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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, May 1, 2023

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)
[*English*]

HEALTH OF ANIMALS ACT

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC) moved that Bill C-275, An Act to amend the Health of Animals Act (biosecurity on farms), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise to speak to my private member's bill.

I have always been taught that if at first we do not succeed, try and try again. I was honoured to have the support of every party in the House in the previous Parliament for my private member's bill, but, unfortunately, an election was called and it died on the Order Paper. Therefore, I am pleased to bring this forward once again on behalf of some of my constituents and farm families across Canada.

I will start my presentation speaking about a family in my riding.

In 2019, I received a call from a farm family in the southern part of my riding that owned a free-range turkey farm. The family members were distraught about what they were supposed to do with a number of protesters who had trespassed on their farm near Fort Macleod. They really had no understanding of what was taking place or what they did to deserve this.

I would ask members how they would feel if they woke up in the morning, went to check their animals, opened the barn and saw 45 protesters trying to take their turkeys off the property. The Tschetter family was really quite distraught. They did not know how to handle this and what to expect. This raised concerns with me about the protection not only of private property, but the biosecurity of those animals and the mental health of that family.

Less than two weeks before, many of these same protesters were on a hog operation in Abbotsford, B.C., where the Binnendyk family had a similar issue. The wife phoned her husband and son to tell them that there were more than 200 protesters in their family's breeding barn. Those protesters, and probably unbeknownst to them, did not understand the very strict biosecurity protocols that

farm families had to follow. Those protesters may very well not have realized that they could have been carrying a virus or pest from one farm, the hog farm in Abbotsford, B.C., to a turkey farm in southern Alberta. We have very strict protocols on farms, and they are there for a reason, which is to protect the biosecurity and the health of those animals.

However, not only did the protesters put those animals at risk, but they had a very serious impact on those families. Even when I speak to members of the Tschetter today, they are still upset about what occurred on their farm and are still hesitant when they check their barns.

Calvin Binnendyk, whose hog farm in Abbotsford was impacted, said "I had quite a few sleepless nights, and it was rough on my family, especially my wife, even though she doesn't even work in the barn. She took it really hard, and she still has a hard time sleeping to this day." This is three years after that occurrence on their farm.

It is because of these two elements that I bring forward this private member's bill, which would amend the Health of Animals Act.

Bill C-275 proposes to make it an offence to enter, without lawful authority or excuse, a place in which animals are kept if doing so could result in the exposure of animals to disease or toxic substance capable of affecting or contaminating those animals. Simply put, this amendment would apply existing penalties within the act to people who trespass on farm property and facilities where animals are kept.

There is a key element to this as well. This would add a very significant fine to those organizations that encourage this type of behaviour. There is no question that those organizations, which, up to this point, are very unlikely to be held accountable, are fundraising off these actions. They videotape those trespassers and protesters who come onto a farm and they fundraise off that. In case of the farm family in Abbotsford, B.C., many of the pictures and videos that they were showing, according to the court case, never happened on that farm at all. They were staged and, in some cases, allegedly faked.

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However, I want to state very clearly for everyone in the House and those listening at home what this legislation would not do.

The bill would not, in any way, disallow protesters from protesting on public property about the issues that they are passionate about and that are important to them. They can hold those rallies and protests outside the farm gate, but there has to be a line in the sand. When they cross that line onto private property and put the health of animals at risk as well as the mental health of our farm families at risk, there has to be a line there. There have to be strict rules in place to deter that action.

The bill would also not stop whistle-blowers from bringing forward cases if they witness practices that jeopardize the safety and welfare of farmers. Canadian farmers and ranchers have the moral and legal obligation to look after their animals. In fact, farmers and their employees are obligated to report any inappropriate actions and any wrongdoing they see happening on a farm, especially because this is a highly regulated atmosphere. They must follow strict codes when it comes to the health, safety and welfare of their farm animals.

I know the members in the House are well aware that there have been numerous actions of protesters on farms. It is becoming more and more daring and reckless.

Only two months ago, an animal rights activist group hung three dead pigs from an overpass in Montreal. I understand this did not happen on a farm, but imagine if one of those pigs had fallen off that overpass and onto the windshield of a passing car? That just symbolizes the extreme lengths that some of these activist groups are willing to go. Again, where did they get those pigs? Were they taken off a farm? They killed them. I do not think that is really protecting the health and welfare of animals.

I know we are going to get some questions about whether we are wading into provincial jurisdiction. Some provinces have implemented something similar. I am proud to say that they were modelled after the legislation I brought forward in the previous Parliament. However, less than half of the provinces and territories have something like this on their books, which shows the federal government and the federal legislators have a leadership role to indicate that there is a line that cannot be crossed.

What this really focuses on is the biosecurity risk and the health of our animals. We saw what COVID did to Canada's economy, a human-borne virus. It devastated not only our economy but economies around the world. Imagine what a similar animal-borne pandemic would do to Canada's agriculture industry. Right now we are experiencing that with avian flu and chicken and egg producers across Canada.

In 2014, in the Fraser Valley, we had 10 farms that had an AI outbreaks and more than 200,000 birds were euthanized.

In 2004, we had a highly pathogenic strain that led to the slaughter of 17 million farm birds. Before that outbreak was eventually brought under control it cost producers \$380 million.

We are going through a similar experience right now, where 7.5 million domestic birds across B.C. Alberta, Ontario, Quebec and Saskatchewan have had to be euthanized.

We know that it is only an amount of time before our next concern, and that is African swine fever. This has killed more than half the pigs in China and is spreading to the Asia-Pacific, Central Asia, Eastern Europe and even the Dominican Republic. It is at our doorstep and we have to take precautions to ensure that our producers are protected. If African swine fever were to occur in Canada, it would have a \$24 billion economic hit to Canada's pork industry. More than 45,000 people are employed in that industry and 70% of our \$4.25-billion industry is exported around the world.

Whether we are prepared to deal with ASF or avian flu is something the agriculture committee will very seriously look into soon, and the threat of transmission is very real. Again, I cannot stress this enough. I know that if any of my colleagues here have toured a chicken farm, or an egg hatchery or a pork operation, they know the protocols that have to be taken, such as putting on a hazmat suit, washing one's boots, putting on booties and a hair-net. If anyone has gone to an animal processing facility, it is very similar. There are very strict protocols and they are there for a reason.

I think that, in many cases, protesters are not willingly putting the biosecurity of those farms at risk but they do not understand the protocols that are in place, which every farm family follows very closely. Those animals are their livelihood and they want to ensure they are treated well. I think all of us in the House understand that. If we can take proactive measures to ensure that these types of animal pandemics do not occur, we want to do that. It is one tool that we are able to use.

● (1110)

We cannot make the same mistake with a potential outbreak on a ranch or farm in Canada. We must take every precaution and use every tool in our tool box to ensure we protect our farm families. We know that agriculture and agri-food is going to be a critical pillar of our economy moving forward. To ensure that it can reach its full potential, our farm families need to know that the Government of Canada and the House of Commons stand with them, will protect them and put these measures in place.

Strengthening the biosecurity measures for trespassers is something farmers, ranchers, food processors and farm groups across the country all support. In fact, I have letters from dozens of agriculture and stakeholders groups that are strongly in support of this legislation. I am glad to hear that the Minister of Agriculture has also spoken out, saying the actions of extremist groups protesting on dairy farms are unacceptable, and it is a concern for her. That is good to hear.

We have the support of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, for example, which said, "The CFA supports in principle, and encourages, [this] private member's bill to support Canadian farmers who have been negatively impacted by activism. We believe that the introduction of this bill is an important and necessary step in the right direction."

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The Canadian Dairy Farmers of Canada said that Canadian dairy farmers were committed to the best care of our herds and were fully engaged in adhering to the highest standards of animal welfare, food quality and biosecurity, and that the amendments proposed by me to the Health of Animals Act would further protect the health and security of our animals.

As I said, the bill would not prohibit peaceful protesting by those groups that want to make a statement on animal welfare, and I appreciate that, but it would ensure the security on our farms and help with the mental health of Canadian farm families.

I hope members in the House will continue to support this legislation, as they did in the previous Parliament. It is very important that we send a leadership message that we support our farm families, that we understand the importance of biosecurity on farms and the protocols that are in place, and that we will protect the mental health of our farm families.

I am speaking especially of families like the Binnendyks and the Tschettlers that work hard every single day. These are family generational farms that do all they can to protect their animals, but they also grow high-quality food for Canadian families and food that is exported around the world, helping us feed the world as well. They understand the steps they must take to protect their animals, but they do not understand when protesters cross the line onto private property and, in many cases, do not understand what they do.

I look forward to engaging with my colleagues as we work together to address this very important issue of protecting Canada's food supply, protecting our supply chain and standing up for Canadian farm families.

• (1115)

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is important legislation. It is also an important occasion to educate people about biosecurity measures on farms. I know I cannot walk into a chicken barn without practically putting on a hazmat suit because of biosecurity concerns, especially in a season when we are dealing with avian flu.

It is Mental Health Week this week. I want to ask the hon. member whether he has heard from farmers on how stressful it can be sometimes with the threat of having protesters on their farms, or family businesses.

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt, especially on the Tschetter farm, for example, that it is doing everything right. It is a free-range turkey farm, yet the protesters still chose its farm, because it is off a main highway, to do their protesting. We know that farmers deal with a number of variables that are out of their control, commodity prices, weather, all of these things, and then add on the potential of protesters coming onto their farms.

Imagine waking up one morning, going into the living room and looking outside, and there are protesters trying to take the family dog because they do not feel it is being treated properly. How would we react? This is exactly what is going on. The protesters are walking into a farmer's backyard and causing extreme mental stress for the family.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Foothills for his very important bill.

Obviously, we will work with him to make this bill effective and enforceable, including by focusing it on biosecurity, as he said so well in his speech.

The member spoke about mental health, as did our Liberal colleague just now. This issue is extremely important. Right now, farmers are struggling, especially under the pressures of high inflation.

To round out this bill, does he think that the government should take steps to boost cash flow on farms to make sure that our farm businesses survive, especially the businesses of the next generation?

[*English*]

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, as one can see, I have a very supportive group on the agriculture committee that I enjoy working with. The member is exactly right. We not only have to ensure that farm families are environmentally and socially sustainable, but it is also critical that they are economically sustainable. Legislation such as this would ensure that their herds and animals are protected.

It also raises important awareness among Canadians that maybe what they are seeing on social media is not exactly accurate. Farmers invest tens of thousands of dollars, and in some cases hundreds of thousands of dollars, to ensure that the biosecurity protocols in place, which are put forward by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and provincial bodies, are followed to the letter.

Absolutely, it is critically important. Any opportunity we have to allow farmers to be economically viable for the next generation is a critical tool that we must give those farm families.

• (1120)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I support the principle of this legislation, but I do believe it needs further scrutiny when it comes to committee. Is my colleague from Foothills aware that there was an Animal Justice report from 2021 that looked at disease outbreaks and biosecurity failures on Canadian farms? It listed hundreds of these incidents, and they were all from authorized personnel on farms.

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He knows this version of the legislation is not the same as the version that was reported back to the House in the previous Parliament. There is a reference to being on the farm with “lawful authority or excuse”. I am wondering if the member for Foothills can explain the discrepancy, given that we have so many biosecurity failures from authorized personnel. If we are serious about biosecurity, should we not be concentrating on making it applicable to everyone who is on a farm, to ensure they are following the standard protocols?

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, my colleague's comments show that the system does work in many cases for those authorized persons on farm. They are making those reports. That does show they are bringing forward issues when they see that the protocol, standards or procedures on farm are not being followed. This legislation would not stop that. They are legally obligated to come forward, as a farmer or an employee on a farm, to an authorized person if they see something on farm that is not following the protocol.

To my colleague's point, his argument shows that it is actually working. What I am focusing on are those who are there with no permission to come on that farm. Again, when it comes to committee, I am more than willing to work with my colleague to ensure we can get this legislation passed.

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a former member of the agriculture committee, I was well aware, when we were in government, what a robust system of traceability we actually have. I also came to learn, which the member would know too, that herds affected by protesters who bring in potential disease take generations to build at times. It takes 50 years to build up one particular herd. Can the member please speak to the risk that could possibly be posed to the family herd if this legislation does not pass?

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, the member brings up a very good point. Many Canadians do not understand the decades of work that goes into building up the genetics, whether it is beef, pork or in the feathers' barns. It is not something one can replace overnight. We are certainly seeing that with the avian flu, where it is taking months to get the numbers back up. When it comes to bovine spongiform encephalopathy in Alberta, or BSE, many of those farms are 20 years past and still have not built up their herd numbers from 25 years ago. It sometimes takes a generation to get the genetics back to where it was.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Foothills for introducing Bill C-275, an act to amend the Health of Animals Act, a private member's bill. As previously indicated, this bill was drafted in response to individuals and groups entering private property such as farms. The right to peaceful protest is fundamental to a democratic society. However, trespassing on farms is unacceptable.

The health and safety of our farmers and their animals are crucial. Incidents of trespassing on farms have made Canadian farmers anxious and have raised concerns about the health and safety of their animals. We recognize the purpose of this private member's bill, Bill C-275, but we also have a responsibility to ensure that any

legislative provision in this area does not have any unintended consequences.

I would like to draw the attention of members to two items to take into consideration. First, Bill C-275, as worded, creates legal risks. Second, existing federal and provincial statutes can be used for managing cases of trespassing on farms. These matters need to be carefully taken into account before any changes to this bill can be considered.

As most of us know, agriculture is a jurisdiction shared by the federal and provincial governments. Generally speaking, the federal government is only responsible for agricultural practices and operations on farms. However, the bill as it stands would probably not fall under federal jurisdiction in this area, given that it generally applies to any building or enclosed area in which animals are kept on a farm or the area outside. Furthermore, the bill seems to focus more on prohibiting trespassing by protesters than on protecting animals from the spread of disease.

Provinces and territories have authority in the areas of property rights and civil rights, which includes passing laws concerning trespassing. Most provinces already have laws against trespassing on farms and other places.

In recent years, five provinces—Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Prince Edward Island—have passed strong legislation prohibiting trespassing on farms or any places where animals are kept.

For instance, in 2019, Alberta amended its Petty Trespass Act to prohibit entry into a farm or farmland without the permission of the property owner or occupant. Someone convicted under the act could be fined up to \$10,000 or face six months in prison. A corporation could face a fine of up to \$200,000 if convicted under this act.

This example shows that the provinces already have laws governing trespassing on private property. The wording of Bill C-275 also shows this bill seeks to regulate trespassing on private property. This is clearly stated in the part that reads, “No person shall, without lawful authority or excuse, enter a building or other enclosed place”. Accordingly, the current wording of Bill C-275 could be seen as infringing on existing provincial legislation.

At the federal level, the Criminal Code criminalizes activity related to trespassing, such as mischief and breaking and entering. In fact, I know of two recent cases where the Criminal Code was successfully used to lay charges against people who had trespassed on farms. One was in British Columbia and the other in Quebec.

I would like to say a little more about the case in British Columbia, because it shows how existing legislation is working to allow charges to be laid against people who trespass on farms.

In 2019, a number of people broke into the Excelsior Hog Farm in Abbotsford, British Columbia, to raise awareness about farming practices they believed were detrimental to animal welfare. Two of the individuals who broke into the farm were convicted and subsequently sentenced under the Criminal Code.

• (1125)

The judge took certain factors into account when deciding their sentence, as is required under the Criminal Code. For example, in this particular case, the judge considered the negative impact the trespassing had on the farmer and the farm's operation. As a result, the trespassers were sentenced to 30 days in jail and 12 months' probation.

What I am saying is that the existing laws work, plain and simple. As the judge in the British Columbia case noted, this verdict, which included a jail term, was intended to send a message to discourage others from engaging in this type of activity.

• (1130)

[English]

The bill of the member for Foothills certainly sheds light on farmer and animal health. While it is crucial that we support farmers with the tools they need to carry out their important work, we need to be mindful of how best to do that without creating legal challenges. Fundamentally, legislation should not introduce new legal issues. It should also complement, not duplicate, the laws we already have.

That is why our government will be supporting Bill C-275 with amendments. Specifically, we will look to move amendments that meet the spirit and intent of Bill C-275, while lowering the legal risks that we have identified.

Rather than broadly prohibiting unlawful entry into any building or other place, we propose an amendment to more narrowly prohibit entry into on-farm biosecurity zones where animals are kept, except in accordance with established biosecurity protocols. Such an amendment would support the strong biosecurity measures that many farmers have already put in place on Canadian farms.

This amendment would also mitigate against the legal issues I outlined earlier. By shifting the focus to entry into on-farm biosecurity zones, it would bring the bill under federal jurisdiction because it would be more clearly related to agricultural options inside the farm gate. It would also reinforce the benefit of biosecurity zones, which are an important part of agricultural practices to prevent the spread of animal disease.

Many may wonder why we are supporting this bill when we did not support its predecessor, Bill C-205. Let me be clear: As I have noted, we do have concerns with the legal risks associated with this bill as currently written. However, we have taken the time to consider previous debates and testimony on this matter. We have listened to stakeholders, and almost all have stressed the importance of biosecurity to prevent the spread of animal disease to animals. Upon further analysis, we have identified an amendment that focus-

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es more squarely on biosecurity and provides a better alternative to the current wording of Bill C-275. This amendment would emphasize to Canadians that biosecurity is serious and necessary to prevent the spread of animal disease, while recognizing there is existing legislation to address trespassing.

We recognize the efforts of the hon. member for Foothills in trying to protect farmers. However, it is important that we find the right balance with the bill and discern the best way forward, considering the legal risks. Should Bill C-275 be referred to committee, we will move an amendment to ensure that the bill addresses the legal risks that have been identified.

The government looks forward to further discussions on this important topic. We are eager to discuss ways we can amend Bill C-275 to provide supports to farmers and protect the health of their animals.

Once again, I want to thank the member for Foothills. We have heard about every issue that has been ongoing over the past few years and past decades on farms. This week we are acknowledging it is Mental Health Week, and I think this bill would address some of the measures and some of the stresses that farmers face on their farms. I want to thank the member for Foothills for putting this bill forward.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the member for Foothills for introducing this bill. I also want to say that I appreciate the comments made by the parliamentary secretary, who basically told us that the government will work with us to come up with an enforceable bill. That is great. It is good news because our duty, as parliamentarians, is to work for our constituents. Our farmers need additional protection so that they no longer have to experience the atrocities that they have endured and over the past few months and years.

This bill seeks to eliminate the growing problem of trespassing. I would like every member of the House to take a few minutes to think about what trespassing means. We may find it hard to empathize with farmers when we think of it in terms of farm businesses, so let us consider it in terms of a more relatable scenario.

I am going to use the same scenario that I did when we spoke about Bill C-205. Imagine if you were to arrive home to find four or five people sitting in your living room, and that they tell you that they do not like the way you run your home, that it is inconsistent with their values. You ask them to leave, but they will not. You cannot remove them by force because you might get into trouble and be criminally charged, so you just have to live with it.

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The real-life example that I always use is the case of the Porgreg farm in Saint-Hyacinthe because it is the most blatant. Farm staff had to put up with this kind of situation for many hours. Even when the police showed up and asked the protesters to leave, they remained seated. They were taking pictures and saying that they wanted to protect the animals whose health and safety they were jeopardizing. Afterwards, it was discovered that a disease had been introduced into the herd because biosecurity protocols had been violated.

I think that “biosecurity” is a very important concept we must keep in mind. This was mentioned by the member for Foothills and the parliamentary secretary. Focusing on biosecurity may be the right approach to take. As federal representatives, we must find a way forward. I appreciate what the parliamentary secretary said about jurisdictions. As members know, the Bloc Québécois also likes to respect the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces. I believe that is something we generally agree on. Nevertheless, I believe that we can work as a team, as we do in committee. That is the sense I am getting from the debates we are hearing today. We must find a way to better protect our agricultural producers against this unacceptable abuse.

This is not about questioning the values of people who are vegans. That is not the issue. It is also not about limiting freedom of expression, because any freedom ends where the rights and freedoms of others begin. There is one thing we often tend to forget and that we really need to remember: the rights of the individual are not absolute. I am sorry to have to tell my colleagues that when someone claims to be exercising their right to freedom of expression by criminally assaulting another person, that is not exercising a right but committing a crime. Parliament must absolutely put a stop to that. That is why we need to work on this issue.

We ask agricultural producers to take strict precautions when it comes to meeting health standards. A few of the possible infections were named earlier. One of them is African swine fever, which is having devastating effects around the world. Thankfully, it has not reached Canada yet, and we are taking every precaution to ensure that it stays that way. We are not going to allow certain individuals to jeopardize the biosecurity of agricultural establishments, which could lead to contamination.

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, foot and mouth disease and avian flu are also risks. Quebec currently has confirmed cases of avian flu. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is advising producers not to go into fields if they see wild birds there, to avoid the risk of contaminating their establishment.

• (1135)

These producers are always careful and are looking for ways to protect their facility. They shower before they enter and they change their clothes. We cannot have people deciding to jeopardize all that based on an ideology that is a little extreme, and so I believe it is our job to be doing this.

In and of itself, Bill C-275 is pretty straightforward: It prohibits people from entering a production facility if it would compromise biosecurity. I think the biosecurity element is already there. I am quite willing to work with the parliamentary secretary and the

member for Foothills to find common ground, but it is imperative that we get this bill passed.

In fact, we studied it in detail in the previous Parliament, as part of Bill C-205. This is one of too many bills that we have had to start from scratch. We need the opportunity to do this efficiently so we do not have to go through this process a third time. The committee is able to work quickly and efficiently by analyzing the scope of Bill C-275 with experts.

First, the issues raised by the parliamentary secretary seem legitimate. Obviously, as I always say, we will work carefully and diligently in committee in order to adopt a bill that is real, that will send a positive message to the farming community and a clear message to people who have any intention of demonstrating, a bill that is actually enforceable. This third condition is important. That is what we are here for and why we will do serious work.

The issue of shared jurisdiction was raised again. This bill also raises the issue of animal and mental health. This was mentioned earlier by two members who spoke before me. This being Mental Health Week, let us take this opportunity to protect our farmers whose life is already challenging. It is already so tough.

I am thinking of pork production. A processing plant in Quebec closed recently, which is having tremendous repercussions on production and jeopardizes several producers who might have to withdraw from farming. It is no joke. Are we going to allow threats, intimidation and gratuitous assault on top of that? The answer is no. As a Parliament, I think we have a duty to say no.

I want to come back to what happened at the Porgreg farm in 2019 because it is a perfect example. As I said earlier, there was disease within the herd. Someone will surely say that laws already exist governing this, which is true. However, it can be difficult to make the connection between the disease and the trespassing incident in a court of law. It also means that these individuals must lodge a complaint and go through the justice system, thus reliving the assault, which can also be difficult. We therefore need to improve and clarify the process. It would be great if we could enhance these protections.

During the incident at the Porgreg farm, there was a biosecurity breach and the doors were left open for many hours. It was -12° outside. Diesel fuel was also contaminated with water. How do prosecutors prove that the attackers put water in the diesel fuel? There are a number of ways.

Significant measures must be put in place to deter wrongdoers. We need to send a clear message that if they do these kinds of things, it will cost them and their organization dearly. In committee, I will pay particular attention to ensuring that fines and penalties are directed not only at individuals, but also at the organizations that sponsor them.

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The member for Foothills spoke earlier about pigs hanging from an overpass in Montreal. This is the same organization that trespassed at Les Porgreg farm and claimed responsibility. It is clear what kind of people we are dealing with. These are extremists who are not afraid of anything and who are ready to face criminal charges.

There must be more significant consequences if we want to discourage these kinds of activities. Our agricultural producers deserve this. They need to know that we respect them, that we appreciate their work, that we want them to carry on for a long time and that we will protect them.

• (1140)

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be standing in the House to give my remarks with respect to Bill C-275, an act to amend the Health of Animals Act, biosecurity on farms. This was introduced by the member for Foothills. I will add to my colleague's comments to say that it is a pleasure to work with the member on the agriculture committee.

Despite what the public sees in question period, we, as members of all parties, actually do get along with each other. I find some of our most rewarding work happens at committee, specifically the agriculture committee, which bucks the trend of many committees because, whatever political party one may be a member of, we all represent farmers, and we all have their interests at heart.

This is the member's second attempt. The first was in the previous Parliament with Bill C-205. I last had the opportunity to debate that legislation at second reading in late 2020. Here we are in 2023, and it may not be the most efficient process, but we had the journey of the previous bill interrupted by an unnecessary election at the time.

Let us get to the purported why of this bill, which centres on biosecurity. We know there are many diseases that pose a risk to farm animals. They include African swine fever; bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or BSE; foot and mouth disease; and avian flu. Many of these diseases do keep our researchers and scientists up at night. I recently had a conversation with the deans council of agriculture and veterinary schools across Canada. They are leading some of the efforts in looking at these diseases, and they are quite concerned, particularly with avian influenza.

Generally speaking, biosecurity at the farm level can be defined as management practices that allow producers to prevent the movement of disease-causing agents onto and off of their operations because, if one farm operator does notice an outbreak of disease, they want to contain that to prevent its spread to other farms. Generally speaking, there are three key principles: isolation, traffic control and sanitation. With Bill C-275, we are mainly looking at the principle of traffic control: controlling who is coming into contact with on-farm animals.

We know that visitors to farms can unknowingly bring harmful agents. They can bring them via contaminated clothing and footwear, with equipment and with their vehicles.

I will talk about some of my personal experiences. In my riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, I have had the pleasure of visiting local farms, including Farmer Ben's Eggs and Lockwood Farms, which are both egg-producing operations. I keep a small flock of chickens on my property. I raise my own chickens, and I like to eat the eggs from them. With the dangers of avian influenza, I was not allowed to come into contact with my own birds for the space of an entire week before visiting a commercial operation, and of course, I had to take very strict measures with my footwear before I was allowed anywhere near the birds.

In a previous life, I used to be a tree planter in the interior of British Columbia. I was planting trees on the Douglas Lake Ranch, a ranch near Merritt, British Columbia, which, of course, is the largest working cattle ranch in B.C. The ranch has such vast properties that many of them are harvested in timber operations. Before our tree-planting operation was allowed anywhere onto the property, we had to have all of our vehicles sanitized to make sure that there was no danger of foot and mouth disease being transferred to the operation.

This just gives members a sense of the operations that are currently in place. I know this is replicated in farms across the country, but these are operations that I have personally witnessed and had to partake in.

Now let us get to the what. We have an existing federal statute, the Health of Animals Act. It is primarily responsible for diseases and toxic substances that may affect animals, or be transmitted by animals to persons, and it looks at their protection. In existing sections of the statute, there are provisions that deal with the concealment of the existence of a reportable disease, the keeping of diseased animals, bringing diseased animals to market, and selling or disposing of diseased animals. That is the current state of some of the existing sections of the federal legislation and what they are hoping to achieve.

• (1145)

Bill C-275 seeks to amend the existing Health of Animals Act by adding a proposed section 9.1. I will read the key section: "No person shall, without lawful authority or excuse, enter a building or other enclosed place in which animals are kept, or take in any animal or thing, knowing that or being reckless as to whether entering such a place or taking in the animal or thing could result in the exposure of the animals to a disease or toxic substance that is capable of affecting or contaminating them." Of course, further on in the bill, there is a new series of penalties for individuals and groups that would violate this new section, consistent with existing provisions of the Health of Animals Act.

I also want to take some time during my speech to outline some of the concerns, because we would not be doing our job as parliamentarians if we did not look at both sides of the argument, and I think this is what our committee really needs to take into account. There are animal rights groups that feel that the legislation represents what they call "ag-gag" legislation, meaning they feel that they are going to be silenced or prevented from taking actions they deem to be in the best interest of farm animals.

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As other speakers have outlined, if the bill is about stopping trespassing and not about shoring up biosecurity, it would be unconstitutional, because we all know that, under our current Constitution Act, jurisdiction over property and civil rights belongs firmly within the provincial realm. We do not want to interfere with the rights of provincial legislatures to make such laws. Of course, as I referenced in my question, there is an Animal Justice report from 2021 that lists hundreds of incidents of failures of biosecurity that were all by authorized personnel associated with the afflicted farms. I will repeat that. All of those incidents came from people who were on the property with lawful authority and excuse. I want to quote from that report:

Despite the risk to farms, animals, and the economy posed by disease outbreaks, biosecurity on farms is not comprehensively regulated at the federal level. The CFIA publishes voluntary biosecurity guidelines for some animal farming sectors, developed in cooperation with industry and government. Adherence to these standards is not a legal requirement. Provincial legislation varies, and tends to empower officials to respond to existing biosecurity hazards instead of prescribing rules that farmers must follow to prevent disease outbreaks.

These are some of the items we have to take into account when we are examining the bill.

I want to conclude by saying that, as New Democrats, we absolutely do support animal welfare. In fact, I was personally proud to support petition e-4190, which collected more than 36,000 signatures and is calling for the Liberals to honour their campaign promise of banning the live export of horses for slaughter. That is something the agriculture minister has still not met in her mandate letter, and we committed, through several elections, to updating the health of animal regulations and to making sure we modernize animal welfare legislation.

That being said, I want to very clearly state that I support farmers and I support their rights to be free from trespass. I know, not only from personal experience but also from my five years in this role as agriculture critic, that farmers are good people. They want to treat their animals well during their lives. Based on the witness testimony we heard at the agriculture committee, there is fairly strong support for a measure like Bill C-275.

I do want to note that protesters can legally get close to farms, not on the property, and it is in their interest to call for more accountability. I also want to note that on-farm employees who witness any instances of abuse to livestock could not be silenced by provisions of the bill. In fact, we do want that measure of internal accountability.

I want to say to the member for Foothills that, while I do support the legislation in principle, more work does need to be done at committee. I want to make sure that biosecurity measures would, in fact, apply to everyone and that we would not be intruding on provincial jurisdiction over trespass laws. I look forward to sending the bill to committee for further work.

• (1150)

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank all of the members of the House of Commons for having another wonderful debate on an important piece of legislation, which is about biosecurity on our farms across Canada. Before I begin, the member for Foothills is not only a gentleman, a scholar and a pretty good hockey player for a dude in his 50s, but

he has also always brought forward some really excellent legislation that directly relates to a problem in my great riding of Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

A number of years ago, the Binnendyk farm on Harris Road, which is less than 10 minutes from where I live, received national attention when protesters entered the farm illegally. To put it bluntly, this was very hard on the Binnendyk family. Another member, from the Liberal Party, mentioned that it is Mental Health Week. Well, when the illegal protesters came onto the farm, that had a lasting, negative impact on this family and on the way Canadians may perceive the work that farmers do on their behalf.

I know that many people, like me and many other members of the House of Commons, love pork. Pork products are amazing. The pork industry in British Columbia, in the Fraser Valley, where I live, has taken a lot of blows. The Binnendyk farm is one of the last remaining farms in the most productive agricultural area in all of Canada. During these past years, activists, not only on the Binnendyks' farm, but we heard about the Schetter Farm in the Foothills riding as well, have entered farm properties across Canada to denounce the living conditions of animals. In response, farm groups have expressed concerns over these incidents and are calling on the government to find ways to address this problem, because food security matters, a safe food supply matters and this is what we are here to achieve today.

Agricultural “biosecurity” refers to “those practices that prevent or mitigate disease from entering, spreading within, or being released from operations that may contain livestock.” At the farm level, “biosecurity” alludes to, perhaps, a series of managing practices designed to minimize, prevent or control the introduction of infectious diseases onto a farm, spread within a farm production operation and export of the disease agents beyond the farm that may have an adverse effect on the economy, environment and human health. A farm environment can significantly affect the spread or prevention of disease on the farm. As such, facility design, layout and traffic patterns on a farm have significant influence on the effectiveness and the efficiency of a farm-level biosecurity plan. For that reason, farm-level biosecurity plans generally include, among other things, measures to control access to certain areas on a farm.

Members of the House who, like me, have experience spending a lot of time on the farm, and my mom was a farmer, know that there were not, when I was a kid, biosecurity measures like we have today. Because of diseases, which have originated in the Fraser Valley in some cases, farmers have had to adapt to agricultural practices in the 21st century, and rightfully so, because Canadians depend on our farmers to create a safe, secure and reliable source of food that is nutritious and keeps us, as a population, healthy. The federal Health of Animals Act and its regulations, the health of animals regulations, do set out certain provisions, but they do not set out all the biosecurity provisions we need. The bill before us today would address that, in good faith, to keep our farmers safe.

Let us go back to talking about the Binnendyks and the protest that took place. I was texting them when we were having the debate earlier this morning. They said that if I could raise one thing in the House of Commons, they would want it to be that they felt that, although some people were convicted, the organization that allowed Ms. Soranno to undertake her activities should have been accountable too. I will note that there was no remorse by those convicted by our justice system for the actions they took. That is problematic. That is why we need this bill today. In fact, even during the core proceedings or after, the protesters went to the SPCA because they did not like the way that the SPCA made a decision about the Binnendyk Farm, one that did not go according to their narrative.

• (1155)

We need laws that protect our farmers. Importantly, we also need to change perceptions about how food production takes place in Canada. That is why this bill is so important today. I would say to the Binnendyk family that, as their MP, I hear them. We are trying to make sure that what happened to them never happens again on a farm and that there are real penalties for those who willingly enter private property without justification and put up fake videos about what farmers are doing on their agricultural property. We want to put an end to that.

Frankly, I remember I had a conversation after the incident took place on the farm with the Binnendyks' cousin Richard Schutte. He told me, as the MP for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, that the Binnendyk farm would probably be the last farm that animal activists would want to pick on, as the Binnendyks have invested all of their livelihood into producing safe food for Canadian families. To my knowledge, they are the last-standing hog farmers on Matsqui Prairie, and they work day and night to provide a safe and secure source of food for my constituents and Canadians around this country.

I am pleased to hear that we have unanimity in the House of Commons to get the bill to committee stage, that members of Parliament are going to work in good faith to improve biosecurity, and that, as a result, our farmers are going to feel a little more protected and a little more heard.

More broadly, in the Fraser Valley, we have been dealing with other sources of biosecurity issues. There are major concerns about avian influenza. I see the work agricultural producers in the poultry sector have to do in order to completely manage their operations with respect to access to their farm and the way animals are transported between farms and processing facilities. We need bills like

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this one to become law to provide the assurances our producers need to do their job effectively on behalf of all Canadians. One example is that, in 2004, an avian flu event led to a 30% increase in international poultry prices. If we have another serious incident like that, we could see the price of pork, beef or chicken go up 30% or 40%. We need these protections in place. We need to do more to stop infectious disease outbreaks and make sure our producers have the tools required to do their job effectively.

I am thankful for the opportunity to speak to this bill today. When I got elected, I made a promise that I would stand up on this bill. I thank the member for Foothills for bringing it forward. This is a concrete measure that agricultural producers in Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon and across Canada have asked for, and I am pleased to stand in support of it today.

• (1200)

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

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023, NO. 1

BILL C-47—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.) moved:

That, in relation to Bill C-47, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the bill; and

That, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and, in turn, every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period.

• (1205)

[*English*]

I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places or use the “raise hand” function so the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in the question period.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

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Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the budget claims that the government plans to reduce spending on outside consultants. This is at a time when we have seen massive increases in government spending inside of government and on outside consultants.

In terms of the government's relationship with McKinsey, can the government confirm that it will be joining B.C.'s class action lawsuit against McKinsey for its role in the opioid crisis? Would the fact that the Government of Canada will now be suing McKinsey be likely to change its procurement practices with respect to McKinsey?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, certainly the focus of the conversation in the House is on the budget and the budget implementation bill.

We are very pleased to bring forward a budget that focuses on affordability for Canadians, health care and dental care for Canadians and the transition to a prosperous, green economy in the future. We certainly want to move forward with the budget implementation bill, including the automatic advance for the Canada workers benefit and a range of other measures.

It is important for us to actually have this conversation, but it is also important to move this bill through to committee.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question with regard to the implementation of dental care.

It is really important that the expansion take place as soon as possible. A number of seniors and persons with disabilities in my riding have been without these services and supports. I would like to ask the government about the prioritization of that and on ensuring that we are going to have it as quickly as possible, as well as other supports; obviously, cost of living has been added by the NDP.

Dental care affects people's overall life, not just their teeth. In particular, could the minister give more specifics in terms of expectations and deliverables for dental care?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, that is an important question.

The move forward with respect to dental care is extremely important. I agree it is a health issue, not just a teeth issue. It is a huge priority for us to actually get this to implementation. The first step is of course getting the budget and the budget implementation bill passed through the House. I want to express our appreciation for the constructive work that has been done on dental care.

• (1210)

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague, the Minister of Natural Resources, about the importance of the Atlantic Loop. It was mentioned in the budget. If he has enough time, could he also address the opportunities for offshore hydrogen development, particularly offshore wind? I know that he is working with the Province of Nova Scotia and the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Could he speak to those two really important elements that matter to Atlantic Canada and his work in the days ahead on those issues?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, certainly we are working very hard on the Atlantic Loop. It is an enormously important infrastructure project. We are working collaboratively with New Brunswick and Nova Scotia to advance this, which will essentially allow the phase-out of coal in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, as well as access to clean energy, which can help power a clean economy. Certainly, the hydrogen piece is extremely important. It is a high priority for Premier Houston and Premier Furey. We have been working collaboratively with both of them.

I was in Germany just a month ago working with the Germans on how we can actually move to export hydrogen as early as 2025-26. It is certainly something that offers enormous economic potential for Atlantic Canada.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is now moving to guillotine debate on its own budget bill, and there is really no reason to do it. The Standing Committee on Finance is already considering the budget bill at committee and has been for many days.

The only reason to do this is to completely shut down debate on a bill that many members, both in the Conservative Party and I am sure other political parties, want to debate to bring forward issues of concern from their ridings. I know people in my riding are extremely concerned about the cost of living crisis that this inflationary budget will only make worse as the government pours more gasoline on to the inflation fire. The Liberals have no plan whatsoever to actually balance a budget in any future budget year that is available in the document right now.

There was no reason to do this; the finance committee is already seized with the matter. It is already considering Bill C-47. The only reason to do this is to slam shut debate in the House of commons once again.

I will remind members that this government passed only one government bill to the next stage last week, Bill C-27. There were more private members' bills passed last week, and I am sure it will happen this week. This government has completely mismanaged the clock. It even has evening sittings and cannot pass government legislation on time.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, certainly my hon. colleague is entitled to his opinions, but he is not entitled to his own facts.

The government has focused very much on affordability issues, including the grocery rebate and, certainly from a fiscal perspective, Canada has the lowest deficit in the G7. S&P just reiterated our AAA credit rating last week. I would invite the member to actually look at that document.

The budget implementation bill has had a lengthy debate in the House. We have debated it for five days, including two extended sittings, and it is being debated again today.

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The bill would do a whole range of things that address affordability concerns, which my hon. colleague says are important to him. It will make a real difference for Canadian folks, and it is time to end partisan procedural games and get this bill to committee.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is kind of like *Groundhog Day*. I do not know how many times I have risen in the House to speak to a Liberal gag order.

It seems as though the Liberals do not want to debate or talk about the issues. We want to talk about what is missing from the budget. My colleague just spoke about what the budget contains. One can either see the glass as half full or as half empty. We are saying that it is half empty.

I gave a 10-minute speech on housing and about how there is nothing in the budget to address the need for 3.5 million housing units. There is only one page of the budget dedicated to this essential issue. We spoke about seniors, who are entirely overlooked. When it comes to fighting climate change, the Liberals are giving billions of dollars to billionaire companies. That does not make any sense. We need to talk about that.

I have always naively thought that we were in the House to talk, to debate and to try to improve bills by presenting arguments. Today, we are once again in a situation where we are being told that the discussion is over, we are not going to talk about it anymore and we are moving on to other things. I find that unacceptable.

• (1215)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague knows that the budget implementation bill was debated at length in the House. I know that many of my Bloc Québécois colleagues took part in this debate. This bill will support Quebecers and all Canadians, for example, by increasing limits on certain withdrawals from a registered education savings plan, or RESP, and by capping excise duties on alcohol at 2% for a year.

I invite the Bloc to join us in referring this bill to committee for a more in-depth study.

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this place sometimes demonstrates that it has a very short memory. I have to call out a comment that was made by the previous Conservative speaker talking about a guillotine motion.

It was common practice, during the days of the Harper government, to introduce a notice of time allocation on the very first day of debate of its government bills. It did not even give the House the courtesy of debating a bill for a few days. A time allocation was announced within the first hour of debate. Let us just call out rank hypocrisy when we see it. I am no fan of it being used either way, but to ignore our history is most egregious.

Does the minister have a comment on that? I would welcome it.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, certainly, I do find the hypocrisy that comes from the Conservative side of the House on some of these issues to be a bit difficult to take. It is no different from the hypocrisy we hear about when they talk about the carbon

tax, which formed a key part of the platform they were all elected on. We should not be surprised.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister referred to the number of hours we have had for debate. Something I hear the constituents ask in the riding of Waterloo is this: When will some of these measures that were put forward in the budget and will impact their everyday lives, including the grocery rebate, come into effect? I tried to explain the process in the House of Commons and explain that the legislation needs to pass before we get it there. It is unfortunate that tools like this need to be used.

If we can keep this legislation moving, how soon will Canadians be able to benefit from the measures within the implementation act? What kinds of measures should they be looking forward to? Perhaps that will ease some of their everyday challenges. We remain in uncertain times, and our government remains here to try to make life more affordable for them.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, clearly, a range of measures are in the budget. Some of them will come into effect very quickly if we can move the legislation forward, and some will require more time and consultation.

Certainly, the grocery rebate is one that we want to see move forward very quickly. It was debated in the House as a separate piece of legislation a couple of weeks ago. It is clearly a priority on the affordability side.

There are many other things that are extremely important for Canadians. We need to move this proposal through to committee and get it through the House, so Canadians can have access to the kinds of supports and programming that will help them build prosperous futures for their families.

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I feel a little sorry for the minister, who now has to stand up in the House and defend an indefensible position.

The finance committee already agreed with the government that it would prestudy the bill. The purpose of time allocation is usually to move a bill through the House so a committee can start to study it, but all parties agreed to prestudy this very large bill to make sure to do our due diligence properly. I have not found a reason for time allocation to be moved while we are still debating it in the House.

After campaigning on not using time allocation, the Liberals are deciding to use it for a purpose for which it is not needed. Could the minister explain why this is being done?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, we understand that, in a parliamentary system, the role of opposition can be to oppose. However, with this bill, the Conservatives have chosen to obstruct.

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With only two days of debate, the Conservatives proposed an amendment that would not even allow the BIA to be scrutinized, which is an integral role of the parliamentary process. They have used concurrence motions and two committee reports to delay and obstruct debate in the House. Conservatives are putting more work into the delay tactics they are exercising than they are into scrutinizing this important piece of legislation. On this side of the House, we will do our job as parliamentarians.

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed to be faced with a time allocation motion yet again, as my colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert so aptly pointed out as he was raising important issues. There are other issues that have not been raised yet.

Let us take employment insurance, for example. How is it that the federal government is taking money from workers for its budget and is refusing to conduct a real EI reform like it has been promising to do since 2015?

Are they moving ahead so quickly before too many people realize that this budget includes a provision recognizing Charles III? That takes nerve. I understand that the monarchy represents a significant expense, but I think it deserves a separate debate and a separate bill.

Do the Liberals want to move this quickly in order to hide the details they stuffed into this huge bill?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Bloc Québécois members have many questions about this bill and the many measures it provides to help Canadians and Quebecers. They will have an excellent opportunity to ask officials and witnesses questions when it is studied in committee.

I encourage those members to vote with us today to send this bill to committee and to ensure that Canadians receive these supports.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, we know that over 100 MPs have already spoken at this stage of the bill.

Over 50 years ago, Tommy Douglas sought to have health care as a primary condition of being a Canadian citizen and dental care was part of that vision.

I would like the minister to elaborate on people such as seniors and persons with disabilities who will not get proper service, or must wait for root canals and other dental care. How much longer they will have to wait in pain is a reality we face. I would like to see those types of service expedited. They have waited long enough and it does affect their overall health.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is absolutely right. I am probably one of the few members of this House who actually knew Tommy Douglas personally. It was part of Tommy Douglas' vision for medicare, more generally, to ensure that health issues, dental being a health issue, were addressed. In fact, Saskatchewan for a long time, led the way. Allan Blakeney brought out a dental care program in every school in the province to

ensure that children had their teeth treated. It was eliminated by then Conservative premier Grant Devine.

This is an important step forward from a health perspective and we are very much committed to moving forward.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Mr. Speaker, I am participating in this debate because the budget implementation act really does impact the backyards of the people I am here to represent. There is a range of things in the budget implementation act, including measures in regard to cryptocurrency. We know that the world is changing. We know the economy is changing and sometimes we have really reckless advice from the leader of the official opposition, but it is important that we understand these things.

I would like to hear from the member how Canadians can also participate and have their voices heard. Even though the official opposition is trying to delay the legislation we are trying to pass, how do we engage more Canadians so that they can have their say and we can respond to their needs? I feel like this budget implementation act does do that.

I would like to hear the member's comments also on cryptocurrency.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, certainly we are focused on serious issues that Canadians expect their parliamentarians to focus on. We are not making strange and awkward statements with respect to embracing cryptocurrency or trying to fire the governor of the Bank of Canada.

We are focused very much on ensuring that Canadians are part of this process. Definitely on this side of the House, members of Parliament reach out through town halls and a range of things to ensure that they are hearing the voices of Canadians. That is reflected in this budget implementation act. There is an automatic advance for the Canada workers benefit. There is a doubling of the deduction for tradespeople's tools. There are improved registered education savings plans. We are working to strengthen Canada's supply chains. We are supporting our friends in Ukraine. We are building a clean economy. We are putting in place dental care. We are investing in health care and we are working on affordability to ensure that Canadian families can move forward with confidence.

• (1225)

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate what many members on this side of the House have been saying.

Constituents in the riding of Provencher are very concerned with the increased cost of living, and we have seen the government put a disproportionate amount of emphasis in this bill, Bill C-47, on environmental spending and green spending, which is something that needs to be debated more rigorously.

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We also know the government has chosen to take \$13 billion of taxpayer money and commit it to Volkswagen for an apparent green initiative. My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources, who tabled this motion. Many of these initiatives are going to require the mining of critical minerals and other minerals in order for them to be successful here in Canada. Is he prepared to move legislation forward that would remove some of the regulations and roadblocks his government has set up that make mining in Canada virtually impossible?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, I am always very happy to talk about a clean industrial strategy for Canada. That was a very big part of this budget, as the hon. colleague talked about. It is about ensuring Canada will prosper and create jobs and economic opportunity in every province and territory in this country as we move through a transition to a lower-carbon future, which science tells us we simply must.

Certainly, we were very pleased to announce the Volkswagen investment in Canada. It is an enormous step forward. It will create jobs, it will create supply chains and it will ensure we are driving forward in a manner that will ensure Canada is prosperous in the future. I am, to be honest, shocked the Conservative Party is opposing the Volkswagen agreement. That is really appalling. I think voters in Ontario are going to think very seriously about this, as well as voters who are concerned about a strong economy in the future.

We are very focused on the critical minerals. I hope my hon. friend has read the critical minerals strategy for Canada. Part of that is about making our regulatory and permanent processes more efficient and working with provinces and territories through the regional energy and resource tables to align those processes and enable good projects to go ahead. We just announced the approval of two critical minerals projects in this country and we expect to see many more.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government is asking us to go to committee and discuss the budget implementation bill, and that is a worthwhile exercise. The problem is that, as the bill stands currently, we would not be able to do a good job because many unrelated items have been thrown into the same basket.

It makes sense that the budget would include the Volkswagen subsidy. However, as my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé pointed out earlier, this budget also includes recognition of the King of England.

That has nothing to do with the budget, and we would oppose it, but the government refuses to take it out of the budget. If we had a real bill for each of these items, instead of an omnibus bill, we would be able to do the effective and valuable work our colleague has urged us to do.

Could I ask him to suggest to the Prime Minister and all members of government that they reconsider this decision and introduce bills that can be worked on in committee so we can do the work we were elected to do?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, as I said, I understand that the Bloc members have many questions about this bill and the

many measures it provides to help Canadians and Quebecers. Bloc members will have an excellent opportunity to ask officials and witnesses questions at the committee stage.

I encourage those members to vote with us today to send this bill to committee and to ensure that Canadians receive these supports.

[*English*]

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we heard the Minister of Natural Resources reference the just transition, the transition to a renewable economy and we heard him reference the VW deal.

As a New Democrat, and recognizing today is May Day, one of the things I think is incredibly important in this conversation is the idea of equivalency. That when workers in the oil patches of Alberta are being transitioned, that they are not just being sent to some job retraining centre and they are actually given prevailing wages and equivalency in their work.

I have not quite heard the government tell Canadians, tell working-class people, those who are currently in a carbon economy, what its plan is to ensure that, when announcement like a \$13-billion deal is set for a corporation, it is the workers who are not left behind.

I will say this on May Day, on international labour day, that it cannot just be about talking about jobs. It needs to be talking about good work, good unionized work with benefits and pensions and the security a collective agreement provides. Can the hon. Minister of Natural Resources please enlighten us on the government's plan to make sure the billions of dollars it is sending to corporations actually make it to the tables and bank accounts of working-class Canadians?

● (1230)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, I want to assure my colleague that we are very focused on creating good jobs for Canadians going forward. That was really the focus of the work that was done on the sustainable jobs action plan. If one reads the document, it is focused on creating good jobs and economic opportunity in every province and territory in this country.

If we reflect on the investment tax credits that are part of the economic strategy to create those jobs, there are labour requirements that are baked into the investment tax credits. We have been working very closely with the labour movement across the country, but, in particular, the labour movement in Alberta, as we move through this. We are very focused.

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I would also say that my concern about the future with respect to the economy is that this economy and the opportunities that are available to Canada are going to enable us to create so many jobs if we are to seize those opportunities. We are actually talking about skill shortages and the need for us to be upgrading and retraining people, ensuring that we are bringing the right skills into Canada.

We have enormous economic opportunities in this country. We intend to seize them and we are certainly going to work with the labour movement and with industry to do so.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, in a debate on Bill C-47, I confine myself to the contents of the bill. Much of the minister's speech and much of the debate in this place did not pertain to the budget itself. I am not criticizing any rulings or trying to get new rulings from the Speaker in terms of relevance, but Bill C-47 is in fact 429 pages of disparate pieces of legislative changes, and I have to say that I find nothing within Bill C-47 with which I disagree and much within the budget with which I disagree. I plan to vote for Bill C-47.

I wonder if the minister has any comments on how we are to proceed with fairly skeletal plans for changes to the Canada Elections Act to protect privacy information.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, we are certainly very focused on ensuring that questions like the ones posed by the hon. member are answered. That is why we want to see this bill move to committee. The Conservative Party continues to obstruct and delay. It is time for us to move forward to ensure that the committee has the time to do the work and answer the kinds of questions that the hon. member is asking.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on page 84 of the budget, it says, "Projected costs of this agreement", in reference to the battery manufacturing plant by Volkswagen, "have been fully accounted for in Budget 2023." Can the minister point out to this House or, maybe at a later date, table how the Volkswagen announcement has in fact been accounted for in the projections put forward by the government?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, as I said, the Volkswagen investment is an enormously important step forward for Canada, as are the investments by Stellantis, by Ford, by Air Products, by Imperial with biofuels, by a whole range of companies that are helping us to build an economy that is going to prosper in the context of a lower-carbon future. One of the reasons why we want to see this bill move to committee is so hon. members, like my colleague across the way, can ask the specific questions that they have on their mind.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is very simple. Can my colleague across the way explain to the people watching what time allocation is, and can he explain why his government moved this time allocation motion that we will be voting on in a few minutes?

• (1235)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, as I have said repeatedly, it is very important that this bill be sent to committee so that members of the House can have an opportunity to ask witnesses

and officials questions. We cannot wait any longer, because it is important for Canadians that this bill be passed.

[*English*]

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will build upon my colleague's question earlier to the minister about the resources that have been provided to St. Thomas in terms of the Volkswagen plant. A lot of people in my area are excited about that for sure. There is a lot of conversation about job creation. However, within this budget, there were not many announcements about housing and supports for the people who are excited about those jobs, to be able to work and get to the plant.

I wonder if the minister could expand on that in terms of government resources and allocations into the specific housing that would be required for people to live in order to work at that Volkswagen plant.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, the Volkswagen investment is an important step forward for St. Thomas, for Ontario and for Canada as we move toward building an economy that is going to create prosperity for our children and for our children's children in an environment that is sustainable. We certainly need to continue also to work on other issues, including the housing issue that my hon. colleague talks about. That is why this government has committed almost \$90 billion under the Canada housing strategy to ensure that we are building the kind of housing that will enable folks to have a place to call home and to ensure that they actually have a good job to go to.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Calgary Shepard, in his question, said that the government cannot pass legislation and that it passed only one piece of legislation last week, and yet the Conservative agenda is often to be a destructive force on the floor of the House. What the Conservatives prefer to do is prevent the government from passing legislation, and they do that by bringing in concurrence motions, by giving no indication in terms of how many speakers would accommodate the passage of a bill, and sometimes by not even wanting to sit late in the evening.

Does the member not agree that if they are criticizing the government for not passing legislation and then go out of their way to prevent the government from passing legislation, that might be somewhat hypocritical?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, it would not be a big surprise to know that I actually agree exactly with the premise of the question. The hypocrisy that comes from the other side on this issue is quite something, at times. It is important that we are able to move forward. Canadians are expecting their Parliament to function and to function well. The obstruction and delay have slowed down the ability to make progress on behalf of Canadians. It is time for us to move forward.

I would say that the hypocrisy coming from the Conservative members of this House is nothing new. As I have said before, the attacks every day on carbon pricing are really rich, I find, given that each and every one of the Conservatives was elected on the basis of putting in place a carbon tax.

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member across the way about critical minerals. We have already heard about this from a previous member. We heard from the Prime Minister that Canada is extraordinarily well positioned to succeed in the decades to come, around critical minerals. I recently spoke with the Yukon Chamber of Mines, which said it will be decades before we see critical minerals developed in Yukon, three decades. The Prime Minister talks about getting critical minerals developed in the next eight years or less. They said that we would be lucky, with the current regulatory burden on miners, to get that developed in 30 years.

What does this member answer to those miners? After being in government for eight years, how can he reassure the miners in Yukon that this is going to get done?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, I would start by encouraging my hon. colleague to look at Canada's critical minerals strategy, which has been lauded by business organizations and governments across this country. It will enable us to move forward in a thoughtful and strategic way. We, of course, need to be working to ensure that our regulatory and permitting processes are as efficient as possible. Certainly, what Stephen Harper did, by gutting the environmental assessment process, set us back a long way.

The Impact Assessment Act enables us to take steps forward, but we are continuing to work internally. We are working with provinces and territories to expedite things. I would just note that the Mining Association of Canada, in responding to the budget, noted that Canada “is a leading mining nation, producing some of the lowest carbon materials and metals” and that this budget “recognizes our industry’s central role in [accelerating] the transition to a net zero economy and building [a strong economic] future”.

• (1240)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

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. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote, please.

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1325)

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

(*Division No. 306*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag
Ali

Alghabra
Anand

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Arseneault	Arya
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Bradford	Brière
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Kwan	Lalonde
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Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lattanzio	Lauzon
Lebouthillier	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	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	O’Regan
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Qualtrough	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Sahota
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Melillo
Moore
Morrice
Motz
Nater
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Perkins
Plamondon
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Rood

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

I wish to inform the House that, because of the proceedings on the time allocation motion, Government Orders will be extended by 30 minutes.

SECOND READING

The House resumed from April 27 consideration of the motion that Bill C-47, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, given the results of the vote, I guess this is a more valuable speaking slot now.

It is my honour to rise to bring the voices of Chatham—Kent—Leamington and, on the issue of Bill C-47 today, the voices of all Canadians to this chamber on the budget implementation act. Perhaps the single most important task performed each year by this House is the debate and the passing of the allocation of federal funds, or more accurately and specifically I should say it is the spending of taxpayer dollars.

It is our solemn obligation to responsibly steward the Canadian economy, a responsibility abdicated by the government. Therefore, it falls to my colleagues and I, as His Majesty's loyal opposition, to oppose and protest the adoption of the proposed budget. I know it is a shock.

The legislation would continue the government's war on work. The raising of taxes would punish the hard work of Canadians by taking an ever greater portion of their hard-earned paycheques away from them, which, in conjunction of the inflationary spending of the government, has seen the cost of living dramatically rise. Today, one in five Canadians are skipping meals, and over a quarter of food banks have seen their use doubled from historical norms.

Government Orders

To further insult the hard work of Canadians, the grocery rebate contained within the legislation would not even cover half of the inflationary costs of groceries purchased by the average family of four, not that expanding the rebate is the solution. One cannot tax and spend one's way out an inflationary cycle. It is due to the actions of the government that Canadians are struggling, yet its ill conceived answer to the problem of runaway spending is to raise taxes. Is it not the height of irony to give back to Canadians' money that was ripped away from them by the tax increases? Is it not further insulting to pretend these proposed rebates would solve the rising cost of living, which the government's spending has partially created?

These rebates would not return to Canadians the money taken from them, let alone cover the rising cost of living, which has already driven many struggling Canadians over the edge, nor would it address the underlying drivers of this inflation, namely the spending itself.

There is a well known adage that you have to spend money to make money. It is straightforward and easy to understand. However, left unspoken in that simple phrase is the understanding that one needs to invest money wisely and to make a profit, yet while the government loves to spend the hard earned paycheques of Canadians, it does not know how to invest.

The government, at the behest of the Prime Minister, over his tenure, has burdened Canadians with more debt than every single one of his predecessors combined. If members want to look at an example of failure to invest properly, they can just look at the track record of the Canada Infrastructure Bank.

Despite all that spending, there is no plan in place to balance the budget or control the inflationary deficits, which have driven up the cost of goods and, now, the interest Canadians must pay. Current projections of the government itself predict nothing but deficits far into the future. The national debt is likely to reach \$1.22 trillion this year. Breaking that down into something Canadians can easily understand, that is nearly \$81,000 per household in Canada. The cost of paying the interest on Canada's debt has nearly doubled since 2021 to a projected cost of \$43.9 billion.

Again, despite all that spending, Canadians are worse off today than ever. The dream of home ownership has all but died for young Canadians, as nine in 10 believe they will never own a home. The minimum down payment on the average home has more than doubled across Canada under the government. The average cost of a mortgage has gone from \$1,400 to more than \$3,100. In 2015, the cost to rent a one-bedroom apartment was, on average, \$973. Today it is \$1,760. Prior to the Prime Minister taking office, the average Canadian only needed to spend 39% of their paycheque to make monthly payments on their house. Today, that number has risen to 62%.

By every objective measurement, things are more expensive, and Canadians are taking home less. Despite that fact, the proposed budget would only continue down the path of more spending while taking more and more from hard-working Canadians.

Returning to the issue of home ownership, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has stated that more than three and a half

million new homes must be constructed before affordability can be restored. Conservatives demanded that the government include a provision in the budget to remove government gatekeepers to free up land and speed up building permits. However, as with every other common-sense proposal, the government turned a deaf ear to the plight of Canadians.

● (1330)

The government has even ignored its own promises and commitments. The Minister of Finance promised in this chamber one year ago that the government was "absolutely determined that our debt-to-GDP ratio must continue to decline. Our deficits must continue to be reduced....This is our fiscal anchor. This is a line we shall not cross. It will ensure that our finances remain sustainable." Here we are a year later, and the Prime Minister has crossed that red line.

I have three commercial harbours in my riding. People in Chatham-Kent—Leamington understand that an anchor is not supposed to float. It is supposed to hold and remain fast, not float within a year of being uttered. It begs this question. What in this budget will be like that anchor, and we will be standing here a year from now describing that? What is going to float away over the next 12 months despite there being ample room to cut back on unnecessary spending?

Despite the pandemic being virtually over, government spending is still up \$120 billion compared to prepandemic levels. In 2019, our program spending was \$323 billion. The spending for this year by the government is projected to be \$447 billion. Once again, it must be said that the government spends, it does not invest, all the while raising taxes as its unsustainable expenses continue to restrict and deny the well-being and future opportunities to our children and grandchildren.

From the work at the agricultural committee, we have heard from expert witnesses how food insecurity is a growing crisis. The typical disposal income spending for food in Canada has historically been around 9% of disposable income. It is now upward, closer to 14%.

Testifying at committee, Chief Byron Louis expressed how first nations communities had been devastated by the rising cost of food. Even first nations communities that are comparatively close to the Canada-U.S. border are having trouble, with many having to resort to food banks just to feed their families. It has even been more challenging for those who live in remote or northern regions. As costs continue to rise unabated, these communities will only have a harder time of it. It is an abdication of duty to allow this to continue.

Government Orders

The solution is simple. Reckless spending that the government refuses to address, let alone reduce, must stop. How can we continue to allow our children to go hungry in one of the wealthiest nations in the globe? Can we call ourselves a truly democratic nation if we let the most vulnerable go hungry? Where is the accountability? Simply ignoring the financial problems crippling Canadians will not make them go away.

As a farmer, I cannot begin to express how frustrating it is to hear that our children are going hungry because their parents cannot afford groceries. We produce more than enough food in Canada to feed Canada. It is the actions of government, the current government, that have seen the proliferation of food insecurity across our great nation.

It is abundantly clear that this food insecurity seen across Canada is the result of rising costs, not an inability of farmers or our food value system to provide. Instead, farmers are raising costs as a result of more taxes, the impact of the carbon tax on transportation and the rampant inflation affecting every input. Canadians are being priced out of their own grocery stores. It is a travesty and it must not be allowed to happen.

It cannot be stressed enough that Canadians are living in desperation, skipping meals, living in their parents' basements, unable to drive to work, falling into depression and even considering suicide because they cannot afford the bills imposed upon them over the past eight long years. This budget makes all those pressures, all those pains and all those costs even worse. This proposed budget cannot and should not be approved for the sake of every Canadian.

• (1335)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very hard to nail down the Conservatives on a substantive policy. In parts of his speech, the member said that the grocery rebate was a good idea. In other parts of his speech, he said it was a bad idea. We have also heard members on the other side sometimes say that the Volkswagen idea is a good idea. Then they sometimes say that it is a bad idea. It depends on which member of the Conservative caucus is standing. The Conservative Party has no plan. There is no depth to its policy.

Could the member give a very clear indication on whether he supports the grocery rebate, yes or no? Does he support the investment that is bringing Volkswagen to St. Thomas, Ontario, yes or no?

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Speaker, this member very much supports a balanced fiscal approach that reduces and gets rid of the need for a grocery rebate. If one is looking for places to bring that up, there were \$21 billion in consultants fees. Why do we need a grocery rebate? It is because of inflation. Where is the inflation coming from?

Mr. Matthew Green: Profits, capitalism; it's an easy question.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly my point. That is the driver of inflation. Are there good ideas, yes, but every creature on this earth must live under the law of scarcity. Priorities must be made.

Mr. Matthew Green: They know that's false.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Speaker, I will let the member ask his question and then address it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my Conservative colleague's speech, and I must admit that he placed a great deal of emphasis on the importance of having a balanced budget and sound finances. I do not disagree. I think he will be happy to hear me say that. I am in no way opposed to a balanced budget. On the contrary, it is a good thing to have a balanced budget in many circumstances.

After listening to him, though, I get the impression that things are all doom and gloom, that everyone is on the verge of bankruptcy come tomorrow morning and that, if this continues, the government is going to hand the keys to Parliament over to the banks.

However, if we look at the budget closely, there is a nice chart showing Canada's debt forecast for the future, and it would seem that, by the year 2055, Canada—the federal government—will be debt free. In the meantime, local governments, such as provinces that would like to become countries, are burdened with debt, while the federal government has plenty of financial leeway.

I would like to know whether my colleague is concerned about the fact that the federal system we are stuck with is financially suffocating the government of Quebec, in particular, as well as the other provinces. That is where the money is most needed.

[*English*]

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Speaker, the federal government often touts the fact that its federal debt is in not too bad of shape vis-à-vis other OECD countries or other G7 countries. The member is absolutely correct that when we take a total of our total sovereign and sub-sovereign debt, we are in trouble.

I do not mean to sound apocalyptic, but I did start my adult career in the early eighties and I remember interest rates. As a result of spiralling inflation, they got out of control as a result of spending. I am concerned. That is why my speech was as it was. The member is absolutely correct on the combination of debt that Canadians face and, more important, what the results of that will be for our kids and grandkids.

Government Orders

• (1340)

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am gobsmacked by the Conservatives who talk about economics. They talk about inflation, but yet they never talk about corporate profits. He just said that he believed there was automatic scarcity. There is no automatic scarcity. This is something that is constructed by capitalism. There are five families that run our food. We have a cartel with our telecoms. We have a cartel with our banking. It is neo-liberal capitalist design to take the value that is created by workers and to syphon it up to the corporate class, yet they never speak about the profits.

This is not the eighties. This is the result of failed trickle-down economics that, at the end of the day, leaves workers with less money to purchase their basic necessities of life. Will the hon. member please find within his spirit a bit of courage today to stand up and finally talk about the corporate greed that is driving inflation, the corporate greed of the banking class, the corporate greed of the grocers and the corporate greed of the Bay Street elite who are driving inflation, rather than trying to put it on the backs of working-class people?

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Speaker, for a moment, I thought my hon. colleague from Hamilton Centre was calling for more competition. With that, I can agree, absolutely. Unregulated capitalism is not what we have and it is not what we are advocating.

A market system works, and this my soap box and I wish I had more time. I will do 10 minutes on it at some point. A market system works when there is a balance of power across the negotiating table and across the marketplace table. I heard him call for more competition in some sectors, and I agree.

[Translation]

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to debate Bill C-47, the budget implementation act, 2023. The budget shows our commitment to strong, sustainable economic growth while supporting the most vulnerable among us and moving toward a greener future for Canadians.

By investing in our physical and social infrastructure and by seizing the unprecedented opportunities at hand in clean energy and critical supply chains, Canada will become a world leader in the economy of tomorrow. That is exactly the vision we have as a federal government, and that is exactly what is reflected in our budget.

[English]

Before delving deeper into the budget implementation act, I want to take a step back and take stock of where we find ourselves after three tumultuous years, three years marked by a global pandemic, by war, by global economic instability, by supply chain breakdowns, the list goes on. Despite the proclamations of some in this chamber, I would like to speak today about where we are as a country and why we are privileged to be here in Canada, despite the tumultuous times that we have faced.

In fact, Canada is one of the best places to be in the world right now. As we sit in this chamber, Canada's inflation rate is the lowest it has been since 2021, despite continued global inflationary pres-

ures. In fact, Canada's inflation rate has decreased consistently over the last nine months.

Our fiscal balance sheet remains by far the best among G7 countries, with both the lowest debt and the lowest deficit. Our AAA credit rating was just recently reaffirmed. Our economic growth was the strongest of all G7 countries over the last year. Nearly 900,000 jobs have been created and the labour force participation of women is at an all-time high in our country. These are facts.

What I hear from Canadians in my community and throughout the country is that these tumultuous times are difficult, that the instability the world is seeing is impacting our economy, our political institutions and our lives, but that we need a responsible government, that we need responsible leadership and that Canadians are thankful for that leadership in us.

[Translation]

At a time of global economic and geopolitical instability, our government continues to focus on managing our finances responsibly while investing in the future of our country. That is what our budget does. Speaking of responsible management, I want to quickly mention the tentative agreement that was reached between the government and the public service union this morning. It is a balanced agreement that respects employees of the public service and the Canadian taxpayers who are funding it.

We are committed to protecting the collective bargaining process both now and in the future. That is why, in our budget, we have committed to introducing legislation this year to ban the use of replacement workers during a strike or lockout in order to protect that very important right. That is just one of the many measures in budget 2023 that invests in Canada's workforce, because we know that the only way to realize our ambitions for the economy of tomorrow is to invest in Canadian workers. Whether they work in auto manufacturing, construction, aerospace, smelting or fisheries, our workers will lead the just, green transition that we want. Our budget focuses on them.

• (1345)

[English]

This budget builds on the foundations our government has built over the past few years to make life more affordable and create well-paying jobs. I would like to highlight a few lesser-known measures in the budget about which Canadians may not yet have heard.

Let me begin with one measure that would significantly support small business owners across the country. For small businesses, we have reduced credit card transaction fees that allow them to reduce their costs and improve their bottom lines. This will make a huge difference.

For Canadians who need to borrow, cracking down on predatory lending by lowering the criminal interest rate by over 25% will make a real difference.

Government Orders

For consumers, we are tackling junk fees in this budget. Those are added costs that make our bills higher. From extra roaming fees to excessive baggage fees, tackling these will make a real difference.

For workers, imposing fair labour requirements for clean-tech workers and extending employment insurance support for seasonal workers will make a real difference. For people looking to enter the trades or the job market for the first time, our doubling of the tax credit for tools will make a real difference.

For first-time homebuyers, the brand-new tax-free home savings account will make a real difference for those looking to purchase a home. For consumers, we are implementing a right to repair instead of being forced to buy new products when we do not have to. We are going to ensure that Canadians can repair what they have already bought. That is going to make a real difference.

For students, increasing Canada student loan grants by 40% and broadening the waiving of the interest on student loans will make a real difference for young people across the country.

For the third of Canadians who do not have dental insurance, our new Canadian dental plan will make a real difference.

[*Translation*]

We know that to deliver on and maintain these achievements, we need to address the looming climate crisis head-on. That is why we made the green transition the pillar of our budget 2023.

Our government's recent decision to update the social cost of carbon further underscores our commitment to solving this problem. This measure quantifies what every one of us knows, which is that every tonne of greenhouse gas emissions causes not only environmental damage, but also economic damage. This is an essential tool for conducting evidence-based cost-benefit analyses.

Although significant progress has been made, there is still a lot of work to be done to meet the target we set for 2030, namely reducing emissions by at least 40% below 2005 levels and achieving net-zero emissions by the middle of the century.

That is why our budget is focused on building the green economy of tomorrow. Our budget acknowledges the global shift to clean energy and the need to reduce our dependence on dictatorships for critical supply chains.

Unlike the Conservatives, we understand that we need to address climate change head-on, and this budget reflects that urgency with historic investments in clean technology, green infrastructure and renewable energy projects.

[*English*]

The thing I find most interesting about the debate around the price on pollution is that Conservatives used to be advocates for market-driven mechanisms as a means to address economic and social issues. In fact, they were in favour of a price on pollution. However, the new Conservative opposition is of a completely different ilk. It has decided that a price on pollution is not the way to go; however, we do not know what its plan is.

Our price on pollution relies on the power of the market to drive behavioural change and incentives. We would think the Conservative Party would be in favour of that. However, instead of embracing this market-driven mechanism, Conservatives have been laser-focused on demonizing pollution pricing while putting nothing else forward. This is not simply about safeguarding our planet for future generations; it is also about seizing the moment in this global race to attract investments in clean technology. According to the International Energy Agency, the global market for clean-tech manufacturing alone will triple by 2030. That is \$650 billion per year.

This is an immense opportunity for Canada, and the government is seizing that opportunity.

• (1350)

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Montreal mentioned the tool tax credit at the beginning of her speech. That is one provision in the budget that I think a lot of people in the trades are happy about. That said, at the same time the budget was announced, Statistics Canada outlined that there is a statistical drop in the number of people who are self-employed and starting businesses in this country. In fact, it is at a 40-year low. What that signals in our economy is that Canadians do not want to take entrepreneurial risks anymore. They do not feel that the economy is working for them.

How does the member opposite justify all those things in the budget when the reality we see is that the small business and self-employment sector of our economy is dropping off a statistical cliff?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the member opposite began his question by indicating that the budget includes an important measure for entrepreneurs and an important measure for workers. When he talks about the importance of our small business owners, I could not agree with him more. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy here in Canada.

I would point the member to some of the comments made by the CFIB, the Canadian Federation for Independent Business. Its members were extremely pleased to see in our budget a long-standing request, which was to reduce credit card transaction fees. This is something that we worked on with CFIB and our entrepreneurs across the country; we got it done.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as usual, my colleague is gushing over her government's budget.

Let us talk a little about the housing crisis. According to CMHC and Scotiabank, Quebec alone will need 600,000 housing units in the next 10 years to deal with the affordability and accessibility crisis we have right now. There is just one page on this issue in the budget. That is ridiculous.

I would like to know how my colleague believes that her government can reconcile this demand for housing over the next 10 years with its \$700-million investment over five years for Quebec's anglophone community, which, as we all know, is threatened with extinction.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague that we must fight the housing crisis. That is why we have a plan to invest historic amounts to build new housing.

I would also remind my colleague that, on April 1, the new tax-free savings account became available at financial institutions across Canada. Quebeckers should use this savings account to help them buy their first house.

I hope that my colleague will also speak to the provincial government, because we are negotiating with the Government of Quebec to ensure that we can provide further financing to build housing.

• (1355)

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the parliamentary secretary mentioned the interchange fees on credit card transactions. The NDP has been fighting for that for decades. Jack Layton was certainly a champion for that, and I have been pressing for it in my role as small business critic.

I also want to mention that, in this budget, the tax credits for creating a new clean-tech economy have been tied to good, union-scale jobs across this country. This is something that, again, the NDP has been really fighting for. So often, we have seen financial benefits to companies given to them by the taxpayers of Canada without any strings attached, and that has to change. Could the parliamentary secretary comment on whether this will finally become standard practice for governments?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his advocacy on credit card transaction fees. It is something that I have been working on since 2015, and I am glad to hear that others in this chamber have been working on it as well. Certainly, we have acted on this file since 2015, and this most recent budget would simply continue the work that we have been doing on this issue since coming into government.

With respect to the member's second point, we have ensured that many of the investment tax credits that are available to clean-tech firms in this country would be more generous should they pay their workers a fair and better wage. That is something that countries around the world will be inspired by; I certainly hope so.

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let me begin on a high note by talking about the riding of Laurentides—Labelle, which I am honoured to represent. Three

Statements by Members

concerns keep coming up every time I speak with my constituents: the housing shortage, support for seniors and, above all, employment insurance.

The Deputy Prime Minister's budget makes no mention of any of those concerns. One would think that these were not serious problems. Instead, a provision was included to recognize Charles III as King of Canada. If that is not evidence that the Liberals have their priorities all wrong, I do not know what is. There is nothing in this budget for seniors, nothing for housing, no long-term solutions to address the underfunding of health care, nothing about EI reform, nothing for Quebec, nothing for the people of Laurentides—Labelle and nothing to deal with the challenges facing Quebeckers and Canadians every day.

Tourism is a major economic driver in Laurentides—Labelle. There are the big attractions like Mont-Tremblant and the peaks of the Saint-Sauveur Valley, but we also have golf courses, ski resorts, outdoor recreation centres, restaurants, amusement parks, campgrounds, outfitters and many other businesses that rely on tourism. The list goes on and on. These are outdoor activities.

Our region is emerging from winter, and we are looking forward to summer. The P'tit Train du Nord is getting spruced up for cyclists. The ski resorts are cleaning up so that they will be ready for next winter. In the meantime, however, thousands of workers are receiving EI until the next tourist season, which starts in June. These seasonal workers are being abandoned by the government because it is incapable of reforming EI. The current government, which has been in power since 2015, keeps putting it off.

When the Liberal government was elected, it told us that reform was coming. In 2022, we were promised that it would be done by the summer. Then the government swore it would happen in the fall. Now, the spring of 2023 is coming to an end, and nothing has happened.

• (1400)

The Speaker: The member for Laurentides—Labelle will have seven minutes remaining when we resume debate on this matter.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

CELIAC CANADA

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is estimated that one in 114 Canadians, nearly 1% of our population, is affected by celiac disease, although 90% of cases remain undiagnosed. Celiac is an autoimmune disease with no cure. Unfortunately, it is often misunderstood and misdiagnosed, which can have long-term health consequences. The only treatment is a gluten-free diet for life, which can be difficult and expensive.

Statements by Members

I congratulate Celiac Canada on its 50th anniversary. Founded in 1973 by two concerned women in the Waterloo Region, Celiac Canada is a vibrant national charity providing resources to those who need it the most.

To further understand celiac disease, this morning, my colleague, the member for Brampton South, and I co-sponsored the first-ever gluten free breakfast on Parliament Hill.

Those affected by celiac, like my amazing niece Hazel, should know that their voices are heard and that organizations like Celiac Canada are here to support, advocate and educate. I thank Celiac Canada for raising awareness, improving diagnosis rates and ensuring that people living with celiac disease can manage their condition effectively and live full and healthy lives.

* * *

ALBERTA ELECTIONS

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Alberta advantage is back. Alberta's economy has roared back to life, employment numbers are on the rise and more Canadians are choosing to move their families to Alberta than any other province in Confederation.

Albertans are confident again and they are in the driver's seat for their future, but it was not always like this. Between 2015 and 2019, Alberta's provincial government launched headlong into a series of disastrous economic blunders that saw over 180,000 jobs lost. Small businesses were fleeing the province at unprecedented rates. Government greed led to consecutive credit downgrades, a punishing carbon tax, higher income taxes, more taxes in general and worse services.

Albertans have a choice: continue down the path that has restored the Alberta advantage, or go back to the job-killing, tax-and-spend ways of Rachel Notley and the provincial NDP.

On May 29, I invite Albertans to choose bigger citizens over big, greedy government and vote Conservative.

* * *

NEIGHBOUR TO NEIGHBOUR

Ms. Lisa Hefner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the important work of yet another powerhouse woman in my riding of Hamilton Mountain: Denise Arkell.

Denise joined Neighbour to Neighbour as executive director 30 years ago when she and just one other staff member pulled together an emergency food bank for an underserved community on Hamilton Mountain. Under her leadership, Neighbour to Neighbour has grown from a single-service agency to one that addresses food security, literacy, life skills, community programming and many more critical areas of need.

In Hamilton Mountain, Neighbour to Neighbour is the biggest provider of social services, thanks to Denise Arkell's leadership. It now counts 24 full-time staff, 350 volunteers, a food bank that serves 1,400 families a month and a separate food bank that serves the trans community.

Denise Arkell plans to retire in June, and I would like to thank her for her outstanding dedication to the residents of Hamilton Mountain. I thank Denise and give her my sincerest congratulations.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today is May 1, International Workers' Day, and all employers will say that the daily efforts of workers, the men and women who keep our society functioning, are at the heart of every business.

The Bloc Québécois thanks these workers, who give of their time, talent and energy for the common good. We give a special thanks to all those who work in seasonal jobs and who play a critical role in the economy of the regions. They are part of every industry, whether it is hospitality, tourism, arts and culture, fisheries, agriculture or construction.

It is inconceivable that, in 2023, the federal government has still not reformed the employment insurance system. It is inconceivable that seasonal workers, who do not have special status, are still dealing with the spring gap. Today, members of Mouvement Action-Chômage were out in front of my office in the rain holding another protest. On this May 1, I thank them for their commitment, and I commend them for their determination. They will prevail.

* * *

COMMUNITY EVENTS IN ORLÉANS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on April 29, I attended the eighth annual Soirée Saphir, an event organized by the Fondation franco-ontarienne to recognize the commitment, excellence and influence of women in the francophone community. I sincerely want to congratulate the six winners of the gala and all the finalists.

I would like to recognize two finalists from my community for their leadership, namely Maïssa Zemni, in the youth category, and Lisa Sarazin, in the professional of the year category.

● (1405)

[*English*]

Also, this weekend marked the 30th annual "Clean up the capital", and I want to recognize the Blackburn Hamlet Community Association and the Cardinal Creek Community Association for their effort and participation. It is always a pleasure to join them and their volunteers to help clean up our community of Orléans.

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' economic failures have forced too many Canadians into desperate situations.

Some feel like they have no one to turn to. For those that are having to choose between food for the table and fuel for the car, "You are not alone." For those having to turn to food banks, charity bins and community services, "You are not alone." For those who worked their entire lives, now forced out of retirement, "You are not alone." For those whose dreams of having a home and a family are shattered, "You are not alone." For those whose savings have evaporated, and debt is piling up, "You are not alone." For those who just want better for their children, "You are not alone."

Thirty-eight million of my friends know what that is like. They are worried about the direction Canada has taken under these Liberals. Everyone who has lost hope, "Know that you are not alone, know that Conservatives will restore that hope in this country once more."

* * *

RIDVAN

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I extend my greetings to the Baha'i Community in Canada and across the world on the occasion of Ridvan.

Ridvan is a festival of great significance to the Baha'i community as it marks the birth of the Baha'i faith in 1863. Ridvan commemorates the vision of peace, unity and justice that Baha'u'llah, the prophet founder of the Baha'i Faith, shared with humanity. He said, "The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established."

Baha'is come together to celebrate Ridvan through various activities such as devotional meetings, artistic and musical presentations, and community gatherings. This festival provides a time for reflection and contemplation on the teachings of Baha'u'llah and offers an opportunity for the Baha'i community to come together in unity.

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MOUNT SAINT VINCENT UNIVERSITY

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, dating back to 1873, 150 years ago, Mount Saint Vincent University was one of the few institutions of higher education for women and girls in Canada at a time when women could not vote.

Today the institution prioritizes access and impact for all underserved groups. That is why I am proud to see that the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry award the Mount with one of this year's 10 Dimensions recognitions last week. This initiative was led by the three federal granting agencies to acknowledge the work done to advance equity, diversity and inclusion in their quality research environment. The Mount was the only institution in Atlantic Canada to be recognized.

I want to applaud the leadership at the Mount, all faculty and staff, and take the opportunity to congratulate all students on their upcoming convocation, and Nova Scotia Senator Dr. Wanda Thomas Bernard on receiving her honorary degree.

*Statements by Members***GREAT LAKES DAY**

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is Great Lakes Day.

We are reminded of this incredible resource that Canada shares with our largest trading partner, the United States of America. These bodies of water have played an incredibly vital role in our shared economy. Roughly 25% of Canada-U.S. trade happens in the Great Lakes Region; that amounts to over \$270 billion. In fact, according to the Council of the Great Lakes Region, if we grouped together the states and provinces that surround the Great Lakes, we would have the third-largest GDP in the world.

Let us join together and celebrate the amazing accomplishments we have had in protecting the environment and growing the economy, but let us also recommit to protecting this incredible resource for decades to come.

* * *

VISION HEALTH MONTH

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we begin the month of May, with all of this rain out there, it is important to recognize that May is Vision Health Month. For over 10 years, it has had that recognition. This is a time to focus on the eye health that we oftentimes take for granted. Last Friday I introduced and moved second reading of my private member's bill, Bill C-284, an act to establish a national strategy for eye care. This bill would have a direct, positive impact on Canadians' vision health now and for generations to come.

I would like to see this piece of legislation move as fast as possible, with other members of the House supporting it, so that we might all be able to celebrate it as the law of the land by the end of the year.

During this month, I encourage Canadians to schedule an eye exam with an optometrist or an ophthalmologist. Additionally, we can protect our eyes by wearing sunglasses when outdoors, maintaining a healthy diet and taking breaks from digital devices. Let us use the month of May as an opportunity to prioritize our eye health and make positive changes towards maintaining good vision.

Statements by Members

● (1410)

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are looking for a government they can trust and a government that respects them. Sadly, they are getting the opposite from these Liberals.

We can all see the results of their failed policies. The cost of living and rate of violent crime in Canada has been on the rise. The Prime Minister is not going to fix the problem any time soon though, because he would rather go on vacation or off to New York to hang out with his celebrity friends. He is, rather, tripling the carbon tax and encouraging catch-and-release policies for violent criminals. Because of all of this, it is getting more difficult than ever for farmers to grow the food that we need to eat. It is getting more difficult for families to afford groceries and gas. In many places, people no longer feel safe in their own communities.

However, our leader and our Conservative team are focused on solving these terrible problems. Conservatives want to bring home a country that rewards hard work, bring home lower taxes by scrapping the carbon tax and bring home safety by ending failed Liberal catch-and-release policies. Canadians are counting on us to deliver the trust and respect that they deserve. Let us bring it home.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Edmonton's violent crime rate has increased 16.5% in just 12 months. 2022 represented the highest number of violent criminal incidents ever reported in a single year. The even scarier part is that this trend has carried into 2023, with violent criminal occurrences increasing by 6% in the first quarter of this year. In fact, we are seeing that 68% of violent offenders who are arrested and released become involved with the police again.

These are the highest rates of crime in our city's history. This is why organizations across the country are calling for bail reforms to keep violent offenders behind bars. After eight years of the Liberals' catch-and-release crime policies, Canadians do not feel safe walking down the street or taking transit.

In fact, what is even scarier is that these policies are just making it worse.

* * *

*[Translation]***MENTAL HEALTH WEEK**

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today marks the beginning of Mental Health Week, and this year's theme is "My Story".

This campaign is about highlighting individuals and communities involved in mental health initiatives and raising awareness of the services available in our regions and across Canada.

That is why I would like to thank the Hawkesbury General Hospital and its staff who work hard to provide services to those with mental health issues throughout our communities.

For those seeking help, there are also many other community support programs offered through both the Champlain East branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association and the four health centres of the Services de santé communautaire de l'Estrie located in Embrun, Limoges, Alexandria and Bourget.

[English]

I also want to thank every individual who has stepped forward and sacrificed their time and effort to provide support for those who needed it. Their work is greatly appreciated.

Mental health is health and I want to emphasize that there is no shame in accessing and asking for help.

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CAROL WALL

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, congratulations to the 120,000 PSAC workers who stood strong and fought for better wages and working conditions. New Democrats offer our continued solidarity to the remaining union of taxation employees still left out in the picket lines, fighting for their fairness. This May Day, may all workers be recognized for their hard work and receive fair compensation for their efforts.

It is only appropriate that I rise in the House of Commons to pay tribute to Carol Wall, a formidable force from the house of labour. Carol was a lifelong labour leader and social justice activist, having been elected VP of the Canadian Labour Congress, having worked as a national negotiator for the Public Service Alliance of Canada and having been a member of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

Carol Wall's legacy as a mentor to entire generations of labour leaders will continue to live on in the heart and soul of the movement.

On behalf of the Green side of the family, I offer her partner Gerry and her children, my cousins Nicole, Jason and Jeremy, and all of those who are mourning her passing our deep condolences, solidarity and love.

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● (1415)

*[Translation]***50TH ANNIVERSARY OF EGG FARMERS OF CANADA**

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all the egg farming families of Berthier—Maskinongé and Quebec, I would like to congratulate the Egg Farmers of Canada on its 50th anniversary.

I would also like to call attention to its commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, as our egg farmers join the fight against climate change.

Our supply management system ensures that farmers have the income and capacity they need to reinvest in their operation when our market grows. It also promotes land use and food resilience. The more family farms there are, the more villages will flourish.

For the Egg Farmers of Canada, this 50th anniversary is a chance to spotlight innovative practices and effective management. To celebrate this anniversary, let us protect supply management by passing Bill C-282. No gift could be more welcome.

Long live the Egg Farmers of Canada, and long live supply management.

* * *

[English]

MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today marks the beginning of the Canadian Mental Health Association's Mental Health Week. This year's theme is "My Story". The goal is to shift beliefs and perceptions about mental health, while shining a spotlight on community mental health programs and stories.

Storytelling is a fundamental part of what makes us human. It connects us and helps us feel less alone. In any given year, one in five Canadians experience a mental illness or a mental health issue. I urge our colleagues to stop for a moment to look around. Someone beside us, close to us, is suffering in silence. Talking about what we are feeling or what we have experienced can be difficult, but by sharing our stories, we can promote understanding, normalize mental health issues and break the stigma.

This Mental Health Week, I encourage everyone to begin to have these mental health conversations and talk to family, a friend or a colleague to ask them if they are okay. Those words may just save someone's life. Together, we can break the stigma and prioritize mental health all year long.

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THE GREAT LAKES

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year, the government made a \$420-million commitment to preserve and protect our Great Lakes. We committed to ensuring future generations have clean water to drink and that they will be able to continue to enjoy the beauty and recreational opportunities along the Great Lakes' shores.

We committed to addressing toxins and invasive species. We committed to creating the Canada water agency, which will pool all our efforts, ensuring not a drop of those efforts is wasted. We have committed to years of stable, predictable and long-term funding for municipal governments to invest in water systems and shoreline protection, alleviating financial pressures on property taxes and water bills.

Oral Questions

With economic, environmental and social groups from all five Great Lakes in Ottawa today, we are excited to work together, alongside our U.S. partners, to protect this unique resource and ensure the health, economic prosperity and enjoyment for future generations.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, we learned that Beijing worked to punish an MP's family member for the way that MP voted here in the House of Commons. The intelligence agencies and the government were aware of these actions for two years, but the Prime Minister did not inform the MP in question and did not expel the diplomat in Toronto who was orchestrating all this.

That diplomat is still on the website of the Chinese consulate in Toronto. Why?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely unacceptable for anyone to be subject to intimidation, particularly a member of the House of Commons and his family. We are following up on the reports that came in today. I have asked various security experts to follow up on this. This is something that we always need to take seriously and that is exactly what we are doing.

● (1420)

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, members of Parliament cannot vote in the interests of Canada while their family members are being threatened as a consequence of those votes. It is unacceptable, as the Prime Minister said, which is why it is so strange that he accepted it.

His government produced a briefing note that exposed these threats to the MP's family two years ago, yet the diplomat who worked to punish a Canadian MP's family is still in Canada, when the Prime Minister could have expelled him. Why did he not expel this diplomat?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely unacceptable for any Canadian to be subject to intimidation by a foreign power, particularly threats against family and against families of members of Parliament.

That is why, as reports came out this morning, I immediately asked officials to follow up on these reports to get to the bottom of this. I also asked for outreach, both from the political side and the official side, to the member in question. We will continue to make sure this is taken extremely seriously.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is just false. He did not immediately take action. He took action after the media found out about it. His government has known that a Canadian MP had his family threatened because that MP voted for human rights in the House of Commons. He knew about that for two years, and he did exactly nothing.

Furthermore, the same diplomat who orchestrated these threats against the MP's family still works in the Toronto consulate at Beijing, even though the Prime Minister has the power to expel him. Will he expel him today?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the reports were made public this morning, we followed up immediately with top officials to get all the information on this file on happened, who was informed and who was not informed, to make sure that we are following up in an appropriate way.

This is absolutely unacceptable, and it should not have happened.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yet he did accept it for two years. The same briefing note indicated two years ago that Beijing saw Canada as uniquely vulnerable to its interference because we have no foreign interference laws to stop them. The laws that exist in the United States and Australia to force those paid by foreign dictatorships to register are not in existence here in Canada.

CSIS warned him about this in the summer of 2021. On what date will we get a foreign influence registry to protect Canadians against these abuses?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a government, we put in place many mechanisms to ensure that Canadians and our institutions are protected from foreign interference, and we are continuing to step up to add more. We brought in NSICOP, an oversight committee of parliamentarians, and NSIRA. We created an elections integrity committee composed of top civil servants, and we are right now looking to establish a foreign agent registry, making sure, through consultations with potentially impacted communities, that it is done the right way.

That is what we will continue to do to keep Canadians safe.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is more administrative and bureaucratic mumbo-jumbo to conceal his inaction. It is now required that one registers if one lobbies for the food bank, but it is not required to register if one does paid work on behalf of a foreign dictatorship to influence Canadian politics.

Let us move over to police stations. The Prime Minister's public safety minister claimed that all Beijing's police stations have been closed. Today, two of those police stations said that they are open, and they are operating right here in Canada. Why is the Prime Minister allowing a foreign dictatorship to run police stations on our soil?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP is taking action against these foreign police stations.

This is something we need to see, and I have tasked the minister to make sure that it gets done.

* * *

● (1425)

[*Translation*]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, according to Pascale Fournier, former CEO of the Trudeau Foundation, his predecessor, Mr. Rosenberg, is caught up in the infamous Chinese donation of \$140,000. He personally talked to donors through an organization with ties to the Chinese regime. He personally sent a receipt to an address in China. He then publicly claimed this was a donation from a Canadian company. Imagine: The man appointed by the Prime Minister to look into interference in the elections was personally up to his neck in Chinese interference.

I guess the Liberal investigation into interference is just a charade. Is that it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as everyone in the House knows full well, for 10 years I have not had any direct or indirect involvement with the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation. As a government, we have taken meaningful action over the past few years to combat interference by the Chinese and others. We will continue to do the work to ensure the security and safety of Canadians, their institutions and their democracy.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is a charade.

First, to investigate foreign interference in the election, the Prime Minister appointed Mr. Rosenberg, a former member of the Trudeau Foundation who was involved in a case of Chinese interference. Next, to investigate Chinese interference, more specifically, the Prime Minister appointed David Johnston, another former member of the Trudeau Foundation. The entire Liberal investigation into Chinese interference is being carried out by two old boys from the Trudeau Foundation, which is directly linked to a case of Chinese interference.

How can the Prime Minister ask Quebeckers to have any faith in that? When will there be a real, independent and public commission of inquiry?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our former governor general David Johnston is responsible for determining whether a public inquiry is needed and what the terms will be for a potential inquiry. We turned to an independent expert to determine how to assure Canadians that everything is being done to combat interference and that we will restore confidence in our institutions and the integrity of our democracy.

Oral Questions

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, disturbing new information from CSIS reveals that China views Canada as a high-priority target and employs incentive and punishment tactics targeted at elected members of this House as well as Chinese Canadians. This interference threatens the safety of members of Parliament, Chinese Canadians and their families in China. Enough is enough.

When will the Liberals finally launch an independent public inquiry on foreign interference in Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have had various mechanisms and programs in place for several years to counter foreign interference and to ensure that we are doing everything we can against Chinese interference. We will continue to use the tools we have, while also seeking out additional tools. We know that Canadians take this issue seriously, and I want to assure them that our government also takes it very seriously.

[*English*]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that clearly shows that this Prime Minister does not understand how much this is damaging our democracy. Media reports came out today confirming that Canada is a high-priority country for foreign interference from the Chinese government.

MPs, their families and even their staff are being targets of incentives and punishments. Canadians deserve transparency, and the government has refused, every step of the way, to call a fully public inquiry. Why does the government fail to bring forward the one thing that will restore trust in our democracy?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the broad range of experts who have looked into this, there are multiple opinions on whether an open public inquiry is actually the best tool to restore confidence in Canadians. That is why we tasked an independent expert and our former governor general, David Johnston, to look at all the tools we have to counter foreign interference, to look at the concerns Canadians have and to choose the best path forward. If he chooses a public inquiry, we will absolutely move forward with a public inquiry. We will take up the right tools necessary to restore Canadians' confidence.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has to answer these questions. He has known now for two years that the family of a member of Parliament was harassed and threatened with other penalties because of how he voted on human rights in the House of Commons. For two years, the Prime Minister did nothing to protect the family or to punish the Canadian-based Beijing diplomat who orchestrated the entire attack against that family.

Could the Prime Minister confirm whether the responsible diplomat from Beijing will be expelled by the end of the business day today?

• (1430)

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure every member in this chamber that we take—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Public Safety has the floor.

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Speaker, I assure every member in this chamber that we take the reports that have surfaced recently very seriously. In fact, I reached out directly to the member for Wellington—Halton Hills to share my concerns. I told him that I have instructed CSIS to provide him with an update.

This government will continue to take concrete actions to combat foreign interference, including allocating \$49 million in budget 2023 to protect all Canadians from foreign interference. This is not a partisan issue. We should do this work together to protect all parliamentarians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is time for the Prime Minister to stand up and do his job. Stand up for once—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I want to remind hon. members to speak through the Speaker and not directly to each other.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, will the Prime Minister finally stand up for this country and its people against a foreign dictatorship that has been interfering in our land for far too long, yes or no?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the heckles of the Conservatives on the other side of the aisle, the Prime Minister and our government have been standing up doing the relentless, tireless work of defending—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. This is not a good start to a Monday, and it started off fairly well.

An hon. member: It's a terrible start.

The Speaker: When people start heckling the Speaker, there is a problem.

Are we going to play nice, or do we start getting tough? I will let the hon. Minister of Public Safety start again, and I want to remind hon. members how we are going to scramble things or maybe eliminate a few questions as well.

The hon. minister has the floor.

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Speaker, this government has been doing the concrete, tireless work that is necessary to combat foreign interference and to protect our democratic institutions by creating new powers and adding more resources for all the security and intelligence agencies that are there to protect our communities, our institutions and, most importantly, Canadians. I encourage the Conservative politicians on the other side of the aisle to get behind what is a non-partisan cause and protect Canadians.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at least I got a direct answer. I asked if he would stand up and, of course, he did not stand up. It is very clear that the Prime Minister knew for two years that Beijing thought Canada was uniquely vulnerable to its bullying and interference because we do not have anti-foreign interference laws, unlike the Australians and Americans. For two years after his intelligence bodies warned him of that, he did absolutely nothing.

Will he stand up and do his job now?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at a pretty young age, I personally learned what it is like to be targeted by an authoritarian communist regime. As a Ukrainian Canadian, I have always known that authoritarian communist regimes particularly target diaspora communities here in Canada. That is wrong. Do members know what makes it easier to target Canada and Canadian democracy? It is when we are divided.

• (1435)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has to stop hiding behind his ministers. The vacation is over. He has work to do.

He wants to talk about taking partisanship out of it. One non-partisan thing to do would have been to recognize that a Conservative MP, or any MP for any party, had his family threatened because of a vote cast on this floor. It would have been to take immediate action against the diplomats who made those threats. That would have been the non-partisan thing to do.

Why did he not do it?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment, and this is uncharacteristic of me, to express my outrage at what has happened to the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. It could be any of us in this House who was targeted for actions we have taken. It is an outrage, and we should all express that collectively. The Prime Minister will continue to work for Canadians and for Canadian democracy. We will continue to stand together and make sure that foreign interference will never be tolerated. If a diplomat has broken the Vienna Convention, he or she will be expelled.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is running out of ministers to hide behind. While he sits there and smirks, we have a country that is under foreign influence by a dictatorship that has actually opened police stations in this country. According to a report put out just today, there are two police stations run by Beijing operating in Montreal as we speak.

Will the Prime Minister stand up now and tell us how he will close down these police stations?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I assure the Conservative leader and all members in this chamber that the RCMP has taken concrete action to disrupt and shut down police stations. If more open up, the RCMP will remain vigilant and do the work. In doing that, it will be underpinned by the investments that are earmarked in budget 2023, which the Con-

servatives have said, without even reading the document, that they will oppose. If they are really interested in protecting Canadians from foreign interference, and that is something we should all be united behind, then they should support budget 2023.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know why the Prime Minister is so afraid to stand up. Maybe it is because he is ashamed that he did absolutely nothing for two years, knowing that a Canadian MP was threatened by a foreign dictatorship. He did not even send the offending diplomat home, and now he has been exposed for it. Then, he puts up a whole myriad of ministers to hide behind, one of whom claimed before that the Chinese police stations were closed. We learn now that they are open.

Given that we cannot believe the minister, why does the Prime Minister not stand up and speak for himself? When will he close these stations?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition knows, because he was here, the Prime Minister stood in his place and answered those questions five times. Ministers of the House also answered questions.

I will say, without equivocation, that the attacks that are taking place on democracy, be they by Russia, China or any authoritarian regime, are something that we must stand in unison against. The attack on one member of this democratic House is an attack on every single one of us. We cannot direct our security and intelligence, but we can sure stand up for democracy.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the end is drawing near. Pascale Fournier, former CEO of the Trudeau Foundation, appeared at committee, and her revelations were troubling. She testified that under her predecessor, Morris Rosenberg, an association with ties to Beijing dictated the terms for transferring the controversial \$140,000 donation to the foundation. It was Beijing that dictated those terms and that got Mr. Rosenberg to address the receipt to a location in China and not include—

• (1440)

The Speaker: I must interrupt the member. I am having difficulty hearing. I wish to remind the members—

[*English*]

Is the hon. member done? The hon. member is going to be done if he keeps that up.

[*Translation*]

The member for Trois-Rivières may begin again.

Mr. René Villemure: Mr. Speaker, Pascale Fournier, former CEO of the Trudeau Foundation, appeared at committee, and her revelations were troubling. She testified that under her predecessor, Morris Rosenberg, an association with ties to Beijing dictated the terms for transferring the controversial \$140,000 donation to the foundation. It was Beijing that dictated those terms and that got Mr. Rosenberg to address the receipt to a location in China and not include the donors' names.

Oral Questions

However, that same Mr. Rosenberg was then appointed by the Liberals to investigate Chinese foreign interference. He concluded that there was no interference.

Should we blindly believe him?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister has repeatedly stated, there has been no relationship between the Prime Minister and the Trudeau Foundation for more than 10 years. It is an independent non-profit organization that hands out scholarships.

It is important that we do not attack an independent foundation here in the House. If the member has questions about the foundation, he should direct those questions to the foundation.

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when Ms. Fournier realized that this donation was linked to Beijing, she demanded two things: first, that an investigation be conducted, and second, that members of the foundation's board at the time recuse themselves from the investigation. The foundation refused to comply with either of those demands, and no light was shed on this.

Nevertheless, it was from the Trudeau Foundation that the Liberals recruited their experts, who are supposed to investigate any electoral interference, by China in particular. The Liberals can no longer claim that the truth will be made known without an independent commission of public inquiry.

When will they launch such a commission?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Johnston is the former governor general of Canada. He is known across the country for his independence and expertise. He was appointed during Mr. Harper's time. Of course, all options are open to Mr. Johnston.

Like Mr. Johnston, the House of Commons must ensure that our process is independent and thorough and that the best approach will be taken.

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let us recap. The Trudeau Foundation accepted a donation from China in 2016. China dictated the terms of the donation to the foundation. The CEO of the foundation later told the media that the donation came from a Canadian company. Years later, the foundation's new CEO wanted to investigate that donation and was persecuted for it.

When Chinese interference started making headlines, the Liberals chose two former foundation members, Mr. Rosenberg and Mr. Johnston, to investigate. What a farce.

When will there be a real independent public inquiry, one that does not involve any members of the Trudeau Foundation, for goodness' sake?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, clearly, the member across the aisle is looking for a conspiracy theory. It is obvious that he is trying to create a connection that is not there.

The foundation in question is independent. The Prime Minister had no direct or indirect relationship with the foundation. The foundation is responsible for scholarships. If the member opposite wants

to engage in partisan attacks against an independent organization, I believe that is irresponsible.

* * *

[English]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, do you know what day it is today? It is tax-filing deadline, and yet thousands of CRA workers are still on strike. For almost two weeks, Canadians have been trying to get through on the phone to have their questions answered and they have been unable to do so.

The government knew when the contract was up and it also knew when the tax-filing deadline was. Therefore, will the government give Canadians a break and extend the tax-filing deadline, and prove to Canadians that it can work instead of just hiding behind non-answers?

● (1445)

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have spoken on earlier occasions in the House on the respect that I have for the hon. colleague. However, he knows very well that the process of collective bargaining is instrumental in democracy. That is why the negotiations continue, and we are positive about their progress.

On the extension of deadlines, I wonder if the member would follow the logic of his argument, because if the deadline is ultimately extended, there is always the possibility of course that benefits would be delayed for the Canada child benefit, for OAS and for GIS. These are the implications of what the member is bringing up.

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, how can benefits be delayed if they do not even know about them? The incompetent Prime Minister spent 50% more on bureaucracy and still ended up with the biggest federal public service strike in history.

Today is the tax-filing deadline, and Canada Revenue Agency employees are still on the picket line without a deal. Taxpayers and small business owners in Saskatoon are calling the CRA with questions, but their calls are not answered. Canadians are going to miss out on benefits, be penalized or miss the tax-filing deadline altogether.

Will the Prime Minister do the right thing and extend the tax-filing deadline?

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the vast majority of Canadians have been filling their taxes online, which is important to note. On a case-by-case basis, it is possible for Canadians to see interest relief and penalties alleviated. Again, I emphasize that it is on a case-by-case basis.

Oral Questions

I find it a bit rich that the member forgets the record of the Harper government, which time and time again disrespected, in particular, CRA employees in a variety of ways, such as by cutting their budget and intervening in their mechanisms when it came to the investigation of charities and the like. The Conservatives politicized the process. We will not do that on this side.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is the last day for filing our federal tax return with the revenue agency still mired in a strike caused by the Prime Minister's Liberal incompetence.

A cascade of delays, like dominos, is penalizing thousands of honest Canadians and dedicated workers.

Will the Prime Minister take responsibility and guarantee that he will give Canadians additional time to file their tax returns?

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about Liberal competence.

Yesterday, we managed to get four agreements with the core public administration. That means we have an agreement that is fair for employees and reasonable for Canadians.

We are continuing to negotiate with the Canada Revenue Agency. I am convinced that we will get the best agreement for the CRA at the bargaining table.

* * *

[*English*]

LABOUR

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as of today, 35,000 CRA workers are still on strike fighting for a fair deal. The government is showing its true colours, seemingly blaming everyone who let this fester for almost two years.

With the tax deadline having just passed, the government made the asinine decision to not extend it, putting Canadians at risk of penalties. Instead of going with the obvious solution, which is to offer CRA workers a fair deal, the government has decided to hold Canadians hostage due to its own incompetence.

When will the Liberals deliver a fair deal to CRA workers?

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the good news is that we just landed a deal with the four public agreements for the core public service, and we are continuing to work with the CRA to make sure we have a deal negotiated at the table.

We have a reasonable deal for Canadians that is fair for public servants, and we will continue to work very hard at the table to get that next deal.

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INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, young Canadian scientists have walked off the job today. They have not seen a wage increase in 20 years.

Here on Parliament Hill and at universities across the country, thousands of graduate students and post-doctoral fellows are rallying for the wages they deserve. Rising living costs are forcing young Canadian scientists to abandon their studies, leave the country or live in poverty. They deserve better, and Canada needs them to stay.

Will the government finally increase graduate scholarships and post-doctoral fellowships and index them to the cost of living?

• (1450)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, everyone in the House realizes that talent is our greatest asset. I would like to thank our young scientists, researchers and students across the nation who are making differences in science and studies around the country.

No one in the House has questioned our commitment to science. We have invested \$16 billion since 2016. More recently, on Friday, I made a historic announcement of \$1.4 billion in the Canada first research section. We want to go from world class to world leading, and we need our young scientists to do that.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we recognize the beginning of Mental Health Week 2023, we remain committed to promoting positive mental health for everyone, including the 2SLGBTQI+ community, indigenous people and people of colour, groups that have already faced disproportionate challenges to their mental health due to discrimination and social exclusion.

Could the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions please update the House on the recent support provided to community-based projects focused on mental health promotion?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Scarborough—Agincourt for all her important work on this file.

This morning, we kicked off Mental Health Week by announcing \$2.8 million in funding to the Community-Based Research Centre. With this funding, CBRC investigators are delivering focused, community-based programs that foster important resources for good mental health, including mental health literacy, social connection and problem-solving skills to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

Today's funding will enable more people with lived and living experience, frontline workers and experts to support the mental health of this community.

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DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's intelligence agency warned the Liberal government that Beijing was the foremost offender for perpetrating foreign influence on Canadians and that it feared no repercussions from the Liberals.

In fact, a Beijing-backed donation of \$140,000 to the Trudeau Foundation was designed to influence the Prime Minister. What did he do in response? He appointed two former Trudeau Foundation board members to investigate: \$140,000 bought a blind eye from the Prime Minister.

How can Canadians believe anything he says about foreign influence or about the Trudeau Foundation?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are in an inflection point in history where Liberal democracies are under direct attack. We are seeing it in Europe. We are seeing it all over the world. The objective of those dictatorships is not to elect a political party; it is to destroy democracy.

History will look back to this hour when we were called to stand up against tyranny and we were called to stand shoulder to shoulder against interference. They will ask who did the hard work of standing up against foreign interference and who played games with it. They will ask who sowed fear and division, and who worked to make sure that we protected our democracy.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, who sowed fear and division? The Prime Minister? Who has been standing, but taking no action? The Prime Minister.

I am extremely concerned that Beijing is not at all concerned about repercussions for foreign interference in our democracy. Between the intimidation of MPs and Chinese Canadians by the Communist regime and now knowing money was directed by Beijing to the Trudeau Foundation to influence the Prime Minister, then the appointment of a past director of the Trudeau Foundation as special rapporteur to investigate interference, this whole situation stinks.

How does the Prime Minister expect us to believe anything he says about the Trudeau Foundation or about preventing foreign interference in our democracy?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask the member opposite, whether it is Russia or China, our collective response to that threat on our democracy, the democracy that the member opposite has tried to defend and protect her whole life, the democracy that I have worked to try to defend and protect my whole life, how do we work together to counter that.

Instead of trying to score partisan political points, or find ways to extract partisan advantage or imply somehow that anybody is advantaged by autocrats who attempt to destroy democracy, we need to stand shoulder to shoulder, side by side against it.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me tell the House how the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, CSIS, explained to the Prime Minister what China thinks of us. China sees Canada as a high-priority target for influencing legislators, business executives and diaspora communities in Canada. CSIS also said that Beijing is the foremost perpetrator of foreign interference in Canada. It could not be any clearer. The Prime Minister knew it.

He also knew that by accepting financial contributions from the Communist regime, the Trudeau Foundation made it easier for the Chinese government to run its influence operations.

Does he agree with the former CEO of the Trudeau Foundation, who spoke out against all of this?

● (1455)

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government takes the issue of foreign interference very seriously. That is why we have already brought in new powers for the intelligence community. That is why we continue to make investments to add people to protect not only our democratic institutions, but also Canadians.

I hope that we can do this work together with the Conservatives, because this is not a partisan issue.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is all well and good for the minister to announce a few million dollars to work with in the future. The problem we have is finding out that the government and the Prime Minister have known what is going on for several years now. They know that China is a critical threat. I am not making this up; the CSIS reports say as much.

Can the Prime Minister now tell us whether he knew that the Trudeau Foundation was influenced by the donation it received and that the transaction was intended to influence operations in Canada, yes or no?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, China wants Canada to be divided. Russia wants Canada to be divided. Dictatorships want democracy to be divided.

I am confident that every member of this House believes in the importance of democracy. We must all fight together for our democracy and assure Canadians that our democracy is strong.

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there have been few opportunities in recent history to debate the possibility of cutting ties between Canada, including Quebec, and the British monarchy. The patriation of the Constitution, the death of Elizabeth II and the accession of Charles III are rare examples.

Oral Questions

According to Angus Reid, a majority of Canadians, not just Quebecers, believe the time has come to get rid of an outdated, backward-looking institution that is incompatible with the fundamental principle of democracy, namely that we are all equal.

When is the government going to finally get rid of the monarchy?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we have the option of discussing the fight against climate change, health, dental care and ways to help our seniors and our families, but the Bloc Québécois has different priorities. Its priority is the monarchy, a constitutional review and days, weeks and months of sitting down with everyone here to debate the issue.

It might be the Bloc Québécois's priority, but it is not the priority of Quebecers or Canadians.

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is a proponent of the status quo. If people say they want nothing to do with the King, the Prime Minister replies that there are other more important files.

He should simply admit that the Liberals are monarchists and then have an honest debate, as we do with the Conservatives. Instead, he tells those who reject the monarchy that it is not a priority and that he has better things to do.

If the monarchy is not a priority, why is the Prime Minister going to the coronation of Canada's King instead of going to his own party's convention?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for mentioning our convention. Thousands of Liberals will be coming from across the country to talk about the future of our country and take the time to reflect about government.

Once again, instead of debating issues vital to the development of our society and preparing the future of our children, the Bloc wants to come to the House and talk about constitutional change.

The Bloc Québécois has one obsession: Canada's Constitution. Our obsession is to make our society better.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Neufchâtel neighbourhood of Quebec City is home to Amélie et Frédérick, a community assistance organization and food bank that has seen an increase in demand.

The same is true of the community fridge in Loretteville, the Val Bon Coeur community fridge in Val-Bélair and the Boîte à FringAL community fridge in Ancienne-Lorette. People who were donating food two years ago are now coming in to get it. We are in a G7 country, but there are people who do not have enough to eat.

When will this Prime Minister finally stand up, step off his private jet and really try to understand the needs of all Canadians?

• (1500)

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, on this side of the House, we agree that more needs to be done to help Canadians, especially at times like these, when we are just recovering from the pandemic and inflation rates are quite high.

That is why our budget addresses the priorities of Canadians. It helps those who really need it. It will help improve our health and dental care across the country and create the clean economy of the future that will enable us to meet our net-zero targets.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 1.5 million Canadians are using food banks.

Today, the reality is that rent costs twice as much as it did eight years ago. For Canadians, mortgages currently cost twice as much as they did eight years ago, when the Liberals took office. Something is wrong here in Canada.

Meanwhile, what are we seeing? We are seeing the Prime Minister living large and jet setting off to New York and back.

What we are asking is that the Prime Minister come down off his tower, come back down to earth and tell Canadians what he will actually do to help them.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent, whom I highly respect, but I think he is missing a page from our history book.

The Prime Minister did listen to Canadians. The first thing they asked us to do was to help them with the cost of living. The most recent budget, which we expect the Conservatives to vote against, contains the grocery rebate, which will help 11 million Canadians.

If the member wants to help the people of Loretteville and Louis-Saint-Laurent, then he should convince his colleagues to vote in favour of the federal budget. That will help the people in his riding.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under this Liberal government, violent crimes have gone up by 32% while under a Conservative government, they went down by 23%.

In some Montreal neighbourhoods, the sound of gunshots is now part of daily life, and yet this government with its soft-on-crime policies is doing nothing to address the problem.

Criminals are on the street instead of in prison. When will the government side with victims and honest citizens who are too scared to walk around their neighbourhoods?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have long been working with the provinces to strengthen the bail system. I hope that we will see results soon.

I also note that the provinces are themselves in the process of strengthening the administration of their systems. We are seeing that in British Columbia. We are seeing that with the investments being made in Ontario.

Last week, we introduced Bill S-12, which will strengthen victims rights in cases of sexual assault.

We are working together on problems to improve Canadians' lives.

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CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, Bill C-11 received royal assent. It was a painstaking process and, as we know, the Conservatives and their leader chose to support billionaires and web giants instead of supporting and defending the interests of our Canadian artists.

Now that Bill C-11 has passed into law, can the minister tell us the impact it will have on our Canadian culture?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and excellent work.

This is a great moment, a very great moment. Web giants will now have to contribute to our culture. They will have to promote it. They will have to pay their fair share.

A big thank you to the cultural sector, who has fought for years, and a big thank you to my Liberal, Bloc Québécois and NPD colleagues and to the senators. This is a great moment for Canada.

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[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's tourism industry and Canadians who enjoy travelling are under attack by the current Liberal government's out-of-control spending and taxes. A recent report found that six in 10 Canadians are scaling back their summer vacation plans, while a quarter say they cannot even afford a vacation. While Canadians struggle with affordability, the Liberal government continues to raise taxes, like the carbon tax, which costs Canadians more than they get back. As the PM jet sets across the globe, hard-working Canadians also deserve a chance to enjoy a vacation.

Will the Prime Minister end his punishing carbon tax?

• (1505)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives continue to talk down the Canadian economy, but on this side of the House, we know that Canada is the best country in the world. That is why I am glad to share some good news today. According to preliminary data published by Statistics Canada on Friday, Canada's GDP is on track to grow by 2.5% in the next quarter; inflation was down to 4.3% in March and the Bank of Canada predicts it will fall to 3% in the summer; and last month, S&P Global reiterated our AAA credit rating.

Oral Questions

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government's carbon tax continues to drive up the price of food, forcing even more Albertans in my community to go to food banks. In fact, usage of the Airdrie food bank is up 40% this year, and almost half of those food bank users are children. What does the Prime Minister have to say to those children standing in food bank lines with their parents? Is having enough to eat really too much to ask?

When will the Prime Minister finally show some compassion and axe his carbon tax?

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the government took office in 2015, we have lifted over 2.7 million Canadians out of poverty, and that includes 450,000 children. We have worked hard to support Canadians during difficult times, whether through the Canada child benefit, our child care plan, increasing the Canada workers benefit, or the grocery rebate. Conservatives say that they are concerned about affordability, but they vote, every time, against every single one of these measures that will help Canadians.

Our government will push through to make sure Canadians get the support they need, with or without Conservative support.

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these non-answers from the Liberals are getting tiresome. When will the Liberals finally understand that Canadians cannot afford a vacation? They cannot afford the luxuries that the Liberals take for granted. Unfortunately, they cannot afford the essentials either, like heating their homes and buying food.

When will the Liberal Party get a clue and cancel the carbon tax?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, do members know that, last week, the Conservative member for Northumberland—Peterborough South called the grocery rebate “cheap marketing”? The grocery rebate is going to deliver support to 11 million low-income Canadians who need it. That support was supported by all parties in the House, so it was a real shame to see the flip-flopping Conservatives attack a policy Canadians need. However, we were not surprised, because they care more about cheap talking points than they care about Canadians.

*Routine Proceedings***VETERANS AFFAIRS**

Mr. Heath MacDonald (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian veterans have served and sacrificed in the name of our country, and should never be without a safe and affordable home. As a proud supporter of our veterans, I was pleased to see, last week, our government launch a new veteran homelessness program to help ensure every veteran can have a place to call home.

Could the Honourable Minister of Housing, Diversity and Inclusion please elaborate and tell the House how this program will help veterans get the essential housing and services they need?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his important work on this important issue.

We know that one homeless veteran is one too many. That is why we announced the new veteran homelessness program. This program will provide much-needed rent supplements and wraparound supports that are geared toward the particular needs of Canadian veterans. Veteran-serving organizations can apply through the Infrastructure Canada website over the next eight weeks for this important fund.

This is a significant step in ensuring that each and every Canadian veteran has a safe and affordable place to call home. We will remain dedicated to those who have served us with courage and dedication.

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DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in April, the Trudeau Foundation president and eight board members resigned due to controversy over a Chinese government-linked donation. Furthermore, last week, it was alleged that the donation was not even flagged as foreign money because the former Trudeau Foundation president, Morris Rosenberg, allegedly misled the public and qualified it as a Canadian-based donation.

With all of these questions around the foundation and its role in foreign interference, when will the government finally clear the air and call a public inquiry?

• (1510)

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, on the question of foreign interference, we are absolutely united in making sure that we have to do everything we can to protect this country. That is why the former governor general, Mr. Johnston, was appointed to take a look at these issues.

With respect to the charitable foundation that the member is attacking, I would ask him to direct his questions to that foundation. I was the head of one of the largest health charities in Canada and had to answer tough questions when I was with that charity. The foundation is an independent organization with no relationship to the Prime Minister, and that has been made clear on many occasions.

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, except for the Americans and the Swiss, Canadians pay more for patented medicines than anyone else on the planet. Despite the reform passed last July, its implementing guidelines led to squabbles and a series of resignations from the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board, which caused further delays. To this day, nothing has changed, and Quebecers and Canadians are still paying higher prices than the rest of the world.

Can the Liberal government tell us what steps it is taking to fix this problem once and for all?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank our colleague for raising this important issue. He is quite right that the cost of patented medicines in Canada is too high, especially in relation to comparable countries.

That is why, as he also mentioned, we enacted new regulations on July 1, 2022, that will allow us to compare our prices to the prices charged in comparator countries, excluding the U.S. and Switzerland, to make patented medicines more accessible and affordable across Canada in the coming years.

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[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. P. J. Akeegok, Premier of Nunavut. He is accompanied by several cabinet ministers for Nunavut: the Hon. Pamela Gross, Deputy Premier and Minister of Education; the Hon. John Main, Minister of Health; the Hon. David Akeegok, Minister of Justice; the Hon. Joanna Quassa, Minister of Environment; the Hon. David Joanasie, Minister of Community and Government Services; and the Hon. Margaret Nakashuk, Minister of Family Services.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

PETITIONS

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, from your home, my home and all our homes, let us bring it home with direct flights to Amritsar. Petitioners in Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon are calling on the Government of Canada to amend the air transport agreement with India to allow for direct flights to Amritsar to serve the one million-plus Punjabi Canadians who are looking for this flight.

It makes economic sense. It makes cultural sense. Let us get it done.

[Translation]

SAINT-MAURICE FIRING RANGE

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present petition e-4296 regarding the repatriation of the Saint-Maurice firing range.

The petition, which I have been sponsoring for nearly two months, has already gathered 1,500 signatures in just a few weeks. The petitioners are calling on the federal government, and more specifically the Department of National Defence, to do the following:

1. Transfer the Saint-Maurice firing range to the Government of Quebec and/or the City of Terrebonne;
2. Expedite the assessment process to determine the amount of unexploded ordnance on the land and the time needed for decontamination work; and
3. Ensure that the site is decontaminated at federal expense as soon as possible.

The petition also points out that the piece of land measures 650 hectares and is one of the largest lungs of the Montreal Metropolitan Area. This petition is receiving a lot of support, including from the City of Terrebonne, the Town of Bois-des-Filons, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, the Chambre de commerce et d'industrie Les Moulins, the Conseil des bassins versants des Mille-Îles, the Société de développement et d'animation de Mascouche, an organization called Génération OUI, and the list goes on.

It is therefore high time for the Department of National Defence to make a clear commitment, relinquish the site and start cleaning up the contamination it created, with the ultimate goal of protecting the area from any real estate development.

• (1515)

[English]

CANADA SUMMER JOBS INITIATIVE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to present a petition today on behalf of Canadians who are very concerned about the unprovoked and illegal war Russia is waging against Ukraine. They are concerned about those Ukrainian refugees who have come here seeking asylum and are being shut out of the Canada summer jobs program.

A lot of the youth who are over here are not eligible to apply to the Canada summer jobs program. The petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to open it up to the children of those Ukrainians who were authorized for emergency travel to come here, work and be safe, as their children should be given the same opportunities.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, many concerned petitioners from Saanich—Gulf Islands have filed this petition asking the government to consider the following: indigenous people have rights, are entitled to traditional territories, and have been stewards of land, which includes old growth forests across Canada. We know the climate crisis demands of us that we do more to protect old growth forest. Valley-bottom, high-productivity, old-growth ecosystems in British Columbia are particularly endangered.

Routine Proceedings

There are many specifics to this petition, but in summarizing, the petitioners call on the Government of Canada to ban the export of raw logs, as the federal government does have control around trade issues, and to ban the use of whole trees for wood pellet biofuel production, a practice that is, unfortunately, funded in the recent budget.

The petitioners ask the government to take seriously the critical importance of protecting indigenous sovereignty and old growth forests, as well as engaging first nations leadership in climate action.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS INITIATIVE

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this petition was signed by people in my riding, many of whom have taken significant steps to support newcomers to Canada from Ukraine, people who have come to Canada for the time of the illegal, unprovoked, full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Ukrainian newcomers are hard-working. They are committed to contributing to Canadian society while they are here, but petitioners are concerned about how young people who come here under the emergency authorization for travel are not able to occupy positions associated with the Canada summer jobs program.

The summer jobs program funds many positions that young people might apply to, and this exclusion prevents Ukrainian young people from accessing summer jobs that are available to all of their peers and almost everybody else in Canada. This is unjust and unreasonable, according to petitioners. Folks who are here in Canada should be able to work and contribute alongside everyone else.

Therefore, the undersigned call on the Government of Canada to allow Ukrainian youth under the Canada-Ukraine authorization of emergency travel to apply for jobs under the CSJ program.

AIR SERVICE TO INDIA

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the last number of years, we have seen a great growth in our Indo-Canadian community. Along with that growth, we have seen a considerable demand with respect to additional international flights, as expressed earlier, to Amritsar, New Delhi and Chandigarh, many international airports in India. Residents, in particular in the Winnipeg, in the capital region and in other areas, are hoping to see more direct flights, whether through Air Canada, Westjet or other international airlines.

The idea is that we try to get more international direct flights. Ideally for me it would be Winnipeg to Amritsar, but the bottom line is that whatever the members of Parliament, the House, the minister, the different airport authorities and different stakeholders can do to enhance air service to India would be seen as a positive thing with respect to the petitioners.

Government Orders

HAITI

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the House knows, Haiti has experienced a dire political, economic and humanitarian crisis comparable to Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine. According to the United Nations, gangs have taken over Haiti and cases of sexual violence and terrorism have increased, including kidnapping, which is up by over 105%. Homicide is up by 35%.

We all know that Canada's compassion is well known as the strength of or nation's fabric and must continue to be shown to all people facing humanitarian challenges.

I have a petition calling upon the Government of Canada to create a Canada-Haiti humanitarian visa program, allowing citizens and permanent residents of Canada to help their Haitian family members to find temporary safe residence in Canada in dignity and grant them the ability to work and study while in Canada, and provide Haitians who are already in Canada a temporary residency status option to acquire or extend their work and study permit so they continue to live, work and study in Canada temporarily.

• (1520)

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here that is signed. It recognizes that the risk of violence against women increases when they are pregnant. Currently the injury or death of a preborn child or the victim of a crime is not considered aggravating. It also recognizes that Canada has no abortion law and that this creates a void in our legal system that does not recognize the preborn child as a victim of violent crime. Justice requires that an attacker who abuses a pregnant woman and her preborn child be sentenced accordingly if the sentence should match the crime.

The petitioners ask that the House of Commons legislate that the abuse of a pregnant woman and the infliction of harm on her preborn child be considered an aggravating circumstance for the purpose of sentencing under the Criminal Code.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling in the House three similar petitions in which the petitioners firstly note that the risk of violence against women increases when they are pregnant. It is very important to note that currently an injury to or the death of a preborn child as the victim of crime is not considered an aggravating factor.

Justice calls out that an attacker who abuses a pregnant woman and her preborn child be sentenced accordingly. Really, the sentence should match the crime.

The petitioners therefore call upon the House to legislate the abuse of a pregnant woman and/or the infliction of harm on a preborn child as an aggravating factor in sentencing under the Criminal Code.

The three petitions all ask for the same thing.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too am rising today to present a petition signed by Canadians from across the country.

The petitioners are concerned about the lack of protections for the preborn human. They point out that the risk of violence against

women increases when they are pregnant and that currently there is no protection for the preborn at all. Therefore, justice requires that an attacker who abuses a pregnant woman and her preborn child be sentenced accordingly and the sentence should match the crime.

The petitioners call on the House of Commons to legislate the abuse of a pregnant woman and/or the inflicting of harm on her preborn child as an aggravating circumstance for sentencing under the Criminal Code.

FALUN GONG

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise once again to table a petition that highlights the ongoing persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China. The petitioners state that Falun Gong is a traditional Chinese spiritual discipline that consists of meditation exercises and moral teachings based on the principles of truthfulness, compassion and tolerance.

They note that practitioners are the victims of various forms of persecution in China, including forced organ harvesting and trafficking. They once again call on the government to pass a resolution to establish measures to stop this crime by the Chinese Communist regime of systematically murdering Falun Gong practitioners for their organs, amend the Canadian legislation to combat forced organ harvesting and publicly call for an end to the persecution of the Falun Gong in China.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1525)

[Translation]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-47, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, now that question period is over, my text is truly up to date. Earlier, we were talking about employment insurance, and we are extremely disappointed that it is not part of the budget.

Government Orders

The Bloc Québécois members are the ones that can actually stand up for Quebecers. I often hope that the Liberals from Quebec will bring the government to its senses. If they did, we might not have the budget we have now.

Employment insurance is an economic stabilizer. Those are not my words. In fact, the Governor of the Bank of Canada said that on April 16, 2020. We were in the midst of a pandemic, and I was on the Standing Committee on Finance, and I asked Mr. Poloz a question about the need to make the EI system cover a greater number of workers than it does now. Here is what he said:

Certainly.

We've known for a long time that automatic stabilizers aren't very sensitive to the economy. In another era, one study estimated that automatic stabilization was almost equivalent to a change of less than 1% in the interest rate.

Very recently, we talked about the renewal of our target and our agreement with the government on inflation targets. We live in a world where interest rates are already lower than usual. [This was in 2020.] The tax authority doesn't have many stabilizing powers. In this respect, it might be better to have more automatic stabilizers in the system, or at least something more sensitive.

Today is May 1, 2023. It has been three years since Mr. Poloz appeared before the Standing Committee on Finance. I still remember his testimony, but what I remember more is the fact that the government failed to take action. It did not undertake a reform. It did not even listen to the experts. I feel rather discouraged.

With regard to seniors, the Liberal government likes to repeatedly tell us that it is generous, so generous that it is taking care of citizens and seniors. However, in the budget, we once again see that there is nothing for seniors. My Bloc Québécois colleagues have asked the government hundreds of times to make massive investments to increase the old age security pension as of age 65.

This winter, my colleague from Shefford organized a consultation on the needs of seniors with representatives of the FADOQ, community organizations and round tables. Everyone unanimously told us that the government should do away with the two classes of seniors. Once again, the government is dragging its feet and slow to act. I would have liked to be able to tell my constituents in Laurentides—Labelle that the government cares about them. That is what we wanted. I hoped that the government would hear what we had to say about our concerns regarding seniors' income. We even made recommendations. However, once again, the government chose to ignore Quebec's demands.

The Department of Finance decided to perpetuate the discrimination that started in the 2022 budget, which increased old age security only for seniors aged 75 years and over. According to the OECD, Canada's program is one of the worst in terms of income protection for seniors. The government needs to stop leaving seniors to struggle. They are the ones who built our society, yet the government thanks them by marginalizing them. This is preposterous. Inflation affects everyone.

Mortgage rates are going up, gas prices are going up, the cost of groceries is going up, the price of everything is going up, but old age security is not going up for seniors aged 65 to 74. This is preposterous.

• (1530)

I will now talk about social and community housing. According to a report released on March 8, the Laurentides RCM is trailing, along with the Pays-d'en-Haut RCM, which is in my riding of Laurentides—Labelle, when it comes to the state of the rental market.

I will provide some statistics. The vacancy rate in the Laurentides RCM is bordering on 0%. I worked in community services for a long time. This is unheard of. The rising cost of rent has seen one of the most significant increases in Quebec.

As I was saying at the beginning of my intervention, an hour and a half ago, in a region where nearly half of the economy is tied to tourism, people are struggling to find housing. Prices are going up because the region is beautiful and the riding of Laurentides—Labelle is a great place to live.

According to the same report, nearly one in four people spend more than 30% of their income on housing, and 30% of those people are in single parent families. That is unacceptable.

In closing, it comes as no surprise that I will be voting against this bill. As members can see, the needs of Laurentides-Labelle have been completely ignored by the Liberals and the Deputy Prime Minister. We are a proud, dynamic and strong region. We will not be taken for fools.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is unfortunate that the member does not recognize the degree to which the government has been listening to seniors. Not only have we been listening to seniors, but we have been supporting seniors. Whether it is the huge increase to the GIS in 2016, the one-time payments during the pandemic, the budgetary measures that are meeting an election platform commitment of a 10% increase for those 75 and over, the grocery rebate or dental support for seniors, these are all supports that the government is providing to seniors. We can contrast those to the previous 10 years of the Harper regime. It is incredibly different, yet the Bloc members do not recognize the benefits and continue to vote against initiatives that are supporting seniors.

Why do you not respect the seniors? You say you do, but your actions say otherwise.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. parliamentary secretary knows full well he is to address all questions and comments through the Chair, and when he was making his speech, I do not think he was actually doing that.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle.

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Madam Speaker, when we say that there is nothing, there is nothing with respect to the recommendations made, there is nothing to meet seniors' specific needs.

Government Orders

What should we say to a 66-year-old worker who returns to work and wants to contribute to society? After earning a few thousand dollars, there are no tax measures to help him out. He is told he will receive a little help to pay for groceries, but that he is too young for the other measures because he is not yet 75. He is told he will get the same amount that the government is giving everyone, based on critical mass. Seniors between 65 and 74 are being isolated.

That is just one example of what I spoke about.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of the really important things for Canada is to position ourselves right now in response to the climate crisis, but also to the massive investments that Joe Biden is putting into the Inflation Reduction Act. The American president has said that within nine years 67% of all vehicles are going to be EV, which is going to lead to a lot of stranded assets for those who are still betting on oil and gas. We do have this TMX pipeline that has cost us over \$30 billion. The total charges on that will go to the taxpayer, who will have to pay for 78% of every barrel of unrefined bitumen.

I want to ask my hon. colleague, given the fact that the U.S., China and Europe are moving so dramatically far in advance on digital and clean technology, why does the government continue to pay for TMX, leaving the threat of serious stranded assets in the oil and gas sector?

• (1535)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Madam Speaker, the energy transition has been under way for quite some time. When I explain to my constituents that the government is going to help companies like Muskrat Falls, it is shocking. With all the taxes paid by Quebec taxpayers, we managed to get Hydro-Québec.

On top of that, the Liberals are creating obstacles for the energy transition by helping the oil companies. It is very difficult to explain this to people, because Quebeckers are ready. We have the resources. We need investments, but the government refuses to step up.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, the member for Laurentides—Labelle talked about better support for seniors. Not only was the Canada disability benefit not included in budget 2023, but the governing party drafted the legislation so as to eliminate the benefit for people with disabilities when they reach age 65. A disability does not go away at age 65, and neither should the Canada disability benefit.

What does the member for Laurentides—Labelle think of that?

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Madam Speaker, are we surprised? No, because there are two classes of seniors. Accordingly, it is clear the government will continue using a system that isolates people instead of looking at the broader community.

The Bloc Québécois is very sensitive when it comes to this; we do not believe in stigmatizing people.

[*English*]

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to stand up and speak to Bill C-47, the Liberals' budget bill.

Certainly, I have had an opportunity to speak with my constituents with respect to the concerns that they have about this Liberal legislation. The thing that has been raised the most is that, going into the budget, they were told by the Liberal finance minister that there would be some fiscal restraint. Maybe for the first time in the Liberals' eight years in power, there would be a commitment to fiscal common sense. However, that certainly did not happen in this budget; we now see a \$43-billion deficit. If that is the Liberals' definition of fiscal restraint, I would hate to see what happens when they turn on the taps and say that they are going to spend unreservedly.

When it comes to Canadians, the Liberals are now asking every single Canadian family to contribute an additional \$4,300 to the Liberal government coffers to pay for their spending. I want Canadians across the country to have a different perspective on what the Liberals are asking them to do. I am asking Canadians to consider themselves shareholders in the corporation of Canada. Every single Canadian is a shareholder in this country. When the Liberals say they are taking on this debt so that Canadians do not have to, it is extremely misleading. The main funder of this corporation of Canada is the Canadian taxpayer. Therefore, if I am the Liberal Minister of Finance and I am asking Canadians to fund our \$43-billion deficit spending with an additional \$4,300 per family, as the shareholder of that company, the first question I am going to ask is this: "What is my return on investment? What is my ROI on an additional call-out for cash from the Liberal government?"

If the Liberal government has to explain to Canadians what their ROI is on that additional tax grab, it is a pretty tough sell. We Canadians have a \$30-billion-plus Infrastructure Bank that has not built a single project. We have chaos at the airports. We cannot get a passport if we want one. People might not be able to get their questions on their tax returns answered by the CRA. The carbon tax is going up, and we are going to have skyrocketing inflation and food prices. We have lost the respect of our most trusted trading partners. We cannot fund our own military and defend ourselves or respond to crises around the world. Other than that, Canadians' investment is well spent with the Liberal government in the corporation of Canada.

How would any common-sense Canadian feel that this has been a good return on their investment? I would say that there is not a single Canadian who would say that the current Liberal government has been a good steward of Canadian tax dollars. I would say there is no government in Canadian history that has spent so much to achieve so little. I do not think there is a Canadian government in history that has spent so much on the bureaucracy and the public service to see it come to a state of such dysfunction. I do not think there is a Canadian government in history that has been so committed to taxing Canadians into submission.

Government Orders

I do not think there is any better example than the Liberals' carbon tax. At a time of 40-year record-high inflation and a struggling economy coming out of COVID and the pandemic, no other government in the world was increasing taxes through a carbon tax. Our number one trading partner, the United States, does not have a carbon tax; the carbon tax is putting us, our farmers, our ranchers, our food producers, our manufacturers and Canadian industry at a stark competitive disadvantage.

What makes it more frustrating for those Canadians who are being asked to contribute more to the Liberals' out-of-control spending is that the Liberal carbon tax has been proven to be a sham. The latest reports confirm that the Liberals have not met a single environmental emissions target they have set for themselves. Now the Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed what we have pretty much known all along, which is that the carbon tax costs Canadians more than they get back from the Liberals' sham of a rebate. In fact, it is going to cost every Canadian family and certainly every Alberta family about \$1,500 a year. What a surprise that Canadians are not better off paying a higher tax. I would ask the Liberal government to show me any tax that has made Canadians better off.

• (1540)

We knew this when the Liberals brought in the carbon tax rebate for farmers that was supposed to make farmers whole. It was going to be revenue-neutral. However, we have now seen the numbers, and farmers get about 15% back in the carbon tax rebate from Bill C-8. This is nothing new.

The Liberals have been telling Canadians for years that they get more money back than they pay in the carbon tax through rebates, but the Parliamentary Budget Officer made it glaringly clear that this is not the case. It is costing Canadians money. Rather than admit their mistake and say that the carbon tax is a scam, the Liberals are doubling down. They increased the carbon tax again on April 1, and on July 1, it will be imposed on Atlantic Canadians: happy Canada Day.

What the NDP-Liberal carbon tax coalition does not understand is that there are very real consequences to these types of decisions. For example, when the carbon tax is tripled by 2030, it will cost an average Canadian farm \$150,000 a year in carbon taxes alone. It is going to put the financial viability of Canadian agriculture and agri-food in jeopardy. It makes us uncompetitive. We already had the most expensive harvest in Canadian history last year, and this is only going to add to those input costs.

For the average Canadian, the consequences are very simple. Higher carbon taxes mean higher production costs and higher prices at the grocery store. Every single Canadian is paying the price for the carbon tax coalition, and they are paying for it at the grocery store when they buy bread, pasta, fruit, vegetables, meat, milk and eggs. They are paying for it over and over again.

I had a constituent family with four kids tell me their grocery bill went up \$700 a month. I do not know very many Canadian families that could afford that. Again, we are seeing the consequences of that when one out of five Canadian families is skipping meals because they cannot afford groceries. They cannot afford to put food on the table for their families. They are having to make that deci-

sion to pay their mortgage and their heat and power bills by skipping a meal.

We had the CEO of the Daily Bread Food Bank in Toronto come to the agriculture committee a couple of weeks ago. We were talking about food security. His comment was that their numbers in March quadrupled from what they would normally see in visitors to the food bank. He called the numbers they are seeing "startling" and "horrific". He has been quoted as saying, "we are in a crisis. The Daily Food Bank and food banks [in Toronto] are at a breaking point". There are very real consequences when we increase costs and taxes on Canadians and food production. The numbers we are seeing at the food bank are a direct consequence of that.

Canada's food price index is showing that groceries for a family of four are going to go up another \$1,000 in 2023. Unfortunately, it is only going to get worse if the Liberal government continues with the policies it is imposing. A recent study that came out last week from Dalhousie University is bracing Canadians for even higher food prices. The study says that, by 2030, the average food price is going to go up 35%. Bread will go up 35%; dairy, 40%; fruit and vegetables, 29%; and meat, 45%. That is what may happen if the Liberals continue on this ideological policy drive that they are on. Increased carbon taxes are increasing production costs, regulation and red tape on transportation and supply chain, which means direct costs to Canadians.

The solution to higher food prices and higher food costs is simple, and one of the steps the Liberals could take is eliminating the carbon tax. It is not meeting any environmental targets that they are setting themselves, and it is certainly causing more pain than anything else. When the carbon tax is tripled, it may cost an average Alberta family \$2,200 a year.

In conclusion, I ask the NDP-Liberal carbon tax coalition to reflect on the hurt and the pain they are putting on Canadians. In fact, the NDP used to be the party of Canadian farmers. I wonder why it has lost that support over the years. Maybe they should take some time to reflect on what happened.

We cannot support this budget. As Conservatives, we are going to stand up for Canadian families and affordability, not the ideological policy that is hurting Canadians.

Government Orders

• (1545)

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, putting a price on pollution can ensure that, at the end of the day, we keep this country clean. Based on the fact that, at the previous Conservative convention, the Conservatives actually voted against a resolution and denied that climate change was real, does the member's party actually believe in climate change today?

Mr. Pat Kelly: The member can read our declaration. It is pretty clear.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I hear somebody else trying to answer, but I did not recognize that gentleman.

The hon. member for Foothills.

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, I think my colleague from Calgary Rocky Ridge had a fantastic answer, but I will do my best to reiterate his point.

Climate change is real. Climate change is impacting every aspect. I live in a rural riding and I know farmers and ranchers talk about it on a regular basis. They see what it is doing, but Conservatives want to have real solutions to those problems that Canadians are facing. We are not going to have a carbon tax that is not meeting any emissions targets. All it is doing is adding additional costs and food prices for Canadians. We are going to solve this issue not through taxes but through innovation and technology.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to hear my colleague talk about the importance of agriculture.

If that is the case, I would like to know why, in the Standing Committee on International Trade, I sat through several filibusters on a bill that protects and promotes our agricultural model.

If agriculture is so dear to them, why did we waste so many sessions and weeks?

[*English*]

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, I am not too sure what the question has to do with my presentation on the budget. I do not think the bill the member is talking about impacts how we farm. It is a trade issue.

The importance of what he is addressing, what we have learned through COVID and some of the issues that the Liberal government is causing, is that we are losing the trust that we have with our most important trading partners. As an example, when Germany and Japan came to Canada asking for help with LNG so that they could cut their cord with Russia, the Prime Minister turned his back and said there was no business case for that. That is an embarrassment for our country and for us on the global stage.

Canada must use our agriculture and energy as the geopolitical tools that they can and should be.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member for Foothills is a real champion for agriculture, and agriculture is very important in my riding.

I know the farmers, orchardists and vineyard owners in my riding saw their gas prices go up three cents a litre this year because of the carbon tax. It is a provincial carbon tax in B.C. They saw the price of gas go up 80¢ a litre because of the greedflation around the world.

The president of Shell Canada has asked for a tax on excess profits, and the Government of the U.K. has implemented such a tax. Would the member support the NDP's call for a tax on excess profits so that we can raise billions of dollars to help farmers and others who need it across the country?

• (1550)

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, I have a lot of respect for my colleague, but the fallacy is in his question. Adding taxes, whether it is a windfall tax or a higher tax on the highest earners, does not reduce the costs. If I were to increase the tax on a company, is that company all of a sudden going to reduce its prices? No, it is not.

The fastest solution is to eliminate the carbon tax. That will eliminate those three cents that the member is saying his producers are worried about. Imagine, the NDP is supporting the Liberals and increasing the carbon tax. In B.C., people pay the carbon tax on any natural gas and propane imported from Alberta. They do pay it, and they pay the GST on top of that.

If the member wants to make life more affordable for the producers and farmers in his riding, the solution is scrapping the carbon tax.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am glad I was able to catch your eye and participate in the debate today, following my good friend the member for Foothills.

There is a disconnection between everything the government has said about fiscal restraint and the numbers contained in the budget this bill promises to implement. Some might call it the “pants on fire” budget. It puts a lie to everything the Liberals have said from the 2015 election to last year's budget.

Just last year, the minister stated, “We are absolutely determined that our debt-to-GDP ratio must continue to decline”. She also said, “This is our fiscal anchor—a line we shall not cross, and that will ensure that our finances remain sustainable so long as it remains unbreached.” The government did not waste any time in breaching that line. This bill would implement a budget with an increased debt-to-GDP ratio. The Liberals blew through that sacred line that quickly. This budget is the culmination of what is now approaching a decade of lies contained in three election campaigns, numerous past budgets and fiscal updates, and statements in the House and communities across Canada.

Government Orders

I will provide members with the solemn commitment that the Liberals made during the 2015 election. It states, “We will run modest short-term deficits of less than \$10 billion in each of the next two fiscal years to fund historic investments in infrastructure and our middle class. After the next two fiscal years, the deficit will decline and our investment plan will return Canada to a balanced budget in 2019.” That was not a casual, throw-away line; it was a critical point the Liberals made carefully, to differentiate themselves from both the Conservatives and the NDP.

The Liberals were the only party promising deficit spending, but they knew that there was political consensus at the time that budgets ultimately had to be balanced, and that Canadian voters would not vote for unrestrained, reckless and out-of-control spending without a clear and credible plan for a balanced budget within the mandate they were seeking. They made that pitch to Canadians. Even the NDP knew then that there was cross-partisan support, consensus even, that budgets had to be balanced. That is why the Liberals did that. They had this solemn promise to run modest deficits for a very short period of time in order to fund unprecedented infrastructure construction that would lead to economic growth that would allow the budget to balance itself. Every part of that critical, election-winning promise turned out to be untrue. They did not run a modest \$10-billion deficit. They did not build unprecedented new infrastructure. The budget did not balance itself. Every single word in that promise was untrue.

Since winning the election in 2015, not one member of the government or its party's caucus has ever acknowledged having made that promise. It was a promise the Liberals made to differentiate themselves, and they broke it. The government treats its own election promises like things that can just be tossed into an Orwellian memory hole to be forgotten forever, as if they had never been spoken. I was present when the Leader of the Opposition repeatedly asked Bill Morneau in what year the budget would be balanced. He acted as if the Liberals had never made the promise, that it was something that could be ignored. It was the promise they made in order to win the election. Then this became the thing they would do, to talk about the ever-declining debt-to-GDP ratios. In the fall 2017 economic statement, the Liberals stated, “The Government will maintain this downward deficit and debt ratio track—preserving Canada’s low-debt advantage for current and future generations.”

There was nothing about balanced budgets and no apology for the fraudulent way they campaigned in 2018. In 2018, the Liberals used the words, “anchored by a low and consistently declining debt-to-GDP”. The fall 2018 economic statement states, “The Government continues to deliver on its commitment to strengthen and grow the middle class...while at the same time carefully managing deficits.” That is nonsense. Careful management of the deficit would be to not run one during a time of relatively stable and strong international economic expansion. The Liberals might have also thought about better managing Canada's debt and not being addicted to issuing short-term debt, which would protect Canadians from the higher interest rates that are now upon us.

• (1555)

The 2019 fiscal update said the Liberals were “continuing to reduce the federal debt relative to the size of our economy.” By

February 2020, weeks before any world jurisdiction had taken economy-slowing COVID measures, Canada was on the brink of recession. Private sector economists had forecast Canada's debt-to-GDP ratio was going to rise for the first time since the 2008-09 banking crisis. This was before COVID, so the Liberals ditched their lines about declining debt-to-GDP for a while.

The opposition warned the government that, during a time of relative global prosperity and growth, it was reckless to run uncontrolled structural deficits resulting from undisciplined spending growth and lowering growth through job-killing tax increases and terrible regulations like Bill C-69. We told the government that it was spending the cupboards bare and that it would leave Canada less capable of coping with a global catastrophe, such as a pandemic or a war in Europe. Of course, the opposition did not predict these things; nobody could have. The point is that unforeseeable events like pandemics, natural disasters, wars, financial crises and global political crises always happen. There has never been a multi-decade period in human history when these events have not happened, yet the Liberals spent their entire pre-COVID tenure pretending times would always be good, and the entire post-COVID period assuming things will just simply always naturally get better.

Look where we are today. Liberals have blown through their sacred promise of continuous decline in our debt-to-GDP ratio. The government has presided over a 53% bloat in the cost of the federal public service and record spending on outside private contractors at a time when service delivery has never been worse and the state of labour relations between workers and management, which means the Liberal cabinet, has never been worse. We are still in the midst of the worst public sector strike in Canadian history. How does one do that? How does one spend more than any government in history and have the worst record on service delivery and the worst strike? It is astonishing.

There are a number of things I want to go through. Liberals are now asking us to approve a bill with \$70 billion in new spending and an increase of the deficit to \$40.1 billion. Debt service charge is now at \$44 billion a year and shortly going to \$50 billion a year, with an increasing debt-to-GDP ratio, which is something they said could never happen. There are billions in losses projected at the Bank of Canada, the possibility of which they also dismissed out of hand when the opposition leader and I both raised it at the Standing Committee on Finance in 2020.

Government Orders

This bill has a host of tax increases on everything from air travellers to beer, wine and spirits. Of course, there is the carbon tax, which is a tax on everything and is something the Liberals also promised would never exceed \$50 a megaton. They will now triple that amount. They have done all of this with absolutely no tangible path to fiscal reckoning other than just hoping for the best, having blown through their last promise in a long litany of broken promises going back to 2015.

I am not buying it. I oppose this bill, as I have opposed the government since I was elected. I will vote against implementing this budget, and I urge my NDP and Bloc colleagues to join me. They ran in opposition to the government. They were elected in opposition to the government. If they agree with me that the government is deceitful, arrogant, untrustworthy and incompetent, I beg them, in fact I double-dog dare them, to vote down this budget implementation act, bring down the government and let Canadians decide who will support this—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1600)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I want to know if “double-dog dare” represents an attempt at intimidation of the opposition.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would say to the hon. member that that is a point of discussion and not a point of order.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Avalon.

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, that hon. member's speech was somewhat disappointing to many of us on this side.

Let us talk about election promises to get elected. I recall a time when former prime minister Stephen Harper sat in front of the cameras at NTV News in St. John's and promised to remove from the equalization formula the funds that come from resource development in our province. As soon as he got elected, he said that he did not say that. It is still on film at NTV News, if anybody wants to take a look at it. How can the member square that circle and condemn the government for not meeting its total obligations it may have made in the campaign? I ask because Conservatives wrote the book on that.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Madam Speaker, I love the fact that, when the members on the government side have nothing, they turn the clock back as far as they possibly can. We are talking about the current government, elected in 2015 on a pack of lies. I will take absolutely no lessons from that member on equalization or on any talk of how resources are developed and resource revenue.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, given that today is May 1, International Workers' Day, I want to ask my colleague a question about workers, or rather about workers who lose their jobs.

Beginning with budget 2021-22, the government intends to take nearly \$17 billion out of taxpayers' pockets between now and 2030

by dipping into the EI fund. I think we can all agree that a reform will not be possible.

Is my colleague not upset about the fact that this government has no consideration for those who lose their jobs? We know that 60% of people who lose their jobs do not have access to employment insurance and that women and youth are particularly affected, because many of them hold non-standard jobs.

[English]

Mr. Pat Kelly: Madam Speaker, I am terribly upset by the incompetence of the government and the growing backlog of cases at Service Canada.

Again, I challenge that member. If she is as upset with the government's incompetence, the government's deception and the terrible job the government is doing, will she vote against the budget implementation act?

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague paints what I think is intended to be a very bleak picture of Canada's economic prospects, yet if we look at the G7 and how different countries in the G7 have fared coming out of the pandemic, by most conventional metrics, Canada's recovery has been above average. I am wondering why he chose to paint such a bleak picture, when, on some counts, Canada is doing quite well coming out of the greatest health care and economic crisis we have seen in several generations.

• (1605)

Mr. Pat Kelly: Madam Speaker, now we are at the point where members of the NDP benches are coming out and cheerleading the government. It is not enough to just be a part of a coalition agreement where those members support the government; they are even bailing it out in questions and comments and in speeches. I wish that the member and his caucus would find their opposition roots and think whether they were elected to support the government or not.

With respect to his question, if he listened to my speech, it was only 10 minutes, and I could only say so much. I focused on the deception of the government, and I certainly think its track record and its numbers are nothing to be proud of. It promised that the debt-to-GDP ratio would never increase. It is increasing. The Liberals cannot be trusted on anything they say. They should be opposed.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the House on behalf of the constituents of Victoria, today to talk about Bill C-47, the budget implementation act.

Government Orders

I want to start by sharing a local concern. Organizations in my riding are reeling from the government's cuts to the Canada summer jobs program. This program is vital, not only for local organizations, non-profits, charities and small businesses, but also for young people, who get valuable skills and economic opportunities. This year, the government has cut the program, and it is not just a cut from our pandemic levels, but a \$60-million cut from pre-pandemic levels. These cuts are having a huge impact on the ground in Victoria.

Local organizations received over \$1.5 million in 2022, and this year's funding has gone down to \$950,000. Last year, 113 organizations received funding, and this year only 66 will receive funding. That is 50 fewer community organizations benefiting from the program and 50 fewer opportunities for employment for young people across the country.

Organizations that have received funding, such as Capital Bike, are seeing cuts in the hours and number of jobs it has been awarded. It is reeling and uncertain of what it is going to do when it cannot offer students the hours they need to accept placements. The government talks a good game when it comes to supporting young people and local organizations, but its actions do not match its words. It needs to reverse these cuts to community organizations and young people across the country.

Canadians right now are living through an affordability crisis. Inflation is still too high, and it is getting harder for people in my community to afford groceries and find an affordable place to call home. One good job should be enough to pay the bills and raise a family, but while the cost of living goes up, rich CEOs and the ultra-wealthy are getting ahead, while families, seniors and young people are falling behind.

For the past eight years, the Liberal government has not been working for people in Canada. Under its watch, Canada has become more unaffordable.

This year's budget includes concrete, tangible affordability measures, which the NDP has fought hard for. They are measures that the Liberals have consistently voted against, but we were able to push them to deliver them now. One example of this is the NDP's dental care program.

For the past year, I have had seniors visiting my office to ask when they would be eligible for dental care. For far too long, financial barriers have prevented millions of people in our country, especially seniors, people with disabilities and young people, from accessing the oral health care they need. Thanks to the first phase of the Canadian dental care plan, close to a quarter of a million children have been able to get to the dentist because of this interim measure. This coming year, seniors, people living with a disability and children under 18 will be able to access this critical care.

It brings us one step closer to Tommy Douglas' dream of truly universal health care, where every Canadian would have access to the health care they need, when they need it.

Additionally, New Democrats have used our power in this Parliament to double the GST rebate. This means over \$400 for a family with two children. Last fall, the NDP forced the government to double the GST rebate for millions of Canadians, putting hundreds

of dollars back into Canadians' pockets at a time of high inflation. I am very pleased that, earlier this month, the House fast-tracked that new rebate.

I also want to highlight the important measures we have fought for to make life more affordable for students. I am proud to represent thousands of students who attend the University of Victoria and Camosun College. This budget increases Canada student grants by 40%, providing up to \$4,200 for full-time students, and it raises the interest-free Canada student loan limit from \$210 to \$300 per week. This means students will have more financial support during and after their studies.

We must do more for graduate students. Today, May 1, graduate students have organized a walkout. They are calling on the government to invest in the next generation of leaders, who are doing research and are the people doing science in our country. They have had the same wage for the past 20 years. Tri-agency awards and grants have not increased, yet the cost of almost everything has gone through the roof.

• (1610)

Unfortunately, for anyone struggling with the housing crisis right now, this budget fails when it comes to building more affordable housing faster for Canadians. It fails for people who want to own a home. It fails for renters.

Victoria has some of the highest rents in the country. Under the Liberal government, the costs of both renting and owning have increased to unimaginable levels. The cost of owning a home in Victoria has ballooned. It would take a family earning over \$150,000 almost 30 years to save to buy a home in my community. For renters, in 2015, when the Liberals took charge, the median cost of a one-bedroom unit was around \$850 a month. Today, it has more than doubled. The average one-bedroom rental cost is a whopping \$2,000 a month. It is \$2,500 for a two-bedroom unit, and \$3,200 for a three-bedroom unit.

How is anyone supposed to get by, never mind get ahead, when rent is eating so much of their monthly income? Every day, countless people in my community are unhoused, under-housed or afraid they will not be able to afford rent next month. Most of the families I speak to have given up on ever even owning a home or dreaming of such a thing.

Government Orders

Earlier this month, I met with housing experts, leaders in Victoria, who told me that the federal government needs to get back to playing an active role in delivering housing. The government needs to stop corporate landlords from treating the housing market like a stock market. Housing is a right. Unfortunately, this bill, when it comes to addressing this crisis, fails. The Liberals are out of touch on this issue, and people are struggling to find an affordable place to live.

I want to mention the tireless work of two of my colleagues: the hon. member for Nunavut and the hon. member for Vancouver East. They fought to ensure there was \$4 billion in this budget for rural, urban and northern indigenous housing. While we know more is needed, without their fierce advocacy, we would not be taking this important first step toward for indigenous, by indigenous housing.

People in Victoria are also deeply concerned about the devastating impacts of the climate crisis. Here at home and around the world, tackling the climate crisis is an economic and moral imperative. My colleagues and I have fought for investments in this bill that represent just the first steps in creating a clean-energy economy and ensuring we are creating well-paying union jobs. This bill includes \$83 billion for the clean-energy economy, including for clean hydrogen and clean tech, as well as \$3 billion to support clean electricity.

I am proud that the NDP has forced the Liberals to invest in a green future and that we were able to ensure that these investments have strings attached for workers. We are forcing the Liberals to incentivize companies to raise wages and provide better working conditions for their workers, and we are ensuring that labour groups have a seat at the table when it comes to the Canada growth fund. However, we also know the government has to do much, much more.

One of the handouts the Liberals are giving to oil and gas companies is billions of dollars for carbon capture, utilization and storage. It is a technology that the IPCC has said is one of the most expensive and unproven at scale, yet the Liberals continue to make it a central part of their climate plan. They are listening to oil and gas lobbyists instead of listening to the science.

I am disappointed that the government continues to show no interest in tackling corporate greed and taxing the excess profits of big oil and gas. Unfortunately, we continue to see the Liberals hand out billions of dollars each year in tax and non-tax subsidies. As parliamentarians, we owe it to future generations to not only believe in climate change and talk about the climate crisis but also act like we are in a climate emergency, because that is what we are in, and invest in climate solutions.

To conclude, we will continue to use our power in this minority Parliament to put money back in the pockets of Canadians, make life more affordable and fight the climate crisis like we actually want to win. My NDP colleagues and I will continue to work hard every day for families, seniors and young people to create a country that leaves no one behind.

• (1615)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am going to go back to the early nineties, when all political parties in the House ultimately advocated that the national government should not be playing any role in housing.

For the first time in generations, we have a government that has committed billions of dollars, developed a national housing strategy that is investing in things such as housing co-ops and non-profit housing, helped municipalities and supported organizations such as Habitat for Humanity. The government is going out of its way to ensure that Canadians are able to have that first home. Would the hon. member not recognize that the federal government can only do so much?

It is important that we demonstrate leadership, which we have, but we need the other stakeholders, in particular our municipalities and our provinces, and other stakeholders as well, to step up to the table so we can provide the type of housing that Canadians expect. We need to all be working together. Would she not agree?

Ms. Laurel Collins: Madam Speaker, I agree that all levels of government need to tackle this crisis. I am very proud of the work the City of Victoria and the Province of British Columbia have done on housing.

However, the Liberal government has had eight years in power. My community is seeing skyrocketing rents. When I sat down with non-profit housing providers, they told me that CMHC is where projects go to die.

This is unacceptable. We need a government that takes the housing crisis seriously, that acknowledges that we have people who are living on the street, people who are struggling just to make ends meet and people who are afraid of losing the roof over their head. So many people have given up on the idea of ever owning a home.

This is unacceptable. In a country as wealthy as ours, we need our federal government to do better.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, I think what is so frustrating for people at home, and everyone watching, is that this is an opportunity to change the government of the country. By voting no to this budget, we can change the trajectory we are on.

What we have witnessed in the House, even today, with the arrogance of the Liberal government on the cost of living crisis, is unbelievable. My colleague has said that everything is unacceptable, yet her party continues to prop them up. Her party continues to keep them in power. Why is that?

Ms. Laurel Collins: Madam Speaker, I am absolutely frustrated with the failings of the government.

Government Orders

I am proud of the work New Democrats have done to deliver for people with dental care; investments in rural, urban and northern indigenous housing; and making sure that we are doubling the rebate for GST.

Canadians do not want another election right now. They just went through one. They sent us back here to deliver for Canadians, and that is what we are doing. We are getting down to the hard work, working across party lines and pushing the government to do the things that it would never do on its own.

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened closely to the speech by my colleague from Victoria.

Today, we are seeing the hypocrisy of the New Democratic Party, which I am now calling the NGP, where the G stands for gag, as in gag order.

Today, that party, which is trying to lambaste the government, is not on its second, fourth, sixth or eighth, but on its 13th closure motion. The New Democratic Party is using anti-democratic gag orders to cut the democratic speaking time of parliamentarians in the House.

We have no lessons to learn on morality from the social justice warriors the NDP members would have us believe they really are.

On this May 1, Workers' Day, if standing up for workers is such a good thing to do, why did they not include EI reform in their agreement?

[*English*]

Ms. Laurel Collins: Madam Speaker, since it is May 1, I want to voice my support for all workers and say that we will continue fighting for workers, no matter what. I am confused, a little bit, about the member's question, since the NDP has voted in favour of EI reform again and again, and has tabled legislation.

We cannot make the government do what it is completely unwilling to do, but we were able to push it on some important issues that will make a difference for Canadians.

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, before I start, I would like to thank the constituents of Brampton East for their support. It was a pleasure seeing so many constituents out in downtown Toronto yesterday for the Nagar Kirtan and to celebrate Vaisakhi alongside colleagues and, of course, the Prime Minister of Canada.

I am grateful to rise in the House today to talk about how budget 2023 is going to benefit both the residents in my riding of Brampton East and all Canadians across the country. Budget 2023, brought forth by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, reassures Canadians that our federal government is delivering on its promises.

We are making decisions that are smart, sustainable and innovative, which in turn will propel our economy toward a greener and more resilient future. We have recovered from the pandemic

stronger than before, with record low unemployment rates and one of the fastest recoveries versus other comparable G7 countries. The Canadian youth unemployment rate is down by 22%, and 830,000 more Canadians are employed compared to when the pandemic first hit three years ago.

Our recovery efforts worked because we listened to Canadians and acted in their best interests so that families could put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads. We acted quickly and provided the help Canadians needed when much of the world was in a state of unknown.

While pandemic supports have ended, our commitment to helping Canadians succeed has not. Budget 2023 proves this statement. Our federal government is making record investments in health care, child care, dental care and a clean, green economy, among many others.

The health of Canadians is what creates the foundation for a healthy economy. Universal high-quality and accessible health care is how we keep that foundation strong from coast to coast to coast. The pandemic put an unprecedented strain on an already overworked health care system. From health care workers feeling burnt out to emergency rooms constantly being overrun to elective surgeries being delayed or cancelled, the level of care that Canadians deserve and rely is not being delivered and can be greatly improved.

What is being delivered is an urgent and much-needed investment of \$195 billion over the next 10 years from our federal government. This funding will accompany the tailored bilateral agreements with each province and territory to provide targeted supports throughout the health care sector, and will also include the accountability measures that Canadians expect and deserve from their provinces and territories.

Health care also extends into dental care, and going to a dentist can be expensive and out of reach for many Canadians and their families. It is concerning to say that one in five Canadians reported that they avoid going to a dentist because of cost. The new Canadian dental care plan outlined in budget 2023 plans to eliminate the difficult decision between taking care of one's teeth and being able to pay the bills at the end of the month. Another record investment of \$13 billion over the next five years, starting in 2023, with \$4 billion ongoing, to Health Canada is being put forward in this budget to help uninsured Canadian families receive dental care.

Programs like the Canada dental benefit have helped more than 240,000 children receive the dental care they need. This includes close to 3,000 children in my riding of Brampton East alone. I have heard first-hand from parents who are over the moon that they can provide important dental care for their children for healthier teeth and bigger smiles.

Government Orders

Here in Canada and around the world, the cost of living has gone up and inflation is a top-of-mind issue. The rising cost of food affects Canadians, small businesses and families who are trying to put a nutritious meal on the table. That is why, through budget 2023, our government is introducing the new grocery rebate, which is targeted to help provide relief to Canadians who need it the most. The \$2.5 billion in relief will help eligible families with two children receive up to an extra \$467, and single Canadians without children can receive up to \$234. This support will assist close to 11 million Canadians with the cost of food. This is yet another way in which our federal government is helping Canadians live their lives in a way that benefits them so they do not have to choose between food, paying rent, and other expenses.

Young Canadians, specifically students, have faced immense pressures trying to navigate their way through the consistent changes, cancellations and delays caused by the pandemic. Our government stepped in to help. When we invest in the success of students and young Canadians, we all prosper. Their research and training achievements strengthen our workforce and economy. When we help more students train in the career of their choosing, this helps fill the gaps in labour shortages that many industries are experiencing across the country.

This is a consistent message I hear from my Brampton East Youth Council. Many aspire to go to college or university, but they are also worried about being able to afford tuition, books, meal plans and other needed expenses. The stakes are high, and for many, they are the first of their families to go to university or college.

• (1625)

I assume that many of my hon. colleagues in this House believe that a student's education should not be cut short because of financial hardship, and this is where our government is stepping in. Over 750,000 post-secondary students across Canada rely on federal assistance each year, and that money is the difference between starting a career with good-paying jobs versus not knowing what their next steps may be. It is clear that during the pandemic, our government should not be making money off the already strained purses of post-secondary students.

That is why we acted and eliminated interest on Canada student loans and Canada apprentice loans. By increasing Canada student grants by 40%, raising the interest-free Canada student loan limit and waiving the requirement for mature students to undergo a credit check for a loan, our government has created access to an additional \$14,400 in Canadian financial student assistance. Students can now spend less time worrying about how they are going to pay for tuition, rent, food and other expenses, and spend more time focusing on their studies.

Budget 2023 would invest over \$800 million to enhance student financial assistance for the school year starting in August 2023. However, our commitment to helping students does not stop there. For budget 2024, we have pledged to work with students directly and create a long-term approach to develop a financial assistance plan that is tailored to their needs for the years to come.

As I mentioned previously, Canada's economic recovery from the pandemic has been steady and climbing, with record low unem-

ployment rates and more than 800,000 more Canadians employed than when the pandemic first hit. We are building back stronger than ever. Historic investments in early learning and child care are helping more women enter or re-enter the workforce.

Budget 2023 would also help students gain the necessary training to transition straight into the workforce once their work placement training is complete. Our government is making it easier for students to work in their desired fields, and we are also encouraging partnerships and increased learning opportunities between post-secondary institutions and businesses across Canada. It is crucial that we help bridge the gap between schooling and employment so that young Canadians entering the workforce can earn a good wage in addition to businesses gaining valuable skilled workers.

Canada is proud to be home to one of the smartest and most skilled labour forces in the world, and my riding of Brampton East is proof of that. Brampton East is home to the MDA plant, which is currently designing the Canadarm3, a robotic arm that will maintain, repair and inspect Gateway, which is a lunar outpost that will enable sustainable human exploration on the moon. Due to the contributions of the Canadarm3 space technology, a Canadian Space Agency astronaut will be part of the first crewed mission to the moon since 1972 with Artemis II. This was something that President Joe Biden touched upon when he addressed this very House during his official visit.

Canada and the United States share an incredibly strong partnership, which will be of value to the Artemis II mission. It is a friendship unlike any other in the world. Through our co-operation, we can improve economic prosperity and productivity, and benefit from a secure sharing of resources that will help the citizens of both of our countries.

While we are reaching for the stars in terms of innovation and technology, or more precisely for the moon, we are also moving toward a greener future with clean, green economic growth. Canada is on the right path forward toward electrification and green energy. A significant portion of our electricity already comes from non-emitting sources, such as hydroelectricity, wind, solar and nuclear, but more can be done. We know that Canada's electricity demand will double by 2050, and our government, through budget 2023, has proposed to make significant investments to accelerate the expansion of Canada's electricity grid, which will supply and transmit clean electricity across Canada.

Government Orders

We are seeing this progress happen in our local communities. Brampton is taking the necessary steps to become a green city by transitioning its transit fleet with fully electric buses, made possible through our federal Infrastructure Bank. With those buses comes a new maintenance facility of over 600,000 square feet of indoor bus storage that will help ensure our electric transit fleet is running smoothly. In Brampton East, this new maintenance facility is set to bring in over 1,000 good-paying jobs in my riding, and I am proud to say that we are on track to establishing Brampton as a newly electrified economic hub.

In two years, Brampton will also be home to the newly revitalized Stellantis plant for Chrysler, made possible by federal investments made by our government. This plant will be a flexible, multi-energy vehicle facility properly equipped to produce new electric vehicles and batteries. This plant will help fuel the green economic growth that budget 2023 is moving toward. It will change how we manufacture electric vehicles and will bring good-paying jobs to the city. This was all possible by the hard work of many of my federal colleagues from Brampton who are here in this House. It will help to fight climate change while growing our economy.

• (1630)

As I end today, I want to talk about parents I met recently, Matthew and Jennifer, who live in my riding, where they are raising their son Sebastian. They want to be close to family and close to the hospitals where they work as full-time nurses. They can rest assured knowing that we will be there to continue to support their young child with our new child care program.

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened with interest as the hon. member, like all Liberal members of Parliament, talked about more and more spending, adding to the record levels of spending and record levels of debt undertaken by the government already. One thing he did not touch on was that it is Mental Health Week. If we read from the Canadian Mental Health Association's website, it says in a headline, "Budget 2023 out of touch with mental health crisis", and then says, "The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) is profoundly concerned that Budget 2023 did not include the promised Canada Mental Health Transfer."

I am wondering if the hon. member will be going to any of the Mental Health Week events this week. If he does, how will he explain to mental health experts and advocates from across the country that his government has once again failed to deliver on the \$4.5-billion promise he made to get elected in the 2021 election campaign?

Mr. Maninder Sidhu: Madam Speaker, that was a very important question on mental health. I know it is very important to my constituents. I sat down with my youth council recently, and we spoke about the importance of mental health.

We have invested continuously in the Kids Help Phone line. There is \$190 billion for health care in this budget. I sat down with college and university associations to speak about why mental health is important, especially considering the circumstances coming out of the pandemic and the many pressures on many of our youth. I think that is a conversation we need to continue to have, as we know there is a lot more work to be done.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I was fascinated by my colleague's speech. He seemed sincere in his belief that a one-time cheque to help pay for groceries, in a time of high inflation, would really help people like seniors who are in a precarious financial situation deal with both rising rent and grocery costs. He said it was to help them get out of that difficult situation.

Quite frankly, anyone who talks about a one-time grocery rebate to help seniors with all the expenses related to inflation is playing a game of smoke and mirrors and engaging in some magical thinking.

[*English*]

Mr. Maninder Sidhu: Madam Speaker, I would like to answer in English. I am still working on my French.

Since the member mentioned seniors, I think it is important to know that our government raised OAS for those who are 75 and older. This is the largest increase since 1973. That needs to be recognized. We have also increased the GIS and have lowered the retirement age from 67 to 65 for seniors.

I think it is very important that we continue to stand with seniors. That is what this government has done from the very beginning.

• (1635)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Conservative leader came to Timmins. He has come a number of times. He has never been willing to meet with indigenous leaders, but during his meeting he was making jokes about electric vehicles. I find it hilarious that a guy who has never actually had a job would come to a mining town where critical minerals are really important and make fun of electric vehicles.

I want to ask my hon. colleague about this. I see the Conservatives undermining and attacking the investments that Volkswagen is making in EV batteries. We see what Biden is doing. We see that the United States is moving to ensure that 67% of all cars are EVs within nine years. Why is it that the Conservatives want to sit at the side of the road with their dead-end 1970s beaters?

Mr. Maninder Sidhu: Madam Speaker, that was a very important question on electric vehicles, on our economy, on Volkswagen and on what our government is doing to be there.

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Our Prime Minister just announced with our Minister of Innovation one of the largest investments in our country's history for what is going to be the largest industrial plant in our history. It is going to bring over 30,000 good-paying jobs across Canada, with 3,000 jobs in St. Thomas. That is only an hour and a half away from Brampton. We know that when that plant comes up, indirect jobs will be coming up in Brampton, and I know many of my constituents are looking forward to that. In addition, we have the Stellantis plant in Brampton East, which will soon be producing electric vehicles. I know many of my constituents are excited about that too.

I think it is imperative that all of us in this House play a collective role in reducing emissions and fighting climate change.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the great people of Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, who saw fit to send me here, the House of the common people, and also in my capacity as shadow minister for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard. As such, my speech will focus on aspects of the budget that pertain to my role as a fisheries critic and aspects that affect the lives of those living in my riding and all the people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The budget is a special piece of work. In six out of the seven ridings in my province, the people have no one to speak out against what the Liberal government is doing to their standard of living. The finance minister is getting a free ride from my fellow MPs back home, but not from me.

Speaking of home, the Minister of Finance took full advantage of being able to work from home, even though she did not want to afford the same luxury to those government workers who provide services to us while their government continues to fail us. The minister was working from home so much that when she came back and stood to deliver the budget, I could not remember what she looked like. I looked across the way, and I asked my colleague from Cumberland—Colchester who was over there next to the Prime Minister. She looked so familiar, but I just could not quite place her. Was she at home working on the budget, or was she using up some of the Prime Minister's frequent flyer hotel points jet-setting around the world trying to save the planet from the common people?

Whatever the case may be, she could have put a little more elbow grease into the budget, at least from the perspective of those who rely on the ocean to make a living in an industry I am sure she has heard of by now. We call it "the fishing industry".

I did some analysis of the budget document, looking for mention of several topics, and I will reveal how many times these topics were mentioned. The first one I thought of, which is very near and dear to my heart, is pinnipeds. Members can guess how many times it was mentioned: zero. Next, it was pinniped predation. How many times was that scourge of our three oceans mentioned in the budget? It was zero.

As I kept gandering through it, I thought I might find the word "salmon" or be extra lucky and find reference to the rollout of the much-awaited and highly esteemed wild Atlantic salmon conservation strategy. How many times do members think it was mentioned? It was zero. The folks of our Pacific coast did not fare much better. I searched and searched for a reference to Pacific salmon. Of

special interest to me was the Pacific salmon strategy initiative. This long-awaited and much-needed program to help restore west coast salmon was mentioned zero times.

Members may think some of these things are not high enough in priority to be mentioned in that honourable document, which the Minister of Finance burned the midnight oil to produce, but let us hang on a minute here. Let us see if some other things that fall under the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard were mentioned. The Atlantic fisheries fund, a program that supports fisheries innovation, surely should be mentioned. One would think so, but the list of zero continues. There is more. Marine protected areas, small craft harbours, the Canadian Coast Guard and the national shipbuilding strategy were all mentioned zero times.

We have heard a lot of talk about the promised great expansion coming to the blue economy. Is it a pipe dream? Will the Liberal government do a bang-up job, as it did with the green economy? I heard my hon. colleague across the way mention the green economy and how well we are doing with it.

Last night, I was sitting in the airport awaiting my connection to almighty Ottawa. I was feeling curious about all things green, so I googled "lithium production in Canada". I found that Canada has large hard rock spodumene deposits and brine-based lithium resources, but Canada's lithium production is zero.

The Liberal government, with its lofty targets to have all light vehicles sold in Canada by 2035 be powered by electricity, and given the fact that we do not mine any lithium at the moment and that mines take 10 years to build in this country, is making a mockery of the green economy. We have almost as much lithium as we have red tape. That bit right there was to temper people's expectations and their hunger for electric vehicles. The only thing worse than a banana republic with no bananas is a green banana republic with no lithium to store its coal-generated electricity in. We do not have to look far to see what a pipe dream the green economy has been.

• (1640)

For those wondering about the blue economy, here in Canada, and especially in Atlantic Canada, this budget is nothing but a disappointment. We can guess how many times the blue economy is mentioned in the budget document. Members should hold on to their chairs, because they are in for a shocker: The blue economy is mentioned zero times.

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The Fisheries Council of Canada and the Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance have identified the opportunity to double the value of our seafood production by 2040. Thirty years ago, Canada was the number one seafood producer in the world. We now sit at number eight. To double our current production from \$8.5 billion to \$17 billion by 2040 is no small feat. It is a growth opportunity available to few other industries in Canada, but it needs attention now, because 2040 is not far away. Every budget that, like this one, neglects this growth opportunity and reduces our chances of supplying the 7% to 9% yearly increase in demand for seafood in the world, is a failure. Can members imagine? There is increased spending in this budget, \$59.5 billion over the next five years, with expectations to grow revenues without even mentioning an industry that could double its contribution to the Canadian economy.

This budget lacks in addressing economic growth opportunities in our coastal region through the blue economy, but it does not lose pace in what the Liberal government is really good at. Members know what I am talking about: increased spending with decreased results.

Last year, the promise was made to balance the budget in the next five years. Now the projection is to have a \$14-billion deficit by 2027-28. The Liberal government has doubled our nation's debt since 2015. The cost to Canadians since then has been \$3,000 each. Residents of my province of Newfoundland and Labrador are going to pay almost \$1,000 a year over the next several years to cover the interest alone on this federal debt.

Due to the inflationary spending, the average family of four in our province is going to pay an extra \$1,065 this year alone for food. The grocery credit that is being offered in this budget is simply a joke compared to what the people of Newfoundland and Labrador pay for groceries, and they know it. They also know that the federal carbon tax is going to cost them way more than they will get in the form of rebates.

The Liberals constantly refuted the fact that the carbon tax is going to cost Canadians more than they would receive in rebates. Their own environment minister finally let the cat out of the bag and agreed with the PBO. Households in my province will each pay an extra \$1,650 per year in carbon tax by the time it is said and done. The finance minister could have taken real measures, like scrapping the carbon tax and reining in spending to save our people money, but she did not.

The people of Newfoundland and Labrador are hurting. This budget will cause them to hurt more. Therefore, I cannot support the NDP-Liberal coalition's budget. It is not worth the paper it is written on.

• (1645)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): 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 Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Democratic Institutions; the hon. member for Kitchener Centre, Housing; and the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Carbon Pricing.

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know the member opposite cares about Newfoundlanders and Labradorians

almost as much as I do. He mentioned a couple of things in his speech, but before I get to the real question, I want to say that I am sorry to hear that he had a fire in his library recently. He lost a number of books, one of which he had not finished colouring.

The member mentioned the shipbuilding strategy. It was the Liberal government that established the shipbuilding strategy to make sure ships were built at home, in Canada. Can the member recall when the Conservative government cancelled the shipbuilding strategy altogether? It let our men and women in the Coast Guard work in rusty buckets. It was the Liberal government that straightened that out and continues to do so today.

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, I admire my colleague. I work with him on the fisheries committee. One thing we have heard time and time again at the fisheries committee is about the failure of the shipbuilding strategy. We have not had a trial survey of cod, capelin or many other species because the program failed. We have not had a survey of the northern cod since 2019, and that says lots about the shipbuilding strategy.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, May 1 is International Workers' Day. It is also the day of those who are losing their jobs. I am thinking of them today because there is nothing in the budget for the overhaul of employment insurance before 2030. It had been promised for summer 2022. After that, we were told it would happen in the fall of 2022. Now, we are being told it will happen in 2030. The government refuses to absorb the pandemic debt incurred by the EI fund and will be forced to increase its premiums and lower its benefits so the fund can accumulate its bloody surplus by 2030.

What does my colleague think of that on this May 1?

[*English*]

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, I do not know what to think of that. That is unbelievable and disgusting. I am glad that once in a while we can agree with the Bloc members a bit. I thank them for one particular time when they did agree with us and voted for my bill, Bill C-251. I really appreciate that.

On another point, they always disagree with me on Bay du Nord, but respectfully, we all try to get along and I thank my hon. colleague for the question.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, I wanted to ask the member about dental care in particular. People in my riding, like seniors, young families with kids and people with disabilities, have been struggling. We know that the most frequent surgeries in pediatric hospitals on children are oral surgeries. How can the member justify voting against providing this essential service, essential health care to Canadians who are in pain and struggling right now?

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• (1650)

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, that national dental program is nothing but washed-out election bait. Fewer than 10% of Canadians are going to be able to take advantage of that program. If they have nothing to eat, they will starve to death anyway.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, last year alone, the top five oil and gas companies in the country made record-breaking profits of over \$38 billion a year, in part because they gouged Canadians at the pump, increasing their profits by 18¢ a litre. The carbon tax went up by 2¢ a litre.

If the member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame claims to be so enraged by the carbon tax, why does he never talk about these excess profits or doing anything about them?

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, experts say that if it was not for our oil production and our gas production in Canada, our dollar would be about 35¢. I would ask my hon. colleague how much a head of lettuce would cost if our dollar was 35¢. It is bad enough now, when it is 75¢.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I go to the next speaker, I want to take a moment for something personal and wish my husband a happy 41st wedding anniversary today. If I cannot be there, I have to at least do that. As many of you know, we are often not able to be with our loved ones for special anniversaries or birthdays, and today is one of those days for me.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Spadina—Fort York.

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Madam Speaker, as someone who will be getting married in the summer, I hope you will pass on tips on how to have a happy long marriage, beyond just saying, “Yes, dear.”

Budget 2023 has some positive aspects, but they are achieved by abandoning the now politically inconvenient fiscal anchor, which was the Liberals' long-boasted-about measure of fiscal responsibility. The Liberals are also jettisoning the people who helped them first come to power in 2015: young people and the middle class, their electorally convenient but quickly forgotten voter base. Additionally, the budget threw Toronto under the bus. They are the same people whom the Liberals relied on to cling to power, but continue to ignore now that they are back in government.

Budget 2023 would not do enough to offset the challenges facing Canadians, especially the failure to combat the most pressing housing and cost of living crises in Canadian history. We are in a crisis. A recent report on housing affordability from the National Bank of Canada states that it now takes 311 months, or just about 26 years, for a Toronto household on a median income to save enough for a down payment for a home. I want to reiterate that point. The unit of measure that Torontonians are using to project when, if ever, they can own a home is fractions of a century. That is wrong.

What the government is doing is clearly not working. It should be consulting experts, yet it ignored the National Housing Council, which is the advisory body that the Liberals themselves set up in 2019. It called for \$6.3 billion over two years, beginning in 2022-2023. This call, I guess, was no longer politically useful, so it went by the wayside, as did the hopes and dreams of Canadians wanting to get their first home and those who have no home at all.

The failures of budget 2023 also point to an urgent need to rethink the national housing strategy. The government has sunk \$82 billion into the strategy, but so far has little show for it. Adequate and affordable housing has become a dream. The state of housing in Canada is in crisis.

With housing the way it is, it is no surprise that homelessness is getting worse in Canada, yet the homeless crisis in our country was mentioned all of three times, and not in anything of substance or real policy, just three buzzwords. Sadly, if we examine the national housing strategy from the perspective of homelessness, even the Auditor General has found that the strategy “is not resulting in measurable decreases in chronic homelessness.”

The strategy is failing to meet its goal of cutting in half core housing needs and eliminating homelessness by 2030, yet despite having the independently researched and confirmed analysis of the government's failure to address homelessness by the Auditor General, budget 2023 does not include measures to improve homelessness in the national housing strategy. Homelessness in Canada is a crisis.

Canadians are facing some tough challenges, and it is not getting any better. In fact, it has gotten worse. Canadians have been hit with inflation, especially in food; increasing interest rates; and an economy sputtering along toward a potentially mild recession. I heard from Amy in my riding, who lives with celiac disease. She shared how rising inflation in food costs is especially hard for her and for everyone in Canada living with this lifelong condition.

We have new records being set, all of them the wrong records, on seemingly a monthly basis by food banks. In March, 270,000 people, which is the equivalent of more than four Skydomes, or Rogers Centres, or over 13 full Scotiabank Arenas, visited a food bank just to ensure that they did not go hungry. Worse still, the Daily Bread Food Bank has warned that among the fastest-growing number of food bank users are people with full-time jobs.

I want to zero in on Toronto, where these three crises of housing, homelessness and inflation have come together to present Torontonians with some of the most challenging barriers right now to their prosperity and the future of our city.

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• (1655)

On March 29, the deputy mayor of Canada's largest city, and the engine of our Canadian economy, bluntly stated that the federal government shut the city out of the federal budget. Deputy Mayor Jennifer McKelvie further stated that the government ignored a direct financial commitment it had made to Toronto during the last federal election to assist the city with ongoing COVID costs largely associated with transit and shelter.

At a time when the government wants to tout this budget as one focused on growth, it is unwilling to acknowledge that Toronto is in a state of recovery. The city is facing a budget shortfall in 2023 of \$933 million. There is a lot at stake. To touch on a few major things, the city's ability to provide social services and to operate the largest transit system in Canada comes to mind.

The transit system is facing line cuts and decreased TTC ridership. Services combatting homelessness and the provision of social and mental health services are stretched to the brink. Our city is also facing policing reductions, even with increases in violent crime. Moreover, Toronto did receive federal assistance for a refugee shelter in 2022, but heard nothing for this year. What does the federal government think happened to the refugees? Did they just go home? No other municipality in Canada operates its transit and social services at the same levels as Toronto with three million residents.

Let us discuss an election promise. After almost a year and a half after getting re-elected, the government will finally remove the interest on Canada student loans and apprenticeship loans. There is no better investment a country can make than in its youth. I am grateful that the Liberals will finally honour an election promise.

Sure, it took me holding it accountable in my question to the minister responsible on February 17, 2022, and calling it out on September 23, 2022, when they quietly tried to sneak into the Canada Gazette the expiration of the loan interest waiver for students. I was more than happy to do the heavy lifting for the government with my private member's bill, Bill C-301, which mapped out exactly what needed to be done.

I am sure it was just a coincidence that, after the National Post featured my bill on November 2, and how the Liberals would have to potentially be forced to vote against their own election promise, the very next day, on November 3, the Liberals finally declared to the nation, in the fall economic statement, that they would do what they had promised.

If only the government could also move on creating a national pharmacare program. It would also help if it removed the tax it applied to all of the other taxes on gasoline. Surely, the government would agree with me that taxing taxes is wrong.

I also want to highlight that, while the government proudly boasts about child care, which I support, it does not contain a workforce strategy or advance higher wages for child care and personal support workers, as promised by the Liberal Party in the 2021 election. Affordable child care is great, but only if one has the spots and the child care workers to actually care for the children.

Budget 2023 could be viewed as a stopgap document, one that gives the government time to prepare for its next election platform. However, Torontonians and Canadians should not have their needs held in abeyance to the Liberal Party's re-election hopes down the road. Canadians want action now, not later.

Many Canadians are facing tough times and are having to make tough choices. With higher interest rates and the ensuing rising costs associated with inflation, Canadians are seeing higher food prices, higher housing costs, increased energy costs, and higher rent and mortgage payments. Canadians are feeling the pinch, and not just the low-income Canadians. Some of the government's much-discussed middle class are now visiting food banks. If they were looking for the government to help them, budget 2023 does not look like it is the answer.

• (1700)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there are many aspects of what the member has indicated that I would suggest are somewhat misleading. If we take a look at all of the accomplishments the government has been successful in through working with the City of Toronto and the whole 905 and 416 area, I think we would find that it has been overwhelmingly successful on the issue of infrastructure.

We can compare that to the Conservative years. We have accomplished so much more in a far shorter period of time, on a wide spectrum of things. Could the member indicate if he believes the Conservative Party would be doing a better job?

Mr. Kevin Vuong: Madam Speaker, I feel a need to remind my colleague that the Conservative government has not been in power for eight years.

Moreover, I also want to reiterate, because I had this discussion with my colleague during a late show, that there is a difference between capital expenditures and operating expenditures. He loves to talk about the infrastructure the federal government has helped Toronto invest in, but that is like the bus the Liberals have thrown our city under. The operating expenditures are the gas and money which allow it to ride over us, reverse and run over us again. There is a vital difference. What we are missing is money for the operating expenses.

Which TTC bus routes would it like cancelled? Which homeless shelters should we close? Which ambulances, police cars and fire trucks should we have mothballed?

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague across the way for his intervention. It was enjoyable to hear him speak. With his experience and knowing what he knows, right off the top he talked about how the Liberals lost their way with that fiscal anchor. We have a debt so high right now that people are using food banks, as he mentioned.

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However, the point I want to hone in on is child care. As the critic for child care, I think he brought up a very interesting point we are working on at committee right now, which is access.

This budget does not address the fact that thousands of families cannot access affordable child care. This is hurting women everywhere. They cannot go back to work because they cannot find child care. What are his thoughts on the budget and how they are allocating money to child care?

Mr. Kevin Vuong: Madam Speaker, 40% of my constituents work in the financial district, so this nation's fiscal responsibility, or perhaps the government's lack thereof, is something that matters to people in Spadina—Fort York.

I get questions from expecting women and new mothers quite frequently about day care spots and when they can expect them to permeate our communities. I think it unfortunately reflects on the government's ability to have the great headlines, but a lack of follow-through. I think it is something that many Canadians, myself included, are very concerned about.

• (1705)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, today is International Workers' Day.

My colleague just spoke about an issue that affects women, namely child care. Employment insurance is another issue that disproportionately affects women.

On this International Workers' Day, would my colleague acknowledge that, in the last budget, money should have been invested in a truly comprehensive reform of EI in order to address these shortcomings that penalize women?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Vuong: Madam Speaker, one of the challenges I see with the government is that it is willing to spend money, but it does not get good value for it. Whether it is with EI, as my colleague brought up, or we pick any number of the other investments it loves to tout, the government lacks a plan and follow-through. I cannot help but ask why.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to say good afternoon to my hon. and esteemed colleagues. Through you, I wish all of my colleagues a productive and healthy week. I hope their families are all doing well.

It is with great pleasure that I rise today to speak to Bill C-47, the budget implementation act, which contains many measures that will continue to strengthen and grow the middle class, and yes, help those working hard to join it.

It is a bill that contains many measures that were brought forward in budget 2023, and it is great to be able to speak to them. Bill C-47 is about putting Canadians and their families first and building an economy that works for all Canadians, all while ensuring a sustainable and strong fiscal path that will allow us to meet the challenges of today and, just as important, the unknowns of tomorrow.

One thing that is abundantly clear is that Canada and Canadians are ready to meet the challenges of the world we live in today head-on and with our heads up. Our talented and entrepreneurial citizenry; abundance of natural resources; trade agreements, including CUSMA, CETA and CPTPP; and our strong fiscal position put us in a favourable moment relative to our global peers in a seminal moment in the world's economic and political history.

Bill C-47 contains a number of measures that I know will assist the most vulnerable Canadians and provide the assistance they need with the elevated everyday expenses we all face. In a challenging time period, we will always have the backs of Canadians when the cost of living is high.

In Bill C-47, we see the grocery rebate. It will begin arriving shortly to literally millions of Canadians, those who need it most and are impacted most by the elevated costs of everyday essentials. Eleven million Canadians and their families will receive these payments, with up to \$467 for eligible couples with two children, for example, and up to an extra \$234 for single Canadians without children and an extra \$225 for seniors, on average. These funds can be used to pay for groceries or everyday essentials. Again, we have the backs of Canadians. This is a prudent and fiscally sensible measure, and at the current juncture, it is the right thing to do.

Bill C-47 contains an important change to the Canada workers benefit. I will use the term "automatic advance", which will see automatic advance payments of the benefit to people who qualified for it in the previous year, starting July 2023 for the 2023 taxation year. This \$4-billion investment over the next five years will ensure that advanced payments based on income reported in the prior year's tax return and any additional entitlements for the year would be provided when filing one's tax return for the year.

This measure would provide, for example, a split among three advance payments, with up to \$714 for single workers and \$1,231 for a family. The CWB assists literally millions of low-income Canadians on an annual basis. It is one of the most powerful policy instruments, lifting families and individuals out of poverty; this is the third enhancement to the Canada workers benefit that our government has put into place since we came into power in 2015. It is very important fiscal policy; it is a very important taxation instrument, which assists low-income Canadians who are working. It encourages them to increase their hours of availability, increase their incomes and, because they are working so hard, move toward joining the middle class.

On dental care, one thing all parliamentarians quickly realize is that dental care is a precious item and that seniors especially need assistance with the cost of dental care. I have a wonderful relationship with the seniors in my riding. In a few weeks, I will start attending many barbecues and outings with the seniors in my community. I know, for instance, that most seniors do not have dental insurance. When they go to the dentist, the bill they get can set them back for the entire month. We know that seniors are generally on fixed incomes, and the vulnerable ones are particularly susceptible to one-off expenses, such as an expensive trip to the dentist.

Many people going into retirement do not have insurance coverage, and we know that we need to change that. Seniors should not need to worry about going to the dentist versus paying their energy bills and buying food. They will not need to worry about that starting this year.

• (1710)

Bill C-47 contains the enabling legislation that, once fully implemented, would provide dental coverage for up to nine million Canadians by 2025. This year, our government plans to start coverage for uninsured Canadians under 18, persons with disabilities and seniors who have annual family incomes of less than \$90,000. Notably, there would be no copays for those with annual family incomes under \$70,000. This measure of dental care for seniors is a game-changer for Canadians and their families, as well as for the over 20,000 seniors who reside in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge, the many more thousands of seniors who reside in the city of Vaughan and, of course, the many millions who reside across Canada.

We all know that small businesses are the backbone of our communities. There are over 13,000 small and medium-sized businesses in the city of Vaughan. I am, and will always be, their biggest champion. The city of Vaughan is the largest economic engine in York Region, sharing over 40% of the GDP and employing hundreds of thousands of workers.

We must, as a government, cut the red tape that small businesses face and reduce their costs. We are doing that, as we have secured commitments from both Visa and Mastercard to lower fees for small businesses; we are also protecting reward points for millions of Canadian consumers. More than 90% of credit card-accepting businesses will see their interchange fees reduced by up to 27% from the existing average rate. These reductions are anticipated to save eligible small businesses in Canada approximately \$1 billion over the next five years. For example, a small business charging using credit cards with interchange fees, say, on \$300,000 could potentially save over \$1,000 up to almost \$1,500. That is real money back in their pockets.

To continue to grow the Canadian economy, we will introduce a suite of new investment tax credits designed to attract and accelerate investments in clean electricity, clean technology manufacturing, and clean hydrogen and nuclear, as well as to ensure that foreign direct investment comes to Canada and that domestic companies are investing in Canada and Canadian workers. Fundamentally, as I have said before in the House, I believe that when we look back in a few years to the decisions that parliamentarians make today, we will find that we were at a critical juncture in the ongoing

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transition in the world economy. We need to make sure that we make the right choices today to continue to grow our economy, raise the standard of living for all Canadians and ensure that all Canadians, including my kids, have a bright future. That is exactly what we are doing.

We know that, at some point in their lives, young Canadians and newcomers will turn their attention to purchasing a first home. A home is not just an investment. It is where people create memories of their families, their loved ones and their friends. A home is where people create futures. A measure that I have talked about within my community is opening a tax-free first home savings account, which could be done as of April 1; I encourage all individuals who are eligible to do so. This account takes the best features of the TFSA and RRSP and combines them into one, as I will now explain.

First, the contributions made into the tax-free home savings account are tax deductible, so you lower taxes payable today. Second, the contributions in the first home savings account grow tax-free, which is wonderful. Even more importantly, much like a TFSA, when going to purchase a first home, the contributions are removed on a tax-free basis. In the years to come, this will be a powerful tool and a powerful account for many Canadians when purchasing their first home, condo, townhouse or detached dwelling in the GTA or across the country. A maximum of \$40,000 can be put into this account, with a maximum yearly contribution of \$8,000. This is a powerful instrument to help Canadians purchase their first home.

In my remaining time, I want to add a few comments about where I think Canada is and where it is going. Fundamentally, as parliamentarians, we have a duty to represent the interests of our constituents and advocate for them. I like to say I am a strong local voice in Ottawa for the residents of Vaughan—Woodbridge. We have to make choices, which is what governing is about. At this moment in time, we are making the right choices for our economy and for Canadians. We are making the right choices to grow and strengthen our middle class and help those working hard to join the middle class.

I will leave everyone with this last thought: I was at the Council of Europe last week, leading the Canadian delegation with a number of MPs and senators. In speaking to the Ukrainian delegation, which we met with several times, I asked what home was going to look like when they got back there. I will finish up—

• (1715)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to stop the hon. member.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Niagara Falls.

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Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his comments, but there are consequences to this government spending the cupboards bare.

I wonder if the member could speak to whether he is as disappointed as I was, when I reviewed budget 2023, that there was no mention of the wine replacement program. In last year's budget, the government identified that it would be generating \$390 million because of the excise tax now being applied to 100% Canadian wine. That \$166 million, two-year replacement program ended last year, and the government has refused to provide details on whether it is going to be extended. Could the member speak to that?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Niagara Falls asks a very diligent and informed question.

As chair of the wine caucus, I will continue to advocate for the program to continue. Along with many other members of Parliament from across all aisles, I advocated for the initial wine replacement program that was put in place. We will ensure that our voice carries on so that the industry continues to grow. I know many winery owners down in that area; people have invested a lot of money to grow tourism, culture and art and create jobs, and I will be there to support this.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, after the 2021 election, we got a clear message from Canadians. They wanted us to come back and actually make this Parliament work and not just stand in the corner, light our hair on fire, jump up and down, and scream.

I wanted to focus on the climate crisis through the need to invest in well-paying jobs to build a clean-energy economy. We spent the last year negotiating with the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of Labour.

I want to ask my hon. colleague about the importance of finally getting the tax credit incentives that are tied to well-paying union jobs and apprenticeships. We have \$85 billion to kick-start a clean-tech economy, a revolution that Calgary Economic Development says will create 170,000 jobs in Alberta alone. Why do the Conservatives continue to oppose anything that has to do with a clean-tech economy?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I know the hon. member from northern Ontario quite well; I have worked closely with him and had trouble with him as well.

I will say that we can only strengthen and grow the middle class and help those joining the middle class with jobs that pay good salaries with good benefits. Those jobs are, to a large extent, union jobs here in Canada.

I have the two largest construction unions in the private sector in my riding. Their training facilities and headquarters are in my riding. I know the type of training that they provide to their members and the types of jobs for the future. I will always be there to support them.

I was pleased to join the Prime Minister in St. Thomas, Ontario, for the announcement by Volkswagen AG and its power affiliate of a \$7-billion investment right here in the province of Ontario. All levels of government are collaborating and working together to cre-

ate jobs and create those bright futures that all Canadians deserve from coast to coast to coast.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, yet again, I hear the Liberals touting the grocery rebate as proof that they are finally going to help people out of their current financial difficulties. Would my colleague not agree with every seniors group in Quebec when they say that it is hard to argue with a good thing, but that what they really need is an increase in old age security for all seniors starting at age 65?

The inequality between the two classes of seniors unfairly created by the Liberals must stop. The government should agree to extend the 10% increase to seniors aged 65 to 74 as well. There is also the guaranteed income supplement. The government could also have provided an enhanced tax credit for experienced workers. There are other options that could have helped seniors over a much longer term.

• (1720)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, It is very important to help everyone who is retired. For example, all benefits are indexed to inflation.

[*English*]

I believe old age security went up by 6% this year, along with the other benefits, because they are automatically indexed to inflation. In addition, we obviously raised the old age security benefit by 10% for those seniors above 75. If we look at the statistics, we know that most vulnerable seniors who are living in poverty are above age 75.

We have been there to help all seniors, of course, since 2015; our record speaks for itself. We must continue to help all seniors.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, hope is the glue that holds us together and allows us to go on when we think we cannot. It is a powerful force that has carried humans through the worst of times. In order to have hope, we must face reality. We must acknowledge the truth.

I ask everyone at home if they are happy with the cost of living. Are they happy with the rise of crime? Are they happy with the homelessness crisis? Are they happy with the addiction crisis? Are they happy with our country?

The truth is the government, which is currently the Liberal-NDP coalition, cannot give us anything it has not taken away from us. The government does not have any money. It has our hard-earned money, and every dollar it spends is our dollar earned.

Government Orders

The most important piece of legislation that is voted on in this House is the budget, which we are debating today. The budget tells Canadians where the priorities of the government are. The budget determines the future of our children and our grandchildren. The Liberal-NDP coalition has doubled government spending, yet nothing in this country is twice as good. In fact, it is twice as bad. Housing prices have doubled, rent has doubled and health care wait times for treatment have doubled.

The overdose rate in this country is 300% higher than when the Prime Minister took office. Each day, 22 people in this country die from an overdose. Do people know how much money is allocated in the Liberal budget for treatment and recovery? None. The Liberal Prime Minister continues to fund people to stay stuck where they are in their disease of addiction, rather than funding off-ramps to help them break free. Remember the 2021 election promise of \$4.5 billion in a mental health transfer? The Liberals must have forgotten about it because it is nowhere to be found in the Liberal-NDP budget.

The truth is Canadians are suffering. There are many Canadians who make good money, almost \$100,000 a year, yet these same people with full-time jobs are relying on food banks. Food banks across this country are reporting record high usage, the highest in history. We are a G7 country and middle-class Canadians are relying on food banks, so we can imagine how awful life must be for our most vulnerable, including seniors on fixed incomes.

Albert from my riding is a widowed senior on a fixed income. His gas bill tripled with the carbon tax, and he is angry and scared. How does the Prime Minister expect Albert to pay his bills?

People are suffering in a way that many have never experienced. Innocent people are being stabbed in broad daylight while onlookers video it, because, under the Prime Minister, there are no consequences in this country. Our bail system is broken and there is nothing in this budget to fix it.

In a cost of living crisis, we have forced women out of choice, like the choice to go back to work because they cannot access child care. Yes, the Liberals will tell people their \$10-a-day child care has saved the nation. I can tell everyone with certainty the detail the Liberals left out is that only a select few can access it. This is another classic winners and losers Liberal bill. There are thousands of families left out because there are no spaces and there is no labour strategy to help with the labour shortage. Women cannot go to work because they cannot access child care and the wait-lists are years long.

One female child care operator wrote on a public forum this morning, "Why are so many child care providers closing? Well, I just filed my taxes and 56% of incoming funds went directly back into my program. They are closing because they cannot afford to stay open." This is another anti-feminism Liberal bill.

Nine out of ten young people have given up the dream of ever owning a home. Many young people say they will never start a family because they do not think they can afford to bring a child into this world.

People are applying for medical assistance in dying because they cannot afford rent or food. Seniors are freezing because they cannot

afford to turn on the heat. There is no accountability, there is no transparency and it has eroded trust in the government and leaders.

What is happening? How did we get here, and more importantly, how do we get out of this? We need hope but we need to face the facts to change the facts. It is time to acknowledge that what the Liberals are doing, what the Liberals have been doing, is not working.

• (1725)

The current Liberal government is so far down a rabbit hole, it does not know how to get out. Instead of acknowledging the suffering it has created, its members double down on their failed policies. Every day in this House of Commons during question period, a Liberal MP or minister tells Canadians how great things are and what a great job they are doing, and it is simply insulting to Canadians who are barely getting by.

The New Democrats are just as guilty. They too have failed to acknowledge that their coalition is not helping Canadians, but it is hurting them.

Social programs rely on a healthy economy in order to secure sustainable funding. The government has run up the highest ever debt. Yes, the Prime Minister has accumulated more debt than all other prime ministers combined. Canada's debt is \$1.18 trillion. That is a pretty tough number to imagine. There is \$44 billion spent on interest. Just for comparison, the government spends \$24 billion on EI and \$25 billion on the Canada child benefit. That means the Liberal government spends almost double the amount servicing its debt compared to supporting social programs to support Canadians.

The current Liberal government is hurting Canadians, and it has no intention of stopping.

It is important to try different approaches, but it is also important to recognize when those approaches are not working.

We tried safe drug supply, and more people are dying and living on the street. We tried spending more, and now life is unaffordable. We tried to be soft on crime, and now violent crime is up almost 40% under this Trudeau government—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member knows she cannot use names of current members of Parliament.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, it took me a minute.

Government Orders

We tried to decriminalize drugs. Addiction has skyrocketed, and there is zero money allocated in the 2023 budget for treatment and recovery, but there is more money allocated for more hard drugs. We tried to tax carbon, and it is costing Canadians thousands of dollars and crippling our farmers. We tried to save everyone by saying nice things and not following through, and the results are catastrophic.

It is not working. Enough is enough. We need to stop doing the same thing and expecting different results. We must stop telling people what they want to hear, and tell them the facts. We must give people hope.

Everything has an expiry date, and the current Liberal government has far exceeded its own. We need to change course, and we can. We need honest, accountable leadership that puts people and fiscal responsibility first. We need to show Canada that everyone is important. We need to show Canada that we do not need divisive labels to separate people. It does not matter our gender, age, ethnicity or religion, we are all Canadian, and we all deserve to be free from a government that believes it knows best.

Canadians are smart, and they do not need a government telling them how or where to spend their money or what media to watch. They do not need a government clawing back their hard-earned paycheques with nonsensical taxes. It is time for a government that evolves with the people, but more importantly works for the people, and working for the people means listening to the people.

The people have spoken. They are hungry, afraid and in need of housing. Conservatives can fix this; it will take time and patience, but we have the facts that bring us a plan, and a plan brings hope. We are here for Canadians, and that means fighting every day to reveal the hard facts of what is not working and putting forth solutions to bring the people together.

The first solution is to ask the members in this House to face the facts and vote this terrible budget down.

• (1730)

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a quote for the member opposite.

As she knows, I have spent considerable time in her riding of Peterborough—Kawartha, and this quote is as follows: “Safer supply...is what's giving us hope”. This is a quote from Peterborough Currents, an organization that provides harm reduction for many of the member's constituents who suffer from addiction. Participants in this safer supply pilot program in downtown Peterborough continue to receive prescription opioids for as long as they need them, because of investments we have made to support people through the process of ending their addictions and saving their lives.

I know there are many different ways and many different opinions in this House of Commons, but there is only one evidence-based approach, and I would like to hear comments from the member opposite on what she would say to her constituents in Peterborough on this life-saving remedy.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, I have been very vocal in my community of Peterborough—Kawartha. Safe supply and our

consumption treatment service has been very helpful. I have advocated for them and worked with the Minister of Health through our MSORT funding.

The problem with this budget, as I said in my speech, is there is no off-ramp. The member opposite actually misled this House by saying that safe supply has stopped their addiction. That is untrue. It is life-saving. It is important to build relationships. The problem is that in this budget there is no off-ramp for treatment and recovery. There is no money for transitional housing with wraparound supports. There is no money allocated to help people break free from the disease, only to keep them stuck in the merry-go-round that is actually hurting our ERs as well.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, in her speech, my colleague said that nothing is working here in Canada. The Bloc Québécois also finds that most of the time the government is just treading water, when there is a lot more that could be done for Canadians.

For example, the government launched two consultations focusing on agriculture. With regard to the first consultation, Bill C-294 and Bill C-244 were just examined in committee, so why is this consultation necessary?

With regard to the second consultation, the government wants to consult the provincial and territorial governments to help farmers with urgent financial needs. Why hold another consultation when the government just negotiated the agricultural policy framework?

Does my colleague have a word to describe that? It is as though we are taking one step forward and two steps back.

I will let my colleague come up with a word to describe the government's approach on this.

[*English*]

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, my colleague from the Bloc hit the nail on the head. This place is extremely frustrating. Let us have a meeting about a meeting and make a subcommittee about a subcommittee about facts that we already have. These reports and consultations just reinforce what needs to be done.

It is just infuriating to waste taxpayers' money on inaction when there are things that we know need to be fixed and they are not doing anything about them. They just continue to have more meetings and more consultations that waste more taxpayers' money.

We need more action and less talk.

Government Orders

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, I wanted to ask about the idea of an excess profit tax. The member spoke about some of the struggles that Canadians are facing, about the high cost of living. We also know that grocery store chains and big oil and gas companies have been gouging Canadians. One way to address that is to put in place an excess profit tax that would disincentivize that kind of price gouging. The Liberals have been unwilling to tackle corporate greed. The Conservatives do not seem to be talking about corporate greed and the role it has in inflation and the rising cost of living.

I am curious about the member's opinion on this.

• (1735)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, I am just searching here. I was actually going to put this in my speech because it is a really interesting meeting that I had recently with not-for-profits and charities across the country. They are a critical industry that serves one in 10 jobs.

It is an alternative minimum tax that has actually been raised in this budget. It is going to have catastrophic consequences because what it does is to disincentivize. Many of the not-for-profits and charities rely on corporations and private donors to meet their fundraising goals. This alternative minimum tax, given the way it is written about in the budget, will disincentivize, crippling the not-for-profits and charities that are primarily, I believe 70%, run by women.

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to take part in this debate on Bill C-47, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023.

Over the past number of years, I have heard from my constituents about how difficult life is getting to sustain. They want to take care of their families and ensure they are doing well, that they are living comfortably and that they are continuing to be part of the middle class and among those who are working really hard to join the middle class. We have worked so hard over the past seven and some years to ensure that those Canadians are able to sustain themselves. Whether it is through reducing taxes on the middle classes and increasing them for the wealthiest; including early learning and child care within our Canadian system; enhancing health care; or providing supports for small businesses and students, we have been working hard to ensure that the middle class thrives.

I know, because I hear from my constituents, that people in the middle class have had trouble and have really been struggling over the past year to thrive. That is not just a Canadian problem. It is a global catastrophe that economies across the world are dealing with. However, we are really lucky that here in Canada we are doing well in comparison to the rest of the world. We are doing better than most G7 nations. We are doing better by our middle class. We are doing better by our students, by our single mothers and by our children to ensure that they are thriving despite the challenges they are faced with not just here in Canada but across the world.

Budget 2023, then, is really significant. It is really important that we make sure that those working hard to join the middle class and those who are a part of the middle class are well supported as we

buckle down and ensure that we get through this and weather the storm.

What I really appreciate about budget 2023 and what I hear from my constituents is what I would like to highlight today in my remarks. That includes our grocery rebate, which would really impact the middle class in my community. They will be able to keep the lights on, work and take care of everybody in the family on a regular basis.

The budget means cracking down on junk fees to ensure that businesses are transparent with their prices. That is another way to ensure that access to the economy and to capital is fair and equitable so that those who need support are able to get support without having to be gouged for it.

The budget also means securing commitments from Visa and Mastercard to lower fees for small businesses and cracking down on predatory lending. What that means to my community and my riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills, which is a significant small business community, is that small business owners who hire five, 10, 15, 20 or 50 people in my riding will be able to save and make their overhead costs balance out because of the reduction in credit card fees. It is a big deal. It is something that I have been hearing from my constituents on a very regular basis, and I am so happy that budget 2023 ensures that we tackle this issue. This is a really important issue that businesses in my community and across Canada deal with.

Since 2015, our government's focus has been on investing in the middle class. It has been about growing the economy. It has been about strengthening Canada's social safety net and making life more affordable for Canadians. We know that investments in our economy are basically investments in Canadians. Canadians do not need handouts; they need a leg-up.

• (1740)

Canadians have the capacity to take care of themselves. They just want a foundation, that equality of opportunity, and, when they are down, to know that their government will look out for them. That is exactly what this government represents.

The important budget measures I have outlined really provide additional support for inflation relief. They will help put money in the pockets of people who need it the most and who need help to make life affordable. I have advocated for these measures in my role as the previous chair of the women's caucus and in my community. I am hearing directly from my constituents to ensure that their voices are carried here in this chamber.

Government Orders

In budget 2023, the government outlines how targeted inflation relief is going to support Canadians, including the proposed grocery rebate, which will support the many Canadians and families struggling to put food on the table due to the rising cost of groceries. For 11 million low- and modest-income Canadians and families, the one-time rebate would provide eligible couples with two children with up to an extra \$467, single Canadians without children with up to an extra \$234 and seniors with an extra \$225 on average. This would be delivered through the GST credit system.

By targeting the grocery rebate to Canadians who need it the most, the government will be able to provide important relief without making inflation worse. Let me be clear: It is going to get better for Canadians.

As I mentioned, we know that inflation is still too high, and the steep increase in interest rates has caused economic pain for a lot of Canadians, including small businesses, which need to pay more for their lines of credit to keep business rolling and keep capital circulating. We saw that the pandemic led to an increase in people using credit cards when they shop. Canadian small businesses pay significant fees to provide Canadians with the ability to process credit card transactions. The largest component of that is the interchange fee paid to credit card issuers.

To support hard-working small business owners, budget 2023 has outlined the government's efforts to work closely with small businesses and the payment card industry to lower these fees. This includes the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, which represents over 97,000 small and medium-sized enterprises. I have had the pleasure to sit down with some of them and learn more about the challenges that small businesses, these mom-and-pop shops across our country, go through on a regular basis and how we can help.

This issue has been a number one issue not just for this year but for many years. I was really happy to see that budget 2023 addresses it with a concrete measure that is going to make small businesses more and more sustainable when doing their daily transactions as the consumer base changes and as transactions happen.

In budget 2023, the government announced that it secured commitments from Visa and Mastercard to lower fees for small businesses, while also protecting reward points for Canadian consumers, because Canadians love their reward points. Over 90% of credit card-accepting businesses in Canada will benefit from these small reductions. Small businesses will see their interchange fees reduced by up to 27% from the existing weighted average rate.

I know I have been a bit passionate in my remarks so far, and there is so much more I want to talk about, but in conclusion I just want to say how important it is for us as a government to support the little guy, whether it is students who are getting out of school and who now no longer have to pay interest on their student loans, the small business person who now has lower interest fees on credit cards or the small families having difficulty putting food on their tables that are now able to access the grocery rebate. This budget is about Canadians, and I am so happy to support it.

• (1745)

Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for her recognition, quite frankly, that people are frustrated financially at this moment in time. I can honestly say that even in my riding, where I have been elected since 2019, the number of calls and emails I have had from blue-collar and middle-class Canadians has gone up drastically. I think part of the blame needs to be on the government's shoulders.

We have heard again that this is a global issue. Well, at some point in time I think the government needs to reflect on that. Does the member not agree that lowering the carbon tax and putting less spending in the budget would, in the end, lower interest rates and make life better for Canadians?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Madam Speaker, as much as the member would disagree, the government supports that were given during the most difficult time for Canadians in our history, which was COVID-19, helped them keep their lights on and put food on the table.

If it means that Canadians can live and sustain themselves as our economy improves and as the global economy improves, our government should definitely be there for Canadians to make sure we are their safety net while the global—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. It seemed like she was playing the violin for us, but it was all sounding a bit off-key.

My colleague spoke about waiving the interest on student loans. Today, students are out in front of the Parliament buildings as part of "Support Our Science" day because the federal government has not indexed student grants for 20 years. Student grants have not been indexed to the cost of living for the past 20 years, yet my colleague is boasting about supporting students. What is even more shameful is that her party did not even show up at the multi-party press conference.

I would like to ask my colleague the following question. Can she name one thing that has not been indexed to the cost of living in the past 20 years other than grants for graduate students?

[*English*]

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Madam Speaker, I think the only thing that is shameful is that we do not highlight the good work the government does, regardless of which government it is.

Over the past seven years, not only have we increased Canada student grants and increased our investment in the Canada summer jobs program, but just now, through budget 2023, we have ensured that no interest will be paid on student loans. I think a collaboration needs to happen between provincial governments, which are responsible for the education sector, and the federal government. I encourage the member to encourage his own government at the provincial level to get on board to ensure that students across the country are well taken care of.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to raise the issue of pharmacare, because so many people in my riding are struggling with the cost of living. When they also have to struggle with the cost of essential medication, it makes life so hard. No one should have to choose between putting food on the table and buying the medication they need.

I have talked to people who are cutting their pills in half and who are skipping doses. I know cases of people who have ended up in the hospital because they are not able to afford their essential medication.

The Liberals have been promising pharmacare for over two decades, but there was no mention of it in this budget. Along with my NDP colleagues, I am going to be pushing the government very hard this year to table legislation for universal single-payer pharmacare. It is a solution that would actually save Canadians money. Billions of dollars each year would be saved. Why, in this year's budget—

• (1750)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the hon. member the opportunity to answer.

The hon. member for Mississauga—Erin Mills.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Madam Speaker, the member is absolutely right that Canadians struggle with affordable pharmacare. I think we need to work on that with our provincial and territorial partners to ensure Canadians are well taken care of.

I know that seniors have the ability to access affordable pharmacare at this time, and young people do as well. However, we need to come together and make sure we have a robust system that is supportive of everybody, especially those who are working really hard to join the middle class.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Madam Speaker, as always, it is a pleasure and a privilege to rise in the House today to contribute to the debate at second reading on Bill C-47, the budget implementation act, 2023, No. 1.

I said it is a pleasure and a privilege to rise because it is always a pleasure and a privilege to rise to express the concerns of the people of Perth—Wellington. While it is a pleasure and a privilege to rise, I am nonetheless disappointed and frustrated with the budget. Like many in the House, I feel like this is a case of déjà vu. Once again, Canadians are looking to the government for a budget to address their needs, yet all we have seen from the government is another failed budget.

Bill C-47 is the first step in implementing parts of the flawed 2023 budget, which the Minister of Finance presented on March 28.

Government Orders

That budget, as presented, would produce a \$43-billion deficit. Recently, the Parliamentary Budget Officer said that could balloon even higher to \$45.1 billion. This is from a government that has already driven the national debt up to nearly \$1.5 trillion.

Let us take a walk down deficit memory lane. What we see with the government is continuous overspending by spending more and achieving less. March 31, 2017, one year after the Liberals introduced their first budget, the national debt had already, at that point, climbed to \$631 billion. A year later, it jumped up by \$40 billion to \$671 billion.

By 2019, the year before the COVID pandemic, the national debt spiked to \$685 billion. A year ago, the deficit had jumped to \$1.13 trillion. Now, in budget 2023, the Minister of Finance has told us that the national debt will reach \$1.22 trillion by the end of this fiscal year.

This debt is a direct result of poor decision-making by the Liberal government. Only last November, the Minister of Finance rose in this place and told us the deficit for this year would be \$30.6 billion. Five months later it was \$40.1 billion.

In this budget, the cost of servicing the national debt is projected to nearly double to \$43.9 billion. This \$43.9 billion is just going to pay the interest on servicing the national debt. That is \$43.9 billion that is not going to the Canada health transfer; not going to build better roads, bridges and wastewater treatment plants in Perth—Wellington, Simcoe—Grey or any riding across the country; not going to help ensure that the Canadian Armed Forces has the equipment it needs to do the important job asked of it; not going to help Canadians afford their rent; not going to prevent poverty; and not going to fully implement the Canada disability benefit. All that \$43.9 billion is going toward is the interest owed to wealthy bond holders on the national debt.

We have been told in the past that we just need to look at the debt-to-GDP ratio, that it will continue to go down. For this year and next year, it is once again going to be going in the opposite direction.

In budget 2022, the Minister of Finance promised there would be a fiscal anchor. Well, that anchor has been dropped. For eight years, we were told this would be good. That we would see results from this deficit spending. Once again, we are seeing Canadians struggling to make ends meet.

Government Orders

If there is one topic I hear about time and time again in Perth—Wellington, it is housing. In every community in Perth—Wellington, where just a few years ago housing was affordable, it is now out of reach for those the government likes to call the middle class and those working hard to join it. My generation and younger, those under 40, are not seeing the hope there once was of owning their own home.

● (1755)

The government has created large, expensive programs without success. The national housing strategy has been a failure. The housing accelerator fund has been a failure. The Canada housing benefit has been a failure. When it comes to affordable housing, the Liberal government has been a failure.

Unfortunately, Bill C-47 will not address the growing problem of housing unaffordability. They promised one thing and delivered nothing.

Like many members, I often hear from young families, seniors and folks who are trying to make ends meet. They are telling us that they cannot afford their groceries. They are cutting back. They are making alternatives. They are skipping meals, yet what we see in the Liberal government is a failure to address the root causes of rising prices.

Its ineffective and inefficient carbon tax is forcing Canadian families to pay more for less. Canada's Food Price Report predicts that a family of four will spend up to \$1,065 more this year than last year. This is after last year, in which there was an increase of nearly \$1,100. If the Minister of Finance were serious about reducing the costs of food for struggling Canadian families, there is an easy way to fix it, and that is to remove the carbon tax from all elements of food production.

The carbon tax has served to make life more expensive, especially for lower-income and working-class Canadians. While higher-income Canadians, such as the Prime Minister and others, simply pay the tax and absolve themselves of any guilt for their excessive emissions, average Canadians cannot afford it. Every time Conservatives have proposed measures to reduce costs, the Liberals have voted against them.

If we are looking at the roots of our food production system, we are looking at the agriculture and agri-food industry. Unfortunately, the Liberals fail to acknowledge that the high cost of groceries is their fault. There are the rising costs on fertilizer, with \$34.1 million collected in tariffs, but none of that is being rebated to the farmers who paid those tariffs. The rising costs of fertilizer is making it more and more expensive for farmers and farm families to grow the crops that quite literally feed our families, our country and the world.

However, Bill C-47 does not address that. It does not address a rebate for those farmers and farm families who paid those \$34 million in tariffs, and it does not remove the cost of the carbon tax. Farmers need fuel to heat their barns. They need it to transport their crops. They need it to dry their grains. There are no alternatives for these measures.

Sadly, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food continues to side with the Prime Minister and his finance minister over the farmers and every other person along the food supply chain. From this, I can only conclude that either the agriculture minister is not really listening to farmers or the Prime Minister and finance minister are not listening to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

As I conclude, I want to reiterate that budget 2023 has failed to address the real concerns of families in Perth—Wellington and across Canada. After eight years in office, the Liberal government and the Prime Minister has made life more unaffordable for Canadians. Now, with this budget, the finance minister expects to be congratulated for the benefits the government promises, despite the fact that those benefits do not even come close to matching the massive increases in prices caused by its inflation crisis.

I will be voting no. I will be saying no more. Canadians cannot afford any more of the Liberal government. I encourage all members to stand up for their constituents and vote against this failed Liberal budget.

● (1800)

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member opposite, in his speech, spoke about helping Canadians.

What I have heard, time and time again, coming out of the pandemic, was of the need for supports in our hospital system, supports for nurses and doctors and those health care heroes who supported Canadians across the country during the pandemic. In addition to that, families in my community talk about the need for dental care for young children and for people who cannot afford to take their family members to the dentist.

The member opposite spoke about supporting families. Perhaps he would like to tell constituents why he does not think they deserve investments in health care and, in their communities, investments in dental care. Could the member opposite explain how he is going to tell constituents why they do not need to take their children to the dentist?

Mr. John Nater: Madam Speaker, perhaps that hon. member would like to tell her constituents why her government's actions are driving up the cost of living by astronomical proportion. Why will she not tell her constituents why the cost of groceries for an average family of four is increasing by nearly \$1,100 per year?

She talked about health care heroes. My wife is a nurse who works in long-term care. Why does the member not talk about the complete lack of respect she has for hard-working families? Because they have to drive an hour to work, the carbon tax is costing them more and more each time to drive that hour to serve that shift as an RPN, a PSW or a RN.

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The fact of the matter is that the Liberal government is driving up the costs for everyday Canadians, the common people who have the common sense of how to run the government. Unfortunately, the Liberals are ignoring them.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague made a quick reference to the carbon tax in his speech. However, what farmers have been asking for is the supply management bill, which is critical. That is the real way to help them. That is what Quebec's farmers are asking for.

My colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot asked a question earlier about why certain members filibustered in committee and delayed work on this important bill.

Now, to really help farmers and agricultural producers, would it not be a good time to work hand in hand to help the bill move through the final stages so that supply management is protected as quickly as possible?

Mr. John Nater: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Shefford for her question.

This is an opportunity for me to talk about the farmers and families in Perth—Wellington, where we have the largest number of dairy farmers and chicken farmers in the country. Supply management is very important for me and for the people of Perth—Wellington.

I was very pleased to vote for Bill C-282, which is very important, but let us be clear: This bill is only a small part of a big concern for farmers and families in Perth—Wellington and across Canada.

• (1805)

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, at the very beginning of his speech, the hon. member spoke to the housing crisis. New Democrats are going to be in agreement with him on that problem. However, I think the solutions are where we differ most.

It is a fact that there is a housing crisis in Canada. It is also a fact that we are seeing houses being built, but they are only being built for those who can afford them. The market is guiding housing toward increased housing prices, creating a bubble. New Democrats have tabled a solution to ensure that there is non-market housing available, such as social housing, for example.

Could the member be so kind as to offer the House and his colleagues, who would like to hear some clear dialogue on this, a solution from the Conservatives, a solution as to what they would do, rather than and absent of cutting the carbon tax, the three cents they have been talking about? What is the real solution Conservatives are proposing here?

Mr. John Nater: Madam Speaker, first of all, we would cut the carbon tax. What is more, we will incentivize municipalities. We will incentivize municipalities to remove the gatekeepers to get permits approved quickly. We will densify the population, building around major transit hubs in larger urban centres and, in smaller communities, such as mine and other rural communities, we will in-

centivize municipalities to broaden their definition of affordable housing to ensure that all Canadians have a place to call home. We need to bring it home for all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, as usual, it is a pleasure to rise in the House.

However, it will quickly become apparent that my speech on Bill C-47, budget implementation act, 2023, is half-hearted because there is not a lot of good news in this budget. On top of that, we were told this morning that we will not be able to discuss this for very long. We always get quite upset when the government prevents debate and deeper consideration. There is a lot to do. There is a lot we need to discuss.

Why are we displeased with the budget?

I am repeating myself, but I think that our message bears repeating so that it might end up being heard. It is unacceptable for the government not to respond to the demands of Quebec and the provinces on health transfer increases. People in emergency rooms and on waiting lists for surgery are waiting—no pun intended.

There is also the issue of old age security starting at age 65. Everyone talks about the cost of groceries, the cost of living and how difficult things are, and everyone forgets those aged 65 to 74, who are on fixed incomes and are left behind. Government members will respond in a while that they treated seniors very generously and so forth, but these people are not getting any real help. It is unacceptable to create two classes of seniors. We will keep repeating that until it is understood.

EI reform has been promised since 2015, and it is now 2023. That is not right. Promises made need to be kept. What is more, if I understand correctly, in this budget the government will help itself to \$17 billion from the EI fund. It is not moving forward with the employment insurance reform so it can balance the budget.

Members who spoke before me talked about housing. It is urgent and essential that 1% of the budget be dedicated to social housing. The sunny-ways speeches and the hair-blowing-in-the-wind rhetoric about affordable housing need to stop. We recently held sessions in Berthier—Maskinongé with the member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, who has been working very hard on this file. People on the ground are telling us that even those in the middle class cannot afford affordable housing. That is why we need to act on social housing to get the less fortunate out of the market. It must be done. We have to act.

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Obviously, this is a broad outline. However, members will not be surprised to hear me talk about agriculture, because I always talk about agriculture at some point in my speeches. The first disappointment is the tax on Russian fertilizer. They took the \$34 million and put it in the on-farm climate action fund. I understand that this is meant to be ancillary compensation, because we are incapable of reimbursing the agricultural producers who paid the tax.

That already does not make sense, but let us say we go along with it. It was too complicated to pay back that money so the government decided to put it in the fund. Will the government do away with those tariffs for next year? Right now, farmers are funding their own program. I hope that the government does not think that that makes it generous.

We need to enhance the support programs for farmers. In our budget requests, we submitted a proposal from young farmers and that was for the government to provide lower-interest loans over 40 years. That would help them cover the cost of buying land, which has become extremely expensive. It is very difficult for a new start-up to be agronomically profitable because the initial purchase price is too high. Can we help them?

In recent weeks, members of the Union des producteurs agricoles, or UPA, sounded the alarm citing the results of a survey. According to this survey of its members, one in 10 agricultural businesses are considering permanently closing their doors in the next year. That is huge. This situation is a result of the huge hike in interest rates and the heavy debt being carried by farms, particularly those owned by young farmers.

The government is saying that it is good and kind and that it is going to feed people, but it needs farmers to do that.

• (1810)

They are the ones who have the courage to take over the family business, after watching their parents work seven days a week, countless hours, when they have endless career options. There is a labour shortage in every sector. It is very easy for a young person living on a farm to look at their parents and decide they do not feel like working all the time and struggling. Then they pick a different career. We need to put measures in place to encourage them to stay. Farming seems rewarding, but it is not easy. People like it and do it because they have a passion for it. I think we need to respect the people who feed us. Let us help them. Let us do as they ask.

I asked the minister this question some time ago. We got what seemed like a favourable response. She said she was thinking about it, but now we expect meaningful action. We often end up waiting for the federal government to take action.

As for improvements to the advance payments program, this budget increases the interest-free limit from \$250,000 to \$350,000. I applaud this measure. Bravo. I hope that the member from Winnipeg North will be pleased to see that I can point out the positives. However, this should be made permanent. It costs about \$13 million, which I think is a quite small amount. It would ensure that our businesses have some flexibility to get through difficult periods. I am asking the government to consider it. Let us make it permanent.

There is also money for the vaccine bank. I also salute this contribution. It is about time. Will the \$57 million be enough? We shall see, but it is important to prevent illnesses from spreading. That is why, this morning, we were talking about protecting biosecurity on farms. That is a related issue. It is very important.

I am going to talk about support for modernizing processors. Unfortunately, there is nothing about that in the budget. I think it is important. I am appealing to those in government. When we talk about agriculture, we often tend to simply say "agriculture", but the portfolio encompasses both agriculture and agri-food.

Most of what we eat has been processed in some way. Agri-food processing plants are in trouble. There is a significant labour shortage, but there is also significant underinvestment in our infrastructure. I have raised this issue in the House a number of times. I do not want us, as a state, to wait for the day when a multinational company that owns a processing plant in Quebec or elsewhere in Canada says that the plant is so old that it is no longer profitable and that it must be torn down and another one must be built, because there is no guarantee that the other one will be built here. That is also important.

Another positive point in the budget is the clarification regarding transfers of family farms. That is a positive. It is long overdue. It has been too long.

If the members of the government are listening in a constructive manner and wondering how they can do better, then I would tell them to act more quickly on things like this. We have been badgering the government to clarify its intentions for over a year now. This has blocked farm transfers, particularly in Quebec.

We need to support regional processing and regional slaughterhouses in particular. I have been talking about this for a long time. Government support will be required for that to work because it is hard for these businesses to turn a profit. I think we realized during the COVID-19 pandemic that our processing industry is sometimes too consolidated. We need only consider what is happening in the pork industry right now. The closure of one processing plant causes major disruptions. We need alternate sites that can help absorb the shock and fluctuations. We need to take action to make all that happen.

I want to talk about reciprocity of standards. Farmers are always talking to us about that. There is nothing in the budget about increasing inspections. Will the DNA test that poultry farmers created ever be implemented? Will vegetables from outside the country be required to meet the same quality standards as what is expected of local growers?

That is important. The government needs to quickly take practical measures to help the agricultural community. I am committed to collaborating, and the Bloc Québécois will be there to help pass appropriate, constructive measures for the agricultural industry. We will be there to support such measures, but they need to be included in this budget. I raised a few points, but there are a lot of things missing.

• (1815)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed the member's comments. I wish he were not a separatist. I like the idea that his contributions to the debate are delivered as constructive critiques. There is always room for improvement. The member highlights some areas which, no doubt, we can improve upon.

I want to emphasize that we have a Minister of Agriculture who virtually lives and breathes agriculture. She is very sensitive to the needs of farmers and is a strong advocate for things like supply management and making sure there are supports out there for agriculture, our farmers, producers and so forth. I have had the opportunity, on a couple of occasions, to host her in the province of Manitoba. The passion and knowledge she exemplifies speak volumes, with respect to moving forward as a government and getting things done.

My question for the member is this. Would he possibly look at taking some of those critiques and continue to advocate, maybe with the Minister of Agriculture, because he does have some good ideas? I look forward to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Let us give the hon. member the opportunity to answer.

The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I did not know I would make someone happy today. I am pleased too.

I want to reassure my colleague. When he says it is too bad that I am a separatist, I say to him that we are still able to work together. What is more, when Quebec becomes politically independent, we will work even better together because we will be equal counterparts. We will maintain ties and continue to collaborate.

As far as informing the minister is concerned, I do that weekly and persistently. We need to be heard. As far as supply management is concerned, we are pleased with the support that is offered and we would like the next steps to unfold quickly.

We are counting on people in the government to support this Bloc bill that we are extremely proud of. It is non-partisan and is aimed at rallying support for our farmers.

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have a question for my colleague about the alternative minimum tax. This is something in the budget that came up earlier in debate. The budget proposes to increase it from 15% to 20.5%. This is a measure that would prevent the wealthiest Canadians from using various tax measures to drive down the amount of tax they pay and to ensure the wealthiest among us pay their fair share.

We heard earlier that the concern of the member for Peterborough—Kawartha is that, if we tax the wealthiest Canadians, they will give less to charity, which is why we should not be supporting

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these measures. I wonder if that is a view that he shares when it comes to the alternative minimum tax.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, generally speaking, the Bloc Québécois and Quebecers have always been in favour of revenue sharing. Therefore, we support this type of measure, which ensures more optimal revenue sharing, to a certain extent of course. I believe it is important for the state to redistribute wealth.

Some believe that if peoples' taxes are too high, they will stop donating to charity. This allows me to clarify the following point. Some media say that Quebecers donate less to charities than other Canadians. Quebecers pay much higher taxes than other Canadians, and they have collectively chosen to have a more robust social safety net than that of other Canadians, who are beginning to realize it. For example, they just created a child care program. People should be cautious about making judgments.

In answer to my colleague, I believe that these are easy answers. I believe it is important to have concrete measures for sharing revenue.

• (1820)

[English]

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I commended the Liberals on the fact that they have finally recognized they have been part of the problem in getting major projects built across the country. We have not seen many. Fourteen LNG projects have been shelved and no pipelines have been built. I know that, in northern British Columbia, a number of forestry mills have closed down.

Does the member think this budget will be what restarts major projects being built in this country?

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I have only 15 seconds left, which is not much time to answer that question.

We need to make the transition from fossil fuels to renewables as quickly as possible and start investing directly in that. That is what the member for Berthier—Maskinongé believes. It is urgent, and I wish everyone understood that.

[English]

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo. I did a brief video with the member for Cumberland—Colchester, who was a physician in his previous career, recognizing National Physicians' Day. However, my sister told me it is also National Principal's Day, so I am going to give her a shout-out. My sister Rosie Caputo gets a shout-out for being an elementary school principal. Happy National Principal's Day to all those out there as well.

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When I looked at the budget, one of the things that stood out to me, actually referenced in question period by the Minister of Public Safety, was a discussion about foreign interference. This is really appropriate today to discuss. The reason I bring that up is because of the news story that was broken by *The Globe and Mail* in respect of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. I do feel as though it is relevant to what we are discussing because we are talking about the budget and what will be invested and also about foreign interference.

The question I have is this: Why now? Why is this coming up now? From what I can see, the government was aware of some degree of foreign interference some time ago. It seems almost trite at this point. It is not even debated. I do see that the government has committed some money when it comes to a national foreign interference office; it may not be enough, given what we have heard today. The money has been budgeted, but one of the concerns I have is that, if I recall correctly, the Minister of Public Safety has not spoken about when this registry would be operational. From what I can see, this is something whose time has come on a number of different fronts.

One thing that I would like to speak about and something I talk about frequently is what it is like to be a member of Parliament. Something I will never forget is walking on this green carpet; sitting in the green chair; addressing you, Madam Speaker; the decorum here and the sceptre. This is an honour and a privilege. When I say it is always an honour and always a privilege to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, I am mindful of the fact that every time we walk in here we never know when there could be an election. There are 338 of us and we sometimes forget that out of the 36, 37 or 38 million people, we are entrusted with captaining the ship of democracy. A lot of members give up a lot. A lot of people in here have heard me speak about my young children, one of whom has special needs, and about the sacrifices my wife undertakes and my family undertakes in order that I can be here and not only fulfill a dream but also do what I think is really the right thing to do in being here. We all may disagree on different things, but most people here think they are doing the right thing. We may agree on where we are going, but not necessarily on how to get there.

That is why I was so troubled by today's news. We give up a lot to be here. Not only do we give up a lot, but a lot is expected of us. Therefore, when the *Globe and Mail* story broke, it spoke about the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and his press release. We can all agree that the member is of the highest calibre of integrity and knowledge that this House has seen in some time. I was very troubled by the fact that his statement said that he had not heard about this. Therefore, here we are in the federal legislature of a G7 country and a member of Parliament is not even advised about the impact on their family in relation to a foreign government.

I find that very difficult. On election day, for instance, I had a situation where somebody came up aggressively when I was with one of my children. They were very inappropriate. My Liberal colleague who ran, came up and expressed his dismay. We are here as colleagues and we may not agree, but at the end of the day we are colleagues. In my prior profession as a lawyer, sometimes we

would duke it out in the courtroom, but at the end of the day we still took the same oath. We all took the same oath to be here.

• (1825)

Some of us may not believe in the strength of that oath, and I am mindful of that. However, we all took it. Therefore, it really should not matter what side of the House a member is on. However, here we have a situation where the member's family, perhaps for the last two years, has been targeted, and there was not even the courtesy of letting him know from the Prime Minister's Office. This is a Prime Minister who, we are told by his chief of staff, reads everything.

I am puzzled as to how that is acceptable. I know that not everybody can speak out, but I am sure there are people on all sides who really take issue with the fact that somebody who is actively participating in Canadian democracy had their family allegedly targeted, and that person was not informed.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This may be a very important issue for an opposition day motion. It may be an issue of privilege. However, it has nothing to do with the budget, and we are debating the budget.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We are very generous in the leeway we give in debate, but the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay has a point. I am sure the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo will bring us to the discussion on Bill C-47.

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, I am tying it in. For my colleague from Timmins—James Bay, this is very important, and the way I opened up my speech was to discuss the \$13.5 million that was budgeted. Perhaps that was not enough. Why are we actually here dealing with this today? With all due respect, when the budget does talk about \$50 million, at foreign interference, everything encompassed in that, including what happens to individual members in this House, is germane. I said what I have to say and was coming to the end of those comments anyway.

I will move now to the budget itself. We have cumulative spending, and I am quoting from one of my Nova Scotia colleagues who did a great deal of work. We are looking here at the national debt rising in the next five years to, in my view, an untenable level. The interest on the national debt will rise from \$44 billion today to \$50 billion in five years, if the interest rate calculations from the Liberal government are actually correct.

I did a quick search on how much the federal government sends to the provinces in health care transfers. According to a CBC article I reviewed briefly, \$49.1 billion is going to be put in health care transfers. We are at the point now where we are putting forward the same amount in federal health care transfers than we are in servicing our debt. I think about that and about how it is problematic on so many different levels.

One of the reasons it is problematic is because the debt has doubled under the current government. When we are talking about how much interest we are paying, so much of it really does lie at the feet of the Prime Minister, because the Prime Minister has done so much when it comes to our debt. This is something I am concerned about.

I am also concerned about inflation, obviously. I was reading about heartbreaking situations. People were talking to me through newsletters by writing back saying that they are a senior who cannot afford groceries. Somebody in his early fifties wrote to me that he cannot afford a condo.

Inflation is a reality. I know the government has finally acknowledged that, but what took a long time was to acknowledge its role in the inflationary fire. I am not sure the government has fully acknowledged that to this day. The government will say it is going to give this or give that. The problem is the price of housing has gone up so high, the price of rent has gone up so quickly and the price of groceries has gone up so substantially that government assistance is meaningless.

In my riding of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, I think of people who are paying probably \$2,000 for a one-bedroom suite. That is what a whole house used to go for. That is what inflation has led to, and that is part of why we have a problem.

The doubling of the national debt is something we cannot overlook. This is also a confidence issue that gives me pause as to why I will not be supporting the government, because I do not have confidence in the government. I do not have confidence in the government's numbers. I do not have confidence food will be more affordable.

One of my colleagues spoke not long ago about the carbon tax and the impact it is having on affordability. The reason that is so contentious is not just because of its impact on affordability, it is also because of the fact the government has missed every single target.

I obviously have much more to say, but I see my time is up and I will answer any questions from my colleagues at this time.

• (1830)

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague spoke a lot about foreign interference, election integrity and breaking news. In fact, I wonder if he would like to respond in this place to the breaking news that a Conservative candidate's campaign manager was just charged with violating Canada's Elections Act, and two Criminal Code charges also.

I am wondering if the member opposite, since he spoke so much about his oath in the office, would like to be the first to champion a full investigation within his party to determine who in the Conservative Party knew and if there will be further decisions made within the Conservative Party to make sure these criminal acts do not happen again.

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, the reality is this. When we talk about standards and something that is foreign interference,

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that strikes at the heart of democracy in this place, the fact of the matter is that if somebody has committed an offence, if somebody has laid a charge, due process will allow it to happen. If we want to talk about due process, let us talk about due process. Let us talk about a public inquiry. The members are so passionate about due process and a public inquiry that I am going to look right at them and talk about due process.

How does one get to due process? One gets to it by shining a light on the truth, not by filibustering at the procedure—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, this evening's debate has been very animated.

The first thing that jumps out at me and that I cannot ignore is the point of order raised by my colleague from Timmins—James Bay, who is asking us to return to the budget debate. Earlier, this same colleague and his party imposed a gag order to cut members' speaking time. So much for lessons in democracy and comments on the need to return to the debate at hand.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Is that a question for me? I am ready to answer my colleague. Does he have a question for me?

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Speaker, we can hear him talking again. I would like you to intervene.

• (1835)

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member is asking a question. He is making a comment and asking a question of the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Speaker, the member is part of the New Democratic Party, but it is not very democratic to talk while other members are talking.

Once again, the new gag order party—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay on a point of order.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I want to apologize to you as Speaker. You are an excellent Speaker. I misunderstood and thought the member was asking me a question, for which I am more than ready.

However, I want to apologize to you. I trust your leadership in the chair.

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The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Speaker, we hope to exercise our democratic right in the House. We do not want to be gagged and we do not want to have to repeatedly rise on points of order, as my colleague from Timmins—James Bay has been trying to do in the last few seconds.

My colleague—

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is a question of politeness, more than even order, to let someone finish a question. I would ask everyone to please remain silent.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for you and the office you hold. However, my colleague's behaviour is completely unacceptable. I hope that you are taking note of it. My colleagues in the House noticed it, as have I.

Here is the question that I have for my colleague. We are currently experiencing a housing crisis. There are no new investments in the most recent federal budget to address that crisis.

In Rimouski, in my riding, we have a record vacancy rate of 0.4%.

I would like my colleague to tell us why the government has not done anything or invested anything in the most recent budget to create—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order.

The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

[*English*]

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, I apologize that I cannot answer fully in French.

When it comes to housing, this is what I would say. I have done a fair amount of digging when it comes to my home riding of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo. Within my home riding, I have talked to people, even developers, who will say that one of the biggest impediments to developing land is municipal issues and provincial and federal regulations. When the Conservative leader talks about gatekeepers, he is talking about removing those things.

I have been told that about half of the fees associated with the price of land actually relate to government regulations. What I would say to my hon. colleague is that the federal government has a role to play in terms of what it invests, but also how it asks the municipalities and provinces to invest money so that they can make things more efficient. It is supply and demand, so let us get those houses built.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo briefly mentioned health care and seemed to indicate that we were spending too much money on health care. I am wondering what he had in mind for health care. If we want to move to a more private health care system, like the States, they spend twice as much on health care per capita than we do and they have a poorer outcome. Their life expectancy is five years less.

I am wondering what the member's plans are for health care.

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, the point I was trying to make was not that we are spending too much on health care. The point I was trying to make is that health care is one of the most pivotal needs in this country. Health care, housing and cost of living are what my constituents are telling me about. What I was trying to draw to the attention of the House and my hon. colleague is the fact that we are now spending as much money servicing the debt, the debt that the NDP is voting for, as we are on health care, and that is problematic.

• (1840)

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to lend my voice today in support of Bill C-47, the budget implementation act, on behalf of the government and on behalf of my community of Newmarket—Aurora.

Budget 2023 is entitled “A Made-in-Canada Plan: Strong Middle Class, Affordable Economy, Healthy Future”. However, like many things done in Canada, this is a plan that has an impact extending far beyond our borders, and that is because, in order for us to have a healthy future, we must have a healthy world, a world based on the rule of law where no people or nation can be threatened, subjugated or destroyed by illegal acts of aggression. That is why, since Russia's illegal, full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Canada has supported the people of Ukraine as they fight for their sovereignty and democracy, and for democracy around the world. Canada will stand with them for as long as it takes.

With more than \$8 billion in total aid, Canada has provided critical financial assistance to the Ukraine government and has provided significant military and humanitarian support. In particular, Canada has sanctioned over 1,800 individuals and entities since February 2022. We have played a key role in the development of price caps on Russian oil and petroleum products to deprive the Kremlin of revenues to fund its illegal war. In fact, on March 2, 2022, Canada became the first country to revoke Russian and Belarusian eligibility for most favoured nation status, placing Russia and Belarus in the same category as North Korea, and in turn applying the 35% general tariff to virtually all Russian and Belarusian imports. Similar measures were subsequently implemented by the United States, the United Kingdom and other major trading partners.

Canada is playing a leading role in efforts to cut Russia off from the global economy and to hold Putin and his cronies accountable for their illegal war on Ukraine. With budget 2023, we are taking this measure one step further by proposing to amend the Customs Tariff to indefinitely extend the withdrawal of most favoured nation preferred tariff treatment for Russian and Belarusian imports. Bill C-47 would make this change a reality, and it needs our support as parliamentarians.

Our government's efforts to secure a safer world also includes working with our partners on the Russian elites, proxies, and oligarchs, or REPO, task force to block or freeze more than 58 billion dollars' worth of assets from sanctioned individuals and entities. Budget 2023, once again, builds upon these efforts. It does so by proposing targeted changes in the Special Economic Measures Act and the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act, known as the Sergei Magnitsky Law, which would support the effectiveness of seizure, forfeiture and disposal framework introduced in 2022 as a means of holding Russia accountable for its illegal invasion of Ukraine. These changes represent an important step in strengthening our ability to pursue the assets of those who have enabled Russia's unjust war and to use them to help finance Ukrainian reconstruction.

The budget also proposes to make a related amendment to the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act to aid in these efforts. The changes would require the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada to disclose information to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in certain circumstances. We are proposing these changes, because serious financial crimes, such as money laundering, terrorist financing and evasion of financial sanctions, threaten the safety of Canadians and the integrity of our financial system. Canada needs a comprehensive, responsive and modern system to counter these sophisticated, evolving threats.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It being 6:45 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill now before the House.

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

• (1845)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the recorded division stands deferred until Tuesday, May 2, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I suspect that if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to call it 7:00 p.m. so we could begin the late show.

Adjournment Proceedings

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about the Trudeau Foundation.

The Trudeau Foundation is the talk of the town in many ways, so it is important to review what the foundation actually is because the Trudeau Foundation is a curious beast. As far as its structure and its governance goes, it is kind of a chameleon, conveniently identifying as a charity some of the time and as a government institution at other times. Similarly, the Prime Minister identifies as sort of involved and sort of not involved. These blurred lines make the Trudeau Foundation and, through it, the government, highly vulnerable to foreign interference. Let me explain.

The Trudeau Foundation was created as a family foundation with a protected role in its governance for members of the Trudeau family. However, the Liberal government of Jean Chrétien, through minister Allan Rock, decided to give the foundation \$125 million of taxpayers' money without actually changing the role of the Trudeau family in its governance.

It became government-funded and, in law, a government institution, according to the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act, but it retained a protected role in its governance for members of one family, making it a government-funded government institution, which is also a family foundation with a protected role in its governance for one family.

I think that this is incredibly bizarre in a free, democratic and egalitarian nation. Giving members of one family privileged control of a government-funded government institution is not consistent with the idea of a just society.

The Trudeau Foundation is controlled by 30 members. Up to four of those members are appointed by the Trudeau family, and six are appointed by the Minister of Industry. In its governance, the Trudeau Foundation directly fuses the intellectual estate of the Trudeau family with the Government of Canada, and that is just wrong.

The Prime Minister himself, incredibly, is and remains a member of the Trudeau Foundation. He has professed repeatedly, and seems to want us to take at face value, the claim that he is not involved, not at all involved, in the Trudeau Foundation, that he has not been involved for years. That is wrong. He is involved. He is involved in a number of ways.

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First, the Prime Minister of Canada is necessarily involved, by virtue of the fact that he appoints the Minister of Industry, who appoints six members. He is involved because his brother is a member of the foundation and his half-sister is on the board of directors, and he is involved because he himself is a member of the foundation. He has not resigned. He remains a member of the foundation. It bears his name.

Whether he goes to the meetings, the membership that he retains matters for effective control, should he choose to exercise it at any point. It demonstrates his deep, personal investment in the Trudeau Foundation. The personal investment is precisely why a foreign government has sought to curry favour with him through funnelling money to the Trudeau Foundation.

The system is clearly broken and the worn-out talking points the government is using clearly do not hold water. The structure is quite evidently broken, even before we start talking about the issue of what happened in this instance of foreign interference because it is this crude hybrid between a family foundation and a government institution. Its charitable face elicits direct donations from foreign entities, while its government face sits by and smiles. The Prime Minister, known, by the way, for wearing many faces, smiles all the more.

Canada Post would not collect money from foreign political parties nor would it allow members of a former prime minister's family to have a locked-in role in its leadership. That is because Canada Post is part of the government. The Canadian Cancer Society would potentially get donations from abroad, but it likely would not be a target for foreign interference because it is not closely tied to the government and does not bear the Prime Minister's name. It is purely a charity. One has roles for a government institution, and one has roles for a charity.

The problem is that the Trudeau Foundation is trying to have its cake and eat it too. It is trying to be both. The vulnerabilities are not only obvious, they are built into the structure of this organization, and members of the Trudeau family exploited those vulnerabilities to take the foreign money.

After attending a cash-for-access fundraiser with the Prime Minister—

• (1850)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the member continues to push this particular envelope. I have actually been very clear, as have the Prime Minister and other ministers. No matter what the member continues to try to propagate to mislead Canadians, at the end of the day, the Prime Minister has had no direct or indirect communications with the Trudeau Foundation for over 10 years. It is actually a very simple truth. One would think that even members of the Conservative Party would understand that truth.

I do not want to insult the member across the way. Maybe the Conservatives are just trying to avoid the truth in order to push an envelope that they have been in since 2014. I think that was the

year the leader of the Liberal Party was first elected as leader of the Liberal Party. Virtually from day one, the Conservatives have spared no expense in advertising and in research in terms of trying to find ways they could make this personal and make personal attacks against the Prime Minister. Absolutely nothing has changed. All one needs to do is go back to the days when he was the leader of the third party and listen to some of the S. O. 31s back then. At the end of the day, 2015 proved that what the member just finished saying was wrong and Canadians did not believe the Conservative Party.

The Conservatives have never changed the channel. There are so many issues that Canadians are facing today. Instead of dealing with those issues, the Conservative Party continues to use character assassination and attack the Prime Minister.

Today, the Conservatives get a kick out of the name of the foundation. We have non-profit foundations that do a lot of wonderful things, including the Trudeau Foundation. The questions the member wants to ask or Conservatives want to ask would be better put to the foundation itself, which is independent, just like many other foundations out there. However, this does not meet the Conservatives' cause. In a tin hat sense, they say there is this and that and who cares if it is true or not. It does not have to be true to be put on the Conservative agenda. They just grab from all over the place, put it together and say there is this huge conspiracy.

The reality is that it is very clear. The Prime Minister, over the last 10 years, has had no direct or indirect connection or communication with the Trudeau Foundation. No matter how the Conservatives try to spin conspiracy theories over there, it does not change the facts. The members across the way know the facts, but their approach is not to let the facts get in the way. Their job is to be critical of the person and the family, and that is what the Conservatives have been focused on since before the 2015 election, and it is still the case—

• (1855)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, very simply, I laid out, in my previous comments, the governance of the foundation and the problems with it, the way the governance of the foundation integrates government with control by the Trudeau family of this public institution.

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The member opposite asks why we do not take his word for it that the Prime Minister has not been involved and is not involved. Does he know why I do not take his word for it? It is because I read the annual report. It is not a conspiracy. It is not off somewhere on a web forum; it is in the annual report. Any member of the public watching can go to the annual report and look at who the members of the foundation are. They will see the name of the current Prime Minister listed in the annual report as a member of the foundation. He retains his position, which he has never resigned from, as do multiple other members of his family. They are members or members of the board of directors. This is the governing structure of this institution.

The Prime Minister's Minister of Industry appoints six members. He is clearly involved.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it is interesting. I would wonder if the member opposite would walk outside the chamber. Inside the chamber, he has parliamentary privilege. He can say what he wants to say inside here, almost without any limitations. Outside the chamber, would he entertain going out there and having a press conference and saying that the Prime Minister has been directly involved with the Trudeau Foundation? My bet is that he would not go out and say that because if he were to go outside and have a press conference and make the allegation that the Prime Minister does have direct communication with the Trudeau Foundation, he might find himself in a bit of hot water. There is a bit more expectation that if one is outside they have to be a bit more truthful than they are on the inside at times if one is a Conservative member of Parliament.

HOUSING

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, the fact is that promises matter. It is why a few weeks ago I asked the Prime Minister about an important promise made last April, just over a year ago now, that would have helped address the housing crisis.

I should pause to talk about that crisis that we are in the midst of. It is one that has led to the unsheltered population in my community more than tripling since 2018. It is also why we are seeing house prices across Kitchener and Waterloo now being eight times the median family income, whereas back in 2005 it was only three times as much. The fact is that house prices have gone up 275% and wages have not only not kept pace, but they are not even close; wages have gone up 42%. We can look at the fact that for every one new affordable unit being created across the country, we are seeing 15 affordable private units being lost.

Obviously, those investments are not adding up, so here is that promise from budget 2022, released last April. It said:

...that the government will engage with provinces and territories over the next year to develop and implement a Home Buyers' Bill of Rights and bring forward a national plan to end blind bidding. Among other things, the Home Buyers' Bill of Rights could also include ensuring a legal right to a home inspection and ensuring transparency on the history of sales prices on title searches.

These are good and important measures. The right to a home inspection, for example, would help protect buyers and give them assurance before making a purchase at a time when multiple bids are coming in and many are getting squeezed out; and eliminating blind bidding would help ensure that others know the other bids that are

being made and would help reduce the inflated prices when homes sell; and yet, it has been silence over an entire year until budget 2023.

Here is what was promised in budget 2023 this past April: "The government is also working with provinces and territories on the development of a Home Buyers' Bill of Rights,..." Therefore, a whole year has passed and what do we have to show for it? We have actually gone backwards. We have lost the commitment to blind bidding being eliminated altogether; that is just gone. We have also lost a commitment for a date to actually do anything. This is at a time when other levels of government are moving with urgency.

Here is what the office of the federal housing advocate had to say in assessing the last 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.

When I asked the Prime Minister when this promise would be fulfilled, he went on to tell me how great the promise is. Well, it is not good enough. We are in a crisis. It is one that is affecting neighbours of mine and, in fact, defining my community today and into the future. Therefore, tonight I would like to hear from the parliamentary secretary. In light of not having any commitment for a timeline for action being taken and the fact that it is now removed from this budget, will the parliamentary secretary answer my question and tell us when the federal government intends on actually introducing and moving forward with the homebuyers' bill of rights?

• (1900)

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government recognizes that escalating house prices are hurting young Canadians who are trying to purchase their first home. This is not only threatening their dreams of home ownership but also creating wealth inequity between older and younger generations. That is why we announced numerous initiatives over the past few budgets that would help first-time buyers. This includes the homebuyers' bill of rights, which will tackle unfair practices in the real estate market. It will also include measures to ensure the right to inspection and transparency in sales history.

At the same time, we have enacted important legislation to temporarily ban foreign investment in Canadian housing. The Prohibition on the Purchase of Residential Property by Non-Canadians Act came into effect on January 1. It will ensure that housing in Canada is owned by Canadians, for the benefit of everyone who lives in this country.

We are cracking down on house flipping by ensuring that profits from property held for less than 12 months are fully taxed. Starting in 2023, with certain exceptions for unexpected life events, this measure will ensure that investors who flip homes pay their fair share; this will play a role in lowering house prices for Canadians.

Adjournment Proceedings

We have also set up a first-time homebuyer tax-free savings account to the tune of \$40,000. Like an RRSP, it is tax-deductible, and when used to buy a first home, it will be non-taxable, like a TFSA.

I also want to be clear on what we are not going to do. We are not going to be like the Conservative Party, which wants the federal government to do less on housing and hope that things will magically get better. We are not going to cut back housing funding for our most vulnerable people, as certain members across the way are suggesting we do. We are not going to download the responsibility for housing on provinces and municipalities, as the former housing critic, the member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, has suggested.

We are not going to do any of these things; rather, we are going to roll up our sleeves and do more to continue to help Canadians all across the country. We are going to keep making key investments into housing so we can get more supply built, which is something our country desperately needs. We will partner with provinces and cities. That is why we are launching our housing accelerator fund. This fund will help cities and towns clear up backlogs at the municipal level so that we can get more shovels in the ground more quickly, get more supply built and see lasting system changes that will continue to allow more supply to be built as our country grows.

I only have time to touch on a few measures that our government is taking to make housing more affordable. We believe that everybody deserves a roof over their head that is affordable and shows respect for their dignity. This is what the government is doing every day.

● (1905)

Mr. Mike Morrice: Madam Speaker, this is the second time I hear talking points about what the Conservative Party would do. I have less trust in that party doing more.

However, that is not the question I am asking. The bill does nothing for neighbours of mine who are living unsheltered. I am asking whether the government is going to follow through on the important promises that are being made in the midst of a housing crisis.

Yes, I am aware of what the homebuyers' bill of rights says. That is why I was asking about it. I appreciate the work the parliamentary secretary is doing to move further and faster. The homebuyers' bill of rights is one of many measures we need to make progress on the crisis we are in. Would she share specifically when it is going to be introduced?

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for his advocacy. We want to make sure, as he does, that everybody in this country has a home and that it is affordable.

As for his question, I would gladly sit down with him to talk about all the measures this government is doing, in particular, on the homelessness front, the homebuyer front and the foreign ban. I think all these measures at some point will help address the shortage of affordable housing we have in this country.

CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, last month I asked if the Liberals would freeze their inflation-fuelling plan to hike the carbon tax. The parliamentary secretary responded by talking about dentistry. As the wife of a dentist, I can say with some certainty that our teeth are not causing climate change.

The Liberals are even claiming that carbon is not the real culprit. According to the socialist alliance, the real villain was capitalism all along, and not just capitalism. Apparently, climate change is also caused by individual liberty and too much democracy. In typical Liberal fashion, the government hired far left consultants to hold focus groups with far left public health workers to discuss climate change.

If there were any small-l liberals left in that party, they would have denounced this report as ridiculous and apologize to taxpayers for wasting our money. They might protest that this report they published does not reflect their views, but that is hard to square with the Prime Minister's publicly stated views about admiring authoritarian China.

Every Canadian was given a full display of the Prime Minister's contempt for democracy when he assaulted two members on the floor of the old chamber. At that time, the Prime Minister was impatient with the NDP delaying the votes. The Prime Minister invoked the Emergencies Act when he grew impatient with people protesting his government.

Now that this socialist coalition has deluded itself into believing that climate change is an existential threat requiring emergency action, what extraordinary actions is it willing to take? According to these public health experts, the plan is clear. They would like to replace our Liberal democracy with a socialist technocracy. These self-anointed experts will guide society to a green utopia. Some Liberals might hear that and roll their eyes. That is because they have not read the report, or worse, they share the Prime Minister's ridiculous cliched thinking.

The Prime Minister said he admired the Communists' ability to implement environmental policies on a whim. What the Prime Minister forgets, or what he never bothered to learn, is the environmental track record of socialists and authoritarian nations. The collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in a massive reduction in CO2 emissions. It was Russia's demand to maintain a Soviet-sized carbon quota that killed any chances of reaching an effective international agreement in the 1990s, yet the Prime Minister looks at Communists building a new coal plant every month and decides Canada needs more of that.

I know why the government would rather talk about dentists than carbon taxes. We got the government's answer on April 1. The carbon tax went up, and it will keep going up until this costly coalition is defeated.

Adjournment Proceedings

• (1910)

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think the Standing Orders are quite clear that speeches during late shows are supposed to address specific questions. There was some content that addressed the question, but to be clear, what we are discussing tonight is climate change, affordability and a question with regard to the strike of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, which I am very happy to share has reached a tentative agreement at the bargaining table.

Getting to the topic at hand, climate change is one of the most pressing issues we face today, and I am honestly disappointed that the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke and her Conservative caucus still refuse to support meaningful action to address it.

While the economic impacts of climate change are daunting, so is the prospect of missing out on the immense opportunity the net-zero economy will provide. Over the coming decades, countries around the world will demand trillions of dollars' worth of net-zero solutions. We need to make sure that Canada maintains and strengthens our global leadership in this space.

Our pollution pricing system actually incentivizes the creation of new sustainable technologies and services while creating sustainable high-paying jobs, all while decreasing carbon emissions. I will remind the member opposite that she actually ran on a platform that supported pricing pollution. It is interesting to see her completely change her position. It was not because the facts have changed; if anything, the case has become a lot stronger. It changed simply because she wants to please her ideological leader.

Also, I would like to remind my colleague that our pollution pricing system is putting more money back in the pockets of those in Canadian households. The member knows that eight out of 10 households are actually better off with carbon pricing, and the remaining 20% are among our nation's highest-earning individuals.

If my colleague really supported making life more affordable, she would support pricing pollution and our affordability package. Our solutions are in stark contrast to those of the Conservatives, whose best ideas so far are to ignore climate change, raid the pension benefits of seniors and underfund our employment insurance system.

While inflation is global, it has gone down in Canada now for nine straight months. It is 4.3% today and is forecast to reduce further by summer. We know that the best way to fight the effects of inflation on affordability is for Canadians to have good-paying jobs. The good news is that a record number of Canadians are working. In fact, 865,000 new jobs have been created since the start of the pandemic, and Canada continues to enjoy historically low unemployment. At the same time, we have created the best economic growth in the G7 alongside the lowest deficit and net debt-to-GDP ratio. This fiscal advantage is what allows us to invest in making life more affordable.

Prior to budget 2023, our affordability plan provided up to \$12.1 billion in new supports to Canadians who needed them the most. We have put forward solutions, such as permanently eliminating interest on federal student loans, introducing dental care, and creating

the Canada child benefit and our Canada-wide early learning and child care program. These are meaningful solutions that have helped make life more affordable for Canadians.

I honestly think this place works best when we are coming together and finding solutions, so I would like to conclude by taking the opportunity to thank the member opposite for her support and her caucus's support of the grocery benefit. This particular benefit is a \$2.5-billion investment that will help make life more affordable for 11 million Canadians and over 50% of our seniors. I think if we work together, we can come up with even more ideas to make life more affordable and grow an economy that works for everybody.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, the Liberal-NDP socialist alliance is spreading misinformation and disinformation. They claim Canadians receive more in climate bribes than they pay in carbon taxes. That is false. They claim a higher carbon tax will stop hurricanes. That is false. They claim the carbon tax is market-based. That is false. They claim billions in subsidies is good for the economy. That is false. They claim they will cut carbon dioxide emissions by 30% by 2030. They claim they will cut nitrogen by 30% by 2030. They claim they will protect 30% of the land by 2030. They claim 30% of cars must be EVs by 2030.

This socialist coalition does not have policies; it has slogans. The latest Liberal talking point is to claim the Conservatives have no plans. That is more disinformation. If they really believed that, they would call an election and let Canadians decide which team has the best plan for a brighter future.

Mr. Terry Beech: Madam Speaker, we had an election, and in that election the member opposite supported pricing carbon pollution. That is exactly what happened. That is a fact that anybody watching at home can look up.

Canadians can count on our government to continue supporting those who need it most while carefully managing our finances and protecting our environment. We have a responsible plan, and we are doing our part to make sure we bring down global inflation in Canada. In fact, inflation has come down every month for the last nine months and is forecast to be back within the target band later this year.

Adjournment Proceedings

Despite these global challenges, we have continued to deliver for Canadians in the areas of affordability, child care and health care, and in transitioning to a sustainable economy with good, high-paying jobs. We have done this while maintaining our AAA credit rating and the best fiscal framework in the G7. We just came off a year with the best economic growth.

• (1915)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been

adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:15 p.m.)

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