



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
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CANADA

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# House of Commons Debates

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Wednesday, September 27, 2023

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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, September 27, 2023

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayer*

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• (1400)

[English]

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being Wednesday, we will now sing *O Canada*, led by the member for Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation.

[Members sang the national anthem]

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### ROGER THIBAUT

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this summer we lost a kind man, or as his partner of 50 years would say, the kindest man. Roger Thibault left us and husband Theo Wouters after a long battle with Parkinson's.

Roger and Theo were trailblazers. They became the first same-sex couple legally joined by civil union in Quebec, two years before same-sex marriage came into being. Sadly, they faced acute intolerance for over a decade, something that ultimately spurred a march outside their Pointe-Claire home that drew thousands of supporters. This would eventually lead to the creation of the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia.

[Translation]

In May of this year, Roger Thibault and Theo Wouters were named honorary citizens of Montreal in recognition of the decades they spent struggling to promote the rights of 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

We offer our deepest condolences to Theo and Roger's entire family and friends in this time of mourning.

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[English]

### CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

**Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. It is a time for us to recognize and support the importance of childhood cancer research while remembering those young lives that have been taken

away from us far too soon. One of these new angels was Jordy Peperall, a beautiful six-year-old little girl who recently passed, leaving behind her older brother Jack and loving parents Lindsay and Colin.

According to Childhood Cancer Canada, over 80% of children with cancer will now have a cure. However, many will continue to experience serious health issues later in life. Research on the development of future treatments is critically important, as is the need for funds to assist this essential work.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all those who participated in the recent Terry Fox runs in both Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake. I also want to recognize Niagara Falls councillors Mike Strange and Victor Pietrangelo for raising over \$60,000 for childhood cancer research and in support of the Ronald McDonald House in Hamilton.

No child should have to endure cancer, and families should not have to go through this alone. I thank the residents of Niagara for coming together to show that we are all in this battle together.

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### GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

**Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, over the summer, I had the pleasure of connecting with the hard-working residents of Brampton, whether through round tables, community events, my annual barbeque attended by hundreds of residents, or simply knocking on doors and listening to their concerns. They told me that we need to take strong action to address affordability and build more housing, which is exactly what we would be doing with Bill C-56, the affordable housing and groceries act.

Tangible measures like these, with respectful debate, are exactly what Canadians expect from their parliamentarians, not daily shouting and heckling, and not polarization. As we start the fall session, I encourage all members to work collaboratively and set aside the partisan games.

\* \* \*

• (1405)

[Translation]

### NATIONAL SENIORS DAY

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this Sunday, October 1, we will celebrate the International Day of Older Persons and National Seniors Day.

*Statements by Members*

The purpose of this day is to raise public awareness about issues related to seniors, such as aging and abuse. It is an important day on the calendar to appreciate the contributions that seniors make to society.

This year in particular, it is also an opportunity to take an important step toward helping seniors by eliminating age discrimination. Next week, we will debate the Bloc Québécois's Bill C-319.

The bill will correct an inequity between people aged 65 to 74 and those aged 75 and over by increasing old age security for all seniors. In the context of inflation, people living on a fixed income, such as seniors, are among those who pay the highest price. Ottawa needs to correct its error.

Let us not miss this opportunity. Let us set partisanship aside and vote for Bill C-319.

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**RIGAUD FALL FESTIVAL**

**Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for anyone interested in enjoying the colours of fall, Rigaud is the place to be.

Next October 7, 8 and 9, the Festival des couleurs de Rigaud is celebrating its 25th anniversary with more music, more activities and more fun than ever. All residents of Vaudreuil-Soulanges are invited to come and enjoy this outstanding event, made possible through the fantastic work of Christiane Lévesque and her team of incredible volunteers, as well as support from Canadian Heritage, Mayor Marie-Claude Frigault and the entire City of Rigaud team.

I invite all members of our beautiful community of Vaudreuil—Soulanges to show up in droves to admire the magnificent scenery of Mont Rigaud and enjoy a line-up of activities sure to please the whole family at the 25th annual Festival des couleurs de Rigaud.

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[English]

**LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, B'nai Brith, the Simon Wiesenthal Center, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, and the Jewish community are all demanding an apology from the Prime Minister for allowing a Nazi veteran of the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS to be honoured on the floor of the House of Commons.

This was an appalling error in judgment on the part of the Prime Minister, whose diplomatic protocol office has massive resources for vetting all guests invited to this place. Only Liberals had the opportunity to vet this individual's past. Allowing a Waffen-SS Nazi to be honoured in this place has embarrassed Canada on the international stage, embarrassed President Zelenskyy, caused a diplomatic disaster and handed the Kremlin and its illegal invasion a propaganda win.

The Prime Minister has brought shame on the House, emboldened the Russians and deeply offended the Jewish community. Will he stand in the House today, finally take responsibility, get up on his feet, do the right thing and apologize?

**RAYMOND MORIYAMA**

**Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, over the summer we lost one of Canada's greatest architects, Raymond Moriyama, a proud Japanese Canadian who built his first structure in a B.C. internment camp during the Second World War. He would go on to design some of the most iconic buildings in Canada. These include the Canadian War Museum, Ottawa City Hall, the Bata Shoe Museum, the Toronto Reference Library and the Ontario Science Centre. In Scarborough, we can thank him for his work on our most iconic local structure, the Scarborough Civic Centre. This Sunday, we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of this landmark and visible symbol of Scarborough. Moriyama's designs are iconic and will continue to delight Canadians young and old for many years to come. I hope this includes the Ontario Science Centre.

My thanks to Raymond Moriyama for his contributions to Canada. May his legacy long endure.

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**NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION**

**Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on September 30, indigenous peoples and Canadians from across Turtle Island will commemorate the annual National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. This day came about because of years of advocacy by Phyllis Webstad. Indigenous peoples from coast to coast to coast, elders, knowledge-keepers, residential school survivors and their families are to be thanked for their work in holding settlers accountable for our actions.

I will be spending the day educating myself further to understand more about how I can better walk the path of reconciliation and to understand how the actions that I myself put forward impact indigenous peoples. I invite all residents of the Soo, Algoma and all of Canada to take part in this day to educate themselves on how they also can support our efforts in reconciliation.

I would like to say *chi-meegwetch* to the members and elders of Batchewana First Nation, the Métis Nation, Garden River First Nation, the surrounding first nations and urban indigenous peoples for their advice and knowledge on my journey. Through my journey of education, I have been taught that reconciliation is not a checked box or a list of accomplishments. It is a continuation of concrete actions to address concerns and issues and to create positive change and relations with indigenous peoples. Every day is a good day to educate oneself on reconciliation and the history of indigenous peoples.

*Statements by Members*

● (1410)

[Translation]

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's reputation is sullied. Our country is the topic of disparaging comments around the world. Worse, Putin's Russia is using our situation as an opportunity to spread disinformation. It is shameful for us. Far worse, it is revolting for millions of people, starting with Ukrainians themselves who are fighting the Russian monster, the Jewish community both here and around the world, and those who actually fought the Nazis.

My late father fought the Waffen-SS in Italy, Provence and the Vosges. He was wounded twice, and had shrapnel from Nazi grenades buried near his skull his whole life. He was awarded a French mention in dispatches and given a medal. France awarded him the Legion of Honour.

In these moments of great turmoil that we are experiencing, the head of government must fully assume the responsibilities of the state with great dignity and respect. At a time when our country is experiencing its worst diplomatic crisis, the silence of the past four days is intolerable. That is why, for the good of the country, we ask that the Prime Minister apologize.

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[English]

**HOUSING**

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, affordability remains a top priority for Canadians. It remains at the top of Canadians' minds, and it is important that Canadians know that, as a government, we continue not only to listen but to take incremental steps to address their most pressing needs.

This summer, I heard from folks in London West that housing remains a top priority. I am happy to say that the Prime Minister was in London West a few weeks ago announcing a historic investment between a municipal government and the federal government, one that will see \$74 million in the city of London, adding an extra 2,000 units in the city of London. An extra 2,000 units will go a long way. It will ensure that families and all Londoners can have a place to call home, a place that meets all of their needs. That is the real change that we want to bring for Canadians and that this government has committed to bring to Canadians.

I am a proud member of this government, representing London West in this session. I am happy to be back to continue to be the voice of people in London West.

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**GUESTS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS**

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week, President Zelenskyy came to Canada looking for more support to defeat the Russian invaders. He should have left here reassured that his visit was a huge success, but instead the Liberals created a diplomatic nightmare that completely overshadowed President Zelenskyy's visit.

The Prime Minister's negligence has fuelled the Russian propaganda machine. The hurt this caused to Ukrainian and Jewish communities is unimaginable. Ukraine has already survived multiple genocides: the Holocaust, the Holodomor and the Sürgünlik of the Crimean Tatars. This incident is deeply personal. President Zelenskyy himself is Jewish and lost family in the Holocaust. His defence minister, Rustem Umerov, is a Muslim Crimean Tatar born in the gulag.

It is time for the Prime Minister to stand in his place and publicly apologize to President Zelenskyy, the people of Ukraine and, indeed, all Canadians.

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**GUESTS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS**

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister had all the tools at his fingertips to ensure President Zelenskyy's visit at a time of war was successful. The RCMP, CSIS and the Parliamentary Protective Service all had massive resources to vet the guest list. Global Affairs, the Privy Council Office and the diplomatic protocol office, on top of the PMO, had an obligation to vet any individual recognized at a globally significant event. All of these departments and offices ultimately report to the Prime Minister.

He has tried to shift all the blame to the Speaker, but the Prime Minister personally invited President Zelenskyy, on short notice, so he is personally responsible. It is the Prime Minister, and he alone, who is accountable for the success of all state visits. He tries to avoid it, but the buck stops with him. He must apologize to Canadians and to our allies and stop crippling Canada's reputation on the world stage.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

**JIM MORRISON**

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Vancouver radio is mourning the loss of a big voice backed by an even bigger heart. We have lost Jim Morrison, a mainstay on CK-WX radio back in the days when radio was delivered on 50,000-watt AM signals by real people with real talent. To Elaine and Jim's WX family, I send deepest condolences.

Many more of us knew Jim through video and record productions, and especially the UBC Amateur Radio Society, where that big voice of his was coupled with warmth, kindness and encouragement for those of us trying with our squeaky young voices to learn the moves. Jim personified the pure joy of being in a craft that we all dreamed to join. Inspired by him, many of us did, learning lessons in our radio days that we have carried forward into other places, including this place.

Now Jim Morrison is riding his mighty 1130 signal out into the stars, where that big voice will forever travel.

*Speaker's Ruling***RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS**

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my constituent Florence Douglas on her retirement and long service to air force veterans at 427 Wing in London.

Twenty-six years ago, Flo was hired as a temporary bar steward at the wing, but after only a few months, the directors made her a full-time manager, after realizing how invaluable she was. Flo quickly became an integral part of the wing. She worked many hours beyond what she was paid for and was the go-to person for everything. She knew all the names of every member and their guests. She ensured that whoever walked through the doors of the wing felt welcome and valued. Flo continues to be a cherished member of the wing and continues to serve veterans in the London East community even in her retirement.

Congratulations to Flo. We thank her so much.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**DEAN LAVALLÉE, YVES JONES AND DAMON ETHERIDGE**

**Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, during the night of Sunday to Monday, the unspeakable happened in my community, off the coast of La Tabatière on the Lower North Shore.

The *Silver Condor* sank in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, taking the lives of three fishermen. Dean Lavallée, Yves Jones and Damon Etheridge worked in one of the most noble, but also the most dangerous, professions. The sea gives, but it can also take away, and that is what it did on September 25.

These three men were our men. They were husbands, fathers, brothers, sons, cousins and friends. Coasters are one big family, and their hearts beat as one.

On behalf of everyone on the north shore, the members of the Bloc Québécois and everyone in the House, I would like to send a message of solace to all coasters. We all feel devastated in this difficult time, but we still have love to sustain us.

Damon, Yves and Dean, today we salute you from down here with gratitude and admiration. Thanks to you, the star that twinkles above us in the night sky to guide fishers and sailors now shines a little brighter.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, who speaks for Canada?

Today our nation's reputation on the world stage is clouded by the story of a tribute to a Nazi instead of support for our allies. When people think of Canada, when they open a newspaper, when they go on social media, when they hear about what happened here, that is all they know.

There is silence from a Prime Minister in hiding. This is his shame to bear, not ours. He failed to do even his most basic duty. He has shrunk from the occasion. He has refused to take responsibility and he has refused to take accountability. He laid blame on someone else and asked others to debase themselves to clean up the mess. Worse yet, he asked his MPs to try to strike it from the parliamentary record.

The Prime Minister has hurt our country. He has left our allies in the cold. He has humiliated Jews, Poles, veterans and all Canadians. If he does not speak for Canada, it is time Canadians had a Prime Minister who will.

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● (1420)

**WORLD TOURISM DAY**

**Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today is World Tourism Day.

With breathtaking natural landscapes and outdoor activities, vibrant cities and delicious food, or indigenous tourism experiences, Canada stands out for all we have to offer the world as hosts.

West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country is a microcosm of what Canada has to offer, with world-class skiing in Whistler, outdoor activities throughout Sea to Sky, the UNESCO biosphere region in At'l'ka7tsem/Howe Sound, and an extensive collection of artists, culinary experiences and nature adventures on the Sunshine Coast.

[*Translation*]

In Canada, tourism contributes significantly to the Canadian economy and has extraordinary growth potential. However, it is the people who welcome the world to Canada who make the tourism sector so special.

Earlier this summer, our government launched a new federal tourism growth strategy to ensure that tourism truly expands in Canada. I look forward to working with all members of the House and with everyone who works in the tourism sector to achieve this vision.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**POINTS OF ORDER****ORAL QUESTIONS—SPEAKER'S RULING**

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am now ready to rule on the point of order raised yesterday by the member for Oakville North—Burlington concerning unparliamentary language.

In her intervention, the member alleged that the member for Thornhill used unparliamentary language in her characterization of the government House leader. She also asked for an apology to the minister. The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader reiterated he had also heard the use of the term “disgrace”, and that it was unparliamentary. He asked that the member apologize.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Without denying that the words had been used, the member for Thornhill, in her response, instead repeated the word, in reference to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

*[English]*

In judging unparliamentary language, the tone, intentions and effects on proceedings must be taken into consideration. I will point out that the term did create a series of heated back-and-forth exchanges between members. This event is of concern to the Chair given the risk it may create for disorder.

*[Translation]*

In a ruling on another point of order about unparliamentary language, the Chair stated on March 29, 2022, at page 3739 of Debates:

The use of inflammatory and provocative statements is contrary to the respect owed to all members. Accordingly, the Chair reminds members to be mindful of the language they use in debate, with respect to their colleagues, in order to maintain proper civility and respect in our proceedings.

*[English]*

The events from last Friday have deeply upset all members. There have been tense and even emotional exchanges on how this situation came to pass. In this context, I would suggest to the House that it is incumbent upon all members to bolster their efforts in being respectful and courteous in their interventions. Without qualifying the words used by the member for Thornhill as being unparliamentary, they certainly did not serve to support and promote the essential civility and respect owed by one honourable member to another. I therefore encourage members to refrain from using such words again in the future.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

*[Translation]***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is the Prime Minister's personal responsibility to invite a head of state to the House of Commons. It was the Prime Minister's responsibility to invite President Zelenskyy here. It is the Prime Minister's responsibility to lead the government, which has security, diplomatic and intelligence agencies that could have and should have vetted the list of all people who were present and recognized during their visit.

Will the Prime Minister finally come out of hiding and take personal responsibility for the embarrassment he caused, for the monumental global shame he caused?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of everyone in the House, I would like to present unreserved apologies for what took place on Friday and for the position that President Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian delegation were put in. For all of us who were present to have unknowingly recognized this individual was a terrible mistake and a violation of the memory of those who suffered grievously at the hands of the Nazi regime.

• (1425)

*[English]*

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it was the personal responsibility of the Prime Minister to invite President Zelenskyy to the floor of this House of Commons. It was his personal responsibility to make sure it was a diplomatic success. It was his personal responsibility to continue to lead the government, which has the security, intelligence and diplomatic agencies that could have and should have vetted all individuals who were present and recognized. However, the Prime Minister allowed for a monumental, unprecedented and global shame to unfold in this chamber.

Will he take personal responsibility for this shame and personally apologize on his own behalf?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all of us in this House, I would like to present unreserved apologies for what took place on Friday, including to President Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian delegation for the position they were put in.

For all of us who were present to have unknowingly recognized this individual was a terrible mistake and a violation of the memory of those who suffered grievously at the hands of the Nazi regime.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, did the Prime Minister's national security, intelligence or diplomatic officials vet the names of the people the Prime Minister allowed within mere feet of President Zelenskyy?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the privilege, responsibilities and rights of parliamentarians are sacrosanct, and that the Leader of the Opposition would be suggesting that any visitor to this House should be vetted by the government of the day is actually a grievous attack on the rights and privileges of parliamentarians.

However, if the Leader of the Opposition, the Speaker or anyone wants our intelligence agencies to vet any of their guests, we would be more than happy to do that in respect of parliamentary rights.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has just said that he allowed the president of a war-torn country, who is perhaps the biggest target of false propaganda and potential assassinations, to be surrounded by hundreds of people who had not been vetted for their security background, the potential risks they present or, in this case, the massive diplomatic disasters they could have brought to the event.

Is the Prime Minister really saying he did absolutely nothing to protect the Ukrainian president from all those many risks?

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the facts are well known here. The Speaker issued the invitation and delivered the recognition; he has taken full responsibility. The Leader of the Opposition knows that not one parliamentarian was aware, but the truth does not matter to him. He distorts, misleads and aims to confuse, all for partisan gain. It is all he knows how to do.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, again he deflects blame and responsibility for his personal failings.

It is the duty of the Prime Minister to protect our diplomatic reputation. Therefore, it was, his duty to make sure that his diplomatic intelligence and security forces ensured that no one who could potentially present a danger to either the reputation or the physical safety of the people was present at such a massive international event.

Today, he said he did none of those things. Instead, after he found out about it, he hid in his cottage for three days. Is that what taking responsibility means to the Prime Minister?

• (1430)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we all know how many years the Leader of the Opposition has served in this House, and we can certainly remember all the times he stood up to defend the honour, the rights and the privileges of parliamentarians. Now, in order to make partisan attacks, he is proposing that the government of the day have the ability to vet and oversee the rights of parliamentarians, and indeed of the Speaker, to include people in this House, to invite them into this House. I know that the Leader of the Opposition used to have more respect for Parliament than that, but he is busy making a partisan attack.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Better late than never, Mr. Speaker. I commend the Prime Minister for his decision to acquiesce to the repeated requests that he apologize to Parliament and well beyond. His description of the leader of the official opposition is not bad either.

However, I would like to know whether the Prime Minister personally called President Zelenskyy to apologize on his and our behalf and whether he has a strategy for working with our allies to counter the terrible propaganda campaign the Russians are currently waging.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is indeed deeply distressing to see that the mistake made in the House on Friday is being used by the Russians to continue to spread their propaganda on why Ukraine is defending itself and why they wanted to invade Ukraine.

Here in Canada, we will continue to stand firm in the defence of Ukraine and the principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty. We have shared that solidarity with the President of Ukraine many times over the past few days.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is distressing because that was the first thing that should have been done.

I understand from the Prime Minister's response that he has not called President Zelenskyy, who is the biggest victim of this terrible mistake after Jewish communities.

Can he correct that mistake, call President Zelenskyy and make sure we counterbalance Russian propaganda? Also, can the government make an urgent effort, both in Canada and elsewhere, to embark on a healing process with Jewish communities?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have sent several messages directly to the Ukrainian people and to President Zelenskyy.

At the same time, we will continue to stand strong and firm against Russia's propaganda, disinformation and misinformation, as it invades a peaceful neighbouring country while attacking the rules-based international order. We will always stand up for international order and stand with Ukrainians.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said that he was embarrassed about what happened in the chamber, but it is not about him. It is much more than that. Real damage has been done: real damage to the Jewish community, real damage to the war effort in Ukraine and real damage to Canada's reputation.

After three days, the Prime Minister has finally said something, but he has to take action. What is he going to do, in concrete terms, to clean up this mess?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out, this was deeply embarrassing not just to all parliamentarians but to Canada as well.

We stand firmly with Ukraine. We will continue to stand against Russian aggression and Russian propaganda. We will continue to ensure, with the military aid, humanitarian aid, financial aid and diplomatic aid we are engaged with around the world, that we will continue and, indeed, step up efforts to counter Russian propaganda. We will continue to stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes, with whatever it takes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it took three days for this Prime Minister to say anything about what happened in the House. He has said that he was embarrassed, but it is not about him. Real damage has been done. Now we need meaningful action.

What is the Prime Minister going to do to clean up this mess?

• (1435)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, indeed, this has been deeply embarrassing for all parliamentarians and for Canada. The important thing is to continue to remain firmly on the side of Ukraine, to fight against Russian propaganda and arrogance. To date, we have invested nearly \$9.5 billion in humanitarian, military, diplomatic and economic aid for Ukraine. We will continue to be there to support Ukraine with whatever it takes, for as long as it takes.



*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there were days of silence from the Prime Minister in the face of an international diplomatic crisis that has brought shame on this entire country: an actual Nazi honoured in this place.

Instead of taking personal responsibility, he blamed the Speaker, went into hiding and waited three days to even call for his resignation. The Prime Minister instructed his MPs to try to wipe the parliamentary record to forget it.

The Prime Minister is there for all the glory, but when he makes a mess, he is nowhere to be seen. Now he says no one was vetted. He owes it to Canadians to take personal responsibility. Will he stand up on his feet and just do it today?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the principle of independence of Parliament from the government of the day is well established. The government is always there to work with opposition parties or the Speaker if they have concerns or questions about any of the guests they choose to invite into this august chamber.

We will continue to stand unequivocally with Ukraine, but we will also, at the same time, defend the rights and privileges of parliamentarians.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has never been shy to use the Nazi label against his opponents, against Canadians. That he is not able to bring himself to take responsibility for an actual Nazi is something that Canadians will not forget.

The Prime Minister could have prevented this. He should have prevented it. He needs to fix it.

The world knows that, under the Prime Minister, a Nazi was honoured in this place. The question is this: Who speaks for Canada? If the current Prime Minister will not, is it not time for Canadians to have one who will?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, indeed, Canadians and the world are watching very carefully what has happened this week and the terrible error that happened on Friday.

However, they are also interested in seeing who is trying to make partisan hay out of this, who is trying to look for gains out of what was obviously a terrible mistake.

It is important that we learn from this, that we stand even stronger with Ukraine going forward and that we counter Russian propaganda.

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Jewish community is horrified that Liberals allowed a Nazi to be honoured on the floor of this House and is demanding an apology from the Prime Minister.

He has embarrassed Canada on the international stage, caused a diplomatic disaster and handed the Kremlin a propaganda win. He has brought shame on the House and deeply offended the Jewish community.

Will the Prime Minister stand in the House today, finally take personal responsibility, do the right thing and personally apologize on his own behalf?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it was incredibly upsetting that this happened. The outgoing Speaker took responsibility and resigned, which was the right thing to do.

We recognize the deep pain this caused for Jewish communities and for all who were victims of Nazi atrocities, as well as their descendants. It was an embarrassment for Parliament and Canadians. It reaffirms the need to keep promoting and investing in Holocaust education, something our government has continued to support and always will.

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the buck stops with the Prime Minister. That is simply not good enough, not one bit.

Not only did the Prime Minister bring shame on the House, but he also tried to bury this sordid affair with a motion on Monday to strike history from the record. Instead of learning from history, the Prime Minister wants to erase it. Conservatives said no. The Prime Minister has brought shame on this House and deeply offended the Jewish community. Its members are demanding a personal apology.

Will the Prime Minister stand in the House today to finally take personal responsibility and apologize to this community?

• (1440)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that all parliamentarians agreed unanimously yesterday that the tribute to this individual would be withdrawn. That is what happened yesterday. We do not want that to stand in the future.

However, we also know that we need to continue to stand every day with the people of Ukraine as they fight against this illegal invasion by Vladimir Putin and as they stand for rule-based order and the principles of the UN Charter, which protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of us all. This government and this country will always stand unequivocally with Ukraine.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for the past three days, Liberal members, ministers and the Prime Minister have all been piling blame on the former speaker, saying he alone is responsible for what happened on Friday, when the House of Commons applauded a Nazi.

However, it is impossible that officials from Global Affairs Canada, the Privy Council Office, the office of protocol and the RCMP could have failed in their duty to run background checks on the guests, especially the person presented by the Speaker.

Will the Prime Minister personally apologize to Canadians and to the international community, which is appalled by what happened in the House?

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Conservative members are well aware that the independence of the Speaker of the House of Commons is critically important in our parliamentary system.

The government of the day has no veto power or control over the guests chosen by other parties or even by the Speaker of the House.

It is extremely important that we continue to unequivocally stand on the side of Ukraine and the international rule of law. We will always stand with the people of Ukraine and against Russia.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Prime Minister feels really bad about the situation.

However, the legislation enacted in 2015 clearly states that the RCMP is in charge of the operations of the Parliamentary Protective Service, which was put in place at that time in the wake of the 2014 attacks.

It is clear that the House must be protected. The members of the Parliamentary Protective Service are doing their job, supervised by the RCMP. When a state occasion takes place and the president of a country like Ukraine comes here to Canada, to Parliament, it is standard practice that the government and the Prime Minister oversee who is present in the House with our guests.

Will the Prime Minister personally apologize to Canadians?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we all recognize that the former speaker of the House made a serious mistake.

As we consider the election of the next Speaker of the House, we will want to determine how we can ensure that mistakes like this never happen again. The government will always be there to work with opposition parties or the Speaker to check the background of anyone who comes to the House, but it should not be a government violating the fundamental rights of parliamentarians.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in 2020, a teacher was beheaded in the south of France and it took two weeks for the Prime Minister to call President Macron.

Is the same thing going to happen now or will he call President Zelenskyy? This is totally unacceptable.

If I may, I want to apologize to President Zelenskyy on behalf of Quebecers and offer my collaboration. I will ensure that the message on behalf of Quebecers gets to President Zelenskyy immediately.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for days now, we have been apologizing to President Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian people through diplomatic channels, and we continue to work hand in hand with the Ukrainian government to defend the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine from this barbaric Russian invasion, from this violation of international law. We continue to stand in solidarity with Ukraine. That is the message I communicate regularly to President Zelenskyy when I talk to him.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I also want the Jewish community of Quebec and Canada to know how ashamed and sorry I am. I want to apologize to them as well and offer my full co-operation.

I want to know whether the Prime Minister personally did the same and whether he met with representatives of the Jewish community of Canada.

• (1445)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we apologized today on behalf of all parliamentarians. For the past few days, we have been saying how sorry we are about the mistake made by the Speaker of the House of Commons.

We will keep working not only to defend Ukraine but also to support the Jewish community, which has been facing a global rise in anti-Semitism for the past several years. We will always be there to defend the principles of the rule of law and openness toward others, and we will always fight alongside Ukrainians in order to do so.

[English]

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, it is the Prime Minister who is responsible for visiting heads of state. President Zelenskyy came here expecting a warm welcome and a successful visit, but, due to the Prime Minister's haphazard management of this visit, he instead turned it into a diplomatic nightmare.

This has played straight into Russia's disinformation campaign against Ukraine. The Prime Minister must accept full responsibility. Will he publicly apologize to President Zelenskyy today for his failure?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I just apologized on behalf of parliamentarians and Canadians. We will continue to be there to stand with President Zelenskyy and Ukrainians.

However, if members of the opposition want the help of security agencies in vetting their guests, if they would like, for example, for us to vet who three members of their team would have lunch with, when they are meeting with a far-right German politician, we would be happy to give them advice on who they should meet with and who they should not meet with.

Respecting Parliament and parliamentary privilege continues to be our—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has a duty of care to protect President Zelenskyy when he is here in Canada. The Parliamentary Protective Service, the RCMP, the Privy Council Office and the protocol office all report to the Prime Minister.

Because of his failure to fulfill his personal responsibilities, the Prime Minister has harmed Canada's reputation on the world stage. He broke trust with Jewish and Ukrainian communities. He has undermined Ukraine in this war, and he has provided fuel for Putin's propaganda machine.

Will the Prime Minister admit that he was negligent, and apologize to President Zelenskyy, the Ukrainian people and, indeed, all Canadians?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, do members know who does not report to the Prime Minister in our parliamentary system? The Speaker of the House of Commons does not report to the Prime Minister.

It is well established that the independence of the Speaker is sacrosanct. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to change that, let him stand up to say that.

We will continue to defend the principles and the rights of parliamentarians, even as we stand with Ukraine against the illegal invasion by Russia.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, actually, the Speaker's Parliamentary Protective Service reports to the RCMP, which reports to the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister says that his national police agency did not vet—

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

I cannot hear the question. I want to be able to hear the question, and I want to be able to hear the answer as well.

The hon. leader of the official opposition can back up and start again.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, the RCMP reports to the public safety minister, who reports to the Prime Minister. That Prime Minister is now saying that, when he has foreign heads of state here, terrorists, assassins and convicted murderers would all be allowed to just walk right into the building and be within mere feet of a potential assassination target.

How does he ever expect another head of state to come back to this place?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for someone who prides himself on having spent as many years in Parliament as the Leader of the Opposition has, including having been the minister of democratic institutions, albeit under Stephen Harper, to demonstrate such little knowledge and respect for how Parliament functions in order to make a partisan attack is truly disgraceful.

The fact of the matter is, we will continue to stand for the principles and values that make our democracy strong, even as, and even because, we stand with Ukraine.

• (1450)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, he speaks of a partisan attack. This is a Prime Minister who, though he says he forgot to vet the people who were recognized during the president's visit, remembered to tell members of his caucus to pull out their phones and tape record other members of Parliament during the speech to make Liberal Party attack ads. That is the shameful politicization he was focused on.

### *Oral Questions*

However, I will get back to the question. Is he really saying that, for future visits of foreign heads of state, he would have no problem letting in terrorists, assassins or convicted criminals to be within mere feet of that foreign head of state, yes or no?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am going to let the supposed arguments of the Leader of the Opposition stand for Canadians to judge whether or not he is making any sense at all. I am not going to dignify that with a response.

\* \* \*

### GROCERY INDUSTRY

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, a report was released that indicated that seven million Canadians are struggling with the cost of groceries. This is after two years during which the Liberal government has allowed greedy CEOs to exploit Canadians and jack up the price of their groceries.

Now, only after the Liberals are falling behind in the polls are they making a show, but it is not good enough. Will the Liberals get serious about taking on greedy CEOs and support our bill, which would bring the cost of food?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians' grocery bills are way too high. That is why we are taking immediate action. We have called in the top CEOs to Ottawa to discuss how they can make groceries more affordable. Should they fail to show results, their inaction will have consequences.

We are moving forward on competition reforms because we know that increased competition is good for consumers. We will always stand up for Canadians.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the climate crisis is hitting families hard. People are also having a hard time paying their energy bills, and the government is noticeably absent. A report released by Clean Energy Canada confirms that we can reduce energy bills and cut emissions at the same time.

Will the Prime Minister show some leadership and do just that?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we are doing.

By putting a price on pollution that returns more money to most Canadians than it costs them, we can fight climate change and help families with the cost of living. That is how we managed to start reducing greenhouse gas emissions faster than the other G7 countries.

We will always demonstrate that building a strong economy, protecting the environment and helping families with the cost of living all go hand in hand. That is what we do every day.

*Oral Questions**[English]***INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, Canadians will recognize the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. It serves as a national moment of reflection on the horrors of our past and a collective call to action in our effort to chart a better future.

I will be spending the morning with elders and indigenous leaders at the site of the former Assiniboia Residential School. Established in 1958, it was one of the only urban residential high schools in Canada. Sadly, it is in my riding and serves as a dark reminder of our collective inaction and colonial laws.

Can the Prime Minister please tell the House the significance of this day to the country?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Winnipeg South Centre for his commitment to reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

On September 30, we mark the third National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. It is an opportunity to come together to reflect on the legacy of residential schools and the ongoing impacts on survivors, their families and their communities, as well as to commit to continuing the hard but necessary work of building a better future for all.

Let us all take a moment to participate, learn and reflect because we all have a role to play in the journey towards reconciliation.

\* \* \*

● (1455)

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister was too frightened to get up and answer my last question, so I will ask it again.

The Prime Minister is now saying that anybody can walk in and be within feet of a foreign head of state when they address a joint session of the Canadian Parliament. That is crazy, because staff members of MPs actually need to have their fingerprints taken and have background checks just to walk in these buildings.

Is the Prime Minister really telling foreign heads of state that when they come here there is no vetting whatsoever of the hundreds of people who would come within mere feet of them while they are here?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our security services, including the Parliamentary Protective Service, are responsible for the safety of everyone in this House, and they always ensure there are appropriate security protocols for anyone who enters into this House.

At the same time, I am fairly certain the Leader of the Opposition is not seriously suggesting the government of the day should be vetting the individuals who that hon. member chooses to invite into the House, in a long-standing principle of parliamentary privilege.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, of course nobody is suggesting that. What we are suggesting is that the leader of a war-torn country, who is the obvious target of propaganda and possibly even assassination, should be protected from danger not only to his person but also to his reputation, and that it is the job of the Government of Canada to carry out.

The Prime Minister has, at his fingertips, the RCMP, Global Affairs and CSIS to do background checks, and a Google check would have shown this individual who was recognized was a Nazi.

Why can the Prime Minister not find someone in his entire government who can use Google?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the Speaker highlighted, no parliamentarian knew the name or the identity of the person he welcomed to his House and recognized, and that is why he apologized and has stepped down from his position.

It is extremely important that all of us continue to stand with Volodymyr Zelenskyy and the people of Ukraine and continue to stand against Russia, including against its propaganda and disinformation. Canada will be there with Ukraine for as long as it takes, with as much as it takes. I hope all members of this House continue to stand together on that.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it would have taken a mere phone call for the Prime Minister's diplomatic, intelligence or police services to get the names of all of those who were approved to enter this building. It would have taken a day of vetting for them to perform Google and other intelligence background searches on those individuals.

Let us take it to another president. We had President Biden here. Is he really claiming that no one in either the presidential administration south of the border or in the Canadian government's security establishment looked at the background of the hundreds of people who were in the building when the President was addressing this House?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that every single day in this House the security and safety of everyone in this House is top of mind for all the professionals in the PPS and in our security agencies and services. The security of visiting dignitaries and presidents, like President Biden or President Zelenskyy, is always taken extremely seriously, and will continue to be.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is responsible for state visits. Foreign heads of states come here. They expect they will be protected not only against security threats but against massive global-scale embarrassments and shames like the one he allowed to unfold before Canadians.

Will the Prime Minister commit to personally calling President Zelenskyy and apologizing for his personal failure to vet those who were present and recognized on the floor of the House of Commons, yes or no?

• (1500)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will note that to this day, the leader of the official opposition has not apologized for having had three MPs, including one who is still part of his leadership team, sit down to dine with a far right German politician a number of months ago. No recognition, no apologies and no consequences for those three MPs who engaged with a far right German politician.

If the Leader of the Opposition wants the government to help him vet those his MPs meet with, we would be more than happy to give him some better advice.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister did not call Volodymyr Zelenskyy. He said he went through diplomatic channels. He did not call a meeting with Canada's Jewish community. Three days have gone by. What has the Prime Minister been doing for the past three days?

The Prime Minister usually churns out one apology after another, but this time, it took five days. He could have been coordinating an effort to fight Russian propaganda but no, he was doing nothing.

Is he going to make another statement tomorrow to tell us what he did or did not do today, without doing it?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think we all recognize that what happened in the House on Friday was completely unacceptable.

We also understand that the situation, and the respect we all owe the Speaker of the House, required us to give the outgoing Speaker some space to come to terms with events, and I think it played a very important part in his decision to ultimately not only apologize, but resign.

The respect we owe this institution and this place demanded that we give him some space.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we all agree that this is unacceptable, but it did not take us all five days to realize that an apology was needed.

I am formally asking the Prime Minister to call Volodymyr Zelenskyy and apologize to him on Canada's behalf. I am asking him start coordinating an effort to counter Russian propaganda, and I am asking him to immediately organize a healing meeting or start the healing process with the Jewish community in Quebec and Canada.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I agree. We have already begun doing those three things.

[*English*]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister claims that his government has nothing to do with security for a state visit in this chamber but this is the agreement that his office signed with the RCMP. It states that the RCMP will lead integrated security operations throughout the parliamentary precinct and on the grounds of Parliament Hill.

His police agency, which reports to his public safety minister, is responsible for the security and, therefore by necessity, the vetting

### *Oral Questions*

of anyone who comes within just 10 or 20 feet of a foreign head of state who is an obvious target of assassination.

Will the Prime Minister take responsibility for this massive security and diplomatic meltdown that happened under his watch?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as colleagues know, the Parliamentary Protective Service is engaged in and has ensured the safety and the physical safety of everyone in this room.

I would like it, perhaps, when the Leader of the Opposition gets up again, if he could say the name, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and actually speak about Ukraine. We would very much like to hear that for once from the Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if he had been listening and not hiding, he would have heard me mention President Zelenskyy many times, in particular the damage that he has caused President Zelenskyy.

The question was about the RCMP vetting. Nobody is suggesting that the 98-year-old Nazi was a security threat but had he been vetted, even with a Google search, it would have been known that he was a Nazi and this massive, unprecedented, global embarrassment might have been avoided. It is the responsibility of the police service of the Prime Minister's government.

Why did the Prime Minister not ensure that his police service was doing its job?

• (1505)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Speaker of this House of Commons invited an individual without apparently doing that Google search, but it is not up to the government of the day to oversee or to have a veto power over those who the Speaker or, indeed, members of official parties choose to invite into this House. If the member wants to change hundreds of years of parliamentary privilege and Westminster democracy then, absolutely, let us have a debate about that.

However, on this side of the House, we respect the independence of the Speaker's office.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we do not have to change hundreds of years of tradition. This rule is already in place. The House of Commons has already given the authority to the RCMP to lead integrated security operations throughout the parliamentary precinct and on the grounds of Parliament Hill. That means that logically, if a foreign head of state were here giving a speech while that head of state is at war, we would ensure that the RCMP would vet the people who come within 10 or 20 feet of that individual.

My question, one more time, is why the government's police service, under the Prime Minister's leadership, did not do its job.

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hard-working women and men of the Parliamentary Protective Service ensured the safety of everyone in this room by thoroughly clearing, through metal detectors and security, everyone who came into this room. When it comes to the respect for the independence and the authority of the Speaker, this government will continue to respect the independence of the Speaker's office and therefore the responsibility of the Speaker in this matter.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**HOUSING**

**Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, many people in my riding are saying that it is difficult to access affordable housing. One of the reasons is the lack of rental housing in my community.

Can the Prime Minister tell Canadians what the government is doing to encourage the construction of rental housing in order to address the concerns of my constituents and Canadians in general about housing affordability?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Etobicoke Centre for his question and hard work.

This week, we announced that it will be easier for developers to access low-cost financing to build apartment buildings for families, students and seniors. This measure will help build up to 30,000 new rental units per year.

Together, we can get more housing built so everyone has an affordable home.

\* \* \*

[English]

**GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has finally come out of hiding from his cottage, but he still follows his old practice of failing to take responsibility. It reminds us that, when he was caught dressing up in racist costumes so many times he cannot remember them all, he said everyone else needed to learn from his personal racist misconduct. When he broke the law to help a Liberal-linked company to avoid prosecution for stealing from the poorest people in Africa, he blamed his Attorney General and fired her. When he doubled housing costs, he said housing is not his job.

When will he start taking ownership for his failures and apologize for them all?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while the Leader of the Opposition concentrates on personal attacks on me, I will stay focused on Canadians, on building more affordable housing, on delivering things like the grocery benefit, on delivering child care at \$10 a day right across the country over the objections of Conservatives and on delivering a dental benefit for families that cannot afford to send their kids to the dentist, something Conservatives voted against.

We will continue to stay focused on fighting for Canadians while the Leader of the Opposition fights with everyone around him.

● (1510)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the country is in a shambles. Interest rates are rising faster than at any time in monetary history, but the Prime Minister does not think of monetary policy. Housing costs have doubled, but housing is not his job. We have the lowest growth since the Great Depression, but he does not know what growth is. Three million people live in poverty, a quarter million are homeless, seven million cannot feed themselves, violent shootings have doubled, there have been 36,000 overdose deaths since he took office and our country's reputation is in a shambles.

Will the guy who caused this nightmare finally take responsibility for it?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are feeling the impact of rising prices across the country, including on things like groceries and housing. That is why we are taking immediate action to increase the pressure on CEOs to ensure groceries are affordable, we are supporting small businesses by extending the term loan repayment deadline and we are increasing the construction of apartments by removing the GST.

We are seeing the impacts already. This week a Toronto-based company shared that it will now build 5,000 more new rental units across the country, which were otherwise on hold.

We will continue to focus on delivering for Canadians, while he focuses on fights.

[Translation]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, he keeps repeating the same election promises he broke eight years ago. The cost of housing has doubled after eight years. The inflation rate is the highest it has been in 40 years and interest rates are going up faster than at any other time in our country's economic history, but he is not thinking about economic policy. The number of shootings has doubled. Seven million Canadians cannot afford to buy food and 36,000 people have died from an overdose.

Will the person who caused this nightmare finally take responsibility for what he has broken?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are feeling the impact of the rising cost of living across the country, especially when it comes to groceries and housing. That is why we are taking immediate action to put more pressure on the CEOs of the major grocery chains to make groceries more affordable. We will also support small businesses by extending the loan repayment deadlines and we will help get more apartments built by eliminating the GST on new construction.

We are already seeing the benefits. This week, a Toronto-based company announced that it will build 5,000 new rental units across the country, a project that it had put on hold.

We will always be there to help Canadians.

\* \* \*

[English]

### THE ECONOMY

**Ms. Anna Gainey (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today for the first time on behalf of my constituents. As I begin as their MP, I promise to be a strong voice for my community. Right now, the number one priority for many families in my riding is making ends meet and paying the bills.

Can the Prime Minister outline how programs like the Canada child benefit are helping my constituents ease the pressure of inflation and deal with the rising cost of living?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the new member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount for her commitment to making life more affordable for all Canadians.

One of the first things we did when coming into office was to scrap Stephen Harper's flawed plan to send child care cheques to millionaires, by implementing a non-taxable Canada child benefit that provides more generous support to the Canadian families that need it the most. Since then, millions of parents have received support, including thousands of families in the member's riding that just got their monthly payment last week. This is a concrete way we are directly making life more affordable for Canadian families with hundreds of dollars a month.

\* \* \*

### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, 250,000 small businesses in Canada may be forced to close their doors by the end of this year because the Liberals are not listening. These are businesses that provide good jobs and are vital to local economies. It is shocking that after years of small businesses being hit with one thing or another, the Liberals' plan is to offer a half-baked extension that will cost businesses up to \$20,000.

Will the Prime Minister commit right now to extending the CE-BA payment deadline by a year, with the promised loan forgiveness?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, through the depths of the pandemic, we were there to support Canadians, to support workers, families, seniors, young people and

### Private Members' Business

yes, small businesses. We have been there to support them and we continue to support them while inflation postpandemic is making the recovery harder.

That is why we put forward measures to support them and why we are going to continue to be there to support small businesses from coast to coast to coast and to support Canadians while we grow our economy, fight climate change and create an economy that works for all Canadians.

\* \* \*

● (1515)

### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member representing Nipissing—Timiskaming was one of the most respectful individuals to have presided over the House. Regrettably, that same treatment was not afforded to him.

I am disappointed in the cabinet ministers and party leaders who tripped over themselves to express their indignation and distance themselves from what transpired. The Prime Minister should have had no hesitation to make a statement in the House apologizing to Canadians, to countries hurt by this serious incident and to the world. He had a duty to make clear that Canada stands firm in its abhorrence to anything or anyone connected to Nazism.

What took the Prime Minister so long to finally make that statement?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said a few days ago, this incident was an embarrassment to Canada and to all parliamentarians. That is why we continue to emphasize how we stand with Ukraine, how we continue to fight against Russian propaganda and disinformation, and how we will continue to ensure that the rules of this place and the independence of the Speaker are fully respected.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The House resumed from September 20 consideration of the motion.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 78 under Private Members' Business in the name of the member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

Call in the members.

● (1530)

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

*Private Members' Business**(Division No. 413)*

## YEAS

## Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison	Holland	Housefather
Albas	Aldag	Hughes	Hussen
Alghabra	Ali	Hutchings	Iacono
Allison	Anand	Idlout	Ien
Anandasangaree	Angus	Jaczek	Jeneroux
Arnold	Arseneault	Johns	Joly
Arya	Ashton	Jones	Jowhari
Atwin	Bachrach	Julian	Kayabaga
Badawey	Bains	Kelloway	Kelly
Baker	Baldinelli	Khalid	Khanna
Barlow	Barrett	Khera	Kitchen
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste	Kmiec	Koutrakis
Beaulieu	Beech	Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Bendayan	Bennett	Kurek	Kusie
Bergeron	Berthold	Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Bérubé	Bezan	Lake	Lambropoulos
Bibeau	Bittle	Lametti	Lamoureux
Blaikie	Blair	Lantsman	Lapointe
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas	Larouche	Lattanzio
Blaney	Block	Lauzon	Lawrence
Blois	Boissonnault	Lebouthillier	Lehoux
Boulerice	Bradford	Lemire	Leslie
Bragdon	Brassard	Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Brière	Brock	Liepert	Lightbound
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins	Lloyd	Lobb
Cannings	Caputo	Long	Longfield
Carr	Carrie	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
Casey	Chabot	MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Chagger	Chahal	Maguire	Majumdar
Chambers	Champagne	Maloney	Martel
Champoux	Chatel	Martinez Ferrada	Mathysen
Chen	Chiang	May (Cambridge)	May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)
Chong	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Cooper	Cormier	McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
Coteau	Dabrusin	McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Dalton	Damoff	McLean	McLeod
Dancho	Davidson	McPherson	Melillo
Davies	DeBellefeuille	Mendès	Miao
Deltell	Desbiens	Michaud	Miller
Desilets	Desjarlais	Moore	Morantz
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Morrice	Morrison
Diab	Doherty	Morrissey	Motz
Dong	Dowdall	Murray	Muys
Dreeshen	Drouin	Naqvi	Nater
Dubourg	Duguid	Ng	Noormohamed
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Dzerowicz	Normandin	O'Connell
Ehsassi	El-Khoury	Oliphant	O'Regan
Ellis	Epp	Patzer	Paul-Hus
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Pauzé	Perkins
Falk (Provencher)	Fast	Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Fergus	Ferri	Plamondon	Poilievre
Fillmore	Findlay	Powlowski	Qualtrough
Fisher	Fonseca	Rayes	Redekopp
Fortier	Fortin	Reid	Rempel Garner
Fragiskatos	Fraser	Richards	Roberts
Freeland	Fry	Robillard	Rogers
Gaheer	Gainey	Romanado	Rood
Gallant	Garon	Ruff	Sahota
Garrison	Gaudreau	Sajjan	Saks
Gazan	Généreux	Samson	Sarai
Genuis	Gerretsen	Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Gill	Gladu	Scheer	Schiefke
Goodridge	Gould	Schmale	Seeback
Gourde	Gray	Serré	Sgro
Green	Guilbeault	Shanahan	Sheehan
Hajdu	Hallan	Shields	Shipley
Hanley	Hardie	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Hepfner	Hoback	Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
		Singh	Small
		Sorbara	Soroka
		Sousa	Steinley
		Ste-Marie	Stewart
		St-Onge	Strahl



*Private Members' Business*

Stubbs  
Tassi  
Thériault  
Thomas  
Tochor  
Trudeau  
Turnbull  
Valdez  
van Koeverden  
Vandal  
Vecchio  
Vien  
Vignola  
Virani  
Vuong  
Warkentin  
Webber  
Williams  
Yip  
Zarrillo  
Zuberi — 323

Sudds  
Taylor Roy  
Therrien  
Thompson  
Tolmie  
Trudel  
Uppal  
Van Bynen  
Van Popta  
Vandenbeld  
Vidal  
Viersen  
Villemure  
Vis  
Wagantall  
Waugh  
Weiler  
Williamson  
Zahid  
Zimmer

Blaikie  
Blanchet  
Blaney  
Blois  
Boulerice  
Bragdon  
Brière  
Brunelle-Duceppe  
Cannings  
Carr  
Casey  
Chagger  
Chambers  
Champoux  
Chen  
Chong  
Cooper  
Coteau  
Dalton  
Dancho  
Davies  
Deltell  
Desilets  
Dhaliwal  
Diab  
Dong  
Dreeshen  
Dubourg  
Duguid  
Dzerowicz  
El-Khoury  
Epp  
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)  
Fast  
Ferri  
Findlay  
Fonseca  
Fortin  
Fraser  
Fry  
Gainey  
Garon  
Gaudreau  
Généreux  
Gerretsen  
Gladu  
Gould  
Gray  
Guilbeault  
Hallan  
Hardie  
Hoback  
Housefather  
Hussen  
Iacono  
Ien  
Jeneroux  
Joly  
Jowhari  
Kayabaga  
Kelly  
Khanna  
Kitchen  
Koutrakis  
Kramp-Neuman  
Kusie  
Kwan  
Lambropoulos  
Lamoureux  
Lapointe  
Lattanzio  
Lawrence  
Lehoux

Blair  
Blanchette-Joncas  
Block  
Boissonnault  
Bradford  
Brassard  
Brock  
Calkins  
Caputo  
Carrie  
Chabot  
Chahal  
Champagne  
Chatel  
Chiang  
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)  
Cormier  
Dabrusin  
Damoff  
Davidson  
DeBellefeuille  
Desbiens  
Desjarlais  
Dhillon  
Doherty  
Dowdall  
Drouin  
Duclos  
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)  
Ehsassi  
Ellis  
Erskine-Smith  
Falk (Provencher)  
Fergus  
Fillmore  
Fisher  
Fortier  
Fragiskatos  
Freeland  
Gaheer  
Gallant  
Garrison  
Gazan  
Genuis  
Gill  
Goodridge  
Gourde  
Green  
Hajdu  
Hanley  
Hepfner  
Holland  
Hughes  
Hutchings  
Idlout  
Jaczek  
Johns  
Jones  
Julian  
Kelloway  
Khalid  
Khera  
Kmiec  
Kram  
Kurek  
Kusmierczyk  
Lake  
Lametti  
Lantsman  
Larouche  
Lauzon  
Lebouthillier  
Lemire

**NAYS**

Nil

**PAIRED**

Members

Godin

Lalonde — 2

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

\* \* \*

**EXCISE TAX ACT**

The House resumed from September 25 consideration of the motion that Bill C-323, An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act (mental health services), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-323.

● (1540)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 414*)

**YEAS**

Members

Aboultatif  
Albas  
Alghabra  
Allison  
Anandasangaree  
Arnold  
Arya  
Atwin  
Badawey  
Baker  
Barlow  
Barsalou-Duval  
Beaulieu  
Bendayan  
Bergeron  
Bérubé  
Bibeau

Aitchison  
Aldag  
Ali  
Anand  
Angus  
Arseneault  
Ashton  
Bachrach  
Bains  
Baldinelli  
Barrett  
Battiste  
Beech  
Bennett  
Berthold  
Bezan  
Bittle

*Private Members' Business*

Leslie	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lightbound	Lloyd
Lobb	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire
Majumdar	Maloney
Martel	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLean	McLeod
McPherson	Melillo
Mendès	Mencicino
Miao	Michaud
Miller	Moore
Morantz	Morrice
Morrison	Morrissey
Motz	Murray
Muys	Naqvi
Nater	Ng
Noormohamed	Normandin
O'Connell	Olipphant
O'Regan	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Perkins	Perron
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Poilievre	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Rood
Ruff	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Scheer	Schiefke
Schmale	Seeback
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Shields	Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Singh	Small
Sorbara	Soroka
Sousa	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Stewart
St-Onge	Strahl
Stubbs	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thériault	Therrien
Thomas	Thompson
Tochor	Tolmie
Trudeau	Trudel
Turnbull	Uppal
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Van Popta
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vignola	Villemure
Virani	Vis
Vuong	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Weiler
Williams	Williamson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zimmer

Zuberi— 327

## NAYS

Nil

## PAIRED

Members

Godin

Lalonde— 2

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

Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Finance.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

\* \* \*

● (1545)

[English]

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACT**

The House resumed from September 26 consideration of the motion that Bill S-222, An Act to amend the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act (use of wood), be read the third time and passed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill S-222 under Private Members' Business.

● (1555)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 415)

## YEAS

Members

Abouttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Block
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Bragdon	Brassard
Brière	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Cannings	Caputo
Carr	Carrie
Casey	Chabot

*Private Members' Business*

Chagger	Chahal	Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Chambers	Champagne	McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
Champoux	Chatel	McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Chen	Chiang	McLean	McLeod
Chong	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	McPherson	Melillo
Cooper	Cormier	Mendès	Mendicino
Coteau	Dabrusin	Miao	Michaud
Dalton	Damoff	Miller	Moore
Dancho	Davidson	Morantz	Morrice
Davies	DeBellefeuille	Morrison	Morrissey
Deltell	Desbiens	Motz	Murray
Desilets	Desjarlais	Muys	Naqvi
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Nater	Ng
Diab	Doherty	Noormohamed	Normandin
Dong	Dowdall	O'Connell	Oliphant
Dreeshen	Drouin	O'Regan	Patzer
Dubourg	Duclos	Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Perkins	Perron
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi	Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
El-Khoury	Ellis	Poilievre	Powlowski
Epp	Erskine-Smith	Qualtrough	Rayes
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)	Redekopp	Reid
Fast	Fergus	Rempel Garner	Richards
Ferreri	Fillmore	Roberts	Robillard
Findlay	Fisher	Rodriguez	Rogers
Fonseca	Fortier	Romanado	Rood
Fortin	Fragiskatos	Ruff	Sahota
Fraser	Freeland	Sajjan	Saks
Fry	Gaheer	Samson	Sarai
Gainey	Gallant	Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Garon	Garrison	Schiefke	Schmale
Gaudreau	Gazan	Seeback	Serré
Généreux	Genuis	Sgro	Shanahan
Gerretsen	Gill	Sheehan	Shields
Gladu	Goodridge	ShIPLEY	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Gould	Gourde	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Gray	Green	Sinclair-Desgagné	Singh
Guilbeault	Hajdu	Small	Sorbara
Hallan	Hanley	Soroka	Sousa
Hardie	Hepfner	Steinley	Ste-Marie
Hoback	Holland	Stewart	St-Onge
Housefather	Hughes	Strahl	Stubbs
Hussen	Hutchings	Sudds	Tassi
Iacono	Idlout	Taylor Roy	Thériault
Ien	Jaczek	Therrien	Thomas
Jeneroux	Johns	Thompson	Tochor
Joly	Jones	Tolmie	Trudeau
Jowhari	Julian	Trudel	Turnbull
Kayabaga	Kelloway	Uppal	Valdez
Kelly	Khalid	Van Bynen	van Koevelden
Khanna	Khera	Van Popta	Vandal
Kitchen	Kmiec	Vandenbeld	Vecchio
Koutrakis	Kram	Vidal	Vien
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek	Viersen	Vignola
Kusie	Kusmierczyk	Villemure	Virani
Kwan	Lake	Vis	Vuong
Lambropoulos	Lametti	Wagantall	Warkentin
Lamoureux	Lantsman	Waugh	Webber
Lapointe	Larouche	Weiler	Williams
Lattanzio	Lauzon	Williamson	Yip
Lawrence	Lebouthillier	Zahid	Zarrillo
Lehoux	Lemire	Zimmer	Zuberi— 326
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)		
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert		<b>NAYS</b>
Lightbound	Lloyd	Nil	
Lobb	Long		
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)		<b>PAIRED</b>
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)		<b>Members</b>
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire		
Majumdar	Maloney	Godin	Lalonde— 2
Martel	Martinez Ferrada		
Masse	Mathysen		<b>The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.</b>
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)		<b>(Bill read the third time and passed)</b>

*Routine Proceedings*

[English]

**The Deputy Speaker:** I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 38 minutes.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS

**Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it was with huge privilege yesterday that I was elected as chair of the indigenous and northern affairs committee. In that context, I am presenting my first report on behalf of INAN.

I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, entitled “Food Security in Northern and Isolated Communities: Ensuring Equitable Access to Adequate and Healthy Food for All”.

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

\* \* \*

### PETITIONS

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of residents in Lillooet, British Columbia. More and more small business owners are being forced to significantly reduce their services or shut down entirely due to labour shortages. Last year, Statistics Canada reported that there were an overwhelming one million job vacancies across the country.

Residents are calling for more action to address labour shortages, particularly by including the community of Lillooet in the northern immigration pilot project so that it can attract more workers to the region. Small towns across the country, I will note, are all struggling with labour shortages.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate having the opportunity to table this petition on behalf of youth in my riding, climate activists from Qualicum Beach.

First, the petitioners cite that children who were born in 2020 will face an average of two to seven times more extreme weather events than their grandparents did. They cite that in the 2020 report in *The Lancet*, 83% of children worldwide reported that they think people have failed to take care of the planet. They are most affected, and they will live to see the worst effects of the climate crisis.

The petitioners are calling on the government to require all members of Parliament, regardless of party lines, to consult with secondary or elementary school leadership, student council or environmental youth group of their riding before Parliament holds the second reading of any bill that would directly affect Canada's green-

house gas emissions. The purpose of the consultation would be to listen to the viewpoints of those who would be directly affected by the specified bill but who do not already have representation in Parliament. Youth discussions have been crucial to successful climate action and policy creation around the world.

• (1600)

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise for the 12th time on behalf of the people of Swan River, Manitoba, to present a petition on the rising rate of crime. The people of Swan River are asking for a plan when it comes to addressing crime and bail reform.

Unfortunately, the Liberal government has failed them. Residents no longer feel comfortable walking at night, and for businesses, theft has become a common occurrence. Members of this community have told me how unsafe they feel since crime has taken a toll on a once safe and welcoming town.

The people of Swan River demand that the Liberal government repeal its soft-on-crime policies that directly threaten their livelihoods and their community. I support the people of Swan River.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by people in Vancouver Kingsway and all over the Lower Mainland of British Columbia who are profoundly concerned about the climate crisis. They understand and want the House to know that they view the climate crisis as an existential issue that requires a top-priority response from governments across the world, and particularly from this one.

They are calling on the government to adopt a number of measures, including meeting the targets of reducing emissions by at least 60% below 2005 levels, assisting the global south, and making sure we have a just transition program to ensure that, as we move to a low-carbon economy, there are good, family-sustaining jobs for all workers, particularly those who will be displaced as we make that necessary transition to save our planet.

#### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise virtually today to present a petition from constituents in Saanich—Gulf Islands and elsewhere who are calling on the government to recognize that we are entering an age where human impact is approaching many ecological system boundaries, threatening survival. They mention boundaries in terms of freshwater usage, atmospheric pollution and extinction of species.

The petitioners also call on the government to recognize the critical significance of indigenous knowledge and indigenous practices in sustainability education and to incorporate them at every level.

The petitioners call on us in the House of Commons to take a leadership role in enacting a Canadian strategy to support educators, communicators, community leaders and all levels of government to take actions that would result in healthy, sustainable and flourishing human and ecological communities.

#### SUDANESE REFUGEES

**Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise today in the House of Commons to speak on behalf of the Sudanese community in Calgary, which is encouraging the government to process more quickly the applications of several Sudanese who want to come to Canada as a result of the conflict that is happening in central Africa. It is imperative that we process these as quickly as possible, particularly for those Canadians and permanent residents who have family in South Sudan and Sudan. These are people who are in refugee camps and we need to make sure they have access to a fair life here in Canada and are processed as quickly as possible.

#### HOUSING

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise this afternoon to present a petition on behalf of folks who have a set of items they are calling on the government to address for the housing crisis we are in. Among the eight items, they are calling for redefining “affordable housing” to ensure that it better reflects the economic reality being faced by millions of Canadians; better regulations to control excess profiteering by corporate investors and real estate investment trusts; closing tax evasion and money-laundering loopholes; increasing regulations on foreign investment in residential real estate; and prioritizing funding for non-profit and co-operative housing.

• (1605)

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC):** Madam Speaker, over the summer I had the opportunity to meet with Dorothy Pane and Linda Megason of the Gardens Condominium Corporation, which is a non-profit corporation in Regina, Saskatchewan. Dorothy and Linda have been paying very close attention to the condominium complex's ever-increasing monthly electricity and heating bills. They have noticed that the carbon tax, as well as the GST on top of the carbon tax, is making it more and more difficult for the condominium residents to make ends meet.

Furthermore, the amount the residents receive from the climate action incentive payment falls far short of the amount they are required to pay in carbon tax and in GST on top of the carbon tax. As Dorothy and Linda made abundantly clear to me and my constituency office over the summer when we reviewed their heating and electricity bills together—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I would remind members to talk about the petition and not individuals. I want to make sure the member is talking about what is in the petition and not about the meetings he has had.

The hon. member for Regina—Wascana.

#### Routine Proceedings

**Mr. Michael Kram:** Madam Speaker, therefore, I am pleased to present two petitions today on behalf of the residents of the Gardens Condominium Corporation. The first petition calls on the government to scrap the carbon tax in its entirety, and the second petition calls on the government to at least stop collecting GST on top of the carbon tax. I am pleased to present these petitions here today in the House of Commons.

#### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition that was collected by residents of Grand Manan Island in my riding. Over 300 people have signed it. After dredging work was done in North Head harbour under DFO contract, the debris was not removed by the contractor, Greenfield Construction. Today, over 35,000 tonnes of toxic rocks dredged from the harbour sit idle next to homes and small businesses. It has been like that for two summers.

It is clear from public documents that the requirements for construction companies bidding on this multi-million dollar debris contract were to remove the dredged material from North Head. Grand Manan Island petitioners are calling on the fisheries minister to quickly clean up this mess.

I would add that it is also important taxpayers are not being swindled again by Atcon/Greenfield, which is well connected to Liberal governments.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am not sure if that is in the petition. If it is not, then I would just remind members that they are to read what is in the petition and not add to it.

Presenting petitions, the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock.

#### PORNOGRAPHY

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from Canadians from across the country, including my own constituents, who are concerned about the age of consent and age verification of those depicted in pornographic material.

The petitioners note that the government should follow recommendation 2 from the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics report on MindGeek, which requires that all content-hosting platforms in Canada verify the age and consent prior to that content being uploaded.

*Routine Proceedings*

Bill C-270, the stopping Internet sexual exploitation act, would add two offences to the Criminal Code. The first would require age verification and consent prior to distribution, and the second would require the content to be removed if the consent is withdrawn. As such, the petitioners are calling on the House of Commons to speedily pass Bill C-270, the stopping Internet sexual exploitation act.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the next petition I have to present today is from Canadians from across this country who are concerned about the human rights protections in India.

The petitioners say that according to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, various actors are supporting and enforcing sectarian policies and seeking to establish a religious state in India. The petitioners say that Christians in India are being targeted by extremists who are vandalizing their churches, attacking church workers, and threatening and humiliating their congregations. They also say that crimes against the Dalit community, including Dalit women and girls, are increasing. The petitioners also note that Indian Muslims are at risk of genocide, assault and sexual violence.

The petitioners are asking the government to ensure that all trade deals with India are premised on mandatory human rights provisions, that extremists are sanctioned, and that the government promotes respectful human rights dialogue between Canada and India.

FREEDOM OF POLITICAL EXPRESSION

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the next petition is from Canadians from across the country who want Canadians to be protected against discrimination. Canadians can and do face political discrimination, and it is a fundamental right in Canada to be politically active and vocal. It is in the best interests of Canadian democracy to protect public debate and the exchange of different ideas.

Bill C-257 seeks to add protection against political discrimination to the Canadian Human Rights Act. Therefore, the people who have signed this petition are calling on the House of Commons to support and pass Bill C-257, which would ban discrimination on the basis of political belief or activity, and to defend the rights of Canadians to peacefully express their political opinions.

PORNOGRAPHY

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the next petition is from petitioners from across the country who are concerned with how easy it is for young people to gain access to sexually explicit material online, including violent, racist and degrading explicit material. They comment on how this access is causing a public health crisis and is a cause for public safety concern.

The petitioners note that a significant portion of commercially accessed sexually explicit material has no age verification software, and, moreover, that age verification software can ascertain the age of the user without breaching their privacy rights. The petitioners note the many serious harms associated with sexually explicit material, including the development of addiction and the development of

attitudes favourable to sexual violence and the harassment of women.

The petitioners are calling on the House of Commons to pass Bill S-211 and to protect young people from exposure to pornography.

FIREARMS

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the next petition is from Canadians from across the country who are concerned about the health and safety of Canadian firearm owners. The petitioners recognize the importance of owning firearms and are concerned about the hearing loss caused by the damaging noise levels of firearms and the need for noise reduction.

The petitioners acknowledge that sound moderators are the only universally accepted health and safety device, which is criminally prohibited in Canada. Moreover, the majority of G7 countries have recognized the health and safety benefits of sound moderators and allow them for hunting, sport shooting and noise reduction.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to allow legal firearm owners the option to purchase and use sound moderators for all legal hunting and sport-shooting activities.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the next petition I am presenting is on behalf of Canadians who are concerned that certain charities could be targeted based on their views and forced into a values test. The petitioners note that the Liberals have promised to deny charitable status to groups whose views differ from the government's views on abortion. This could jeopardize the charitable status of hospitals, houses of worship, schools, homeless shelters and other organizations.

● (1610)

They also note that the Liberals have previously used a values test to discriminate against groups applying for the Canada summer jobs grant. The petitioners are asking the House of Commons to protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis, without discrimination on the basis of political or religious values or the imposition of a values test. They also ask for an affirmation of their freedom of expression as Canadians.

\* \* \*

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

*Government Orders*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

**MOTIONS FOR PAPERS**

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

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[*English*]

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND GROCERIES ACT**

The House resumed from September 26 consideration of the motion that Bill C-56, An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Competition Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, when I left off in my speech, I was talking about some of the stakeholder reaction to the proposed measure to remove the GST from purpose-built rentals.

The Squamish Community Housing Society from my riding stated that this “will have a real and meaningful impact on the delivery of critically needed rental housing” and “support lower rents for residents moving into newly constructed homes”.

The Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society stated that “The removal of GST on purpose-built rentals is an excellent example of a simple federal policy adjustment that when combined with other affordability measures makes a meaningful difference in local housing systems.”

The Whistler Housing Authority stated that “The removal of GST on new purpose-built rental housing will help to decrease the financial burden experienced by those who are trying to create much needed affordable rental supply across the country. Every financial consideration throughout the development process ultimately impacts the end user.”

From the Resort Municipality of Whistler, Councillor Cathy Jewett noted to me that it would save Whistler \$725,000 on a rental project they are building, provided that it is eligible.

This gets me to the only gripe that I have with this particular piece of legislation, which is that we should really look to extend it to projects that are already being built by the non-profit sector. That way, future tenants will be able to benefit from lower rents from these projects; in the end, that is the entire point of this exercise.

I want to contrast this bill with the housing policy and legislation that has been put forward by Conservative Party members, as pro-

posed by their private member's bill and otherwise. Believe it or not, Madam Speaker, their bill and policy would actually increase taxes on purpose-built rentals for projects meant for middle-class Canadians. It would take away the resources that would allow municipalities to get more housing built faster with things like the housing accelerator fund. Given that the Conservatives invested 13 times less on transit when in government than our government has, their commitment to withhold funding to municipalities unless there is sufficient density around transit projects is just another avenue where they would not only cut housing funding but also cut the pathetic amount of funding they delivered towards transit. Well-known housing expert Mike Moffatt said that this private member's bill is incredibly “weak” and would actually substantially increase federal bureaucracy. This is not serious housing policy. This is unintelligible housing policy as crafted by a bully, and Canadians deserve better than that.

The second aspect of the bill that we are debating today would make some significant changes to the Competition Act. It would increase competition in our economy and ultimately lower costs for Canadians. In particular, it would take aim at the failings the Competition Bureau had in ascertaining the reason for high grocery prices, because of some of the structural challenges in the act.

The changes announced in Bill C-56 would amend the Competition Act to allow the Minister of Industry to direct the commissioner of competition to conduct an inquiry into the state of competition in a market or industry. It would permit the Competition Tribunal to compel information to allow it to do its work, as well as to look at vertical collaborations. It would also repeal the exception under the act for efficiency gains brought on by mergers. These new measures would allow the minister to ensure that the bureau is keeping a watchful eye on anti-competitive behaviours in different sectors.

By looking into the state of competition, for instance, in gas stations, we could answer the question of why gas prices are consistently higher in Squamish and Whistler than they are in metro Vancouver. They are often 10¢ a litre higher. Meanwhile, they do not have the 18.5¢ tax that the metro Vancouver transit authority charges at gas stations. By looking into the grocery sector with these new powers, we could answer the question of why the amazing small-scale farms on the Sunshine Coast and in the Sea to Sky corridor are able to produce delicious, nutrient-dense, organic produce at a lower price at farmers' markets compared with the mass-produced, non-organic produce that is found in a lot of grocery stores. I would suggest that these might be two areas that the minister should direct the bureau to investigate with these newfound powers.

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Lastly, I want to talk about the efficiency defence. Long ago, Canada brought in the defence for a merger that otherwise would be anti-competitive, if it showed that it would allow businesses to be more efficient so that Canadian companies would become large enough to compete with foreign counterparts. Given how concentrated parts of these sectors have become and how large companies have become, this defence no longer makes sense, if it ever did.

Each of these changes to the Competition Act is very welcome, but much more can be done, and it must be done when a more fulsome update of the act is undertaken.

● (1615)

In particular, I would like to see stronger penalties for anti-competitive behaviour, and I would like for us to take a closer look at the thresholds to ensure that more regional monopolies are tackled as well. However, both the proposed changes to the Competition Act and the removal of GST on purpose-built rentals are very welcome; these things would make a huge difference in tackling the rising cost of living and the rising cost of housing.

● (1620)

**Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I noticed my colleague is speaking about economic benefits, and he had spoken to somebody in a town in his riding; I think he mentioned Whistler. He talked about the importance of the GST benefit that is presented in this bill.

I just wonder if he had a date on that actual benefit. I think the Liberal government promised this eight years ago and abandoned it six years ago, but the GST benefit is starting to come back now. The member also criticized, and compared it to, the bill on the floor of the House of Commons put forward by my leader. That is interesting, because he took that shot, but we just had a federal budget here, and none of this was in it. It is late to the game for the government to say it is starting to recognize that there are things it should have been paying attention to for the last six years. Is this coming to the game late? Does he finally recognize this? Is it because we have actually identified this for years in the opposition that the lights are going on, they are seeing what is happening and people are talking about it to him in his riding?

**Mr. Patrick Weiler:** Madam Speaker, I quite enjoyed working with the hon. colleague on multiple different committees.

The contrast with the policy that has been put forward by the Conservative Party is that it plans to get rid of the GST on only purpose-built rentals that are below market, not all rentals. Therefore, I think it is missing part of the puzzle to make sure we can get more rental housing built faster, particularly right now, when we are seeing high interest rates impacting the business case for making those projects happen.

I think it is a very important time for us to be moving forward on these measures because of that. Prior to this, we really tackled low-income and social housing with our national housing strategy. However, given the changing economic circumstances, it is really important that we are bringing forward this measure now.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ):** Madam Speaker, this bill is very worthwhile. It is welcomed by some, but it

is getting a cooler reception from others, depending on the community. That just shows that we cannot please everyone.

Clause 3 of Bill C-56 seeks to amend the Competition Act by adding, after section 10, subsection 10.1(2), which reads as follows:

Before making the direction, the Minister must consult the Commissioner to determine whether the inquiry would be feasible, including with regard to its cost.

My question has three parts.

If the inquiry is feasible but the cost is too steep, does that mean that no inquiry will be conducted? How are we defining what constitutes too steep of a cost? If an inquiry is in the best interests of consumers but does not go forward, are we ignoring the interests of consumers? Whose interests are we then considering instead?

**Mr. Patrick Weiler:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for that good question.

We could invite experts to come to committee to get more details on these issues. I know that to conduct these studies, the bureau needs resources. I think that is an issue we should study a bit more. We gave more money to the bureau in budget 2022, but if resources are the problem, then we need to look at that too.

[English]

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I note that this bill would suspend the GST on purpose-built rental housing, but the 2015 ministerial letter on this issue talked about giving tax breaks for the building of purpose-built affordable rental housing. Can my hon. colleague explain to the House why the present bill drops the word “affordable”?

**Mr. Patrick Weiler:** Madam Speaker, this is more inclusive. It is not just for below-market rental housing; it is for all rental housing, because we have a need right now to get as much supply to make sure we are able to meet the very high targets that CMHC said we need to meet: 3.5 million homes on top of what we are already building right now. A big part of this needs to be below-market rentals, but market rentals are also needed, so that we are able to bring down prices overall.

● (1625)

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as always, it is a true honour for me to speak on behalf of the residents of my riding of Davenport on Bill C-56, an act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Competition Act, though I will note that the short title is the affordable housing and groceries act. It is an important piece of legislation. It would help build more rental homes that would be affordable for Canadians and help us to start making much-needed changes to the Competition Act. More competition will create a healthier and more prosperous Canadian economy.



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There are two key changes within the legislation. The first would remove the GST from new purpose-built rental housing. The second would make changes to the Competition Act that would enable the Competition Bureau to conduct market studies and would remove the efficiencies exception from merger review. There are also a number of other changes that I will get into in the time that I have. I am going to speak for five minutes on the first part and five minutes on the second part because it is important for us to understand why we are introducing this legislation and why is it important right now.

As we know, over the last almost eight years, our federal government has done a lot on housing. I am very proud of our investments in all of the programs we have implemented. Since 2017, when we introduced the national housing strategy, we have introduced a number of programs. There are about 82 billion dollars' worth of programs that have been introduced. Their purpose is to build supply and support first-time buyers in purchasing their first home. I will run through some of the key programs and initiatives we have introduced.

There have been a number of incentives for more affordable rental units to be built. We have also introduced some disincentives for house flippers and foreign buyers. We have introduced the multi-generational home tax credit. We have made a massive commitment of \$1.5 billion to build the next generation of co-op housing, and I am eager for that to get started. We have put in a historic amount of money for rapid or modular housing, which has been a game-changer for most of our big cities across the country. We have introduced a Canada housing benefit, a home accessibility tax credit, long-term supports for the homeless and a number of programs for Canadians trying to buy their first home: the first home savings account, the homebuyers' plan, the first-time homebuyers' tax credit and the first-time homebuyer incentive. We realize, as always, that we need to do more, and more is part of this legislation.

I spent a lot of time over the summer meeting with a number of groups, including groups trying to build deeply affordable housing within Davenport and Toronto, and I want to give a special shout-out to West Neighbourhood House and St. Michael's Homes. They took me through their examples of how they are trying to use the programs at all levels of government for additional housing. They did point out that there are some issues at all levels that need to be addressed, but they are not huge, insurmountable issues. They are working with our programs, are happy with our programs and look forward to us resolving some of the issues with the programs. They are very happy with the introduction of Bill C-56.

I have also met with a number of developers. I met with them not just over the summer but over the last year or so. They indicated that, due to inflation, many of the plans they had created a few years ago are just no longer viable. That is why our proposing to remove the GST on the construction of new apartment buildings to get more rental homes built faster is so important.

I am sure this has been quoted in the House, but there was a great article by the Canadian press, in which the CEO of Dream Unlimited Corp. said that high interest rates and construction costs had put many projects on pause, but given the federal government's announcement that it would eliminate GST charges off rental developments and the expectation that provinces would follow suit, this

has changed the calculation for it. That is exactly the sentiment for many of the developers in my riding.

What are the actual changes being proposed in the bill? It would change the Excise Tax Act so that the goods and services tax would be removed from new purpose-built housing to encourage an increase in the construction of rental housing. These measures would modify the existing GST rent rebate by increasing the rebate rate from 36% to 100% and remove the rebate phase-out threshold for purpose-built rental housing projects.

• (1630)

What are experts saying about this? I took a couple of examples from a long list. Mike Moffat, one of Canada's leading housing experts, called this a "fantastic transformative step." Toronto's former chief city planner Jennifer Keesmaat has said that this measure could be "the beginning of a sea change."

This is very popular with developers in my riding and across Toronto. I want to note, before I go to the next section, that provinces such as Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nova Scotia are already following our lead by eliminating provincial taxes on new rentals. This would of course result in even more building of the affordable rental homes Canadians need.

The second part of this legislation is about measures that would begin a much-needed update to Canada's Competition Act. I sit on the finance committee. It has been just over four years that I have been on that committee, and we hear a lot of concerns from those in the business community, and many Canadians in general, who are worried about our competitiveness. They are worried about the limited number of large companies in what many feel are oligopolistic sectors. They worry about Canada's productivity. They worry about the little business investment we have had in our country, despite historic low interest rates for over 10 years, until a year and a half ago. There is a great recognition that we have a lot to do to improve competition in Canada.

I was delighted when our Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry indicated in February of 2022 that he would undertake a review of the act. He wanted to begin with some immediate targeted improvements and follow up with some more consultations to consider some broader changes. We received a lot of feedback, so Bill C-56 gets us started on the changes that were suggested.

*Government Orders*

What would Bill C-56 do? It would provide the Competition Bureau with powers to compel the production of information to conduct effective and complete market studies; remove the efficiencies defence, which currently allows anti-competitive mergers to survive challenges if corporate efficiencies offset the harm to competition, even when Canadian consumers would pay higher prices and have fewer choices; and empower the Competition Bureau to take action against collaborations that stifle competition and consumer choice, in particular situations where large grocers prevent smaller competitors from establishing operations nearby.

Our Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance spoke in the House on this bill the other day and said:

This bill also seeks to amend the Competition Act to give more power to the Competition Bureau so that it can investigate price gouging and price-fixing.

It would put an end to anti-competitive mergers that drive up prices and limit Canadians' choices. It would also enable the Competition Bureau to ensure that big grocery stores cannot prevent smaller competitors from opening stores nearby. Our [federal] government is relentlessly focused on building an economy with stable prices, steady growth, and abundant, well-paying, middle-class jobs.

While this bill includes these measures, it is only our initial response to the feedback we heard during the ongoing consultation on the future of competition policy in Canada. This bill's amendments strike at the core of Canada's competition law and would empower the Competition Bureau to better serve the public in its role as enforcer and advocate, and it would allow the country to reap the well-documented benefits of more competitive markets.

Now more than ever, effective and modern competition law and enforcement are necessary to promote affordability for Canadians and to help our economy grow. With our federal government's 2022 amendments to combat price-fixing and the changes proposed in this bill, our federal government is promoting greater affordability and the type of marketplace that allows our economy to grow.

In conclusion, our federal government is relentlessly focused on building an economy with stable prices, steady growth and abundant, well-paying middle-class jobs. That is why this legislation, Bill C-56, is so important. It would provide key changes that may help to stabilize grocery prices for Canadians and would help accelerate the construction of new apartment buildings that are affordable for all Canadians.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I paid close attention to the speech by the member for Davenport, and I would like to ask her two specific questions.

First of all, many of the farmers in my riding continue to talk about the carbon tax, and many of them are receiving bills with about \$12,000 per month for the carbon tax alone. These are our food producers, so we know this tax is actually applied, because when a person is charged \$12,000 monthly, this money has to come from somewhere, which ends up being from the consumer. Will she support getting rid of the carbon tax, knowing that it has horrible implications on the cost of living?

Secondly, in the farming community, there are lots of people looking for housing, especially temporary foreign workers. Will this housing incentive also assist farmers?

• (1635)

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Madam Speaker, I will answer the second question first, as it is more relevant to the bill at hand.

On the second question, it will help all Canadians. It will help rural Canadians and urban Canadians. That is because it is meant to be a game-changer. It is meant to incentivize far more building of rental housing, whether it is in an urban setting or a rural setting. As I mentioned before, I quoted a couple of experts who have indicated that this is transformational and a game-changer. I think it will help all Canadians, wherever they live across the country.

On the price on pollution, as we know, we have to decarbonize our economy, and I would say that, largely, experts right around the world agree that a price on pollution is a really great way to reduce our emissions. I would say that the residents of Davenport very much support a price on pollution and very much support us moving, as quickly as possible, to a low-carbon future.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Madam Speaker, of course the Bloc Québécois is in favour of this bill, but it will not have much impact.

When it comes to housing, eliminating the goods and services tax on construction will have no impact on lowering rent. That is a concern that everyone shares. This will have no impact on access to home ownership. More importantly, the critical need right now is for social housing. Again, this will have no impact on that.

What are my colleague's thoughts on this?

[English]

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Madam Speaker, I would say to the hon. member that I would like to respectfully disagree with him. I had mentioned that I have been on the finance committee for four years. Over the last year and a half, we have disproportionately, and rightly so, spoken about housing and inflation, about how we get started. I will tell members that the rebate of the GST has been one of the top recommendations that have come forward. It is about increasing supply into the marketplace and I think that is going to help overall prices because we are putting so much more supply into the marketplace.

I had also mentioned that I met with a number of constituents in my riding who are trying to build deeply affordable housing. They have indicated that we have amazing programs. We have to make some adjustments to make it easier for them to apply and deal with some irritants, but other than that, we have great programs that will lead to deeply affordable housing for our most vulnerable.

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, removing the GST on rental housing is a start. This is certainly something that the NDP has been calling for.

We have heard the Conservatives put forward a proposal of selling 15% of federal buildings and lands, and we have seen what that looks like at the provincial level, with Doug Ford and the Greenbelt. We also saw that in British Columbia with what they did with private forest lands. They sold them off. People cannot access the outdoors anymore in some of those areas.

Will my colleague support legislation to ensure that all federal lands and buildings are not sold but leased, and that they go for non-market housing, so that there is certainty that they do not just end up in the pockets of developers, as we are seeing right now in Ontario with what just happened with the Greenbelt?

We need to make sure that it goes to the people who need it and that it stays in the hands of Canadians.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Madam Speaker, I will say a few things. One is that we have introduced 82 billion dollars' worth of programs, and we will, as a government, always be thinking, every single day, of what more we can do to make sure that we are providing housing for Canadians, deeply affordable housing, and the ability of Canadians to buy their very first house.

Every day, we should be thinking and looking at all options. I am open to all options, and I know that our government is as well.

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Order. It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock, Carbon Pricing; the hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, Housing; the hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon, Carbon Pricing.

• (1640)

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I rise in the House to express my sadness and shock over events unfolding on the international scene. For several days now, Azerbaijan has been waging a brutal military attack against the Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, which the people there call Artsakh.

The attack is very serious. Civilians are being bombed, leaving some dead or injured. The Lachin corridor has been blocked by Azeri forces for months. Now, we are witnessing a majority of the Armenian population flee the region for fear of reprisals. Already, most of the 120,000 people living in the area are heading to neighbouring Armenia seeking refuge. My colleague from Edmonton Strathcona and I have written to the Government of Canada, asking it to seriously consider imposing sanctions against the dictatorial Azerbaijani regime. We cannot keep silent about the blatant human rights violations being committed there. The situation bears many

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similarities to the forced displacement of a civilian population, which is outlawed by international agreements.

Now, let me come back to today's bill. It touches on themes that are central to people's lives. We have been constantly hearing about the severe housing crisis and the cost of groceries for the past weeks and months. It is hurting workers, seniors, students and families everywhere.

I want to take the time to emphasize one point. We are definitely seeing more and more visible homelessness on the streets in Ottawa and Montreal, but there is also invisible homelessness. I have just returned from a trip to Sault-Sainte-Marie and Sudbury. Things are just as difficult there. People are grappling with mental health issues and drug addiction. There are people who do not have a roof over their heads, who are on the streets. This crisis is everywhere. It is a homelessness and housing crisis. There are people who desperately need help.

Earlier today, NDP MPs had the opportunity to meet with Olivia Chow, our former colleague who is now the mayor of Toronto. She told us that 10,000 people are living in Toronto's shelters every night. These shelters are overflowing. Hundreds of people are turned away every day. There are people sleeping in church basements.

In Quebec alone, a recent report on housing and poverty from the Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain shows that 173,000 households are in core housing need. That means they have inadequate housing or live in overcrowded housing or in poor physical or material conditions that are affecting their health.

About 370,000 Quebec households are spending more than 30% of their income on housing. Anyone spending more than that is living in poverty. That is the norm, that is the rule, it is 30%. If someone is spending more than 30% on housing, they are living in poverty and are at risk of ending up in a precarious situation. Nearly 400,000 families in Quebec are in this position. Moreover, close to 130,000 households, families and individuals are spending more than 50% of their income on housing. That means they are just steps away from homelessness.

This really illustrates the impact of the Liberals' and Conservatives' decision to walk away from building social housing and co-operatives over the years. What we are seeing right now is the direct impact of that decision.

What is more, rent in Quebec has gone up by 13% in two years, and the phenomenon of renovations is becoming increasingly frequent. That means that people living in a rental unit in a given neighbourhood whose rent used to increase by small or relatively reasonable amounts have to move because they are being kicked out of their unit. In Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, we are constantly getting messages and emails from people who are desperate, people who are really sad to lose their homes. Right now, it seems as though the government is turning a blind eye to this phenomenon.

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Today, we are still seeing the impact of the cuts the Liberals made in 1994. At that time, the Liberals stopped making investments in long-term housing, particularly social housing. The Conservatives were no better. Under Stephen Harper's regime, when the current Leader of the Opposition was a minister, 800,000 affordable housing units were lost. The Conservatives are in no position to lecture anyone. What is more, their solution is pretty transparent. It involves taking public land and selling it to private developers who will use it to make a profit and not to meet people's needs.

• (1645)

The current Liberal strategy is not working, either. All the reports confirm that. All the experts and the community groups working on the ground are saying that the situation is getting worse year after year.

The member for Davenport can keep saying that her government is investing \$82 billion in the housing strategy, but the fact is that it is not working. It is failing to meet our extremely pressing housing needs.

Bill C-56 removes the GST on the construction of rental housing, which is a good idea. The reason it is such a good idea is that it was proposed by the NDP. As usual, however, the Liberals are doing things in half measures. The government is giving a bit of a shot in the arm to people willing to build rental housing in order to improve supply. We understand the logic. We need to address the supply side. However, there are no guarantees at all. There is no mechanism or measure to ensure that these homes will be affordable and meet the needs of people in our communities, cities, towns and regions.

Is it possible that this will have no impact on the price of rent? Is it possible that the 5% rebate being gifted will only increase the developer's profit margin? Will we be any further ahead if these developers profit from this gift or from this incentive to build housing which, in any case, will be rented out at \$1,200, \$1,800 or \$2,300 a month? Is this going to help ordinary people or those who have been on waiting lists for social housing? The answer is no. There is still some work to do. We will need to improve this bill.

The Minister of Finance tells us that this measure will help add 30,000 housing units a year. Last year, 270,000 housing units, houses or apartments were built. The CMHC, however, is telling us that we need 500,000 housing units a year. According to my calculations, 270,000 housing units plus 30,000 housing units comes to 300,000 housing units. We still need 200,000 more housing units. This is just a half measure that provides no guarantee that we can help people afford their rent. This is still market logic. The right to housing is not being seen as a fundamental right. The Liberals never talk about it. This bill completely fails to address the fact that housing is a human right, a fundamental right. The Liberals are handing out gifts that will have no impact on the assistance they are trying to provide to the middle class, to workers.

How do we solve this? We need to build affordable housing. That means building housing where the rent does not exceed 30% of an individual's or family's income. It is not particularly complicated.

My NDP colleague from Vancouver East says that we would need a major nationwide construction project in order to build 2 million affordable and non-market housing units, specifically, social housing, co-operatives or community housing. There needs to be an acquisition fund to buy buildings and land and to build housing that meets people's needs. In Vienna, Austria, they have done exactly that. Today, 60% of that city's housing stock is non-market. That is an example worth following. Unfortunately, the federal government is not doing that. None of these ideas are included in the bill before us today. The NDP believes that an acquisition fund is needed to build public housing.

With regard to groceries, we are seeing the crisis unfold day after day. People are making agonizing choices, even having to reduce meal sizes. Grocery prices have gone up 22% since 2020, but not many people have seen their wages go up 22% since 2020. In the meantime, while people are suffering, these big companies are busy lining their pockets. Last year, Loblaws, Sobeys and Metro made \$3.6 billion in profits. They are making record profits when people are having trouble paying for their groceries, and the Liberal government is doing nothing.

We in the NDP believe that it is not enough to stabilize prices at the grocery store. Prices must come down. We have solutions to propose. We need to punish the CEOs who are lining their pockets. We need to be able to tax the windfall profits of these major grocery chains, who are using inflation as an excuse to hurt people. The leader of the NDP has introduced a bill that I hope to be able to talk about and that would give the Competition Bureau more power to impose sanctions and investigate. I hope that the Liberal government will follow suit. My colleague's bill contains a lot of good solutions. We have to be thorough and not just go halfway, as the Liberals all too often do.

• (1650)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I know that a number of members have raised the issue of non-profit housing. I just want to amplify the fact that this particular legislation would not preclude that from taking place. More importantly, in certain situations, housing co-ops are already exempt from having to pay the GST. The government has supported organizations like Habitat for Humanity, which has built many houses over the years.

The reason I say that is to emphasize the importance of having the Government of Canada, provincial jurisdictions and different stakeholders all come to the table to deal with the true housing situation of Canadians. We all need to play a stronger role in resolving the problem. Would the member not agree?

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, but I find it strange that he is saying that we should be pleased that the bill does not preclude the construction of affordable housing. It would be incredibly ridiculous if the bill precluded the possibility of building social and affordable housing. We need to look at this another way. We need to make sure that this gets done, not just hope that it might.

However, there is nothing in this bill about that. I hope that we will be able to improve the bill in committee because, right now, it seems as though this bill is only a half measure. I agree with my colleague when it comes to collaboration and co-operation between the federal, provincial and municipal governments, but we need to harmonize the way we do things because it is really complicated right now. I get the impression that the various levels of government are all creating obstacles.

I do not want to get into who should be blaming who, but we need to all sit down at the table to find solutions with community groups and experts so that we can build truly affordable housing.

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his presentation. Clearly, he is just as alarmed as we are about housing. In Quebec, we will need 1.1 million units of affordable social housing by 2030 and Quebec is at the top of the list for measuring the extent of the problem in Canada.

Does my colleague not agree that on the one hand, we should vote in favour of this bill and improve it in committee, while on the other hand, we are dealing with an emergency as serious as climate change?

Faster and more generous action must be taken immediately to change things if we want to achieve minimal results by 2030. Winter is coming and it does not bode well at all. I do not think that getting caught up in the details is among our citizens' concerns right now. We are really into something else. We must take much more meaningful and much more urgent action.

What does my colleague think?

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague's analysis and how she sees things regarding the current emergency.

We see the situation deteriorate every July 1. Homelessness is getting worse not only in Montreal, but throughout Quebec. I am convinced that my colleague is seeing this in her riding as well. It is an absolutely deplorable phenomenon.

In Montreal, 23,000 people are waiting for social housing. It will take 7 years, 8 years, even 12 years for them to get it, and in the meantime, they are living in precarious situations. They are suffering. They are living in poverty. Yes, it is an emergency.

Some fairly simple things can be done. Federal public lands should be used to build social and affordable housing, as well as co-operatives. These are lands like the Peel Basin in Montreal, which already belong to the federal government. There is no need to even buy it. We just need to be able to get shovels in the ground to build genuinely affordable housing.

Let us start with that. Let us reject the Conservatives' idea of selling public land to private developers and let us instead build public housing on public land.

[*English*]

**Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am glad to have a moment to be able to get up and speak to Bill C-56, an issue that I know matters to all of us here in the House.

On September 21, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance introduced an act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Competition Act. This government has consulted and worked alongside the public to establish a tangible solution to alleviate this burden for hard-working Canadians. In doing so, we have arrived at Bill C-56, which would establish the affordable housing and groceries act.

This act is primarily focused on taking a stand against the cost of living crisis and delivering on the government's agenda of making life more affordable for all Canadians. We envision this act would be welcomed by all members of Parliament as it addresses many of the problems our constituencies have raised, by making life more affordable. This act does nothing other than endorse that objective, which is one we all care about.

In our public consultations on addressing the cost of living crisis, we received repeated requests to tackle the rising cost of groceries. The government fully understands that higher prices have made life more challenging for many Canadians and their families. I think we all know that because all of us go to grocery stores. We are surprised at the markup on so many items, as well as the tremendous profits our grocery companies are making on the backs of all of our families.

In May, a young lady from a neighbouring constituency reported that she must leave her home near Jane and Eglinton at 6:00 a.m. to commute nearly an hour to the Fort York Food Bank, and wait additional hours to shop for her groceries. She does this in the hopes of providing food for her children, ensuring they do not go to school hungry, and also to have a hot meal ready for them when they come home. It is very sad that, in 2023, in Canada this is happening.

Today, we are introducing a solution that will hopefully help her and prevent other Canadians from enduring this hardship. Over the past 12 months, we have consistently fought inflation effectively. We have managed to reduce inflation to 4%, almost two basis points lower than all 33 OECD countries, but we need to continue to drive it down even further. That is why last week, we summoned the CEOs of Canada's major grocery chains to Ottawa to devise a plan to stabilize grocery prices by Thanksgiving or face consequences if they fail to do so.

### *Government Orders*

It is quite a challenge to attempt to do this, but I think it is important that the government take to task the different companies so they get a better understanding. They are reaping the profits on the backs of everyone else. They need to be reducing prices as much as they possibly can because Canadians are suffering as a result of what they are doing. If they fail to provide a plan by Thanksgiving, then the government will use whatever tools it has in the tool box to force them to do that.

The opposition leader and his one-liners will not support Canadians, but our effective measures, we hope, will. Finding ways to reduce the cost of living is no easy task. A relevant adage runs along the lines of, “If you don’t miss two or three planes a year, you are spending too much time in the airport.” This government understands that, and that is why it is exploring ways to address the affordability crisis without stifling or controlling the market.

In 2022, our government passed significant legislative amendments to the Competition Act, including provisions to combat price-fixing with some of the world’s highest penalties. Since then, we have launched a comprehensive review of the Competition Act and engaged in public consultations with the aim of modernizing Canada’s competition framework.

Our government is now introducing amendments that would prevent large business mergers with anti-competitive effects, empower the Competition Bureau to conduct precise market studies, and halt anti-competitive collaborations that harm small businesses, particularly small grocers. Our government has also bolstered the bureau’s enforcement capacity by increasing its funding by \$96 million. There have been decisions made in the past by the Competition Bureau that did not align with the message we are attempting to deliver today.

● (1655)

Taking this feedback into account, we have removed the efficiencies exception from merger review. As a unique feature of Canadian competition law, the efficiencies exception currently protects from state intervention mergers that would harm competition, as long as the efficiency gains they generate offset the harm to competition. All of these are very important steps to take to ensure competition is healthy and that there is actually more competition in Canada.

The provision has been a long-standing focus of criticism, often cited as an example of the act’s ineffectiveness and poor outcomes. Many pointed out that the law focuses too narrowly on calculating efficiencies that benefit specific firms over the short run, which, in turn, enables industry concentration and consumer harm over the long run. Again, this is exactly what we are trying to prevent from happening.

Through this initiative, the government proposes to repeal the exception, following which an anti-competitive merger could now be remedied by order of the Competition Tribunal, notwithstanding the efficiencies generated. Abolition of the defence puts competition first and brings Canada in line with international norms.

Our government will continue to work on affordability for Canadians and promote a marketplace that would allow our economy to grow. Through various measures, we provide more authority to the

Competition Bureau to better understand anti-competitive mergers that limit choices for Canadians and block competition that restricts Canadians’ options.

This proposed package comprises carefully selected areas that could directly contribute to addressing the most immediate concerns, while the government continues to consider further reform proposals to be introduced in the near term through future legislation.

A negation of our constant fight against inflation is the rising cost of rent, which continues to make life increasingly unaffordable for people. We have people throughout our country who are gouging renters and making it extremely difficult to make ends meet for many Canadians, no matter where they live in Canada.

This act seeks to take concrete steps to deliver real-time relief to renters from coast to coast to coast. In these efforts to do this, we will be incentivizing housing unit construction. We are enhancing our GST rebate model, currently at 36%. We will be increasing it to 100%, effectively removing GST from construction costs for new rental units intended for long-term renting, such as apartment buildings, student housing and senior residences.

We know that has already had a big response back from the development community. Yesterday a developer indicated he was going to build 5,000 rental units and would have them in the system very quickly.

The measure also removes a restriction in the existing GST rules to ensure that public service bodies, like universities, public colleges, hospitals, charities and qualifying non-profit organizations, that build or purchase purpose-built rental housing are permitted to claim the 100% GST rental rebate.

This will accelerate much-needed rental housing builds across Canada. This enhanced GST rebate would apply to projects beginning on or after September 14, 2023, up until December 31, 2030. All projects in this timeline must be completed by December 31, 2035.

This rebate will only apply to new builds and not renovations, solely to incentivize supply and fight to bring down the increase in rent costs.

I hope Canadians see an evident and comprehensive response from the government to address the current cost of living crisis affecting us all. This bill presents the most logical steps towards ameliorating the standard of living for many Canadians and keeping us on track to become one of the top G7 countries in reducing inflation. If that is something this House seeks to accomplish, and I know it does, there is no valid reason to oppose this bill.

● (1700)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ):** Madam Speaker, Bill C-56 is certainly very interesting. The discussions that have been held so far with various companies and major food distributors are also, on the whole, interesting. We will just have to wait and see.

*Government Orders*

What I like about Bill C-56 is that its purpose includes limiting the action of conglomerates. I will name one that is known by everyone. We have seen the big chart on social media many times: it is Nestlé, which sprawls out everywhere. We want to avoid conglomerates.

However, they do exist. We want to limit them, but we tend to forget that, basically, the people who feed us, the 3% who feed 100% of the population, that is, the farmers, receive nothing more, while prices increase.

What is the government's solution to the fact that those who feed us cannot even earn a decent salary?

• (1705)

[*English*]

**Hon. Judy A. Sgro:** Madam Speaker, certainly the government is very concerned and investing a lot of money in opportunities in the agricultural community to ensure that farmers can have more than just a comfortable living, but that they can have a good quality of life. We know many of the farmers have their own families that intend to take over their farms when they retire. It is important that the farming industry continues to be supported and that we do everything we can to assist it. The government clearly is investing a lot of money in the whole agro community that continues to supply a variety of funds and additional support.

**Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is nice to hear my colleague across the way with platitudes for farmers. The real question has been asked multiple times in this House in different ways. For farmers who must hire temporary foreign workers and create housing and shelter for them, will those farmers qualify for the GST rebate on the housing?

**Hon. Judy A. Sgro:** Madam Speaker, the whole issue is how we need to bring in foreign workers and temporary workers to be able to help pick the tomatoes, cucumbers and all the wonderful stuff we enjoy every day. Finding Canadians to do that is very difficult, so we all know that temporary foreign workers are a very important part of our economy. They have to be treated fairly, they have to be treated appropriately and they have to have decent housing. We know with the past practices we have seen, they lack all of those things. I think a variety of pieces of legislation have been put forward in different ministries that are going to ensure that when workers come they are treated fairly, they are paid appropriately and they are also housed. Whether that will fit into the GST requirements, I do not know. It is a new announcement, but I certainly would hope that there is whatever is required to ensure those workers who are feeding us every day get the support they need.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Madam Speaker, earlier one of the member's colleagues had talked about the bill as something that would be “transformational” and so critical, yet I found that a bit hyperbolic, considering we know this is a good first step, but only one of so many that are needed, in terms of housing, affordable housing and much-needed housing in this country. Even economists from RBC are saying that this is one step to improve housing stock, but that it would do nothing to lower rents in the short term.

As such, I would like to hear from my colleague what the government is planning to do to directly support low-income Canadians so that they can pay their rent.

**Hon. Judy A. Sgro:** Madam Speaker, I do not think we should fool ourselves, and we should not be over the ceiling with anything. These are initiatives that are moving forward. I hope they will be able to materialize very quickly, but I think we have to be realistic. This is legislation that is coming in now. The needs of our communities are out there today, and there are people out there who are homeless and people in low-income families who cannot find housing because they tripled the rents that are required. I would like to see there be some rent controls in the systems that would prevent the doubling of rent.

**Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC):** Madam Speaker, right now, far too many Canadians are sitting around their kitchen table with their head in their hands, saying, “What do we do now?” They are filled with anxiety, fear and apprehension about what the future holds, and it is no wonder. As inflation continues to rise, everything continues to get more and more expensive. Young parents, working families, seniors and students are seeing their budgets stretched, and each dollar is not going far enough. This is causing most Canadians to feel a profound sense of hopelessness.

There is nothing more they can do to make things easier. There is nothing more they can do to afford a home of their own. There is nothing more they can do to ensure a better life for their children. They cannot take on any more extra shifts, a side hustle or a better-paying job. There are only so many hours in the day, and whatever extra income they make is immediately evaporated by price increases and tax hikes. Whatever they take home will make virtually no difference toward an achievable down payment on a home of their own. They cannot look for any more ways to save. They can cut back only so much, and at a certain point it becomes unaffordable just to put food on the table or gas in the car. There is no longer any money left over to save toward goals like home ownership, starting a small business or children's education.

Canadians who have worked hard and made sacrifices deserve better than to be left feeling hopeless because of our country's economic situation. They deserve better than to fall farther and farther down each rung of the income ladder, descending from middle class to poverty, and some even farther. They deserve to know that their government is ready to do whatever is necessary to address the cost of living crisis in Canada.

Unfortunately, the Liberal government has shown, time and time again, that it is completely out of touch with the day-to-day realities faced by Canadians. It is unable to step up and take responsibility for the situation facing our country, the situation for which the government is directly responsible. To the Liberals, out-of-control inflation is a global phenomenon and not the result of eight years of uncontrolled inflationary spending. Instead of changing course or finding solutions, the Liberals are always looking for a scapegoat. To them, it is far easier to find someone else to blame than to do something that will actually address the staggering cost of fuel, groceries, rent and mortgages.

*Government Orders*

This is clear once again, based on the contents of Bill C-56, which is supposed to be the Liberals' comprehensive affordability bill to address high grocery prices and rental prices. The proposed legislation sends a message from the Liberals to every Canadian who is feeling hopeless and is struggling to afford the most basic of necessities. What is that message? It is that the government does not care about how hard things have become and that, given the lack of concrete measures in this bill, the Liberals are not serious about making life more affordable.

Since last year, the cost of groceries in Canada has gone up 6.9%. The cost of food is up 18% since 2020. No matter how they look at it, Canadians are paying more and more each month to feed their families. However, Bill C-56 would do nothing to lower food costs for Canadians by addressing the primary reason why grocery prices are increasing: the Prime Minister's carbon tax. The Liberals' expensive carbon tax makes everything more expensive. It affects the entire supply chain from farm to plate: the farmer who is taxed to grow the food, the trucker who transports it, the store that sells it and the family that buys it. After eight years, everyone is paying more and hurting more as a result. Because of the carbon tax, it is now cheaper for Canadians to buy onions that were grown and packaged in Mexico and transported across North America than it is to buy the exact same onions that were grown and packaged here in Canada. It has become unbelievable.

● (1710)

We know that Bill C-56 would not address the most significant driver of food prices in Canada, but what would it do? In Bill C-56, there are measures to ensure increased competition in the Canadian marketplace. Some of these common sense measures were introduced by Conservatives earlier in the year. We support efforts to improve economic freedoms of Canadians through increased competition. However, the massive market share held by Canada's biggest grocers, Loblaw's, Sobeys and Metro, is a problem that has been decades in the making. Even if the bill were to become law tomorrow, no Canadian would see their food bill go down. In fact, in the government's press release for Bill C-56, it admitted that its goal is to stabilize food prices, not lower them.

Just last week in the House, during question period, the Prime Minister said he was glad the rebates Canadians received cancelled out all of the increased costs his government is responsible for putting on Canadians, but that is just not good enough. Under the Prime Minister, high grocery bills are here to stay. That is the difference between this tired, corrupt, out-of-touch Liberal government and Canada's common sense Conservatives. We believe that the current status quo is not acceptable. That is why Conservatives would lower costs for Canadians by axing the carbon tax and by bringing home more powerful paycheques that would buy affordable food once more.

We know that the government never knows where the puck is going. As with so many other issues, this is the case with the housing crisis facing our country. The government is a day late and a dollar short. The average rent in Canada has now increased by 6.5% since 2022. The costs of mortgages, rent and down payments have doubled, and nine in 10 young people say they will never be able to afford a home. After denying there was a problem and doing nothing for far too long, the Liberals have now proposed in Bill C-56 to re-

move the GST from new purpose-built rental housing. While this is a step in the right direction after years of broken promises, it is far too limited in scope to make enough difference for too many Canadians who have seen their dream of owning a home shattered.

As part of the leader of the official opposition's comprehensive plan to build more homes, Conservatives have pledged to remove the GST on the building of any new homes with rental prices below market value. The Liberal rebate proposed here would make it easier for developers to build more expensive homes that only the ultra-rich can afford.

I often say that my primary responsibility and the responsibility of the official opposition is to make the government the best it can be. As a Conservative MP, I take this job seriously. While it is good to see some of the measures Conservatives have advocated for incorporated into this bill, it ultimately does not go far enough. Canadians want more action. Bill C-56 shows that the Liberals are not taking housing and affordability issues seriously, and it is just another confirmation for Canadians that the best the Liberal government can be is just not good enough. As more powers of sale take place and as the lines get longer at the food banks every day, the Liberal approach is not working for regular people.

I am reminded once again, just as I was when the government brought in its budget a few months ago and I looked through the first pages, that the tired Liberal government no longer has a vision. There is no vision for this country. Canada should be a world leader, not an international embarrassment. We should be at the forefront of so many sectors, like agriculture and advanced manufacturing, not lagging far behind. We should be a country that can ensure that its citizens have a roof over their head. That is the most basic expectation we can have, but the Liberals have failed in this.

● (1715)

**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 talks about inflation on groceries and that the Conservative Party supports competition, yet when the leader of the Conservative Party was in government with Stephen Harper, that is when we saw the merger of Loblaw's and Shoppers. Today, combined, they make up, I think, close to 40% of total grocery sales. There was actually a reduction of competition when the leader of today's Conservative Party was in government with Stephen Harper, yet they say that they support competition. It is somewhat weird to be hearing that. The member says we need to get away from the price on pollution, yet Erin O'Toole, another leader of the Conservative Party, said we should have a price on pollution.



*Government Orders*

Why should Canadians trust the Conservative Party of today?

• (1720)

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** Madam Speaker, I would say two things to the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

First of all, the carbon tax relief would be instant for Canadians. The Liberals looked at where they were in the polling, and, all of a sudden, we have Bill C-56. Let us rush, rush again. I would also say, to bring up housing because it is so important in my riding, the Liberals have had, think about it, eight years to build houses. I know there are a number of ridings across Canada where people are living in tents. The snow is about to fly. Here we are with Bill C-56, and the snow is about to fly in two months. Are we going to bus people to Florida?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, in his speech, my colleague talked a lot about the carbon tax, although he should have focused on Bill C-56. I will elaborate on this because, lately, many Quebec Conservatives have said that there is a second carbon tax that applies in Quebec. From what we understand, this is not true. I am sure Quebec Conservatives would never knowingly state falsehoods, so I think they must not be informed. They did not do their research and did not make a meaningful contribution to the debate.

What we have is actually a regulation that requires oil companies to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, but with billions of dollars in subsidies to help them do so. Some say that there will still be an added cost at the pump.

Is my colleague saying that the Conservatives are protecting the record profits of oil companies that, in turn, pass the cost of all that on to ordinary Canadians?

Instead of protecting ordinary Canadians, are the Conservatives protecting oil companies' record profits?

[*English*]

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** Madam Speaker, I am going to try to make my colleague understand.

In York—Simcoe, people feel that they are on the outside looking in. They are paying the carbon tax, and right now they feel like they are subsidizing China to produce. They are looking around and saying to me, "Scot, we have got onions coming in from Egypt and Morocco. We are losing our competitive edge internationally." This has got my farmers very worried. The government could have passed Bill C-234 for farmers, and that would have made a huge difference to grocery prices. Farmers are going to have to dry their grain and their beans. Half of my riding is on propane, half on natural gas. We want the infrastructure, and the carbon tax is not working for the people of York—Simcoe.

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, we have heard that the Conservative leader wants to sell 6,000 government buildings. We know what that looks like, when the private sector gets involved with government. We just saw Doug Ford's government try to sell off the Greenbelt in Ontario, which would have amounted to \$8 billion going to a handful of develop-

ers, with no assurances that the housing that would have been developed would have been affordable.

There is nowhere in the world that the free market has solved an affordable housing crisis. Does my colleague agree that public land should be in public hands and that any buildings used for housing should be leased out and in the hands of the public for non-market housing? Will he condemn the—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for York—Simcoe has time for a brief answer.

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** Madam Speaker, I always thank my colleague for his support of my plastics bill. I think he has spoken 96 times now on the importance of my plastics bill, Bill C-204, that is going through the Senate again. It will be back in the House.

In support of Lake Simcoe, I am glad he also supports our plan to put 15% of federal government properties into houses that people can afford.

• (1725)

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise to address Bill C-56, our affordable housing and groceries act, as affordability is an issue of great concern to many of the constituents in the riding of Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, which I have the privilege of representing.

Affordability continues to be a major challenge for Canadians. Despite the inflation rate decreasing from a high of 8.1% last June to 4% last month, prices remain high. As we all recognize, global events, including COVID-19 and the post-COVID economy, the climate crisis and, of course, the unconscionable invasion of Ukraine by Russia have contributed to high inflation worldwide. Even though the Canadian economy has done well, compared to most other countries, it is of little solace to Canadians who are struggling. While global inflation was not caused by the Government of Canada, it is the responsibility of us all to continue to put forward measures to help Canadians.

*Government Orders*

The pandemic created a unique challenge through the closure of businesses, the creation of labour shortages and the disruption of supply chains. For the first time, for many, we saw some of the worst consequences of an interconnected global economy. The reality was exacerbated by extreme climate events such as flooding, forest fires and heat waves that have swept across countries and continents. In fact, 2023 was the worst year on record for wildfires in Canada. In addition to all that, the war on Ukraine impacted vital food exports that Canada, as well as many other countries, rely on. This conflict has increased global commodity prices, further exacerbating inflation and affordability issues here at home.

Inflation in Canada has decreased to 4% from a high of 8.1% in June 2022, as I have already said, and that is considerable progress. However, the stark rise in oil and gas prices due to large cuts by the Saudi Arabia energy minister and OPEC highlights the precarious nature of this commodity and illustrates that we are not yet at the stable prices Canadians need. A lot of the increase in inflation recently was due to the rise in oil and gas world commodity prices.

A noteworthy point by Tiff Macklem asserts that the source of inflation is from these impactful global events and not, as the opposition believes, that putting a price on pollution is the driving force. In fact, Tiff Macklem, who the opposition loves to quote, calculated that the price on pollution only contributes 0.15 percentage points to inflation, a very small percentage of the inflation we have experienced. This does not take into account the cheques that Canadian households, in provinces that are part of the federal backstop program, receive four times a year, which help to offset these increases. Additionally, while we have no specific estimates of the inflationary impact of climate events, we do know that there has been a great deal of money spent fighting these events. The decreased food supply due to climate change has had an additional impact on inflation rates.

While we must fight the climate crisis, we must also fight the affordability crisis. Thus, we are introducing additional measures to do just that. We are introducing measures to respond to the affordability challenge. With Bill C-56, our affordable housing and groceries act, we are proposing amendments to the Excise Tax Act and the Competition Act to make rental housing more affordable and encourage greater competition to stabilize prices.

First, we are removing GST on new rental housing for apartments, student housing and senior residences to encourage new-builds to support the housing crisis. It is not the only answer, but we have heard from many housing advocates that this will definitely help. Increasing supply in all sectors of the housing market will drive down rental rates. This measure is being applied to all rental units that are being built. This plan is a continuation of the Liberal government's 2015 commitment to affordable housing with the social infrastructure funding stream and other programs, so this is building on actions that have been taken.

This government has been putting forward measures to address the housing affordability crisis for years, but we see that more is needed. This is an additional measure that will help increase supply and bring down rental costs. This is also meeting the SDG objectives of reducing poverty, inequalities, improving health care and creating economic growth.

• (1730)

Additionally, we have done many things to address the cost of groceries. I sit on the agriculture committee. We have had two studies on food prices, one on food security and one on grocery prices. A number of recommendations were made in these studies, and the proposed changes to the Competition Act would address many of these.

However, we still need to do more. Therefore, the government, the Prime Minister and Minister Champagne called in not only the heads of the major grocery chains but also the heads of the—

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

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy:** Madam Speaker, yes, I realize I said a name I should not have.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Yes.

The hon. member may continue.

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy:** Madam Speaker, they have called in the heads of the grocery chains as well as the heads of major food manufacturers to come speak with the government and work together to come up with further solutions, because we all have to work together. We know when grocery chains are making record profits and CEOs and others in the C-suite are getting high-level bonuses that Canadians need to know they are also concerned about other stakeholders, such as their loyal customers and their frontline employees, who need help given to them as well.

We are proposing reforms to the Competition Act to foster competition across the economy, with a focus on the grocery sector, in addition to these other measures we have taken. Of course, we also gave the grocery rebate to try to help with affordability.

We have modernized competition law and the necessary enforcement to combat price-fixing in all sectors by applying some of the highest penalties in the world. We did it with the help of public consultation to ensure Canadian voices were engaged and heard.

We would also introduce amendments that would eliminate big business mergers with anti-competitive effects, enable the Competition Bureau to conduct precise market studies and stop anti-competitive collaborations that stifle small businesses, especially small, local grocers.

*Government Orders*

We also need to take the necessary steps to collect public data on the costs throughout the agri-food supply chain, including disaggregated data on costs of primary agriculture food and beverage processing and food retail sectors. We know farmers are working hard across Canada. We know they need support and we do not want to see any more pressure put on them.

In addition, there would be funding for indigenous-led initiatives in remote and northern areas to improve infrastructure that supports food security in the communities. The recommendation recognizes the unique challenges attributed to vulnerable communities in times of crisis and would facilitate measures to support and protect them.

There were several other recommendations made in these studies, and we are following up on most of them.

We know this government has lived through some of the most challenging global events in history. The opposition likes to confuse correlation with causality, but just because something happened at the same time as something else does not mean it is caused by it. We have heard time and time again experts who have cited that the causes of this global inflation are the three Cs: climate change, COVID and conflict. Those are the three major reasons for this inflation, and we are doing everything we can as a government to try to help Canadians fight inflation and deal with the issue of affordability.

All of us here will continue working on affordability to ensure a prosperous marketplace that fosters economic growth and a comfortable standard of living for Canadians and their families. We see them, we hear them and we are acting to correct this affordability crisis.

**Mr. Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, with regard to Bill C-56, would the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill agree that a band-aid covering an infection does not actually heal the infection and only makes it worse?

When I look at the farmers in my riding, they are the only people I know of who buy retail and sell wholesale. Putting a carbon tax on top of their monthly bills does directly affect our economy. Would she agree with that?

• (1735)

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy:** Madam Speaker, the member asked a couple of different questions.

Band-aids do not heal wounds, it is true, but Bill C-56 is definitely more than a band-aid. We know we need more housing, and this would provide more housing. We have heard it from many experts. This would help Canadians get more affordable housing, especially in the rental sector.

Additionally, on the subject of farmers, absolutely farmers are hard-working. I come from a family of farmers. In my Dutch background, my mother's family are all farmers, and they talk to me. They recognize climate change is a reality and that we need to work on this as well to help them deal with climate events.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for my colleague.

Since Parliament resumed, we have often heard the Liberals brag about holding a major summit with the heads of large grocery chains. It is a big show that promises potential commitments, but none of that is binding on the big grocers. We were expecting a response within three weeks, so there is still a week and a half left.

What will happen if the grocers do not decide to voluntarily lower prices? Will a surtax be imposed? Will we go on the offensive on that? Will the government use a coercive approach? After that, where will that tax show up? Will it be passed on to consumers? How will prices be brought down? Will the Liberals impose an obligation to deliver?

[*English*]

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy:** Madam Speaker, we are having meetings currently. We believe that the grocery chains and the large manufacturers will come forward with solutions.

In Canada, we all work together. I believe they understand that the thing to maximize is not only shareholder value, it is also stakeholder value in other areas, such as employees and customers.

We are working with them. We will come up with solutions. Certainly, the last thing we want to do is increase prices for consumers. Whatever solutions we come up would not be passed on to consumers.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Madam Speaker, for months now, large grocery chains have been ripping off consumers. People are paying crazy prices while the companies make record profits. Now, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry is going on bended knee to the CEOs of those companies to ask if they can stabilize prices. Prices are already too high. Even if prices can be stabilized, people will still be paying too much.

Is that the Liberal plan? To stabilize extortion?

[*English*]

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy:** Madam Speaker, the prices are too high. We all understand that. We have all seen that.

We are asking. We are not on our knees, we are meeting with the heads of these companies, both the grocery chains and the manufacturers, to talk to them about what they could do voluntarily to address this with us.

*Government Orders*

We are willing to see that these exceedingly high profits and bonuses are not okay when people are suffering, unlike the Conservatives who like to blame everything on the price on pollution, not at all looking to the profits that are being made by both the grocery sector and the oil and gas sector when Canadians are struggling.

**Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise for the first time in this session of Parliament to speak to Bill C-56, an act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Competition Act.

The lack of affordable housing has been top of mind in my riding of Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound as home and rental prices have continued to increase over the last eight years.

To give members some data, in 2015, when the current government took office, rental units were on average \$700 a month, I did have a fairly wide variance as I represent a large rural riding, but now that rent is well over \$1,000 per month. An average house price in 2015 was \$311,000 whereas now it is over \$608,000. Further complicating this is home sales are down over 27% below the five-year average, and over 31% below the 10-year average.

This speaks directly to the impact the Liberal government's inflationary deficit spending is having on the economy and the ability for people to get into homes, not only to get them built, but to afford to build them or to move into rental units. This has finally come home to roost with the Liberal government, which is acting now, albeit far too late. It is funny that it finally comes forward with a bill to help make life more affordable for Canadians at the same time that the hon. leader of the official opposition introduced his bill, the building homes not bureaucracy act. It liked the bill so much it decided to take a piece of it and call it its own. I guess we could say that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. I would offer that it could save itself a lot of work by just passing the more comprehensive bill from the Leader of the Opposition.

One of the aspects of the bill that I question is how it is going to address the immediate housing crisis that Canadians are facing right now. If we read the bill, these rental housing units do not even have to be completed until 12 years from now, in the year 2035.

This housing issue has been going on and I have been hearing about it almost the whole time since I was elected. I hosted a housing task force meeting just over a year ago back in my riding because I recognized that this issue transcends all levels of government, elected officials and stakeholders. Everybody has a piece to play in solving this. Those stakeholders included my counties, health units, realtors, builders, chambers of commerce, not-for-profits, co-op housing groups and the construction sector. I would like to paint the picture of the complexity of this issue we are facing and why this bill does not go far enough. There is the increasing cost of land to build on; rising interest rates; the Nimbyism that is existing at all levels, but in particular at the municipal level; development charges and red tape; labour shortages in the construction sector; high inflation on building goods and everyday goods caused by not only supply chain issues, but more importantly, the carbon tax; and the deficit spending of the Liberal government.

This cost of living crisis has basically exhausted the not-for-profits in my area as the demand for aid continues to increase. They have been calling for the removal of the GST on not-for-profits as

well, not just what is being proposed in Bill C-56. Existing landlords are hesitant to rent out their properties due to the challenges that so many Canadians are facing because of a frequency of home takeovers, and the excessive red tape for private investment because federal government programs are too restrictive. Ultimately, removing the GST from eligible purpose-built rentals is just one small drop in the bucket for what the residents in my riding of Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound need to see in order to fix this housing crisis.

The government likes to talk about some of its other programs, like the housing accelerator fund. I had the privilege of sitting on the HUMA committee when we first studied the housing accelerator fund, but it has failed to demonstrate its utility. Today, I am only aware of one announcement of any funding going out under that program.

• (1740)

When I asked the minister specifically at committee a year ago about how this is going to help a large portion of Canada, i.e., those of us who live in rural Canada, he admitted on the public record that this funding is geared toward the major urban centres in this country, not for the rest of Canada.

I was lucky enough to question the president of the CMHC at that committee as well about the level of bureaucracy and complications. I will mention a specific example of the challenges that not-for-profits were facing. Ultimately, I was successful in advocating for a change.

There was a not-for-profit senior housing development that was running into roadblocks because of the Liberal government's inflationary spending and the costs that have gone up, as I highlighted earlier, to the point where it had to buy down, according to the CMHC, through its financial institution, the actual lending rate.

It was not allowed to talk or renegotiate that, because now the prices had doubled. I will get into specifics a bit later. It was being told it could not communicate in it. Fortunately, when I had the president there, we were able to come to a solution, but the point is that too much bureaucracy is causing the problems. We need fewer gatekeepers, not more.

I will get into some of the specifics I just mentioned. In this case, the construction costs had gone from \$3 million to \$7 million for this not-for-profit. That is why it is so important that we change it.

*Government Orders*

In prepping for this speech, I reached out to a number of stakeholders and not-for-profits in my area to ask how this would help them. They feel it is a step in the right direction, but there are plenty of tangible steps the government needs to take in order to make more substantial changes.

I mentioned charities and not-for-profits. I have Habitat for Humanity in my riding; it is a charity that builds homes for low-income residents, and it suggested removing the GST from the sale of homes being built for charities as well, because that is not mentioned at all in the bill. A challenge it specifically faces is that, when fair market value rises, so does the GST, which makes it more expensive for charities such as Habitat for Humanity to build these homes for low-income Canadians, especially given the affordability crisis that Canadians are facing, which has now reduced the charitable donations these charities are receiving.

Additional feedback I got from charities was to remove the compounding carbon tax and clean fuel standards, as they increase costs significantly for charities, which receive no rebate off these additional taxes.

Ultimately, Bill C-56 contains a number of half measures, ideas taken from opposition parties, including, as I already mentioned, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, and, on the competition side, from my colleague from the Bay of Quinte. They have an overreliance on existing programs that are obviously not working, and they are just redoing funding announcements. As I said, while there are some solid measures in this bill that may encourage the construction of more homes, more must be done now to catch up and ensure that Canadians have a roof over their head immediately.

Specifically regarding the housing portion of the bill, the reality is that there is a lot more value in the hon. Leader of the Opposition's building homes not bureaucracy act as a bill, because it goes far beyond just removing the GST from certain new builds. It sets out a road map for bringing homes that people can afford to more Canadians.

Ultimately, if the Liberal government is serious about addressing housing affordability, it would fast-track the Leader of the Opposition's bill and make it law today.

• (1745)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I must say, I am somewhat disappointed in the Conservative Party today. It is not recognizing the many different things that this legislation would actually do.

It is very easy to critique the legislation and underestimate the degree to which it would help Canadians from coast to coast to coast. In fact, yesterday we saw on the floor a concurrence motion to prevent debate on this particular piece of legislation. There is no sign the Conservatives want to let up in terms of allowing the bill to go to committee.

Does the Conservative Party support the legislation today? If Conservative members support it, do they believe the legislation should get to committee some time this month or next month? It would provide relief to Canadians. When do Conservative members feel the bill should go to committee?

• (1750)

**Mr. Alex Ruff:** Madam Speaker, I am not shocked that the member for Winnipeg North is disappointed; I am frequently disappointed in a lot of the stuff that comes from that side of the aisle as well. I am not shocked by his comments.

My point back would be that I believe every MP in the House should have the right to speak to every piece of legislation, because a lot of MPs do not have the opportunity to speak as often as that member does in this chamber. If he would have listened to my speech, he would know that this is one of the most important issues that Canadians are facing in every riding. Every MP in here, if I asked for a show of hands, I am sure would stick up their hand and say that housing affordability is one of the primary issues they hear about daily.

We need to be able to share that, and we should all have the opportunity to speak to it.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I really appreciated my colleague's last comment about how much speaking time certain members get. I want to congratulate him on his speech.

I am wondering about something. For some time now, certain Conservative members from Quebec have been passing themselves off as champions of jurisdictional issues in the House. We in the Bloc Québécois are quite accustomed to seeing the Liberals interfere in areas of jurisdiction that are not theirs. Much to our surprise, this bill does not encroach on the jurisdictions of Quebec, the provinces or the municipalities. However, in what my friend described as the Conservative Party's proposals, I see interference in the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces. In case my colleague needs a little reminder, subsections 92(13) and 92(16) of the Constitution Act, 1867 give the provinces legislative jurisdiction over property and civil rights.

Am I to understand from this afternoon's debate that the Conservative Party does not want to respect the Canadian Constitution? What is going on?

[*English*]

**Mr. Alex Ruff:** Madam Speaker, I apologize to my colleague for not breaking out the French today, but I want to try to get a serious reply back to his question.

*Government Orders*

We absolutely believe in the Constitution, but as I said in my speech, the challenge we have with housing is that it transcends all levels of government. It requires everybody to work collaboratively and co-operatively together. If he actually reads what we are proposing from the Conservative Party, he would realize that our bill would offer incentives. It would not be interfering in different levels of jurisdiction; it would incentivize municipalities to get more houses built to meet targets. If they cannot do that, ultimately, they would not actually be trying to help solve the problem we are facing, which is that Canadians need a roof over their head. Therefore, they would not get that money, or as much money;

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague and I are both Ontario-based MPs. It has been asked in the House several times, and yesterday, during conversations about the bill, I was asking about the Conservative housing plan. One of the key things that strikes me is that they want to sell off public assets, yet we have seen the Doug Ford Conservative government do that in a very problematic way in Ontario. It is at the point where it has been quite controversial, in fact.

As such, I want to hear that the Conservatives would not specifically do that at the federal level and that they would not follow their Conservative colleagues in that regard. What is their plan, specifically, for selling off those public lands?

**Mr. Alex Ruff:** Madam Speaker, I am not going to get into the specifics of our plan. Our job right now is to criticize. Maybe that is even too harsh of a word. I would like to say that we will hold the government to account to ensure the legislation it is putting forward is the best possible for all Canadians.

If the member is concerned about provincial politics, I encourage her to resign as a federal member of Parliament and run for provincial parliament. I am sure there are openings available. We will have a plan as soon as the next election is called, and the NDP—

• (1755)

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

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services.

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, today I rise to address this chamber with respect to Bill C-56, specifically its amendments to the Competition Act. This is the regime that enables the Competition Bureau to protect our economy from actors and acts that would unduly and artificially increase prices and decrease product choice for consumers. An empowered Competition Bureau means a Canadian marketplace that is more innovative, efficient, and, most important, affordable. In my home province of New Brunswick in particular, where household incomes on average are lower than in the rest of the country, we need to use every tool at our disposal to bring down food prices for Canadians and their families.

The series of proposals enclosed in Bill C-56 may be part of the response to a global inflation crisis driving up the costs of Canadian necessities, but they are also a long-awaited package that would better align our competition framework with international best practices.

The bill includes three significant changes to the Competition Act: the abolition of the efficiencies exception in merger review, the ability to compel information during a market study, and the ability to review agreements between non-competing actors that are designed to reduce competition.

The efficiencies exception, a defence that allows anti-competitive mergers to survive a challenge if the corporate efficiencies they are expected to generate are greater than the harm to competition, is unique among advanced competitive regimes. It allows a merger to proceed knowing full well that consumers may pay higher prices, to help the merging companies save costs.

The European Commission, one of the most active and visible competition authorities around, does not treat efficiencies in this manner. Our European counterparts will consider efficiencies as relevant only when those efficiencies are likely to benefit consumers; they never rely on corporate efficiencies to justify an anti-competitive merger.

In Australia, the law itself does not list efficiencies as a factor to consider in deciding merger cases. In fact, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has published guidelines stating that it will not clear anti-competitive mergers even if the new firm would enjoy a lower-cost structure.

Of course, the comparison often used, given our proximity, is the United States. The courts in our neighbouring jurisdiction have specifically ruled that possible corporate efficiencies from a merger cannot be used as a defence to justify an anti-competitive merger. Efficiencies must be pro-competitive and passed through in some capacity to the marketplace and not just the merging companies.

In this way, Canada is out of step, which is illustrated perfectly by the fact that the U.S. Federal Trade Commission has successfully challenged a Canadian merger that our own Competition Bureau could not, because of claimed efficiencies. For example, when Superior Plus Corp. was going to acquire Canexus in 2016, the bureau found that the competition would suffer materially in a number of markets. It predicted a lack of remaining competition and higher prices for consumers. Nevertheless, because of the provision in the Competition Act, the bureau had no choice but to refrain from challenging the transaction, as the efficiency gains could be shown to outweigh the anti-competitive impacts.

*Government Orders*

With no similar constraints, the United States Federal Trade Commission mounted a challenge because of what would be the resulting high rate of concentration in the sodium chlorate market. It also found evidence of the acquiring party's desire to restrict output post-merger, an increased ability to collaborate with competitors, and its desire to neutralize Canexus as a disruptive lower-price alternative.

Without even delving into the important question of whether promised efficiencies are ever delivered, it should be clear that this defence can lead to detrimental effects on competition. It is about time that Canada joined the rest of the world in putting competition first.

I would now like to speak specifically about the market study powers. Our current market study framework is another area where we are out of step. The bureau can periodically study industries to better understand their competitive dynamics and make recommendations to government, such as the retail grocery market study that it released last June. However, the bureau has no means to compel parties to provide any information and instead relies on voluntary submissions, public data or information it already happens to have.

This is not the case in comparable jurisdictions, once again. In the United States, the Federal Trade Commission has the authority to demand a compulsory special report that answers specific questions about an organization's business, conduct, practices, management and relationship to other parties. The European Commission can conduct studies into sectors or agreements across various sectors and can request necessary information or carry out inspections. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission can also ask the treasurer to instigate a price inquiry that allows authorities to access information on a wide variety of topics.

All of the above jurisdictions have serious sanctions for failure to comply, ranging from the ability for the enforcers to conduct a much wider study to fines based on the company's annual turnover. Moreover, these studies have proven to be a valuable tool for market insight. The USFTC, when faced with the novel problem of serial acquisitions by dominant tech platforms, launched its version of a market study to compel information on relevant mergers.

- (1800)

Similarly, in 2022, the United Kingdom's competition authority concluded a market study in the music and streaming industry to better understand why there had been a 40% revenue drop over 20 years. The retail grocery code that is currently in effect in the U.K. is also the direct result of recommendations by the competition authority after a detailed market study. Also, the Government of Australia, in response to ballooning electricity prices, ordered a price inquiry that resulted in a series of high-impact recommendations to government, many of which were directly related to enhancing competition.

Canada has had five market studies since 2007: retail grocery, digital health care, financial technology, self-regulated professions and the generic drug sector. Were the bureau empowered with the ability to compel information from elected companies, it is not difficult to imagine just how much more fruitful these studies really could have been.

Lastly, the third reform in this bill concerns agreements in restraint of competition that are made between parties who are not competitors. Sometimes this is called "vertical collaborations". This has been identified as an issue relevant to restrictive clauses made between commercial landlords and supermarket tenants to keep grocery competitors out of the property, thus limiting competition. The Competition Act has a number of provisions that could apply to some vertical collaborations, but will not necessarily if the specific facts do not quite line up perfectly with the statute. Its most basic provision on anti-competitive collaborations meanwhile is limited to those between real or potential competitors or horizontal collaborations.

Once again, we are the outlier in this approach. Our peers in the United States, Europe and Australia can examine vertical agreements that limit competition, such as by restricting distribution channels or territories of operation. In one notable case, the United States' Department of Justice challenged Visa and Mastercard for their contract terms with merchants that limited consumer options. When our own Competition Bureau tried to mount a similar case, the limits of the Competition Act meant it was forced to bring the case under an ill-suited provision, and it lost. The Competition Tribunal could not issue an order, even though it recognized the competitive harm. It was a viable lesson in the importance of a modern legal framework that reflects how today's marketplace operates.

We have seen that it is time for Canada to join the club, so to speak, and emulate the best practices of our peers. This is why I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill's passage.

**Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I congratulate the member on her expanding role, having started in a different political party, moving over to a new political party and actually getting a parliamentary secretary position. Her trajectory is clearly on the rise here, and I congratulate her for that. There is a life in politics, obviously, that requires a lot of advancements and those kinds of things.

I will ask the member clearly if she thinks that advancing this legislation through Parliament would be better served if she paid attention to the bill that was being brought forward rather than just trying to reinvent a new bill. If she were actually serious about it, like her party should have been serious about it, it would have been in the budget last year.

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin:** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. colleague for his kind words. I certainly paid attention, and I pay attention to all the happenings in the House.

*Private Members' Business*

Consultations began on this quite some time ago. I think it is important to look at the process when we bring in legislation and involve multiple provinces and territories, and have conversations with retailers and everyone who is going to be involved in what we are trying to achieve here.

There is never a better time to put forward legislation. I am glad that we are certainly stepping up and acting because, as we have clearly stated in this House, affordability and grocery prices are what we are hearing from all of our constituents. As I said, we have to use every tool at our disposal. I am happy to see the legislation now, and again, those consultations began quite some time ago.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Madam Speaker, a bill that seeks to eliminate the GST on housing construction should be based on one obvious principle. It should significantly lower the rent paid by current tenants who are having a hard time making ends meet.

Make no mistake, the crisis is affecting all of Canada and Quebec. The cost of housing in Abitibi—Témiscamingue is almost as high as it is in Montreal. How will abolishing the GST on new housing construction lower the price of existing housing? Should we not be looking for a solution that regulates or lowers rents instead?

• (1805)

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

[*English*]

We were already hearing from developers across the country about how this was going to incentivize them to really increase that stock and supply. The biggest thing we can do right now on the federal side is to look at those rising costs for rent and homes. It is specifically an issue in my riding as it is for every member of the House.

I have had these conversations with developers, and they are looking for tools. They are looking for that support from the government. This is one really important measure that could help with that densification and increase that stock. That is the biggest thing we can do to bring down prices. It is not going to happen overnight, but we are working as fast as we can.

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on her new role.

We have heard the Conservatives talk about selling off 15% of private lands and 6,000 government buildings. We saw what happened with the greenbelt with the Conservatives in Ontario. We saw what happened in British Columbia with private forest lands. Basically, it ends up in the hands of developers and it does not create any affordable housing.

What I want to know is whether my colleague will look at creating legislation so that all federal buildings and lands that are used for affordable housing are not sold but leased or transferred back to the indigenous peoples whose lands we sit on. I want to make sure that it does not end up in the hands of and profiteering for developers. We know that the private sector has never solved an affordable

housing crisis, ever. We need non-market housing, and we need to work together on that.

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin:** Madam Speaker, there is a combination of things. Again, this is a multi-faceted issue that is impacting Canadians right across the country. We absolutely have to look at the non-market rentals. We have to ensure that we are looking at models like co-ops. We have to look at every available tool that we have.

However, the private sector does have a role to play. I know that there is certainly lots of vilifying of developers that is happening. I can point to some examples in my home riding. We have an incredible developer, whose name is Marcel LeBrun, who has been integral in putting forward really inclusive and creative ways to deal with our housing crisis.

It is going to take a combination, and we certainly need to bring the developers into that conversation while protecting those who will be impacted by the housing crisis in the country.

**Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we see in this piece of legislation that there would be amendments made to the act that would stop big business mergers with anti-competitive effects. I want to know what kinds of benefits the member thinks this could have in her community when it comes to small businesses and especially small grocers.

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin:** Madam Speaker, I come from a province that is very familiar with corporate capture and what can happen when one does not have a competitive market, especially to protect the smaller retailers and grocers, in particular. We are having this conversation. Competition is always better. This is a really big step forward, bringing us in line with some of our other nations as well.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

### CRIMINAL CODE

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-295, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (neglect of vulnerable adults), as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** There being no motions at report stage, the House will now proceed, without debate, to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

• (1810)

[*English*]

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.)** moved that the bill be concurred in.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** If a member participating in person wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

**An hon. member:** On division.



(Motion agreed to)

**Hon. Hedy Fry** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

She said: Madam Speaker, for those who do not remember, I just want to quickly refresh them. This bill seeks to amend the Criminal Code under section 215, to ensure that there is a clear duty of the persons responsible for providing the necessities of life to vulnerable adults to do so. It is very clear.

I want to thank the House. All of the parties have supported this bill because, I think, we saw what happened during COVID, the fact that many units and institutions responsible for caring for vulnerable adults did not follow protocol, did not do all of the things that they needed to do to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults. The bill is very clear, and I want to thank those who saw it and who spoke to it at the committee stage. There were some excellent amendments made that were accepted unanimously by the committee and are incorporated now into the bill.

I just want to remind everyone that it must be made clear that when we refer to people who are taking care of the necessities of life for vulnerable adults, we do not include in that group people who are family or blood relatives who are looking after anyone. They are out of this equation. The ones we are talking about are people who are looking after three or more vulnerable adults and who are not actually bound by blood or family ties.

We have seen what happened. As a result, I brought this bill forward because, as we well know, the federal government has no responsibility, really, for long-term care facilities because they are actually under provincial jurisdiction. However, we do have some ability to look, as we did, at child abuse and to look at the fact that anyone who is not caring for and bringing the necessities of life to vulnerable adults should be held responsible.

I must say that about four or five days ago, a report came out in my province of British Columbia that showed that, actually, for-profit agencies were not using all of the money they were given to care for vulnerable adults. They were not actually providing the hours of service. However, non-profit societies were providing more than the hours of service they were being paid for. Therefore, I think it is really important for us to recognize that this tells us that there need to be some regulations, some ability to enforce this ability to take care of vulnerable adults. By “vulnerable adults”, I want to remind the House, we do not just mean seniors. We mean any adult who is vulnerable because of age, disability, mental illness, or any other inability to take care of themselves personally. This is the definition of a vulnerable adult; it is not only our seniors.

I want to thank everybody in the House. I could speak and speak, but members have heard me speak about this. I know that most of us in the House actually support this bill, and I want to thank everyone for their support. I am hoping we can get this bill passed so we can protect the vulnerable adults in our society, especially now that we know there is evidence that COVID is on the rise again. The respiratory syncytial virus is on the rise again. Influenza is on the rise again this fall. I just want to let members know that we do not want a replication of what happened during COVID.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulou, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I was a bit worried about Bill C-295 at first. I was afraid it would encroach on provincial jurisdiction, but in the end, that is not the case at all. I am quite happy about that.

The bill specifies that if an owner or officer of a long-term care facility is convicted of failing to ensure necessities of life, that owner or officer will be prohibited from doing paid or volunteer work in the presence of elderly or vulnerable persons. However, the bill does not specify how, after the prohibition period, we can ensure that the owner or officer is no longer a threat to people in vulnerable situations.

Does my colleague think that a risk assessment should be carried out before the end of the prohibition period in order to allow paid or volunteer work with people in vulnerable situations?

• (1815)

[*English*]

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Madam Speaker, that is a good question.

If someone did not provide the necessities of life and was responsible for doing it, and we penalized them either with fines or jail time and prohibited them from being able to even volunteer in such institutions for three years, I think we should give them the benefit of the doubt that they may have learned some lessons. It is important, therefore, for people who are allowing those institutions to exist to check that they have learned their lessons and are going to do the thing right again.

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it just seems unique or perhaps interesting to me. We see that the Liberal government has been pushing this euthanasia regime that would open up assisted suicide even to those who are mentally ill. I am just wondering if there is going to be any interplay between this bill that the member is bringing forward and the euthanasia regime that the Liberal government has been rapidly advancing in this country.

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Madam Speaker, no, I do not see that it has any relationship to this bill.

The MAID, medical assistance in dying, bill is very clear in terms of what it is supposed to encompass and how it is supposed to encompass that. This has nothing to do with that. Before MAID even came about, there were institutions that looked after vulnerable adults. We want to make sure that we do not have a repeat of what happened during COVID-19, and that vulnerable adults get the care they desire.

*Private Members' Business*

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am glad my hon. colleague brought up the treatment of our seniors during the COVID pandemic, because Canadians were horrified to see so many vulnerable Canadians, our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, living in what were appalling conditions. I am glad to see that her bill addresses that.

On a more systemic basis, we have been promised a long-term care bill. That legislation, according to experts and stakeholders, would mean that we would have to establish binding, mandatory, quality care standards in long-term care homes across this country. That is to protect our seniors.

Would the hon. member agree with the NDP that we need binding, mandatory, quality and enforceable standards in legislation so that we could make sure that every senior in this country is not left in a vulnerable state, as they were during COVID?

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Madam Speaker, that is a very interesting question that the hon. member posed.

What we have to remember is that these institutions are under the jurisdiction of provinces. What we know is that the Canadian Standards Association set very clear guidelines for what is meant to be the best care to provide the necessities of life. Based on that, there is an opportunity, if we want to look at a long-term care bill, to work with the provinces to ensure that through such a bill, the Canadian Standards Association guidelines would be implemented.

**Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for her care and concern for the most vulnerable adults in our society.

There is another bill coming through the House very shortly, Bill C-314, which is about medical assistance in dying and protecting the mentally ill against the scope and expansion of medical assistance in dying. I was wondering, given the fact that the member has concern for the vulnerable adults in our society, if we could expect her to also support that bill?

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Madam Speaker, that was a very leading question. I think it is important to note that the criteria and guidelines for medical assistance in dying for people suffering from a mental illness are very clear. I co-chaired the committee that looked at MAID for a year and a half. It was a joint committee with the Senate. We heard so many witnesses who told us that there is a very clear distinction between somebody who is going through momentary suicidal ideation because something happened in their lives, and somebody who has a mental illness. Again, the Supreme Court said that it is very important for specialists to decide whether a person has a mental illness or whether they are just going through suicidal ideation.

• (1820)

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour, as always, to rise and contribute to the debate on Private Members' Business. Tonight we are debating Bill C-295, moved by the member for Vancouver Centre, whose bill proposes an amendment to the Criminal Code to create a new offence for long-term care facilities, their owners and their managers who fail to provide the necessities of life to the residents of their facilities.

The bill would also create a process by which courts could make prohibition orders against the owners and managers of such facilities, prevent them from being in charge of or in a position of authority over vulnerable adults, and to consider as an aggravating factor, for the purpose of sentencing, the fact that an organization failed to perform the legal duty it owed to a vulnerable adult.

Her concern for vulnerable adults is most certainly a credit to the member, and I share this concern for many reasons. Many of my constituents have shared with me, as a member of Parliament, personal stories about fraud, abuse and neglect of elderly or vulnerable family members. I share this concern because, like most Canadians, I have, and had, vulnerable adults in my family.

My own grandfather was defrauded by his caregiver in the final months of his life. I have spoken about it in this place before with respect to other bills designed to enhance protection for vulnerable adults, but I am going to do so again. My grandfather spent the final months of his life worrying about money and a possible financial burden on his companion because a caregiver defrauded him. This crime did not take place in an institutional setting. The perpetrator of the crime provided care to him in his home, preparing light meals and doing housekeeping. This was the level of care he needed to stay in his home with his companion comfortably, yet he was defrauded.

The local RCMP detachment had a poster in the police station imploring people to report fraud and to be aware of elder abuse, yet despite obvious and overwhelming evidence, it took months for charges to be laid. The police kept saying they were too busy to get around to arresting the suspect. This resulted in my grandfather's passing away before they eventually arrested and charged the caregiver who preyed upon an elderly couple in their own neighbourhood.

I mention this episode again in the House to be clear that I know first-hand how vulnerable adults can be prone to abuse, fraud and neglect. I also know first-hand how poorly the justice system reacts to such cases of abuse and fraud, so I can only imagine how slowly and reluctantly authorities react to cases of neglect. There is no doubt much more needs to be done to protect vulnerable adults. My family experience is enough to convince me of that even if I did not also have the weight of so many similar stories from the people I represent in Calgary.

I am also very concerned about the rise of incidents of violence against seniors. We know that under the current government's watch, crime has gone up significantly in every category, but according to Statistics Canada, the rate of violence against seniors has gone up faster than the increase in violence against all other age groups.

I too was appalled by the collapse of care in some seniors homes during the early weeks of the pandemic and that the military was called in to restore the most basic care and ensure that the necessities of life were delivered to helplessly vulnerable seniors.

However, this bill is not about establishing who cares the most about seniors. It is not about how to fix shortcomings in the seniors care system. It is not about how seniors care is funded or how it is delivered. It is not about regulating standards of care in long-term facilities. This bill proposes a Criminal Code amendment. This bill would amend the Criminal Code to create a new offence and give addition order-making power to courts. It was supported by parliamentarians at second reading and was referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. During the hearings, 15 provincial long-term care associations, organizations and businesses submitted briefs opposing this bill.

● (1825)

Six national organizations also opposed the bill, including the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Association for Long Term Care, the Canadian Medical Protective Association, the Canadian Association of Social Workers, the Canadian College of Health Leaders, and CanAge. These associations raised concerns about the unintended consequences of this bill. Some said that if passed, this bill will have a devastating impact on recruitment and retention by creating undue risk and hardship for frontline staff. They raised concerns at committee that this bill would exacerbate what is an already precarious situation with chronic labour shortages in the industry.

It was also remarked that this bill and the debate around it have had a tone of general opposition to privately owned long-term care facilities, in favour of publicly operated ones. To those who assert without evidence, mostly from philosophical conviction, that privately owned and operated long-term care facilities are more prone to instances of neglect than publicly owned ones, they could run for provincial office, which is where such facilities are regulated, and they could get involved in the regulation of health care facilities and the general regulation of commerce. They could also consider whether a new offence and new order-making provisions are the best way to protect vulnerable adults. Perhaps they could propose comprehensive anti-elder abuse legislation, something that the previous justice minister was tasked with in his mandate letter but failed to actually do before he was shuffled. During the 2021 election, the government promised a safe long-term care act, but it has not introduced one.

The Criminal Code really is a blunt instrument, and given the testimony at the justice committee, one really must reconsider whether this bill will help vulnerable adults or whether, through unintended consequences, it will make the highly stressed system of care for vulnerable adults worse rather than better. What good are new offences in the Criminal Code when existing offences are not enforced? Prohibitions against fraud, abuse, and failing to provide the necessities of life already exist in the Criminal Code, but we need better enforcement and prosecution of our laws. What good is a new offence if existing offences are not enforced?

We have seen this before with private members' bills, when a member proposes a change to the Criminal Code in order to draw attention to an issue and force a vote in the House of Commons to signal concern about an issue, but without actually creating a comprehensive solution. This is admittedly part of the limitations of private members' bills. In this case, the member for Vancouver Centre cannot propose changes that commit public money, and she cannot

### *Private Members' Business*

propose provincial regulations in the federal House of Commons. The Criminal Code is one of the things that a member can change but, again, it is a blunt policy instrument. It is a long and complex law already.

I do not like to have to criticize a bill for what it does not do, but if one just focuses on what this bill actually does, we have to consider the evidence that was presented at committee. We have to be concerned about the consequences and consider whether there are already provisions in the Criminal Code that can and should be applied to horrific cases of abuse and neglect when they arise. As I have said, when existing laws to protect the vulnerable are not a priority for law enforcement and for our courts, what is the point of passing new laws?

While I commend the member for trying to deter and punish future cases of neglect through the Criminal Code, I will not support this bill, given the evidence of harm that it will cause to the ability of existing facilities to retain workers and attract investment at a critical time, when facilities are struggling with acute labour shortages and rising costs.

● (1830)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am very proud to rise today to once again speak to this bill. I already spoke to it at second reading, and I want to reiterate what I said at that time: The Bloc Québécois intends to support Bill C-295.

This bill warranted review in committee. It should be passed and brought into force as quickly as possible. Negligence toward anyone in our life is wrong. Negligence toward our seniors and most vulnerable is shameful.

Our seniors were the victims of terrible treatment during the 2020-22 lockdown. They were often abandoned in institutions with a lack of services, a lack of staff or staff who were ill equipped. They were shuffled from one institution to another. They were considered to be in the margins, people we did not need to take care of like they deserved. They were cut off from their loved ones. Many of them died without even having their close family, children or spouse with them. That is unacceptable. Often, they were not properly fed or fed at irregular hours. They were mistreated.

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Collectively, our behaviour was unbecoming. We were like ungrateful children. This must never ever happen again. In Quebec, we have legislation to address this issue, an Act to combat maltreatment of seniors and other persons of full age in vulnerable situations. I mentioned earlier that I hoped that the federal government would model its legislation on the Quebec law, and I think it did so in some regards.

Bill C-295, which has been moved for adoption, was amended in committee. That is why we wanted to study it in committee. There were things in the bill that bothered us. We worked hard in committee, and I thank my colleagues from the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights for the work we did. Many, if not all, of the amendments proposed by the Bloc Québécois were adopted. Now we have a bill that seeks to improve living conditions for our seniors and the most vulnerable among us, whether by reason of age, illness, mental disorder or disability. I think that it does us credit to think of these people during our deliberations here in the House.

These people will now be protected when they live in long-term care facilities. Situations like the ones that occurred between 2020 and 2022 were already prohibited and liable to prosecution. Now, both the owners and the officers of long-term care facilities will be personally responsible for providing necessities of life to residents of the facilities. Again, we are talking about seniors and people with disabilities or mental disorders, people who are sick. They need us. We needed them at one time. Now, they are the ones who need us. It is wrong not to take care of them.

I therefore welcome this bill with a certain amount of pride. I hope it is not used to prosecute people for contravening its provisions, but rather to encourage them to respect what is now enshrined in law and what should be the minimum we are required to do for some of our most vulnerable citizens. One of the main responsibilities of any government or society is to treat seniors with dignity, respect and fairness. Bill C-295 tells us that we must do just that. We cannot be negligent toward our seniors or toward people who need us without being subject to prosecution under the Criminal Code.

• (1835)

That is not all. Their economic well-being also deserves attention. The federal government must provide the transfers that the provinces have been demanding for far too long now. These transfers are necessary for Quebec and the other provinces to properly administer health care services. In response, the federal government tells us that it intends to set conditions on its transfers and dictate the way we care for the less fortunate. Where, when and how this should be done, the federal government has no idea. The federal government does not manage any hospitals, long-term care homes or health facilities, except those catering to veterans.

The expertise exists not in Ottawa, but in Quebec City. I think that setting conditions on health transfers is outrageous. It does not mean that seniors in long-term care are going without food or baths. It means that the people in charge of these health services are being deprived of the financial means they need to meet the needs of these citizens properly. That is also unacceptable. I think that if the federal government and Parliament want to look into the well-being

of the less fortunate, economic aspects should not be overlooked. We have been talking about this for years, and I am fairly certain the talking is not over. I would be very surprised if cheques were sent out next week, but I can promise that we will be there keeping an eye on things. The health care system matters.

That is not all. There are health transfers, but there is also the economic well-being of seniors. As we saw recently, the federal government decided to make seniors aged 65 to 75 poorer. The government acknowledged that needs had increased. God knows they have, and quite a bit more than the government was willing to acknowledge. It gave a 10% increase to seniors aged 75 and over, while leaving retired seniors aged 65 to 75 to fend for themselves. However, all of our laws recognize that people in that age bracket are seniors. This is an unacceptable decision, one we have also frequently criticized in the House, and we will continue to do so.

We have an opportunity to fix this inequity. My colleague, the member for Shefford, is sponsoring Bill C-319, which we will have to vote on in the near future, probably when we return from the parliamentary break week or before the holidays. We hope it will be as soon as possible.

On the one hand, the bill proposes to increase pensions by 10% for all seniors aged 65 and over, across the board, regardless of their age, sex or race. Everyone who is 65 or over and living in Canada should be entitled to the 10% increase. People know very well, as I do, that the 10% increase does not even come close to covering the added economic burden resting on our seniors' shoulders. Groceries cost nearly twice as much and rents are skyrocketing. We are having to strike committees to look into the issue. We are out of ideas for how to stem these increases. Seniors are getting a 10% increase, which is not much at all, so the least we can do is give it to all seniors.

On the other hand, Bill C-319 also proposes to increase from \$5,000 to \$6,500 the maximum income a retiree can earn with no penalty clawed back from their pension. That, too, seems reasonable to me. It is the least we can do. We want to tell people that they have a right to their pension, but should they decide to work a little to make ends meet, we will not penalize them for it. I think it would be shameful to penalize them when the pension we are giving them amounts to crumbs.

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We can talk about Bill C-295 and the need for us to properly take care of the most vulnerable, seniors, people with intellectual deficiencies, the sick and persons with disabilities in our long-term care facilities. We can talk about transferring money to the provinces and Quebec that is needed to provide adequate health care services in our hospitals and we can talk about the need to provide equitable and basic economic conditions to seniors. In any case, we are talking about taking care of the least fortunate among us. It does not seem right to have to talk about it here. This is something we should be doing, no questions asked, without even having to vote. This should already be in effect. Let us hope this gets done.

In closing, I would remind the House that a society is judged on how it treats its most vulnerable members.

• (1840)

Let us prove ourselves worthy of our seniors. Let us prove ourselves worthy of the benefits of the society in which we live.

[English]

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am honoured to stand here today to represent my communities of Port Moody, Coquitlam, Anmore and Belcarra.

New Democrats support this bill, which would amend the Criminal Code to protect vulnerable adults. The bill would create a new offence for the owners and managers of long-term care facilities that fail to provide the necessities of life for their residents. The bill would allow the courts to make an order prohibiting the owners and managers of these facilities from working with, volunteering with, being in charge of, being in a position of trust with or being in a position of authority over vulnerable adults.

The bill is the start a conversation about the conditions of care in this country and the dignity that seniors and other vulnerable adults deserve. There is still more work to do. Today, I spoke with the Canadian Federation of Pensioners. The organization has been meeting this week in Ottawa to address the ongoing crisis of the care economy, health care and access to aging with dignity.

They sent me here today with this message. They have highlighted the following four actions that need to be addressed, even more so than the bill: ensure that funding for care is spent on care; improve the accuracy and transparency of monitoring and reporting because we need data; define profit because we need to talk about what it means to have profit in long-term care; and make revenues and expenditures for publicly funded care homes available.

We have seen that, through the global pandemic, long-term care facilities were hit incredibly hard, exacerbated by the appalling conditions in some facilities that led to the deaths of more than 14,000 residents and staff. The pandemic has shown that facilities that are for-profit do not put the needs of their residents first in every case. Reports prove that for-profit long-term care facilities have worse client outcomes than the not-for-profit facilities. Without checks and balances, corporate greed can lead organizations to prioritize their profits before the health and safety of their residents.

This month, the Office of the Seniors Advocate in British Columbia published a report that reviewed for-profit and not-for-profit long-term care facilities and their patient care. They exam-

ined how money directly impacted the quality of life for people living in long-term care. Its report found that not-for-profit facilities spent 25% more on residents in direct care than for-profit facilities. An even more unacceptable fact found in the report is that for-profit facilities delivered 500,000 fewer hours of care than they were funded to deliver. Those are hours stolen from seniors and put into the pockets of private corporations and their CEOs.

In contrast, not-for-profit facilities delivered 93,000 more care hours than they were funded to deliver. They gave more care, and that highlights not only why public long-term care facilities are more compassionate, but also that the workers in long-term care deserve to be paid for those compassion hours.

New Democrats have said many times that we will end for-profit and private long-term care. It is public health care, and it needs to stay public. The recent pandemic has shown us that for-profit companies cannot be relied upon to protect our loved ones and keep workers safe. By continuing to have for-profit long-term care with little oversight, those private investors will continue to cut corners on care and increase pressures on the health care system, putting more Canadians at risk.

• (1845)

Here, I need to mention the abysmal record of the Conservative government in Ontario. It continues to advance a privatization agenda for health care, which is dangerous and irresponsible.

Therefore, I want to take a moment to go back and recognize the incredible staff who work in long-term care. They face unrealistic demands and step up every day, often suffering physical and mental injury. We must do more to support staff, who continue to be pushed to the limits as they feed, bathe and care for loved ones in long-term care. Here in Canada and around the world, women, and disproportionately immigrant women, continue to do most of the care work in institutions and facilities. Pay is low and working conditions are harsh. Many of these care workers are seniors themselves.

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Translating Research in Elder Care collected data for over a decade about care aides from more than 90 nursing homes in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The researchers learned that 67% of care aides are over the age of 40 and that 61% speak English as a second language. A third of them work at more than one nursing home, often because their work does not offer full-time hours or a living wage and benefits. This is the lived experience of care workers in Canada.

The government needs to stop the gender discrimination experienced by care workers and pay them appropriately. It must recognize their skills and experience. When immigrant care workers come to work in Canada, their credentials need to be recognized and they need to be compensated equally. When staff continue to be undervalued and underpaid, they suffer moral injury while trying to administer care. The government must do more to change this reality in health care and in long-term care.

Bill C-295 is a step in the right direction for protecting care and care workers, but, yes, as I have said, there is more to do. That is why Canada's New Democrats have included a safe long-term care act in the confidence and supply agreement. A safe long-term care act would address the needs and dignity of vulnerable adults, including those with disabilities, who have been let down by the current government over and over again. They have not been provided adequate housing or community supports. This reality is unacceptable.

In closing, the government should move immediately on tabling a safe long-term care act. The NDP is ready to make that a reality.

**Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am honoured to represent Scarborough—Agincourt and delighted to speak today about the progress of Bill C-295, an act to amend the Criminal Code regarding neglect of vulnerable adults.

Bill C-295, introduced by my colleague, the member of Parliament for Vancouver Centre, seeks to criminalize owners and officers of long-term care facilities who neglect the residents in their care. We all remember the circumstances that led to the introduction of this bill, and it is hard to forget the headlines in recent years about the chaotic situations within the walls of long-term care homes. Available information shows that charges are rarely brought for negligence in caring for vulnerable people, and none were brought in connection with the recent cases of abuse denounced by the media at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Criminal Code currently addresses elder abuse through offences of general application. This means there is no specific protection, so neglect or abuse must be prosecuted under existing laws, such as laws regarding all forms of violence, abuse, fraud, and failure to provide the necessities of life to a dependant who is unable to withdraw from a person's charge due to age or other circumstances. It is also possible for a person to be held criminally liable for aiding, abetting or conspiring with a third party to injure or harm the physical and psychological integrity of a vulnerable adult. These general offences do not necessarily target the right people.

The bill, as drafted, would target those in senior management positions and clarify consequences for their operational decisions. I will speak today about a few statistics that justify our support for the amendments proposed by the justice and human rights commit-

tee, and about some of the measures taken by our government to support the efforts of the provinces and territories in their fight against elder abuse.

According to the Royal Society of Canada's June 2020 report "Restoring Trust: COVID-19 and The Future of Long-Term Care", home support workers provide up to 90% of direct resident care. It is not surprising to see a higher percentage of home support workers compared to nurses or other professionals working in long-term care facilities.

Another study, released in 2020 by Statistics Canada, entitled "The contribution of immigrants and population groups designated as visible minorities to nurse aide, orderly and patient service associate occupations", informs us that Black and Filipino women are significantly overrepresented in this sector.

Thanks to the amendment adopted by the committee, this bill targets owners and officers of long-term care facilities, not frontline workers. In the legislation, "officer" will be defined as "the chairperson of the board of directors, the president, a vice-president, the secretary, the treasurer, the comptroller, the general counsel, the general manager or a managing director of a long-term care facility, any other person who performs functions for a long-term care facility similar to those normally performed by a person occupying any of those offices, or any other person designated as an officer of a long-term care facility."

Frontline workers devote themselves to the task of care, often in difficult working conditions. With the amendments that have been adopted, committee members carefully took into account the very real difficulty in attracting and retaining workers in the care sector. This bill targets the correct decision-makers. This was the issue most often raised by groups representing long-term care facilities across the country, and it was recently raised in the ombudsman's report in Ontario entitled "Lessons for the Long Term", published at the beginning of this month.

• (1850)

The data speak for themselves. Our population is aging, and these percentages will undoubtedly rise over the years.

The segment of the population most at risk of institutional abuse is made up of women aged 85 and over. In Canada, more than one-third of these women live in institutions, as they tend to outlive their male partners and may not have the health or support to age at home.

Forms of institutional abuse include physical abuse, neglect, emotional and verbal abuse, financial abuse and sexual abuse. Individuals in institutions may also experience systemic abuse, which is defined as systemic practices that result in neglect, substandard care, overcrowding and violation of dignity.

Some research suggests that up to 1% of Canadian seniors are victims of violent crime or physical abuse, and approximately 45% of seniors report having experienced some form of abuse by age 65. In addition, recent provincial and territorial reports, as well as reports from organizations serving seniors, have revealed significant systemic problems within long-term care facilities.

There are other adults who are also in long-term care facilities. Indeed, people with a disability or permanent incapacity often end up in these facilities because it is the only institution capable of providing them with the necessary care.

In my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt, we have three long-term care homes, one transitional care home and many senior housing facilities. In fact, 27% of the riding population of Scarborough—Agincourt is made up of seniors. It is so important that we provide competent care for all seniors across Canada.

Some seniors will have exhausted their own financial resources. Others will be placed by relatives, who are themselves aging or unable to provide the necessary care. To the same extent as seniors, these adults are vulnerable to neglect by those who have an obligation to care for them.

With a rapidly growing aging population in Canada, it is expected that companies specializing in this field will also experience some form of expansion. Currently, there are 2,039 long-term care homes in Canada; of these, 46% are public and 54% are private. The percentage of facilities varies considerably from province to province. For example, 86% of long-term care facilities in Quebec are public, compared with only 16% in Ontario.

This government is working on a number of measures to enhance protection for seniors, including a federal policy definition of senior abuse to better guide our policies, working in partnership with stakeholders and other levels of government to improve data collection, education and programs tailored to helping seniors and elders. It is also putting in place more measures to prevent senior abuse before it happens. Several commitments have been made in this regard, including the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada's mandate letter commitment to work with the Minister of Labour and Seniors to strengthen Canada's approach to elder abuse.

Initiatives have been put in place to address identified gaps in our long-term care facilities. Moreover, \$740 million in funding has been invested to support our most vulnerable populations through infection prevention and control measures to protect those in long-term care and those receiving home care and palliative care. Several bilateral agreements have been signed, for example, to increase the number of beds in Nova Scotia or to establish screening protocols in Saskatchewan.

Most recently, the government provided \$3 billion over five years to support provinces and territories in their efforts to improve long-term care in their jurisdictions. This is in addition to the \$1 billion provided for the creation of the safe long-term care fund.

### *Private Members' Business*

This money will be used to protect people living and working in long-term care, and all provinces and territories have signed a bilateral agreement for this fund.

The work continues to evolve; despite our best efforts, we are not immune to another pandemic. We need to put elements in place to avoid repeating the same mistakes.

• (1855)

I am confident that the members of this House will recognize the importance of moving this legislative reform forward so that it can be quickly considered by the other chamber. The path ahead of us in long-term care facilities is one of collaboration as we continue to work with our provincial and territorial counterparts to improve outcomes for seniors.

We must recognize that for many, illness strikes without warning. We cannot control its speed or its effects, however we can ensure that those in need of long-term care receive the best possible care in well-maintained facilities that afford them the dignity and respect all Canadians deserve.

**Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to engage in this debate on Bill C-295, and I want to commend the member for Vancouver Centre for bringing forward this bill. I am not sure we will be supporting it, and I will explain why in a moment, but she has brought forward a bill that addresses what is perhaps one of the most existential challenges facing not only Canada but western developed societies, which is the aging of our population.

A huge demographic challenge facing our country of course is the aging of our population. There are more and more Canadians who are becoming seniors. There are more and more Canadians who are moving out of the workforce, which is creating significant workforce shortages, and we are experiencing those today. At the same time, these seniors are requiring more and more care, which of course imposes a burden on taxpayers.

I would not for a moment suggest we should not be providing for the seniors who built our country. We owe it to them to do that.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

However, the COVID pandemic, the first pandemic of its kind in over 100 years, left virtually every government around the world unprepared to meet that challenge. Here in Canada, that challenge manifested itself, among other things, by creating significant shortages of competent workforce members within our hospitals to address the increasing numbers of patients coming in suffering from the COVID virus. This became an acute problem for hospitals across our country.

There was not a province or territory that was not impacted by the fact that our hospitals could not provide the care needed. Beyond that, our long-term care facilities suddenly found themselves faced with this incredible challenge of having vulnerable seniors they were in charge of who had now contracted the COVID virus and trying to put into place protocols that were going to protect those vulnerable residents of those homes.

This bill seeks to address that by criminalizing the failure to provide the necessary care in those homes. More specifically, this enactment, Bill C-295, would amend the Criminal Code to create an offence for long-term care facilities, their owners and their managers who fail to provide the necessities of life to residents of their facilities.

I think all of us can agree that is a worthy undertaking to make sure our long-term care facilities have the kinds of services and protective protocols that would protect the residents of those facilities. The problem is we have significant labour shortages in our country. Until we have actually addressed those labour challenges, it would be imprudent to impose on these facilities criminal sanctions that effectively mean these homes could not provide the kind of care the Criminal Code would require but that our labour challenges cannot address adequately.

My challenge with this legislation is we are trying to do two things. We are trying to provide those facilities with the labour force they need to adequately protect residents and patients, but at the same time we are trying to criminalize the activities of these facilities when in fact they are in no position to comply with the law.

● (1900)

I would raise one other point. The proponent of this bill, the member for Vancouver Centre, has said that this is all about protecting the most vulnerable within our society. I commend her for standing up and defending the rights and the welfare of our seniors, the ones who find themselves in extremely vulnerable positions.

However, there are other seniors and other Canadians who are also in vulnerable positions who call out for protection and those are our mentally ill, the mentally disordered in our society, who are now finding themselves caught under Canada's medical assistance in dying regime, Canada's assisted suicide regime, which is being extended by this government to the mentally disordered within our society, including those suffering from depression.

I do not know how we square that, on the one hand, advocating for the protection and welfare of seniors in our homes, but, at the same time, saying that we are going to also advocate for assisted suicide to be extended and expanded to include the mentally ill.

There is something wrong with that picture. It troubles me deeply that we have found ourselves in this place where competing ideologies are taking place right here in the House of Commons.

I earlier asked the proponent of this bill if she would support Bill C-314, which seeks to extract and remove the mentally ill from Canada's MAID regime. She hummed and she hawed and she explained this way and that way.

At the end, all we could conclude was that, no, she was not prepared to protect the mentally ill against medically assisted dying but, at the same time, would be advocating for the seniors in our homes and the residents of our long-term care homes who find themselves vulnerable and could see their lives and their health impaired by another pandemic.

We can see that I am quite frustrated to be placed in the position of having to judge the member for Vancouver Centre's bill based on her inability to understand that there has to be consistency when we bring forward legislation.

When we promote an ideology that is supposed to protect the most vulnerable in our society, that does not mean we can pick and choose between different vulnerable groups. We need to address their needs in a wholesome way, in a holistic way, and we have to be consistent in how we apply our ideology.

Unfortunately, that is not taking place here. Quite frankly, I lament that our country is moving down this road, where some of our most vulnerable are going to find themselves at great risk because of the life and death policies that this government is adopting, which have not been properly thought out.

I am going to ask the member for Vancouver Centre to reconsider her position on Bill C-314, as I will reconsider my position on her bill, Bill C-295. We both have objectives to protect and defend the rights of the vulnerable.

I call for one thing: consistency. All those who are vulnerable in our society are worthy of our protection.

● (1905)

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice):** The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

CARBON PRICING

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to stand up this evening to talk about a question I asked the Minister of Environment back in June.



*Adjournment Proceedings*

I was concerned that the carbon tax plan was simply that, a tax plan, and it does nothing to benefit the world we live in. I pointed out that hard-working families in Alberta are struggling to meet the needs of everyday life due to the fact that the government has imposed not one but two carbon taxes on all Albertans.

At that point in time, I also asked the minister to point me to which flood, fire, hurricane or drought had been prevented by all of the Albertans having to pay the carbon tax. The minister could not point to a single flood, fire, hurricane or drought that had been prevented by us paying the carbon tax. In fact, many of these floods, fires and hurricanes caused increased expenses for many of our constituents, yet the government is just taxing them, making them poorer. The carbon tax only makes Canadians poorer. It does not do anything to ensure that Canadians could prevent the effects of climate change or work to mitigate those effects.

Common sense Conservatives have been bringing forward common sense ideas that would make life more affordable. We have been saying that we would work to fight against the effects of climate change by using technology, not taxes, because we think that humanity has the capability to solve the problems that we are faced with. We do not think that paying more taxes would be the solution to this at all.

The reality is that minister is just playing a shell game with the pocketbooks of Canadians. His carbon taxes, both of them, are putting Canadians in dire situations. We are seeing Canadians from across the board groaning under the weight of this tax-and-spend, high-inflation, high-deficit, high-spending Liberal government, which has caused inflation. Now Canadians are struggling with it.

The carbon tax is a cumulative carbon tax. It is not like the GST. The GST is a flow-through tax that the end user pays. The carbon tax is applied to every level along the way. The carbon tax is paid by the farmer who grows the crops. It is paid as he puts the crop in the ground and as he takes the crop out of the ground. It is paid as he trucks the crop from the field to his bin, from the bin to the processor, from the processor to the mill, from the mill to the bakery, and from the bakery to the grocery store. It is also paid as consumers drive to and from the grocery store. It is paid all along the way. That cost is borne all the way through all of this.

It is a cumulative cost. Not only that, it is compounded by the fact that on top of all of that, the GST is paid on the carbon tax, all the way along and all the way through. Everybody then adds their percentage on top of that. That is causing a massive amount of inflation.

The ECHO Society, an organization that takes care of the most vulnerable disabled people in my riding, has complained that their utility bill last year was \$8,000, \$2,000 of which was just the carbon tax. Why?

Why do Canadians have to pay this carbon tax when it does not stop the things that the government is talking about? Why will it not just scrap this carbon tax?

• (1910)

**Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appre-

ciate the opportunity to come into the House and talk about our efforts to fight climate change.

Canadians across the country are well aware of the fact that 2023 has been a devastating year with historic wildfires in Canada that have impacted people in the member opposite's riding, all across Alberta and all across Canada in unimaginable ways.

However, the member opposite stands there, denies the existence of climate change and denies the importance of pricing carbon. The Conservative member's daily consumption of Tucker Carlson conspiracy theory nonsense and steady diet of climate change denial is also fuelling misinformation.

As we saw entire communities evacuating this summer, he tries to make a joke out of it and basically asked which fire or flood was prevented by carbon pricing. Scientists confirm and Canadians understand that these historic and intense wildfires were made far more likely by climate change, and they are made more intense by climate change. Pricing carbon is basically just a foundation to fighting climate change and reducing our reliance on fossil fuels.

Last time I looked, there were no members of the House of Commons who have a Nobel Prize in economics. Therefore, we rely on experts in economics, environmental experts and paleoclimatology experts to inform us and tell us how we can do a good job fighting climate change.

Every member in this House ran on a commitment to fight climate change using some form of a price on pollution, a carbon price, in the last election. Not only do the Conservatives have absolutely no credibility on the environment, but they also have no credibility with their voters, as they promised in the last election that they would institute a carbon price if elected. Conservatives did not get elected. They failed to become elected. They did not form government, so they spun on their heels when their new leader decided they were not going to pursue any climate change action. They do not care about climate change. They will not talk about climate change and they will deny its existence entirely.

Alberta-based economist Trevor Tombe recently published research indicating clearly that family grocery bills are only marginally impacted by carbon pricing. In fact, in Alberta, carbon pricing has only increased groceries by about \$5 on the monthly bill.

The Conservatives members may not believe in math. They do not believe in climate change. I would not be surprised if they did not believe in gravity because it is right in front of us. Climate change is real. Carbon pricing works. The Conservatives have—

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

*Adjournment Proceedings*

• (1915)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice):** Order.

The parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Adam van Koeverden:** Mr. Speaker, individuals and families under the federal system receive direct rebate payments. It is not something that any of the Conservatives ever acknowledge. They just talk about how much it costs families. It is important to also acknowledge and be very clear that a family of four in Alberta receives \$386 four times a year for a total of \$1,544 annually. For 80% of families, that accounts for more than they pay through the price on carbon.

Members do not need to believe me. They can go to any university in Alberta, the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, talk to an economist or a paleoclimatology expert, and ask them for a basic way to fight climate change in this country and they will hear directly from them.

Just like William Nordhaus said, and this is how he won a Nobel Prize in economics, if we are fighting climate change in our country, we ought to be pricing carbon.

I have more to say, but I believe it is the member opposite's opportunity to rebut.

**Mr. Arnold Viersen:** Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful that the parliamentary secretary has so much confidence in his minister, but I do not.

When the minister was responsible for Canadian heritage, he had an opportunity to address online exploitation. In fact, in his own backyard, there is a company called MindGeek, the world's largest pornography company. In 2020, The New York Times embarrassed the Liberals into acknowledging the existence of this Canadian company.

This was well after we warned the government that MindGeek was publishing videos of online sexual material, child sexual material, child sex trafficking and rape, and was making a lot of money. The minister promised to propose legislation within three weeks. Those weeks turned into months, which turned into years, and still nothing was ever done. As a result, survivors have continued to be exploited on these platforms.

If we cannot trust the minister to do his job when he is required to protect women and children, how can we trust him on anything else?

**Mr. Adam van Koeverden:** Mr. Speaker, the issues raised by my colleague opposite are serious ones, but time and again we see Conservatives abusing adjournment debates, abusing late shows and coming in and talking about issues that are not on the agenda. Tonight, we are talking about climate change and we are talking about carbon pricing.

The opposition should know better than to constantly claim that carbon pricing does not work. When Erin O'Toole was the leader of the Conservative Party, even when Stephen Harper was leader of the Conservative Party, and going back to Preston Manning, Conservatives have consistently run on a plan to price carbon. It is just this new leader, the member for Carleton, who has spun on his heels and determined for himself that carbon pricing does not work,

in opposition to economists and Nobel Prize winners across the world. The Conservatives are basically pivoting and putting it on a T-shirt and a bumper sticker.

I am sorry, but good policy is not a bumper sticker. Good policy relies on facts. Good policy relies on evidence and research, and all of that evidence and research points to the fact that a serious plan to fight climate change includes a price on carbon.

## HOUSING

**Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is nice to see you in the chair this evening.

After the last election, the Prime Minister said in this House on numerous occasions that “the Conservatives’ plan on housing...was to give tax breaks to wealthy landlords”. He typecast all landlords as wealthy crooks, while ignoring key barriers to building new and affordable rental units. When the current government was elected in 2015, the Liberals promised to scrap the GST on purpose-built new rental housing. Was their definition of a landlord a little different back then?

For months, housing experts, home builders and Conservatives have been sounding the alarm and calling on the government to finally follow through and do something to address the housing crisis. Unfortunately, it took a massive tank in the poll numbers for the government to finally do the right thing and announce that it is removing the GST on purpose-built rentals. I wonder if the Liberals will actually keep this promise.

After eight years of the current government, housing costs have more than doubled. A recent C.D. Howe study determined that in Vancouver nearly \$1.3 million on the price of an average home comes from unnecessary red tape added by government bureaucracy. In many parts of the world, that kind of money would buy someone multiple houses or a mansion, but in Vancouver it would get them about 60% of the average home, just enough to pay for taxes, delays, fees, regulations and the high-priced consultants who were involved in building it.

In my community of Abbotsford, the city needs to nearly double its housing starts over last year just to reach the new targets set by the province. Nobody wants to build new homes in Abbotsford because of all the hurdles they would have to jump through, and my city is far from alone. According to Rentals.ca, the average monthly rent in Canada hit a record of \$2,100. A recent graduate in an entry-level job who is paying back tens of thousands of dollars in student loans cannot afford that. A senior on a fixed income who has to move, who is already struggling to pay the bills, cannot afford that. A young single mother working two jobs for her kids cannot afford that. It has just gotten so bad.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

I believe there is consensus in the House of Commons now that we need to do much more on housing. Will the government commit to linking infrastructure funding to housing completions so that big-city gatekeepers will finally start approving more housing developments? Will the government commit to linking transit funding to housing completions so that our students and seniors can live close to public transit? Will the government penalize Nimbyism, which is stopping certain developments from taking place where housing costs are very high? Will the government commit to providing more money to communities, like a bonus, when they decide to build more homes so people can afford to have a place to live? Will the government commit to offloading federal assets to build more affordable homes?

In April, I asked the former minister of housing if he would allow the hard-working home builders, many of whom are small business owners, to get back to work to build the homes Canadians need. I will ask the parliamentary secretary the same: Is his government prepared to act, get out of the way and let home builders finally build homes, and no longer label them as tax cheats?

● (1920)

**Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as previous speakers have, I would like to thank you for serving in this capacity tonight. It is great to see you in the green chair.

I am always glad to have the opportunity to speak about the government's record on housing, and I am excited to talk about our plans for the future, because the current government has prioritized housing since the beginning of its mandate. Indeed, we are the government that started Canada's first national housing strategy; the previous government did not even have a minister of housing. There was no one in that government that carried the portfolio of housing, and its record on housing is abysmal.

The Conservatives' plan on housing going forward has received similar reviews from experts, such as Dr. Mike Moffatt, from right here in Ottawa. Members should not take my word for it. Dr. Mike Moffatt referred to the Conservative leader's plan on housing as an "incredibly weak" plan that "would substantially increase federal bureaucracy." He tweeted that the "Tory plan comes with [a] condition" around average rents, and something about below-market rent.

We have removed the HST, as per our commitment on all purpose-built rentals. Since that we have seen thousands of new commitments from developers right across this country to change their plans from building condos to building purpose-built rentals. It is a plan that is having an impact today. I spoke to a developer last week, who said that a 5,000-unit condo development is all being shifted to purpose-built rentals. This is good news for Canadians.

The Conservatives can stand there and say that it was their idea. That is hysterical. They have been in opposition for almost eight years, and they have never talked about removing the HST on purpose-built rentals. Indeed, we had it in our platform previously. As soon as the national housing accord came out, as soon as they made that recommendation, they made a presentation to our government and we took quick action.

Some in this House say that the federal government should abandon housing. Certainly, my colleague opposite has said that the federal government should get out of the housing sector and leave it to the provinces.

We believe that we have a strong role to play in helping Canadians meet their housing needs. Since 2015, the current government has invested more than \$30 billion to support, create and repair half a million homes. That is not trivial. We are talking about millions of Canadians who have a safe and affordable roof over their heads because of the national housing strategy and the money that we have invested through it since 2017.

I am often heard talking about co-ops, or co-operative housing. Successive Liberal and Conservative governments over the last 25 years or so have neglected the need to build purpose-built, non-market housing. My favourite version of that is co-ops, because I grew up at the Chautauqua Co-op.

One of the first things that I wanted to talk about when I came to Ottawa was the importance of building more co-ops. In the most recent budget on housing, we can see a \$1.5-billion investment in co-op housing that is already making a huge impact on the sector. The co-op housing sector is invigorated and revitalized, and we are seeing more non-market houses getting built. That is something that the Mulroney government ended entirely, and no government since except ours has reaffirmed a pledge to recommit to this.

Our government is getting more co-ops built. We are getting more homes built. Unlike the Conservative plan, which received negative reviews from experts across the country, including the development sector, the construction sector and academics such as Dr. Mike Moffatt, our plan is being received well. We are making things happen immediately.

Through the historic national housing strategy, we have been helping people throughout this country find suitable housing. We are proud of this, and it is making a big impact.

● (1925)

**Mr. Brad Vis:** Mr. Speaker, all I can say is that it is too little and too late. We can ask any member of the Liberal caucus who was elected in the 2015 general election if they could have imagined the Canada we have today. We can look at a home in Abbotsford that could have been bought for a price of under \$400,000 in 2015 and fast-forward eight years to see that very house on the market today for \$1.3 million to \$1.4 million. Under the current government the social contract between all Canadians and their government to ensure that they have a safe and affordable place to live has been eliminated.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Oftentimes, the Liberals talk about extremism growing in this country. I am afraid of extremism too. I am afraid of neo-Marxism and of the government trying to fix every problem. The reason we are facing extremism is that the government screwed up so badly on housing that an entire generation of people will not be able to have the joy of home ownership or the security of it for their children.

**Mr. Adam van Koeverden:** Mr. Speaker, I listened closely and what I just heard following my personal story about co-op housing, which is a form of non-market housing and a form of social housing, is the member opposite refer to that as neo-Marxism. I find that repulsive.

We are talking about finding solutions to people's problems and the market to date has not solved those problems. To suggest the government needs to get out of the way of the housing market is exactly the wrong path forward. The government needs to be involved in the building of non-market units, of new co-ops and of supportive affordable housing, and that is what our government has done since 2017 when we instituted this country's first-ever national housing strategy. I accept that housing is unaffordable right now, but it would be worse had we not invested \$30 billion. It would be a lot worse if we were not removing the HST from purpose-built rentals.

We are going to keep investing in Canadians, in Canada and housing affordability on behalf of all of our neighbours.

## CARBON PRICING

**Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when I asked my question last week, it was as a result of being at the International Plowing Match, which was a fantastic event in my riding.

Most members of Parliament should take the time to speak with the people who produce our food. I did that, and the message I got back from them was loud and clear: The carbon tax is making their lives a whole lot more difficult because it makes everything they do more expensive. If they are driving their combines, they are paying a carbon tax on the gas. If they are drying their grain, they are paying a carbon tax on the gas to dry the grain.

What does that do? It does a whole bunch of things. Number one, it makes exports more difficult because Canadian products are now more expensive. Who is our number one trading partner? It is the United States. They do not have a carbon tax on their farmers, so our farmers are automatically at a disadvantage when they are trying to export their products to the United States. There is a bill, which the Liberals opposed, to remove the carbon tax on farm fuels. It would be a great solution.

The other problem with this is that it makes everything more expensive. We know this because everyone throughout the supply chain is now paying a carbon tax, and that makes the price of food more expensive. What have we seen as a result of that? Canadians are saying they cannot afford to pay for food. We hear from seniors visiting food banks. Those numbers are skyrocketing. I have constituents calling my office and sending me emails every single week saying they cannot afford their grocery bills, their grocery bills are now going on their credit cards and they are paying off

their credit cards with their line of credit. This is an economic disaster, and it is caused by the Liberal government.

Liberals are going to say things like Conservatives do not care about climate change and what about natural disasters, all these kinds of things, or they will come up with the one big one, which is that most Canadian families get more money back. All of these things are completely inaccurate.

First of all, the carbon tax will not prevent natural disasters. Canadian carbon emissions are 1.5% of global carbon emissions. Even if we completely eliminated all our emissions, a country like China will use up all that space in less than one year, because of a year-over-year 10% increase. Its year-over-year increase is more than our entire carbon emissions. Therefore, even if we go to zero, it will not stop any of the effects the Liberals are talking about because there is no carbon dome over Canada. As much as they might try to say that is what happens, it absolutely does not.

The carbon tax is hurting Canadians. The Liberals can quote the PBO all they want, but when it looked at a distributional analysis of the cost of the carbon tax throughout the entire economy, Canadian families are paying more, but then they are also paying it to heat their homes. They are paying it to drive to work. In my riding, people heat their homes with propane and they drive long distances to work. The carbon tax is killing them. It is making them have to make terrible choices with their personal finances.

The simple solution is to cut the carbon tax and deal with greenhouse gas emissions in another way, because Canadians cannot have alternatives. People in my riding drive their cars, heat their homes with propane and they have no alternatives. They get punished no matter what, as a result of the government.

● (1930)

**Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the concerns raised by my colleague opposite are what we have heard from the Conservatives over and over again. They would like to blame carbon pricing for all of the affordability challenges Canadians are facing. However, it is clear to me that this member has not gone to an economist. The Conservatives have not even looked at the simple math. They have not read the PBO report, which indicates not only that carbon pricing works, but also that the price on pollution instituted by the federal government as the back-stop program gives back to 80% of families more than they pay.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Like the member opposite, I live in a rural riding. A lot of my community is agriculture-based. Many in my community drive long distances to work, and a lot of my constituents use home heating oil to heat their homes. I understand full well the impact that the price on carbon has on the economy.

At the same time, I am listening to economists who have indicated that, sure, pricing carbon causes a moderate increase to the price of food, but let us look at how much. For an average family of four in Ontario, it is less than three dollars. Why? It is because there is no HST on food. Food is not taxed. There is also something called “output-based allocations”, which mitigate a lot of those concerns back to industry, such as farm fuels, as my colleague acknowledged, which are mostly fossil fuels. They are exempt from the price on carbon. That is something that the members opposite ignore entirely.

It is also important to recognize that all of those Conservative members, including the member for Dufferin—Caledon, ran on a promise to price pollution. When Erin O’Toole was the leader of the Conservative Party, in their election platform back in 2021, they all ran on a commitment to price carbon.

I knocked on doors in Caledon in that last election for the Liberal candidate, and there are a lot of environmentalists who live in downtown Caledon. They want to know that we are fighting climate change because they recognize events like wildfires and floods. No, a price on pollution does not automatically prevent them as if this were some sort of fairy tale that the member just popped the bubble of. That is not how it works. However, we do have to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, and the price on pollution, carbon pricing, is the cheapest and best way to do that according to expert economists, paleoclimatologists and people who actually study this for a living.

Now, the member opposite mentioned that Canada is 1.5% of the global emissions, which is true. We are also 0.5% of the global population. What does that mean? It is simple math. It might not be something that the member opposite believes in because he also does not believe in climate change. As I have acknowledged, if he does not believe in climate change and simple math, it is possible he might not believe in gravity either, but it is right in front of us. If we are 0.5% of the global population and responsible for 1.5% of emissions, that means we are responsible for three times the average amount of anybody else from another country, which is too much.

We all have a role to play. Conservatives used to be a party of personal accountability. Let us be accountable for our own actions. Let us make sure that our personal finances are sacrosanct. That is not the case with this Conservative Party. Its members have completely abandoned the concept of accountability. In just the last couple years, the new leader, the member for Carleton, has been leading their party on a downward spiral of Tucker Carlson conspiracy theory videos and climate change denial. However, that does not change the facts that carbon pricing works, climate change is real and this government is committed to affordability while the party opposite has no credibility.

• (1935)

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** Mr. Speaker, I will say a couple of things.

Number one, I won that election in 2019 by nine points. After that member came to canvass in my riding, I won by 19 points. I hope he will come to canvass in my riding again in the next election. It will go up by another nine or 10 points.

It is always disappointing for a member who was a former symbol of this country to take his commentary in a debate down to a level where he attacks people, saying we do not believe in gravity. It is incredibly disappointing for a former national figure, but unfortunately, this member always stoops to that level when he engages in debate.

The fact of the matter is this: The PBO made it very clear that most families do pay more, and if the member actually talked to a farmer, they might show him their bill for drying grain, which would include a carbon tax, and for some farmers, it is upwards of \$100,000 a year. It needs to go.

**Mr. Adam van Koeverden:** Mr. Speaker, personal attacks on my character and my former career notwithstanding, I do not care. That does not matter. What matters is that we are standing up for Canadians. We are standing up for affordability, and we are fighting climate change, because that is what I heard at the doors in Milton and that is what I heard at the doors in Caledon.

I congratulate the member for being elected. I wish him luck in future elections. I would say that in the last election, where he won by more than the previous one, the Conservatives also all ran on a commitment to fight climate change, which they have since abandoned. As I said, when I was knocking on doors in Caledon, I heard loud and clear that climate change and fighting it was a priority, and running on a commitment to price carbon was part of their platform. I wonder what they plan to do in the next election.

The member opposite mentioned grain drying. The farm fuel exemption applies to the gas that people use for drying grain as well. The spread of misinformation on that side is rampant. They have to stick to the facts and talk to some experts about carbon pricing and fighting climate change.

*Adjournment Proceedings**[Translation]*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice):** The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. According-

ly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:39 p.m.)

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