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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 17, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)
[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) and consistent with the policy on the tabling of treaties in Parliament, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaty entitled “Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement”, done at Ottawa on September 22, 2023.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADA-UKRAINE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-57, An Act to implement the 2023 Free Trade Agreement between Canada and Ukraine.

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

* * *

[English]

PETITIONS

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise virtually today to present a petition of deep concern to residents of Saanich—Gulf Islands. The petitioners note that the Paris Agreement, which Canada negotiated back in 2015, calls for, in its language, a “just transition” for workers in the fossil fuel sector in the transition to end the addiction to fossil fuels.

The petitioners go on to point out that the workforce of oil and gas workers is highly skilled, with many skills transferable to the renewable energy sector, and they call on the government to bring forward a plan for a just transition for fossil fuel workers. They specifically reference an existing strong piece of work, which was a

task force on just transition for Canadian coal sector workers. The 10 recommendations from that extremely important piece of work are recommended to this House as the basis for work in this area.

WOMEN'S SHELTERS

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to present this petition.

Whereas women's shelters are sadly seeing an increase in demand, the high cost of living and the housing crisis have made it harder for women and children fleeing a violent home to find a place to live. At a time when the Liberal government is dramatically increasing spending on bureaucracy and consultants, it is cutting \$145 million from women's shelters.

I am hoping the government will understand that women's shelters are in crisis right now, as we are seeing an economic crisis carry on that is causing a lot of problems for many Canadians. Hopefully the government will do something about it.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of Canadians who are calling the attention of the government to the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report. It has warned repeatedly that rising temperatures over the next two decades will bring widespread devastation and extreme weather.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to move forward immediately with bold emissions caps for the oil and gas sector that are comprehensive in scope and realistic in achieving the necessary targets that Canada has set to reduce emissions by 2030.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Business of Supply***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

● (1010)

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—FISCAL PLAN

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC)
moved:

That, given that,

- (i) after eight years of this Liberal government, this prime minister has added more to the national debt than all previous prime minister's combined,
- (ii) a half-trillion dollars of inflationary deficits has directly led to 40-year inflation highs,
- (iii) prior to budget 2023, the Minister of Finance said, "What Canadians want right now is for inflation to come down and for interest rates to fall [...] and that is one of our primary goals in this year's budget: not to pour fuel on the fire of inflation," and then proceed to usher in \$60 billion in new spending,
- (iv) in order to combat inflation, the Bank of Canada has been forced to increase interest rates 10 times in just 19 months,
- (v) interest rate increases have increased mortgage payments, and since this prime minister took office, monthly mortgage payments have increased 150% and now cost \$3,500 on a typical family home,
- (vi) the Liberal-NDP government must exercise fiscal discipline, end their inflation driving deficits so that interest rates can be lowered,

in order to avoid a mortgage default crisis, as warned by the International Monetary Fund, and to ensure Canadians do not lose their homes, the House call on the government to introduce a fiscal plan that includes a pathway back to balanced budgets, in order to decrease inflation and interest rates, and to introduce this in the House of Commons prior to the Bank of Canada's next policy interest rate decision on October 25, 2023.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by saying that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Tobique—Mactaquac.

Inflation is the cost of the spending that the government said would be free. We know that the Liberal-NDP government promised a utopia and it said that it would deliver results for free. It said that the cost of this spending would never hit Canadians because the budget would balance itself. It also suggested that because interest rates were so low, the government could magically keep increasing spending faster than the cost of living and the population grew, without any consequences.

Today, after eight years of this government and this Liberal-NDP Prime Minister, it is time to pay the bills. Canadians are seeing that reality in their mortgage payments, which have more than doubled, increasing by an average of 150%.

I talked to a worker in British Columbia who is now spending \$7,500 a month on mortgage payments. I repeat: \$7,500 a month. He is a middle-class worker with three kids. Of that amount, \$4,000 is just for interest, not even to pay down the principal. This worker's family is losing nearly \$50,000 a year in interest alone on their mortgage. It is an impossible situation for the average family, but it is the reality after eight years of this Prime Minister.

Ironically, this is the same Prime Minister who promised to help the middle class and those working hard to join it. He no longer says much about the so-called middle class, does he? We never hear him talk about the middle class. It has been forgotten, because he

does not want to remind anyone of the suffering his policies have caused this so-called middle class. We now have middle-class Canadians who are homeless. Yes, it is true that, unfortunately, homelessness has always existed in all countries, including Canada. However, we have not seen homelessness amongst middle-class Canadians since the Great Depression. Now, it is becoming more and more common.

Across the country, we find people like nurses and carpenters living in their cars because mortgage payments went up so much, which also pushed up the cost of rent. The Prime Minister promised to bring down the cost of housing eight years ago, but since then, the cost has doubled. Rents have doubled, mortgage payments have doubled, and the down payment required to buy a home has doubled. In fact, when I was the minister responsible for housing, it cost half of what it costs today to pay the rent, the mortgage and the down payment.

The government's decisions have consequences. The government caused the amount of money in the economy to grow by \$600 billion, increasing from \$1.8 trillion to \$2.4 trillion. This 32% increase meant the money supply grew eight times faster than real economic growth. In other words, the money to buy stuff grew eight times faster than the stuff money buys. This is why we have inflation.

The Bank of Canada has to respond by raising interest rates, again hitting the same people who are struggling to buy food and pay their rent or mortgage.

● (1015)

What is the government doing? It is still forcing the Bank of Canada to keep interest rates high. According to former finance minister John Manley, the government is stepping on the inflationary gas pedal by running deficits, which is forcing the Bank of Canada to slam on the brakes by raising interest rates. One might have expected the government to try to rein in deficits and work toward balancing the budget, but it did the opposite.

Six months ago, the government said it wanted to balance the budget by 2028. When budget time came, it suddenly changed its mind and said it would never balance the budget.

Last week, the Parliamentary Budget Officer told us that the deficit is 15% higher than the government promised in its budget. Things are completely out of control, and Canadians are paying the price, not to mention the price our children will have to pay in the future.

That is why we put forward common-sense solutions, including a "dollar-for-dollar" law, which would force the government to find a dollar's worth of savings for every new dollar spent, and the elimination of wasteful spending on things like the ArriveCAN app, the Canada Infrastructure Bank and other ideas that have jacked up the cost of government.

The goal should be to balance the budget in order to bring down interest rates and tame inflation so Canadians can keep their homes and feed their families. That is common sense.

Business of Supply

[English]

After eight years of the Prime Minister and his NDP-Liberal government, we are starting to see the hard reality that inflation is the price one pays for all of the programs the government told us were free. We will remember that the Prime Minister said he could double the debt, but not to worry, because the budget would balance itself. He said that interest rates were low, so not only were deficits permanently affordable, but also we could not afford not to spend. Here we are, with the devastating human consequences not so long after that because, as Pythagoras says, numbers rule the universe. No matter how many words are spoken, no matter how many soft lullabies are sung, the reality is that when we spend what we do not have, we drive up the cost for everyone else.

Here we are. The cost of government has driven up the cost of living. Half a trillion dollars of inflationary debt has bid up the goods we buy and the interest we pay. According to former Liberal finance minister John Manley, government spending is pressing its foot on the inflationary gas pedal, which forces the Bank of Canada to press on the brakes with higher interest rates. Now, I bump into people across Canada who are living in financial terror. A shipyard worker in Vancouver told me that his monthly mortgage payment is now \$7,500. He is a shipyard worker. Of the \$7,500, \$4,000 is just for interest. His family is basically spending \$50,000 a year on interest for their mortgage. This is after the Prime Minister, his budget documents and his bank governor told that man that rates would stay low.

One would think the government would reverse its policies, but it is doing the opposite. A year ago, it said it would balance the budget by 2028. Six months ago, it changed its mind and said it would never balance the budget. Last week, we found out from the Parliamentary Budget Officer that the deficit is 15% bigger than the government claimed only six months ago. It has totally lost control of the spending.

Our common sense plan is to cap spending and cut waste in order to balance the budget and bring down interest rates and inflation. Let us do it before the hundreds of billions of dollars of mortgages renew into these higher rates. Let us save people's homes and our future. It is common sense. My colleagues will work to bring home this common sense here in Canada. It is your home, my home, our home. Let us bring it home.

• (1020)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is disappointing to hear the leader of the Conservative Party try to simplify it to the degree he has, saying that it is because we spend too much. Yes, we spent money to protect small businesses, the backbone of Canada's economy, during the pandemic. Yes, we spent money in order to support millions of Canadians during the pandemic.

For much of that, the Conservative Party voted in favour of our borrowing money in order to do that, but its members have easily forgotten that. Now they say it is all about the inflation. Yes, inflation is hurting, but the reality check is to take a look at the inflation rates around the world. I am wondering whether the leader of the Conservative Party could be more honest and straightforward with

Canadians in regard to the reality of the situation. In comparison to other areas of the world, Canada is doing well.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, boy does he ever need to get out of this place and talk to real people if he thinks Canada is doing well. Holy smokes. Maybe he has not been to the tent cities that have formed right across the country, which never existed eight years ago. Perfectly pristine and safe neighbourhoods are now overtaken by misery and pain from people who can no longer afford to pay their rent.

Maybe he needs to go door to door and ask people what they are paying on their monthly mortgage payments. Maybe he needs to talk to the one in five households skipping meals because they cannot afford the food. Maybe he needs to go to the bread lines that go block after block and street after street next to food banks. Those kinds of bread lines we do not see outside of either the Great Depression or the Soviet Union. If he thinks things are going well in Canada, he needs to get out and talk to the real people who are suffering from coast to coast.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if we want to eliminate waste and return to a balanced budget, would it not be common sense to cut the \$83 billion that will go to the oil and gas sector between now and 2034?

If we want to help low-income earners, seniors and people struggling to put food on the table and pay their mortgages, should we not be redirecting that money to them instead of supporting the greedy oil and gas sector, which has made \$200 billion in profits?

Yesterday, at the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, the Conservative Party's response was to apologize to Suncor on behalf of Canadians.

Is the leader of the opposition defending big oil or low-income earners?

• (1025)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, we are defending consumers against the Bloc Québécois, which wants to radically increase taxes at the pump for ordinary Canadians.

The Liberals have a tax that applies to Quebec. They call it "regulations". They can call it whatever they want, but it is a tax, and it increases the cost of gas by 17¢ a litre. The Bloc Québécois is against it, but only because they do not think it is high enough.

The Bloc said it wanted to radically increase taxes for Quebec consumers. That is crazy. Voting for the Bloc Québécois is costly. We Conservatives are the only party guided by the common sense of ordinary Quebecers.

Business of Supply

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Carleton has regularly made videos going after the poor and people with addictions, further dehumanizing people already left out. The member for Carleton says he stands with workers, but I have never seen him stand on the front lines on the picket line. In fact, he has voted for back-to-work legislation. At the national inquiry, he was at the cabinet table when former prime minister Harper said that we were not on his radar, so how does one like them apples?

My question is about seniors. Does the member for Carleton plan to stand with his Conservative colleague Danielle Smith and cut the CPP of seniors, sinking them further into poverty, seniors who are currently living in terror and becoming more poor? Is his common sense plan to take down people who are already down?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the people living on the streets and in the tent cities. Where is it the worst? It is worst in NDP-controlled British Columbia. That is where the tent cities started, in the Downtown Eastside, where NDP policies were tried out like—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Let the hon. leader of the official opposition answer the question.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, the experiment that the NDP tried on the people of the Downtown Eastside, to decriminalize and provide taxpayer-funded opioids, to the great profit of the pharmaceutical companies that caused the crisis in the first place, caused misery and despair, a 300% increase in drug overdose deaths.

They then took that experiment, under the NDP Prime Minister, and, yes, he is an NDP prime minister, and they spread it right across the country. We now have 30,000 people who have lost their lives. The working class has been devastated under this NDP-Liberal coalition. There is only one party that stands up for the hard-working people and their wages in a drug-free, growing economy that gives people a chance to get off the street and into homes and better lives. That is the Conservative Party.

Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an absolute honour to rise in the House today, and it is somewhat intimidating to follow the hon. member for Carleton, the leader of His Majesty's loyal opposition.

We heard a very compelling case for supporting this motion. The fact is that Canadians are hurting from coast to coast to coast. They are feeling the effects of the soaring cost of living, the ever-increasing cost at the fuel pumps, the ever-increasing heating costs and the soaring costs of having a place to live. That may be the mortgage rates, which have doubled over the last eight years, the rent doubling, seeing interest rates going up or seeing the dream of home ownership quickly falling away for so many of our young people.

It is something that all of us in this House see if we take the time to visit the communities we represent; I am sure many do. In my travels and in the conversations I have experienced recently, I have heard from Canadians back home in western New Brunswick. In

recent visits, I engaged with people on the beautiful Island of Prince Edward; I heard it there as well. Throughout Atlantic Canada, Canadians are hurting. They are experiencing the pain of this ever-expansive cost of living that challenges them even when they go to get necessary supplies at the grocery store.

Perhaps some of the most heartbreaking stories I have heard have come from seniors. They have worked hard all their lives. They were counting on the pensions they have and what they paid in to be able to carry them through. However, they are honestly and sincerely worried about what they set aside and what they worked hard to save up. Will it be enough to sustain them as things continue to rise in cost?

Some seniors, especially in Atlantic Canada, have had to make tough decisions. They are facing another long winter, wondering if they have enough left over to pay their heat bill and make sure they have adequate groceries, let alone put a little fuel in their gas tanks. These challenges are very real. When we take the time to hear seniors' stories, we cannot help but be affected.

It is our job as their representatives in this House, which is the people's House, to bring those concerns here. Our job, as His Majesty's loyal opposition, is to make sure that the Liberals are held to account, that they are responsible in the legislation they bring forward and that this legislation has a positive impact on the lives of the people we all represent.

I believe that it behooves this House and that it would be the responsible thing for the government, and this entire House, to move and bring forward motions and legislation representing the concerns that we are hearing right now. The top-of-mind concern for Canadians from across this country, bar none, is the soaring cost of living and inflation. I am hearing it everywhere I go.

I believe it would be good for us to all consider what is happening right now to cause Canadians this kind of angst and concern. What is leading to the increased levels of anxiety and despair we are seeing? There are desperate situations happening not only in our inner cities but also in our rural communities. What is causing this?

After eight years, we have seen things that have led to the current circumstance we are in. There has been a multiplicity of factors. One of them that cannot be discounted is the fact that the Prime Minister has added more national debt than all other previous prime ministers combined. That is a staggering fact.

When we double the debt in under eight years, we are doing something that will have devastating consequences in the long term. I am talking not about the deficit but about the debt of this country. We have half a trillion dollars of inflationary deficits that have led directly to inflation rates that are at a 40-year high.

Business of Supply

• (1030)

We saw that, prior to the budget in 2023, even our own Minister of Finance said that what Canadians want right now is for inflation to come down and interest rates to fall. That was one of the primary goals of this year's budget. It was not to pour more fuel on the fire and then proceed to usher in \$60 billion in new spending. The government did not hear what was being said, or if it did, it is certainly applying the wrong fix to the problem. We cannot stop inflation and soaring interest rates by spending increasing amounts of money. That is adding fuel to the fire. As has been previously stated, the former Liberal finance minister John Manley said that we cannot keep doing that and expect to be successful.

We have seen this all throughout history, any time governments have gone down this road. In order to increase the revenues to pay for their ever-expanding debt and deficits, they inevitably increase taxes. If we ask the citizens of this country if they can afford more tax; I think the answer would be a resounding no. They have more bills than they have paycheques. When they get to the end of their paycheques and all they have is another bill waiting, then the government suggests that it is going to quadruple the carbon tax, because it will make them feel better and somehow cause the weather to change and the climate to improve.

A short time ago, when we asked the environment commissioner at the natural resources committee if there is yet in place in Canada a metric that can tell us how much the carbon tax has reduced the amount of carbon in Canada's atmosphere, he responded by saying that there is no such metric in place as of yet. The carbon tax is one of the major factors of inflation in this country. Therefore, the landmark signature piece of environmental legislation that has led to huge inflation in this country does not even have a metric by which we can tell Canadians its impact on the overall environment of Canada. That is a disgrace, and it is impossible to justify to the Canadian population. At a time of economic duress, when people are feeling the heat economically and their finances are depleting, we as a government are going to tell them yet again that we are going to keep augmenting the carbon tax. However, we really cannot tell them why, because we cannot demonstrate its effect on the environment. That is unjustifiable.

It is time for a course correction. It is time for the government to rearrange its priorities and get back to what it needs to be doing, which is to develop the incredible potential that Canada has. If we want to tackle the inflationary problem that we have in this country, let us get our economy growing and our people working. Let us get off their backs and start removing the hindrances to their prosperity and growth.

Do members know what the definition of "frustration" is? It is impeding progress, feeling that we have all this potential we cannot touch and that we can never attain what we want, because of the weight that is currently on our backs. That is why there is an increasing sense of frustration among Canadians; they are crying out for change. They want the government to get out of the way, stand by their side, say it will unleash their potential and let them do what they do best. That is to grow, develop, work, make money and, yes, make a profit so that they can better their future and the lives of their children and families.

I hope the government will do the right thing and support our motion today.

• (1035)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want the House to focus on the word "hypocrisy" for just a moment and to think of what the member just finished saying. A major part of his speech was with respect to the price on pollution, the carbon tax, and condemning the government for it. Every one of the Conservative members across the way campaigned in favour of a price on pollution in the last election. It was in their platform. Now they are in denial and saying that their election platform meant nothing, when the reality is that every member of the caucus participated in saying to Canadians that they supported a carbon tax.

Could the member across the way explain why he supported a carbon tax, a price on pollution, in the last election?

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to answer this member's question, absolutely. Personally, I never, ever supported a carbon tax.

I want the member to know something: I made those points very clear. Furthermore, I want to ask the member opposite to explain why a colleague of his, the hon. member for Avalon has come out this very week and supported our motion to axe the carbon tax. He said: "Everywhere I go people come up to me and say, 'We're losing faith in the Liberal Party.'"

He went on to say:

I've had people tell me they can't afford to buy groceries. They can't afford to heat their homes and that's hard to hear from especially seniors who live alone and tell me that they go around their house in the spring and winter time with a blanket wrapped around them because they can't afford the home heating fuel and they can't afford to buy beef or chicken.

That is from the opposite side, the governing side. When will the member answer that question, and finally respond to the cries of Canadians who say, "Get off our backs and axe the carbon tax"?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulo, BQ): Mr. Speaker, inflation is caused by a variety of factors. Some people may include government spending in there, but the cost of housing is also part of it. According the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, in Quebec alone, an estimated 1.6 million housing units will need to be built by 2030 to adequately accommodate all the people who are currently living in Quebec and those who will move there.

However, according to the most optimistic forecasts, only 500,000 housing units will be built by 2030 in Quebec, driving up rental costs by 102%. The Conservative Party of Canada supports population growth. I would like my colleague to explain how eliminating the federal deficit will solve the housing crisis and, by extension, address rising costs and inflation.

Business of Supply

● (1040)

[English]

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Mr. Speaker, housing is absolutely a growing concern, and we are facing a housing crisis.

One of the best things we could do is what the Leader of the Opposition has been calling on the government to do, which is to get rid of some of the gatekeepers that are blocking development in and around our cities, in our urban centres. We could reward and incentivize those who do build, those who are going to make a difference, and those cities and municipalities that are going to step up to the plate and make sure that we do everything we can to provide more housing opportunities.

The other thing that is impeding housing development is the fact that the cost of everything is going up. One of the biggest factors in the cost going up of all those supplies, when everything is trucked and shipped, is the carbon tax. One of the greatest things we could do to help is eliminate the carbon tax.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the member for Tobique—Mactaquac, his analysis of inflation is not worth the paper that his leader's office wrote on.

Not only does he not do justice to the role that corporate greed is playing in driving inflation in Canada, but he does not even mention it. It is not even part of the analysis. Oil and gas profits, between 2019 and 2022, went up by 1,000% in this country. There was no mention of the effect that that has on Canadians.

When oil and gas companies gouge the farmer who grows the food, the producer who makes the food and the trucker who ships the food, sure as shooting, Canadians are going to get gouged at the grocery store. Does the member not recognize that?

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Mr. Speaker, one of the biggest things that is affecting the cost of everything is the fact that the cost of doing business is going up. This is indisputable.

The wage earner cannot be lifted up, as has been famously said, by tearing down the wage payer. When they continually attack those who grow the economy and produce wealth, more wealth is not generated. It is better to go after a government that spends beyond its means and gets in the way of development. It is time we unleashed the potential that Canada has by saying, "Yes, we can do better. Yes, we can grow. We are going to stand on the side of our producers." It is time we did that.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my friend and colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

We learned just this morning from Statistics Canada that inflation fell to 3.8% in this country. That is well below market expectations and good news for Canadians as our economy continues to stabilize.

We know that many Canadians are still having trouble making ends meet.

[Translation]

Our government understands that many Canadians are having a tough time these days. That is why our government is working hard to build an economy that works for everyone, with stable prices, strong and sustained growth and high-paying jobs. That is what matters most to Canadians.

There are over 1 million more Canadians in the labour force today than before the pandemic. The OECD and the IMF predict that Canada will have the strongest economic growth in the G7 next year. Moreover, rating agencies, including DBRS Morningstar, confirmed our AAA credit rating last month. That is the foundation for more investments in Canada. Our plan is working.

I want to highlight certain measures that our government introduced recently to continue to support Canadians. We know that for too many of them, including youth and new Canadians, the dream of being homeowners is increasingly unattainable, and the cost of rent keeps rising. I see it back home, especially in Côte-des-Neiges. People are struggling to pay their rent because it keeps rising all the time.

The housing crisis is also affecting our economy. Because of the shortage of housing in our communities, it is difficult for businesses to attract the workers they need to grow and succeed. When people spend more of their income on housing, it means they are spending less money in our communities and on necessities.

● (1045)

[English]

That is why we began this fall parliamentary session by introducing Bill C-56 in the very first few days. This bill would enhance the GST rental rebate on new purpose-built rental housing to encourage the construction of more and more rental homes throughout the country, including apartment buildings, student housing and seniors residences right across Canada. For a two-bedroom rental unit valued at \$500,000, this GST rebate for residential rental buildings could mean a tax break of \$25,000. This is just one more tool to help create the necessary conditions to build the types of housing that Canadians need and families want to live in. This measure would also remove the restriction in the existing GST rules to ensure that public service bodies, such as hospitals and charities, as well as qualifying non-profit organizations that build or purchase purpose-built rental housing, are permitted to claim that 100% enhanced GST rebate.

Business of Supply

The government is also calling on provinces that currently apply the provincial sales tax or the provincial portion of the HST to rental housing to join us by matching our enhanced rebate for new rental housing. In fact, Ontario, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island have already announced that they intend to follow our lead by eliminating the provincial component of the HST on those new purpose-built rentals.

Since we moved to remove GST on new rental housing, home builders from coast to coast to coast have announced they will be moving ahead with new or stalled projects. This means more housing for Canadians. I would certainly hope that Conservatives will stop playing procedural games with this bill so that we can deliver this important measure to Canadians because I do fundamentally believe that the Conservatives are supportive of creating more supply in the housing market.

In addition to the enhanced GST rebate, our government recently announced the next step in our plan to address the lack of housing in this country.

[Translation]

To ensure builders have the low-cost financing required to build more rental projects, the government is increasing the Canada Mortgage Bond issuance limit by \$20 billion per year and designating the increased amount for funding mortgage loans on multi-unit rental projects insured by CMHC. Eligible rental projects must have at least five rental units and can include apartment buildings, student housing, and senior residences.

[English]

There is no fiscal impact for the Government of Canada as a result of this particular measure, and I would like to make that very clear. This is fiscally responsible policy, using policy tools at the government's disposal. This new measure alone would help build up to 30,000 additional rental units every single year. The increase to Canada mortgage bonds builds on the federal government's recent actions to make housing more affordable for Canadians, including the \$4-billion housing accelerator fund, which was launched earlier this year, as members know. That fund helps to cut red tape to address outdated local policies, such as zoning issues that are preventing construction. It allows us to build more homes faster.

The government also introduced the new tax-free first home savings account, which is helping Canadians to contribute up to \$40,000 tax-free toward their first down payment.

[Translation]

Since we implemented this new tax-free first home savings account in April, most of Canada's large financial institutions have started offering it. Today, 150,000 Canadians have already opened a tax-free first home savings account and many new accounts are being opened every day.

• (1050)

[English]

Our government also understands that inflation is, of course, challenging when it comes to the essentials Canadians must purchase every single day, such as food. Earlier this year, we addressed

the rising cost of food by delivering targeted inflation relief for 11 million low- and modest-income Canadians and families, those who needed it the most. That was through our one-time grocery rebate, which meant up to an extra \$467 for eligible couples with two children and over \$200 for single Canadians without children, including single seniors.

I know that this support was welcomed by Canadians, but I also know that more work needs to be done. That is why Bill C-56 proposes to take immediate steps to help make groceries more affordable.

[Translation]

This crucial legislation would introduce a series of amendments to the Competition Act to strengthen competition, especially in the grocery industry. These amendments would give the Competition Bureau more power to investigate and take action when industries engage in unfair competition, such as price-fixing or unreasonable price hikes. They would eliminate the efficiencies argument to stop anti-competitive mergers that end up driving up prices and limiting consumer choice here, in Canada. These amendments would also allow the bureau to block collaboration efforts that undermine competition and consumer choice, for example, when major grocery chains prevent SMEs, their smallest competitors, from opening stores nearby.

[English]

The government continues to work with leaders of Canada's five largest grocery chains and, of course, domestic and international food processors, to take this action to stabilize food prices. Price stabilization requires the full engagement of everyone, of the entire supply chain. We are encouraged that grocers and manufacturers have agreed to work with us to find solutions that are in the best interests of Canadians.

In closing, these are real, concrete actions that will make life more affordable for Canadians. More competition will ease the sticker shock at the grocery store checkout line, and that is important. Eliminating the GST on the construction of new homes will get more homes built faster. That, too, is critically important.

Business of Supply

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know if things are different in the member's part of the country than they are in mine. I just met with members from LSTAR, which is part of CREA, the Canadian Real Estate Association. They shared with me that one of their smallest branches just announced 40 delinquent mortgages. The banks do not know what to do because, if they go forward and close some of these, what will happen to the rest of housing?

We know that we are in a crisis when we are seeing small towns with 40 delinquent mortgages. What does the member have to say about her government's record on this?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the members opposite raising important issues local to their own communities. I have to say that I am hearing very similar things in my community. I know that the banks are working very hard to find solutions for their customers.

The news this morning that inflation is falling is certainly welcomed by our government not only in that we need to stabilize inflation to ensure that we stabilize prices, but also that we need to make sure that the Bank of Canada continues to work on interest rates and ensure that Canadians are well served by our institutions.

I think the elements of Bill C-56, as I pointed out in my speech, are important to help Canadians who are struggling to find homes and to help Canadians who are facing higher prices at the grocery store. I certainly hope the member opposite will support that bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, has the government already thrown in the towel when it comes to the housing crisis? We know that Quebec needs 1.2 million new housing units by 2030. The government has announced GST breaks on new housing construction, which may enable a few thousand units to be built. After 18 months, the government finally signed an agreement with Quebec to release \$900 million in the housing accelerator fund. Again, that represents a few thousand housing units. Unfortunately, to really address this crisis, we should be building 200,000 housing units a year from now until 2030.

What is the plan? Where are the meaningful measures to address this crisis? Has the government already abandoned people to their fate in this housing crisis?

• (1055)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Mr. Speaker, of course, we are working tirelessly to respond to the housing crisis. In fact, we were the first to acknowledge that there actually was a crisis. We put money on the table.

Yes, negotiations with Quebec took some time. I am glad we were able to reach an agreement, as my colleague mentioned. We signed an agreement with Quebec to transfer funds.

The money is there. We expect it to be used to build more housing. We will keep on keeping on.

[*English*]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, the infrastructure gap for first nations, Inuit and Métis communities is estimated at over \$300 billion. That is almost more than the entirety of the fed-

eral government's annual budget. Recently, the Prime Minister announced that he would ask all ministries to make cuts in their budgets, and this is a huge concern for indigenous services being delivered for indigenous peoples.

I wonder if the member agrees that making cuts to Indigenous Services and Northern Affairs Canada, CIRNAC, will have major detrimental impacts on the conditions that first nations, Métis and Inuit already live under.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Mr. Speaker, I always appreciate the questions from my hon. colleague. They help elucidate all of us in the House as to the situation in her community.

I know that in the last budget, many of us worked very hard to ensure that we had the right strategy, not just the money, but the right strategy, to address indigenous and northern housing. That was found in budget 2023.

I look forward to working with the member on further issues, including the issue she raises today.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me start by providing a comment reflecting on what is happening in our communities from coast to coast to coast.

We do not necessarily need to be lectured by Conservatives on the issues of inflation and interest rates. We understand, as we are often told by the Prime Minister and others, that when we look at what is happening in our constituencies, it is important that we bring those concerns to Ottawa, as opposed to trying to tell our constituents what Ottawa is doing for them.

If we look at the most recent budget that was passed by the House, we will find that it is very much a reflection of what is happening in communities from coast to coast to coast. People need to understand that, yes, we are very much concerned about the interest rates and the impact they are having on Canadians in a very real and tangible way.

Last weekend, the President of the Treasury Board came to Winnipeg to meet with some of my constituents who are primarily entrepreneurs. We talked about the impact of interest rates. We talked about homeowners, and so forth. We also talked about the rates of inflation. We are all concerned about that. That is one of the reasons why we brought forward legislation, such as Bill C-56. That is one of the reasons we brought in the inflation or grocery rebate, affecting 11 million Canadians, last spring, which came into effect in the summertime.

The budget and the type of legislation we are bringing forward are a reflection of what we are hearing from our communities. Therefore, one needs not lecture us on what is happening in and outside of the Ottawa bubble. We are very much aware of it.

Business of Supply

At the end of the day, we look at not only what is happening around us, but what the Conservative Party is saying, particularly in the motion it presented today. Today, it wants to give the impression that there is this huge debt that has been acquired over the last number of years, and there is a huge debt. It is a huge debt that, in good part, was supported by the Conservative Party when we were borrowing money to help Canadians through the worldwide pandemic, and I underline the word “worldwide”.

• (1100)

Yes, we borrowed extensively, billions of dollars, in order to have the backs of Canadians. We spent that money, most of it supported by the Conservative Party, on things such as small businesses.

Yesterday, I heard a Conservative member talk about small businesses being so important to Canadians and Canada as a nation. I have talked about small businesses as the backbone of our country when it comes to economic development. During the pandemic, this government spent billions of dollars supporting small businesses, preventing them from going bankrupt in many ways.

We supported Canadians, who were no longer in a position to work, through programs such as CERB. Millions of Canadians were supported by billions of dollars, which did increase the debt. However, the Prime Minister, this government and many members of this chamber supported spending that money. It is like the leader of the Conservative Party giving a child a chocolate bar and then condemning the child for eating it.

However, at the end of the day, it was important for the government to spend that money to support Canadians and small businesses, not to mention the billions of dollars that were there to support our seniors through one-time payments for those on GIS and OAS or individuals with disabilities.

The Conservatives talk about this huge debt. In part, they supported us at the time and now they criticize us for it. They need to be more transparent and honest with Canadians about that when they criticize the government for spending money. Are they now saying, retroactively, that we should not have supported Canadians, that we should not have supported small businesses and others? That is what it sure sounds like. Today, in a question that I put forward to the leader of the Conservative Party, I challenged him on that point.

It is interesting when we look at the waffling of the Conservative Party. The best example is the previous speaker, the seconder on the motion. After I posed a very straightforward question for him, the member spent so much time, as many members of the Conservative Party have, criticizing the price on pollution, or as they call it “the carbon tax”. Like their apparent flip-flop on the need to support Canadians during the pandemic, the member failed to acknowledge that he supported a price on pollution, or the carbon tax, and he was not alone. Every member of the Conservative Party who ran in the last federal election supported it. When I pointed that out, he replied that he personally did not support it. It would appear that the first thing we need to ask every Conservative candidate is whether he or she personally supports this.

• (1105)

Imagine how many statements are made in an election platform and somehow the Conservative caucus believes that it is not responsible for that platform, that it can just opt out, much like it is opting out of the price on pollution. It makes one wonder about the Conservatives.

The Conservatives like to talk as if they know things about finances. Today it is about budgets and deficits, even though, compared to the G7 countries, Canada is doing exceptionally well.

I still remember when the leader of the Conservative Party was telling Canadians to invest in cryptocurrency, which is incredible. He still has not apologized for that. If people had followed his advice, they would have lost thousands, depending on how much they invested, 60%-plus of their investment.

We need to ensure that we put things into proper perspective. Yes, let us be concerned about inflation and interest rates. Let us take actions like bringing in Bill C-56.

I would suggest that the Conservative Party get behind legislation such as Bill C-56 and vote for it. It will ensure that more homes are built. It will ensure more stability in grocery prices. Actions speak louder than words.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always insightful hearing the member speak. I notice that he takes up a lot of space to speak in the House, where his other colleagues do not seem to rise to the occasion. I appreciate that he is there to do that.

One thing we have to acknowledge is that inflation hurts Canadians badly. We know this. Who does inflation help? I think he has to acknowledge that it helps the government in so many ways. The government gets to raise more money from the increased activity, the increased taxes, that it imposes upon Canadians. It does not raise the base level of exemptions that happen in that respect.

For instance, a house used to have a GST exemption of \$350,000 when it was first built and when GST was implemented in the late 1980s. It is still \$350,000, because that GST rebate has not risen. That is a problem and the government continues to collect that GST.

When is it actually going to stop collecting so many taxes and start inflating the exemptions it gives Canadians?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I hate to inform the member, but it was Brian Mulroney, a Progressive Conservative, who brought in the GST. I am okay with that. Today, I look at the GST as a progressive tax that can make a positive difference. When we think of Bill C-56, that is one of the ways to ensure that literally hundreds of thousands of additional purpose-built rentals are constructed. It is as a result of GST rebate. It is a tool.

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Where I really disagree with the member is with regard to inflation. This government does not look at inflation, in any form, as a positive thing. Inflation is hurting people in a very real and tangible way. That is why we brought in the grocery rebate. That is why we continue to take actions to try to minimize the impact of inflation.

I am happy to say that since June 2022, when inflation was just over 8%, today, it is at 3.8%. Hopefully we will continue to bring it down to make life easier for Canadians.

• (1110)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the motion calls for a fiscal plan to be introduced by October 25, which is next week. A fiscal plan requires predictability and planning. What would keep the government from introducing such a plan? Is it the timeline or its own inability to predict and plan?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, as a government, we have recognized the importance of having updates in regard to the economy, some of the important stats and numbers, so people can feel confident with respect to where the government is and the general direction in which we are going. There will be a fall economic statement by the minister. Of course, it takes into consideration a wide variety of consultations and working with numbers. I am not an actuary, far from it, but I believe that Canadians will be pleased once they get that fall economic update from the government.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, earlier the hon. colleague was talking about hypocrisy. I just cannot get past the fact that he is taking shots at the Mulroney Conservatives for introducing the GST. I am pretty sure it was the Chrétien government, when it was running against the Conservative Party in the 1993 election, that promised Canadians it would cancel the GST.

Maybe he could explain to me that level of hypocrisy and how he defines it.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I do not know if it is a good thing or a bad thing. In fact, I was a parliamentarian back then. I can assure the member that if she had read the 1993 red book, she would have found that the commitment was, and it was in the election platform of the Liberal Party of Canada, that the Liberal Party would look at a way to replace the GST. I believe, and this was a few years ago, that it said we would like to see a harmonization of the GST so it would incorporate provinces. I am glad we have seen a harmonization, and the GST has proven to be a very good tool that can be used to support Canadians in different ways.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by saying that I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Mirabel.

In 2015, something remarkable happened in Canadian politics. At the time, the Liberals were in third place in the polls. At one point, the current Prime Minister made an extraordinary statement, something that people did not expect at all. He basically said that the Liberals were going to run deficits and that they liked doing that. He said that interest rates were low and the country is like a

business, so, in those circumstances, we needed to invest in the economy. People looked at him dumbfounded and wondered what this was all about. At the time, I said that it was the first time in 40 years that a politician had said that he was going to run deficits and that he liked doing so. One thing we can say is that he really does like running deficits, because he has run up some big ones.

At the time, his premise, as economists would say, was that the interest rates were low and we needed to invest in the economy. What does that look like now? Interest rates have gone up 10 times since the pandemic ended. The rate is now 5%. I am no math whiz, but that means that interest rates are quite high now.

The money he is spending is not for investments, not at all, it is for current expenditures. Often, he spends frivolously. He has lost control. He is a compulsive spender. He likes that. He hands out money left and right. When he talks about spending he gets as excited as a kid on Christmas morning.

Let us look at where things stand today. There are current expenditures that are outside of his jurisdiction. He has become friends with the NDP. The NDP are not compulsive spenders; they are master spenders. They like that. They watch movies, they picture themselves spending, they imagine people spending and it is all amazing.

What happened is that the Liberals and the NDP started talking. The NDP said everyone needed dental insurance. However, that falls under Quebec's jurisdiction, but that was okay, the federal government was going to take care of it for Quebec. The Liberals then got to work to bring in dental insurance. I went to my dentist to get a tooth fixed, and he was in quite a state. I asked him what was the matter and he said he could not believe what was going on with dental insurance, that he had been thinking about it for two months. He said it made no sense. This spending is completely ridiculous. At one point, someone—I am not sure if it was the Parliamentary Budget Officer—talked about the excessive spending, saying that it was crazy, that it should never have been done that way and it should have been left to the experts, namely Quebec and the provinces.

We are also talking about \$82.8 billion in subsidies for oil companies, which are making \$200 billion a year in profits. No one was shocked, but we all should be. We are talking about \$82.8 billion in subsidies until 2035 to those poor folks who are already making \$200 billion a year in profits. Some might call that insanity, but that is what the Liberals are doing.

They bought a pipeline for fun. They say that they do not like oil, but that they are going to export oil like pigs and put the proceeds into the energy transition. I tried to explain it to my golden retriever, and he was beside himself. How can we explain that to people? The Liberals seem to believe it, to the tune of \$30 billion and counting.

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Then there is the inefficiency of the public service. A passport costs four times more to produce than a driver's licence. Look at health care costs. The few times the Liberals have administered health care, in veterans' hospitals, for example, it cost twice as much as in the public sector in Quebec and the provinces. That is outrageous. Processing an EI application costs 2.5 times more than processing a welfare application in Quebec. Why is that? It is because Ottawa has money from the fiscal imbalance. When it has that kind of money, it does not look at how much it is spending. The carpets are thicker in Ottawa than elsewhere, and the government is having fun.

We are telling them to rein it in. When the Liberals announced the 2023 deficit in November 2022, it was \$30 billion. Now it is \$46.5 billion. It keeps going up.

• (1115)

We are not necessarily in an economic crisis. We are at or near full employment, and according to Keynesianism, deficits should only be run in difficult situations like the pandemic or recessions. Right now, there should be few deficits, if any. Most importantly, we should have a plan to restore a balanced budget. That is the responsible thing to do. A plan might force the government to be more conscientious about its spending. It would compel the government to tell people that it is going to try to do better, manage its finances more effectively, and take steps to ensure that an objective set out in the plan is met.

As Émile de Girardin said, governing means planning ahead. This government has a hard time planning ahead. It is always reactive, but very rarely proactive. The important thing is that the plan would send a signal to the market that the government wants to get on the path to a balanced budget. This could relieve inflationary tensions.

The Conservatives want to see that plan by October 25. Why October 25? Maybe they have a party or something on the agenda. They picked October 25, but nobody knows why. Why not ask to see the plan alongside the fiscal update in November? That would make sense.

The Conservatives pull things out of thin air, like this date, October 25. Then they make things sound deceptively simple. They latch onto these mantras. They talk about inflation and convince themselves that they can make it go away just by talking about it. Do they have any actual proposals? No they do not. They have this kind of mystical approach to public finance. They are sitting there with a Ouija board hoping for answers. They are very good at whining and complaining, but they have no concrete proposals. When one of them does come up with a concrete proposal, the others turn a deaf ear. They do not know what to make of it. "What are you talking about?" they say. They decided to complain and talk about the cost of living, the cost of turkeys and carrots. If ever they come to power, those problems will miraculously disappear.

They have no concrete proposals for helping seniors. When the grocery CEOs paraded before the committee, the Bloc Québécois offered up some proposals. Our agriculture critic came armed with a whole list of them. The Conservatives complained that it was pointless and useless. Given that they are the ones talking about the cost of living, they should have some ideas about how to address it.

They say the cost of living is appalling. They are right, but do they have any concrete proposals for fixing that? The answer is no.

They are also talking about the housing shortage. Stephen Harper did nothing during his nine years in office. The current situation is one of the consequences of the Conservatives' inaction. The Conservatives are not making any proposals for fixing this issue either. My colleague, the member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, spoke about the \$900 million. The federal government needs to give this \$900 million to the Quebec government so it can build housing. Do we ever hear a Conservative saying that the \$900 million should be paid out? The answer is no.

Then, they had an idea, which is always cause for concern. Their idea is to force municipalities to increase housing construction by 15% every year or face cutbacks in subsidies. Where does that 15% come from? They took out a Ouija board and that is the number that came out. I have spoken with municipal officials in my riding. There is a moratorium in one municipality because of a water shortage. I told the officials in that municipality that they would be forced to increase housing construction by 15% if the Conservatives were to be elected. They said that they are running out of water, and I replied that the Conservatives would cut back their subsidies. They said that if that were to happen, they would run out of water altogether. What do the Conservatives not understand?

They do not talk about the labour shortage either, but that does not matter. Oil prices are high, and renewable energy is a competitor. That is what will save us from spiralling fossil fuel prices. Do the Conservatives ever talk about that? They do, actually; they say that it is futile and pointless. Seriously? In light of climate change, it is a vital solution that must be taken into consideration.

As Talleyrand famously said, "All that is exaggerated becomes insignificant." I think the Conservatives tend to exaggerate quite a bit when it comes to inflation. My colleagues may extrapolate from there.

I taught economics for 20 years. When discussing the causes of inflation, I used to spend four or five hours on the subject. My students would get sick of listening to me go on and on about inflation, but it is an important subject. I would explain all the different causes, including deficits. However, we have to be careful because it is not as simple as that.

• (1120)

When someone says that deficits equal inflation, we need to be careful. Incidentally, inflation is happening around the world, so the deficit is not entirely responsible for inflation. Of course eliminating the deficit would help, but it is not a magic solution. At some point, the Conservatives are going to have to wake up, because anyone who keeps telling lies is going to become insignificant.

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Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member talked about frivolous spending. I would like him to explain whether it was frivolous to support Canadians during the pandemic with the Canada emergency response benefit and whether it was frivolous to invest in a national child benefit program. We learned that he was not in favour of dental insurance, but the millions of Canadians who are eligible for the program may not agree with him.

Could he elaborate?

Mr. Alain Therrien: Mr. Speaker, sometimes people mean well but end up doing more harm than good. Dental insurance is a good example. I did not say that dental insurance is bad, but it is up to the provinces and Quebec to take care of that. It is their jurisdiction. They are the experts. In Quebec, we already have dental insurance.

What I am saying is that the government announces that it is also going to have dental insurance, and then Quebecers end up paying twice for the same service. We are losing \$30 million a year because the government decided to go over Quebec's head. If the question is whether or not having dental insurance is frivolous, the answer is yes because it is none of the federal government's business. It should leave it to Quebec and the provinces. They know what is best and they can manage this better.

• (1125)

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think that the member's speech is the best I have heard from a Bloc Québécois MP. It was an economic speech that criticized the Liberal government for its spending, which is causing inflation across the country. However, he then mentioned a statistic that comes from the New Democratic Party about the \$88-billion subsidies to the oil companies.

Is he prepared to talk about where exactly he got that statistic?

What is the source of the information he referred to?

Mr. Alain Therrien: Mr. Speaker, it is the total of all the tax benefits identified and given to the oil companies. It is a well-known fact, not a number pulled out of thin air.

I congratulate my colleague on the quality of his French. I also thank him for his compliments on my speech.

Of course, when I speak out against the Liberals, it suits the Conservatives. However, when I point out the Conservatives' faults, mistakes or exaggerations, it hurts their feelings. I think my speech was good from start to finish.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at the end of his speech, my hon. colleague mentioned that inflation is caused by a number of factors. We in the NDP remain focused on the greed of large corporations, including oil companies, which are making record profits. That, too, is driving up prices for Canadians.

I wonder if my colleague would like to talk a bit more about the price increases that are generating huge profits, and the effect this is having on Canadians' budgets.

Mr. Alain Therrien: Mr. Speaker, market structures can certainly influence inflation. In a situation where there is a monopoly or oligopolies that form, in many cases, cartels, this puts upward pres-

sure on prices. Obviously, this will have a fairly significant impact on the cost of living.

That is why applicants need to find another refuge, such as renewable energy. With oil, we are victims of price hikes that are potentially organized, in some cases, by the oil companies. I say potentially, because I do not want to be sued. That is why, for us, the solution is to move towards renewable energy so that consumers can avoid rising prices. In addition to fighting climate change intelligently, they will see a drop in the cost of living.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my speech may not appeal as much to the member for Calgary-Centre. We shall see. First, let us talk about the text of the motion.

I would like to thank the Conservatives. For once, they made our job easier. Entertaining a Conservative opposition day motion is usually quite difficult. We have to separate truth from fiction, sense from nonsense, and populism from statecraft. This happened with their carbon tax motion. The Conservatives force us to vote against their motions sometimes when they fill them with too much nonsense. We cannot support a motion that is 90% nonsense and 10% good sense. This motion, however, is about 70% nonsense and 30% good sense, and we will support it. I congratulate them.

Mr. Speaker, in the most substantive part of its text, the motion essentially states that the government should submit a plan to achieve a balanced budget. We are not told, however, the number of years it will take. We ask that positive signals be sent to Quebecers, Canadians and the markets, along with steps showing everyone that government management is not haphazard, despite current appearances to the contrary.

There is obviously the date, October 25, which I will come back to later. It is yet another thing the Conservatives pulled out of thin air. Members may recall that we supported a similar motion in June. The Conservatives moved the motion when there was no upcoming economic statement. This illustrates their ability to manage their time and resources in the House well. Now they are moving the same thing a second time before an upcoming economic statement.

I would like to talk about context. I have been listening to the Conservative leader make populist, misleading statements for months. We see that in ads on TV. I would like to remind him that the federal government has always churned out deficits and mismanaged public funds. The Conservative leader was a minor minister—which was a very good thing—in Stephen Harper's government. That government churned out one deficit after another—seven in a row, in fact. Back then, the Harper Conservatives set the record for deficits, but the current Conservative leader never said boo. None of the people who were here then and are still here now said boo. Nobody thought it was a problem.

The Conservatives did well one year thanks to the financial crisis fallout when interest rates plummeted and, like a gift from on high, interest payments on the debt shrank. Interestingly, as the Conservatives went from one deficit to the next, the member for Lévis—Lotbinière, who I appreciate and whose office is next to mine, never rose to cry “scandal”. It is easier to criticize others than oneself. Still, I congratulate them on taking an interest in the management of public funds.

The Liberals have the same problem. As my colleague from La Prairie pointed out earlier, the current Prime Minister came on the scene in 2014-2015. Essentially, the Prime Minister figured that he had a credit card. People who manage their personal finances will understand what I am about to say. The Prime Minister figured that it did not matter if he maxed out the credit card and paid the minimum balance each month, because everything would work out fine. He would not lose his job, his car would not break down and he would not have any bad luck. He would just always have to walk a financial tightrope.

Then, in 2020, the car broke down. The pandemic hit, along with a lot of bad luck, and the government was unprepared. The country found itself in a situation where we had to borrow heavily. This pandemic spending was supported by the Conservatives, for one. It is high time these people wake up and realize that being unable to properly manage the public purse—which comes out of the pockets of taxpayers, who are having a hard time paying for groceries these days—is a deep-rooted issue here in Ottawa.

Let us come back to the October 25 deadline. It took seven years for the Harper government to learn how to balance the books, sort of. The Liberals have been at it for eight years and they still have not gotten the hang of it. That is 15 years total. The Liberals could not do it in eight years, and the Conservatives, allegedly acting in good faith, are giving them eight days. They are telling them to come up with a sensible plan in eight days. That is the Conservatives' new turkey. I listened to the Conservative leader this fall. I do not know what he does with turkeys and I am not sure I want to know, but it was all about turkeys with him this fall. I do not want to assume anything.

● (1130)

What did he do? He spent two or three weeks talking about the price of turkey and asking what the price of turkey would be at Thanksgiving. He wanted the government to promise to lower the price of turkey. Thanksgiving is over now, and the Conservative leader can no longer use turkey as a pretext for annoying the Liberals and trying to appeal to the public. Incidentally, he forgot to mention that the price of gas went down 18¢ at Thanksgiving. He was not interested in telling us that.

What did he do then? He found a new turkey. His new turkey is October 25. Now, we are going to hear him talk about the plan that was not introduced until he can talk about the price of Christmas trees in December. Then, he will tell us all about Christmas trees until he can come up with something new to talk about. In reality, the Conservative leader is not interested in having a good plan. The mature thing to do, the thing that would make sense, would be to tell the government to do its job, to come up with an intelligent

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plan, to take more than eight days to think about this and to table the plan in the upcoming economic statement.

What could that plan include? The Bloc Québécois and I have all kinds of ideas that we have been thinking about and repeating for years, while they are just now starting to wake up. For example, there is a basic principle for properly managing taxpayer money and the public treasury: Stop giving money to those who do not need it, including the oil companies. Why will the government not stop giving money to those who do not need it?

From now until 2035, despite all the planned tax benefits and carbon capture subsidies, the government is going to take money from people who are having a hard time paying for fuel, groceries and home ownership and give it to the oil companies. The amount of subsidies oil companies will be getting by 2035 is equivalent to what they would get if we lined up 40 million Canadians every year and asked them each to give these same companies \$20. It is exactly that. The numbers show it.

I did the math on what could be done with the money the government will be giving to oil companies, money that has already been promised and committed until 2035. For Thanksgiving, with the Conservatives' subsidies to the oil companies, we could have bought 21,789,473.7 turkeys for Canadian families. We could have paid for 1,815,789.47 turkeys for Canadians every year for Thanksgiving.

That does not bother the Conservatives, because they do not care about food prices. That is the least of their worries. The cost of living is the least of their worries. Home ownership, the \$900 million for Quebec that my colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert is fighting for, that is the least of their worries.

I can think of something else the federal government should do. It should stop behaving badly. How does it do that? It has to stop doing what it is not allowed to do, what the Constitution says it cannot do, something it has never been good at. It needs to focus on what matters.

The government is unable to issue a passport, unable to take care of veterans and unable to take care of immigrants. We are the ones who deal with all this in our offices. I have files from Liberal ridings piled on my desk in Mirabel. Some ministers, whom I will not name because of the little self-respect they have left, are incapable of doing what little they have to do themselves. They are unable to order planes, to repair the Prime Minister's plane, to order ships, or to look after shipyards. I was going to say “shipwrecks” here, given their track record.

We can imagine what their dental care is going to look like. I care about my teeth. I want to keep them. I would like them to keep their hands off dental care. We can also imagine what their pharmaceutical care will look like. There is no doubt that it will cost more than \$10 billion.

They need to focus on the basics, stop subsidizing the oil companies, put the money where Quebecers need it and focus on the little they have to do because, historically, they have never been able to manage well, much like the Conservatives. I think they should go back to the bare minimum, because the minimum for a Liberal is already a lot.

Business of Supply

• (1135)

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I always appreciate my colleague's speeches. I just want to ask him if he can comment on the Conservatives' lack of seriousness on these very important issues for Canadians and Quebecers. Can he comment on the message the Conservatives are sending Canadians with their nonsense?

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, I am not really comfortable answering this question. Not that I want to avoid it, but it makes me uncomfortable because the people running the country at this moment are sitting across the aisle. Am I terrified at the thought of a Conservative running the country? I sure am.

That being said, until they drop the NDP and maybe call an election, the Liberals are at the helm. They are running the deficits. They have to get the country back on track. I know that they say that things are not so bad here compared to other countries who run things like dummies and never get better, but I always find their lack of ambition surprising. Things need to improve here. First off, the government needs to stop infringing on provincial jurisdictions, because there are real people waiting in hospital corridors. That is real life.

While we are here in this completely disconnected bubble, there are people on gurneys. The Liberals seem to forget that, and they are the ones in power.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, apparently my Bloc Québécois colleague reiterated the hoax, the misinformation that his colleague was spreading, namely that the oil industry receives subsidies from this government. However, according to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, in 2021, Canada gave the oil sector only \$7 million in subsidies. That is the lowest rate among 38 countries worldwide. Would my colleague like to repeat that misinformation and provide his source?

• (1140)

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, I find that amusing. My colleague knows I appreciate him. More than anything though, I like the facts to be accurate, and those figures come from one of the least transparent federal institutions. We do not know where Export Development Canada, or EDC, makes its investments, and it is one of the largest sources of taxpayer-backed public funding for oil.

What surprises me is that the Conservatives are right wing, but only until it comes time to help the oil companies. Then they move left. That is where they think government money is needed. That is where they think subsidies are needed. That is where they think protection and help are needed. Did the NDP and Bloc Québécois just make up the figure of \$30 billion for Trans Mountain? Did EDC not send them that memo? At some point, we have to face the facts. The oil industry is a government-supported industry. It is incapable of controlling its costs, and without government assistance, there would be a lot less Canadian oil.

[*English*]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I really appreciate the member's intervention. I am so glad that he focused on subsidies to major for-profit corporations. That is something that Nunavummiut northern residents have a major issue with.

As an example, the federal government, in 2022, between July and September, subsidized southern non-indigenous, for-profit corporations in the amount of \$30 million. In three months, \$30 million went to for-profit corporations.

Does the member agree that the \$30 million could have done more by making improvements to indigenous peoples' lives if it was targeted to support hunters and trappers organizations that support their communities?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, I will give a more general answer because I do not have all the information on that subject.

There are circumstances where it can be worth it to subsidize certain activities, like the clean energy transition and cases where there is unfair competition, for instance. Some subsidies that have been in place for a long time and have never been revised end up being a complete waste.

The basic principle that I stated earlier probably applies to the matter mentioned by the member. State resources are not unlimited. They come from taxpayers, from the janitor working the night shift and other hard-working people. These resources should not be redistributed to the people who need them the least. Most large publicly traded companies are among those who do not need them.

[*English*]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to a Conservative motion that is not what it pretends to be, presented by a Conservative leader who is not who he says he is. What I mean by that is that this motion pretends to be an analysis of the causes of inflation in Canada, except that it only includes one factor, which is government spending and government deficits. Yes, there is a deficit. Yes, there has been government spending. Yes, some of that may have contributed in some ways to inflation. However, that is far from the whole story. Canada has had deficits at the federal level in periods when there has not been inflation, or at least not inflation of this significant type that we are living with today. It has been inflation within the target zone. The seven consecutive large deficits that the Harper Conservatives ran when they were in power did not coincide with the kind of significant inflation we have seen.

Obviously, there are other factors at work here. It is dishonest to pretend that only government deficit is what is driving inflation, or even that it is the major factor in what is driving inflation. There are supply chain constraints that arose through the pandemic, a reordering of purchasing, first towards goods and then back towards services. There are a number of strictly market forces that we could talk about. Chief among those is the role that corporate greed plays. It is a glaring deficiency of this motion, and not just this motion but also the Conservatives' analysis generally, that they do not talk at all about the role that corporate greed has been playing in fuelling inflation.

Business of Supply

What do I mean by that? When we look at corporate profits, for instance, in the grocery sector, at the very same time that Canadians are struggling, and we are hearing more and more about Canadians having to choose between paying rent and paying for groceries, we have seen massive increases in the profit margins of Canada's largest grocery retailers. That is not a function of their simply passing on costs from the carbon tax, supply chains or whatever else to their consumers. If they were just passing on the cost, their profits would not be increasing. The fact of the matter is that the profit is going up because they are charging Canadians more than the additional costs they are facing right now. That is important to talk about.

When it comes to the Liberal government, corporate greed is just as much missing from their analysis of what is driving inflation as it is from the Conservatives', and they are doing just as little about it, which is certainly a frustration of ours in the New Democratic Party. The Liberal government called the big grocery retailers to Ottawa to give them a slap on the wrist, ask them to do better and ask them to not reduce but stabilize prices, which is to say, to consolidate the gains they have made by raising prices unfairly over the last number of years so Canadians have to continue to pay that going forward, rather than talking about ways to try to make food more affordable than it currently is.

We cannot look to the Conservatives for solutions on food prices, because they have nothing to say other than to reduce the carbon tax, as if those very same grocery retailers who have shown that they are quite happy to raise prices to eat up whatever extra disposable income Canadians get would not just turn around and do that very same thing. Conservatives are silent when it comes to corporate greed in the oil and gas sector, which has been driving inflation for Canadians. When we talk about the role that energy costs play in driving inflation, it is important to note that the price increases on energy far exceed the increase in the carbon tax. That is why, from 2019 to 2022, oil and gas companies in Canada saw an increase in profits of 1,000%. Where is the analysis from the Conservatives on what that does to grocery prices?

If oil and gas companies are going to gouge the farmer who grows the food, gouge the processor who makes the food and gouge the shipper who ships the food, Canadians are going to get gouged at the grocery store, notwithstanding anything that happens in this place or the level of tax. They are going to get gouged based simply on the outsized increases in oil and gas prices that oil and gas companies are using to pay larger dividends to their shareholders and bigger cheques to their CEOs.

• (1145)

We have to talk about that if we are going to get real about the challenges Canadians are facing. We have a Conservative Party that talks about very little else other than inflation and about the housing sector. Canadians are experiencing pain, but to pretend that somehow deficits derived from payments so kids can get their teeth fixed is causing inflation in the housing market is either stupid or dishonest. The fact of the matter is that there is a ton of private capital in the Canadian real estate market, domestic capital that is bidding against Canadians when they are trying to buy a family home, in order to turn that house into a long-term investment. That is a big part of the story of what is going on.

Conservatives talk about how we need lower taxes in spite of the fact that now, 1% of Canadians own 25% of the wealth in this country, while fully 40% of Canadians have to live sharing only 1% of the wealth being created in this country. The 1% that owns the 25% is a big part of the problem in the housing market. They have a lot of extra cash, which they did not get from government and which they are investing back into the housing market to buy up more housing and make more money off the backs of Canadians who are already strapped.

That is not to knock business. Small and medium-sized businesses are an important driver of economic growth in this country. They are important employers. They help make the world go around, and there is a lot of room for legitimate business. We know that a lot of small and medium-sized enterprises are actually struggling right now. They are not the ones that are the problem, so let us not conflate our criticism of big corporations and big capital with the small business owner who is providing services in their community and trying to break even in a very difficult time.

I heard earlier from a Conservative MP, "Well, don't go after the wage payer if you want to help the wage earner." When we talk about the oil and gas industry, look at what happened the day after the Alberta election. A big oil and gas company laid off 1,500 workers, despite the fact that it is extracting more oil than ever and making more money than ever. The fact is that more and more employment in the oil and gas industry has been decoupled, through technological advances and other things that do help with productivity growth, from the employment of Canadians. That oil and gas company timed the announcement of those layoffs in order to help its political friends in the Conservative Party in Alberta, to spare them the embarrassment of bringing that fact to light during an election.

That is why this motion is not what it pretends to be. Furthermore, as I said earlier, it has been presented by a Conservative leader who is not who he pretends to be. He talks about the housing crisis. In fact, earlier in his speech on this very motion, he took credit, naming himself as the minister who was responsible for housing in the Harper government. This was the government that lost 800,000 affordable units during its tenure. It was the government that, when operating grants to create affordable rents were set to expire because they were tied to 40- or 50-year mortgages signed in the sixties, seventies and eighties in order to make rent more affordable, took the decision not to continue providing that operating grant money but to let it drop.

Business of Supply

That is why we are seeing places like Lions Place on Portage Avenue in Winnipeg get sold off because, without the operating subsidies, they cannot continue to provide the deeply affordable units that they were providing. What happened there? A big corporate landlord swooped in. It is going to superficially renovate the building, kick out the existing tenants and start charging a lot more rent for the people who can afford to move in. I do not begrudge those folks the housing, because we know that no matter where one is in the housing spectrum, there is a need. We do not have enough supply of any of those kinds of housing.

I will not begrudge Canadians' taking the opportunity to find a home they can afford, but it is no excuse for a government that is not willing to do what it takes to make sure that those people who need those deeply affordable units have a place to go. That is where we need a federal government that is willing to take responsibility for that. I am sorry, but we have not seen that from the government. We are not building enough deeply affordable and affordable units in this country. We are simply not. If we leave it to the market, it will never get done. As a developer at the finance committee said yesterday, they are never going to build affordable housing. It is not their job. Their job is to build housing that they can make a buck on, and they are not going to make a buck if they undercharge on the rent.

• (1150)

We know that. That is why the federal government for decades made serious repeated, regular and predictable offerings in the social and affordable housing space for a generation. That is why, during that generation and for a little while after, we did not have the kind of housing crisis we currently have. The problem is that we have a government that is focused too much on simply effecting market solutions in the very market that let us down and that said it would not fix the problem.

If we look to the Conservatives, how are they different? They are not, because they too only offer solutions predicated upon the market. It is not that we do not also need market solutions, but if we focus too much and only on those market solutions, we are never going to get to where we need to be. We have a Conservative leader who wants to talk about housing and says that he has the answer, but who, just like the government, is overly focused on market mechanisms instead of the kind of non-market housing that we need and used to have in the past, in the period when Canada was not facing this kind of housing crisis.

He is not who he pretends to be. He says that he wants workers to have powerful paycheques. I agree; I want workers to have powerful paycheques. That is why when workers are on strike, I am out on the picket lines with them, supporting them to bargain for better wages, working conditions and health and safety standards in their workplace. I have never run into that guy on a picket line. I have never seen a picture of him on a picket line. I have never seen him support picketing workers with a tweet, a post or anything. What I have watched him do is vote with the Liberal government on back-to-work legislation to prematurely end strikes on terms that are favourable to the employer, so do not tell me that this guy has the backs of workers.

We watched as he sat at the cabinet table and raised the age of retirement from 65 to 67, denying Canadian seniors their old age supplement for a further two years. Why was that done? It was to keep them in the workforce. That is not having the backs of Canadian workers who have worked their whole life in order to be able to enjoy their retirement. Anyone who has had a member of their family fall ill with cancer in their sixties knows how precious those two years can be and what a difference it can make in their life and that of their family in benefiting from some of the things they worked hard to build during their life. Those two years are not nothing.

I have watched the Conservative leader bring three opposition day motions in the last five months. He has put them in his name. He has given the lead speeches for them. I watched a special debate about the allegations that the Government of India had killed a Canadian on Canadian soil as a result of his political beliefs and activity. I watched as just about the whole Conservative caucus, except for its House leader, was silent. I watched a very intense protest and counterprotest on the rights of children to be safe and to make some of their own judgments about what is safe or not in their home. I watched as the Conservative leader told his members not to go, not to speak and not to post.

This is the apparent champion of freedom of speech, but just not for his caucus, I guess. I watch as Conservative MPs rehash the same member's statement over and over again, clearly formulated out of the talking points of their leader, who says that he wants people to say what they will. I want to know why, if the Conservative leader does not trust Conservative MPs to speak for him, Canadians should trust Conservative MPs to speak for them in this place. I watched when the Conservative leader was a member of the Harper team that pioneered the electoral tactic of telling its candidates they were not allowed to go to local debates, speak their own mind and offer their own position. Perhaps he is worried that if they speak too much, they will reveal that he is not who he says he is.

• (1155)

I noticed earlier that the Conservative MP for Tobique—Mactaquac got up and said that he never supported a carbon tax. Maybe if he had read his platform in preparation for debate in the last election, he would have noticed there was a carbon price in that platform. Maybe the Conservative leader does not want his MPs talking too much in this place or elsewhere because they would expose the fact that what he is saying now is not what they have said in the past and is not what they will do in the future.

I heard the member say that we cannot support wage earners without supporting wage payers in respect of the oil and gas industry. As I said earlier, the wage payers in the oil and gas industry are making more money than they have ever made before and are laying off workers, so I really do not think that is an example we can take to heart.

Business of Supply

This motion calls for a financial plan with a path back to a balanced budget, which is fair enough. I don't think that is a bad thing. Perhaps we will see something like that in the fall economic statement, but I will not hold my breath. We listen to this guy talk about the incompetence of the government, and there are some very compelling arguments on that front. We may not make all the same arguments, but we certainly have our own. Then he wants Canadians to believe it is plausible for them to come up with a plan to balance the budget in a week's time. Come on. It is not serious, and fundamentally, the Conservative leader is not serious.

This motion is not serious either, because it does not get to the bottom of what is driving inflation in Canada. It just singles out one thing that incidentally is to his electoral advantage to have people believe and leaves out all the ways he will help the corporate players that are driving inflation in Canadians' household budgets. He does not want Canadians thinking about that, because then they would know those problems will persist.

He likes to quote a former Liberal minister, John Manley, which is curious because we have seen him be very disparaging of anyone with any connection to the Liberal Party. I understand the impulse, but I find it passing strange that a long-time Conservative and strong public servant of this country, David Johnston, could have his character assassinated by the leader of the official opposition when he happened to not necessarily agree with everything the Conservative leader thought. Then he is willing to turn around and hold up a former Liberal minister, whose advice I never took very seriously but who is now suddenly an authority for the Conservative caucus.

It is the surest sign of despotic tendencies in a political leader when they are willing to disparage and engage in character assassination, even of their own folks who come out of their own political movement, for the simple cry of disagreeing with the leader and then hold up people they would otherwise criticize as authorities when they agree with them. To do that in a context where he has shown he is quite happy to silence his own people in order to make sure they do not expose some of the web he is weaving and the wool he is pulling over Canadians' eyes is another sure sign.

It is just like when it comes to the opportunity my private member's motion offers to Conservatives to curtail the powers of the Prime Minister to unilaterally prorogue this place and dissolve this chamber, providing more political accountability for that. One would think the Conservative leader would be interested in putting some meaningful constraints on the gatekeeping powers of the Prime Minister, but he is not. The Conservatives were first out of the gate to say they would not support that motion, and it is because this leader wants those powers for himself, not because he has an objection to the gatekeeping powers of the Prime Minister's Office.

Those are just some of the reasons the Conservative leader is not who he says he is, just as this motion is not what it says it is, and that is why the New Democrats will be voting against it.

• (1200)

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member for Elmwood—Transcona made a couple of good points. One is that we cannot trust the Liberal government to provide affordable housing. I could not agree with him more, and I would like to give

him the opportunity to expand a bit more on how the government has reneged on its promise to look after the people who need its help.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, when we look at the national housing strategy, there is a lot of fanfare. Some big numbers were announced. One of the really important things to note is that at the beginning of the housing strategy, the big number announced was actually a multiplier that took for granted a bunch of provincial funding that had not been committed. The Liberals were taking credit for money that had not even been announced, except unilaterally by the federal government on behalf of the provinces, which is something it had no right to do.

The national housing strategy has been a bit of a smokescreen from go. Yes, some units have been built along the way, but they pale in comparison to what we need. One of the compelling proof points of that is from Steve Pomeroy, who is a housing expert in Canada. He has said that for every one affordable unit we are building in Canada today we are losing 15. How do we make up the ground that has to be made up in order to get people out of tent cities and back into homes if we are losing 15 units of affordable housing for every one being built? We cannot do it. We are not even treading water in Canada today.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, what he just said is very interesting. He talked about the affordable housing we are losing in Canada. This brings me to a topic that does not come up very much when we talk about the housing crisis: the financialization of housing.

We are talking about affordable housing because large investment trusts, often international, investment companies, are buying up affordable housing. Often, they demolish the housing, or they renovate it and then double the price. That is important.

When the federal government withdrew from housing in 1993, this phenomenon did not really exist in Canada. Now, we see that between 20% and 30% of the housing stock is owned by these corporations. We do not see the government legislating against that. We will not be able to build the 3.5 million housing units. They will not appear out of thin air. We will have to protect affordability any way we can.

I would like my colleague to elaborate. Are there any measures that could be taken right now to counter this financialization that is hurting Canada's housing market so badly here?

• (1205)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his question. I would say that there have been two phases of significant federal disengagement from housing.

In the 1990s, the Liberals cancelled the Canadian housing strategy. Later, the Harper Conservatives made the decision not to renew operating funding for affordable housing mortgages once those mortgages matured. Since these buildings could longer offer affordable rents, large corporations began buying them up and raising rents.

Business of Supply

It would be really helpful to have an acquisition fund for non-profit organizations, to make sure that it is not just big business that has the resources to buy these buildings. Other organizations that are committed to offering affordable rental housing need to be able to access these buildings and take over the work that the previous owners were no longer able to do.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to my colleague's speech, in particular when he was talking about how Conservatives are being muzzled by their leader. He is absolutely right.

A take-note debate occurred in this House in early September, and we were discussing a Canadian citizen who may have potentially been murdered by a foreign government. The Conservatives chose to be absolutely silent. They did not stand and give one speech, other than their House leader speaking for five minutes at the beginning. They did not ask a single question the whole time.

Then, about a week later, there were protests on the streets in front of this building regarding the LGBTQ movement, and once again the Conservatives were told not to speak. As a matter of fact, a leaked email from their leadership told MPs not to make any comment on it whatsoever.

What does that say to the member about the “freedom” the Leader of the Opposition purports to express to the country?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, what it says is that when someone is making accusations of Orwellianism, Canadians cannot just take it at face value. They have to do their homework.

I remember when the leader of the Conservative Party was at the cabinet table and was the author of the so-called Fair Elections Act. There is nothing more Orwellian than that. That was a bill designed to disenfranchise whole swathes of Canadians, and they called it the Fair Elections Act.

I think it is an act of psychological and political projection that the Conservative leader runs around talking about how other people are engaging in Orwellian language all the time. He read *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a bloody guide book, so he imputes to everyone else that they are doing the same, but not everyone has done that. The Fair Elections Act is just one example. I would say my Motion No. 79 is another, where the leader of the Conservatives has the opportunity to go after the Prime Minister's gatekeeping power and has refused to do it.

We do have to be wary of the use of Orwellian language in politics, but we cannot take it at face value from the Conservative leader when he accuses others of it. He should be looking in the mirror.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I completely understand what my colleague says when he says not to take this motion at face value, because Conservatives have a history of making it seem like they want to help but they do not. I have a specific example. When the Conservatives were in government in 2010, they made cuts to two things that were very important to indigenous peoples: funding to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and to the Native Women's Association of Canada. This was at a time when Nunavut had a Conservative MP.

I wonder if the member can explain why we must not trust this motion to be as it appears to be.

• (1210)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I think Canadians should be suspicious anytime they see a motion that talks generally about government spending without anyone having done the homework to identify the real waste.

There is sometimes waste in government spending. We have seen our fair share of that with the ArriveCAN app and the tens of billions of dollars that have been shunted out the door to big consulting companies to do the work that properly belongs in the civil service, padding the pockets of KPMG and others.

There is waste in government, but a motion like the one before us should be singling it out. I think also of the massive investments in child care that I ran on in 2015 and that the New Democrats supported for a long time. They are actually helping to make room in Canadians' household budgets. There is more than one way to tackle inflation, and in the NDP we believe the best way is to work collectively to lower the cost of things Canadians cannot do without rather than simply cutting taxes when we know grocery stores and oil companies will gladly raise their prices to eat up the extra disposable income.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, that was a tall tale my friend from Elmwood—Transcona just told the people of Canada. He is acting like he and his NDP party have no responsibility for what has happened in Canada over the last two years. I realize how—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I want to remind members that once I have recognized an individual, that does not allow others to ask questions or make comments. If they wish to ask questions or make comments, they should wait until the appropriate time.

The hon. member for Regina—Lewvan.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I want the member to explain how the New Democrats have no responsibility for the inflation in grocery prices, as they vote with the Liberal Party 95% of the time. How do they have no responsibility for interest rates going up so that people cannot afford their homes? How do they have no responsibility for mortgage rates going up so that Canadians cannot afford their homes? Rental rates are going up too so that they cannot afford their homes.

It is so funny that those members want to say they have the answers. The only answer they have is playing lapdog to the Liberals and keeping the Prime Minister in power. It is pathetic.

Business of Supply

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, folks in the whip's office may be concerned that the member did not quite get his speaking notes right, because Conservative MPs for a long time now have been saying it has been an NDP-Liberal government for eight years, which is palpably untrue. It speaks to the fact that the Conservatives are not interested in getting to the truth; they are interested in getting into office, and they are prepared to say whatever it takes to get them there. Beware, Canada, because when they get there, it is not going to be what they are saying it is going to be.

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Madam Speaker,

Everywhere I go, people come up to me and say, you know, we're losing faith in the Liberal Party... I've had people tell me they can't afford to buy groceries. They can't afford to heat their homes, and that's hard to hear from, especially seniors who live alone and tell me that they go around their house in the spring and winter time with a blanket wrapped around them 'cause they can't afford the home heating fuel and they can't afford to buy beef or chicken.

It is heart-wrenching when you hear someone say that you.

This is a quote from the lone Liberal member who was brave enough to vote for his constituents instead of this high-inflationary Prime Minister.

These are the same sentiments I hear day after day as I tour the country hearing from seniors. Last week, I had the opportunity to spend time with a group of seniors from the Northumberland—Peterborough South area. Their concerns mirror the same concerns as our friends from the Atlantic coast.

I will be sharing my time with one of my favourite MPs, the member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

After eight years of the Liberal government, the Prime Minister has added more to the national debt than all previous prime ministers combined. A half a trillion dollars of inflationary deficits has directly led to a 40-year inflation high.

Prior to budget 2023, the Minister of Finance said, "What Canadians want right now is for inflation to come down and for interest rates to fall. And that is one of our primary goals in this year's budget: not pour fuel on the fire of inflation." Then she proceeded to usher in \$60 billion of new spending.

In order to combat inflation, the Bank of Canada has been forced to increase interest rates 10 times in just 19 months. These rate increases have increased mortgage payments. Since the Prime Minister took office, monthly mortgage payments have increased 150% and now cost \$3,500 on a typical family home.

I want my colleagues in this place to think about a few statistics I found on the Nesto mortgage company website. In Toronto, as of 2021, the average house price was just over \$1 million. The down payment required to purchase a home was just in excess of \$232,000. It would take an average person 42.2 years to save for the down payment. To make a comparison, it took roughly 4.2 years to save up for the minimum down payment on a home in Toronto 10 years ago when our country enjoyed a Conservative government. In Vancouver, there is a similar situation. The average cost of a home is just in excess of \$1.2 million with a minimum down payment of \$242,000. The time to save for a down payment in Vancouver is 44.3 years. Just 10 years ago, it took an average of only 5.2 years to afford the minimum down payment for a home in Vancouver.

On June 5, CTV News Toronto reported that the National Bank of Canada released its housing affordability report, indicating that it will take Torontonians about 25 years to save for a down payment on a house and the qualifying income level to purchase a property is in excess of \$236,000. Does the average Canadian earn \$236,000? I do not think so.

• (1215)

If this does not make it clear, this Prime Minister just is not worth the cost.

Let us think about it. According to TransUnion, the average credit card balance for Canadians in the second quarter of 2023 was \$4,185, which is up from \$3,909 in the second quarter. That is up from average monthly credit card spending of almost \$2,447 in the third quarter of 2022, which is up 17.3% from the same time in 2021, and up 21.8% from 2019.

From another report, Canadian consumer debt has risen to \$2.4 trillion, with an average debt load of approximately \$21,131, excluding mortgage payments. Canadians are using credit cards more as there was a 9% increase in credit card balances in June 2023 compared to the same time last year.

These trends are a repeat of the past. Let us reflect on the 1980s when the lending rate for a five-year fixed mortgage was 22.75%. This caused homeowners with mortgages to struggle with high interest payments, resulting in foreclosures.

Let us do some comparisons. In 1981, the average price of a home was \$110,000. At an interest rate of 22.75%, the monthly payment was just under \$2,000. Today, the average price of a home in Toronto is \$1.2 million. At an interest rate of 7%, the mortgage payment is \$6,724. What was the similarity during these two periods? Can anyone guess? Both prime ministers shared the same last name.

In my previous life as a bank manager and mortgage specialist, I witnessed the hardship of many Canadians, friends and neighbours who lost their homes to the inflationary, out-of-control spending by the Trudeau Liberal government.

• (1220)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I believe the hon. member mentioned the name of the Prime Minister, so I just want to make sure that—

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, I am speaking about Pierre Elliott Trudeau. I apologize.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I appreciate the clarification.

Business of Supply

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, history continues to repeat itself today as we see the Liberal-NDP government force the Bank of Canada to raise interest rates due to their out-of-control spending habits. This Liberal Prime Minister is just not worth the cost.

The Liberal-NDP government must exercise fiscal discipline over its inflation-driving deficits, so that interest rates can be lowered in order to avoid a mortgage default crisis as warned by the International Monetary Fund and to ensure Canadians do not lose their homes. The government must introduce a fiscal plan that includes a pathway to balanced budgets in order to decrease inflation and interest rates. Alternatively, it needs to get out of the way, so that Conservatives and our Conservative leader can fix what the Liberals have broken and bring hope back to Canadians.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know the member was talking about inflation. What we have seen and what we know with the numbers that have come out today is that the only sector of the economy that continues to experience significant growth in terms of inflation and indeed is pushing up the inflation numbers is the transportation sector. I wonder if the member can comment on how she sees the government bringing in policy that will help to decrease inflation, specifically in the transportation sector.

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, it is an easy response. Let us get rid of the carbon tax. The Liberal member for Avalon stated that his constituents in Newfoundland cannot afford to heat their homes or feed their families. Let us get rid of the carbon tax. Let us give those Atlantic provinces the opportunity to live.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, the real carbon tax is the \$83 billion the government is giving to oil companies between now and 2035. At the natural resources committee yesterday, the member for Lakeland responded to that ineptitude by asking the other members not to give the Suncor representative a hard time.

Worse still, a Conservative member apologized to Suncor on behalf of all Canadians because the committee was asking questions about what the company was doing with public money. If there is one thing that is not common sense, it is the \$83 billion the government will be giving the greedy oil and gas industry between now and 2035.

If my colleague really cares about what happens to people who cannot afford groceries and rent, the first thing she should do is demand that the government stop funding the greedy oil and gas industry.

[*English*]

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, our Conservative Party has a plan and that plan is to use the technology in this country to ensure that we are green. One of the things that we have to look at is the windmills. Does anyone here know that it takes 176,000 gallons of oil to service the windmills in this country?

If we stopped oil production, who is going to service those windmills? We need to make sure that the carbon tax is kept under control, because with the carbon tax, people cannot afford their homes.

They cannot afford to feed their families. They cannot afford to go to the grocery stores. They cannot afford the gas in their car to drive to work. That is going to hurt the economy.

• (1225)

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, today's Conservative motion ignores the real role of corporate greed in the rising cost of living. We know that many working people and people on fixed incomes are struggling right now. What are the Conservatives going to do about making sure the wealthy pay their fair share?

Does the member agree that the wealthy in our country need to pay their fair share and will she and other Conservatives support putting a wealth tax on the rich in this country?

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, we have seen these Liberals contract work outside of our government bureaucrats. They are the ones that spend money on consultants. That is greed. We have Conservative plans to ensure that the out-of-control spending is within the budget. They do not know how to balance a budget. Conservatives do.

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague is actually my neighbour in the soup and salad bowl of Canada, King—Vaughan. We were chatting earlier today about how important it is to get out in the community. I know my hon. colleague is always out in King—Vaughan, chatting with people.

She told me that she had a number of conversations over the past week with people in the riding. Boots on the ground are important. I wonder if she could elaborate on those conversations and what people are telling her right now.

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, it saddens me to say that, yes, I did speak to several constituents during the past riding week. I was saddened to hear of seniors who are in their mid-to-late 70s having to go back to work just to make ends meet. They cannot afford this additional carbon tax. They cannot afford to pay their utility bills. They cannot afford to buy groceries. They cannot afford to do the things they once enjoyed. Now, with this additional tax and the burden that this government has placed on our Canadian population, when does it end?

I will tell us when it ends, when our leader and the Conservative Party form government.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to start by congratulating my good friend, the passionate member for King—Vaughan for her incredible speech. She is a great advocate for her community,

Canadians are going through housing hell right now. Nine out of 10 young people say they have lost the dream of home ownership. Newcomers will not be able to achieve home ownership. The IMF is now saying that Canada is the most at risk in the G7 for a mortgage default crisis. There is a major housing crisis in this country, which we need to take seriously before people start losing their homes.

Business of Supply

We need to understand how we got here in the first place. The Liberal-NDP government spent more money than all governments before it combined. Let me put this into context. Between 2015 and 2023, the Liberal-NDP government spent more money than every single government did from 1867 to 2015, combined. That has led to 40-year highs in inflation, which has led to the most rapid mortgage interest rate hikes we have seen in the last three decades.

The Bank of Canada had to counter with something, and it did so with the interest rate hikes. That was done in reaction to something, and that something was the government deficit. It is not just Conservatives who admit that government deficits fuelled inflation, making interest rates go up. Random Liberals and others have said the same thing.

I will point to the three Ms: Manley, Macklem and Morneau. They have all admitted that government spending fuels inflation. Mark Carney, who could possibly be the next Liberal leader, also said that inflation was due to domestic pressures. It was nothing to do with outside pressures, as the Liberals and NDP try to make everyone believe. They say that it is always someone else's problem and never theirs. Even someone who could become a Liberal leader admits that the inflation we see today is due to domestic pressures.

Even the current finance minister has admitted this. Though she does not believe in it, she still admitted that government deficits do fuel inflation. It is too bad that, after she said she wanted to be careful to not fuel the inflationary fire, she dumped a \$63-billion jerry can of fuel on that inflationary fire. What ended up happening? Inflation went up and so did mortgage interest rates. Once again, this is why Canada is now the most at-risk country in the G7 for a mortgage default crisis.

The Liberal-NDP government shows its incompetence over and over again. These are the geniuses who ended up spending \$89 billion, almost \$90 billion, on housing only to have housing costs double in this country. Mortgages have doubled. Rents have doubled. Let us look into that a bit deeper.

Why have mortgages doubled in this country? As I identified, it was a domino effect. All the money printing the government did was bounced off by bonds. What ended up happening? We flooded the market in doing that, and there was too much money chasing too few goods, which is literally the definition of inflation.

When inflation went up due to all the government deficits, the Bank of Canada had to do the opposite of what the government is doing. Former Liberal finance minister, John Manley, put it perfectly. He said that today's situation is much like the Liberal-NDP government deficit. It is like it is pressing the gas, the inflationary gas, while the Bank of Canada is slamming on the breaks as hard as it can with its interest rate hikes. Both things are happening at one time. They are working in opposite directions and the engine is going to blow.

Who will be left paying for this mess? Canadian taxpayers will be. There is only one party in the House that cares about taxpayers' money and wants to make sure that Canadians do not lose their homes. That is why our leader, the next prime minister of Canada, the hon. member for Carleton, put this motion forward. It is because we are more worried than ever that Canadians may lose their

homes because of the out-of-control deficit spending of the Liberal-NDP government.

• (1230)

Housing costs have gone up. They have doubled in this country after the Liberals spent \$89 billion on housing. How does that even happen in a country like Canada?

This is the reality of the failed policies of the Liberal government. I met a single mom in Calgary recently, a single mom with three kids. Her rent went up by \$600 a month. She was already struggling to feed her kids and keep a roof over their heads. She was literally in the stat of being the one in five who are skipping meals today. She told me her heartbreaking story of, because of the cost of her rent going up due to these deficits, having to move back in with her abusive ex-husband.

This is the reality of Canadians today. The Liberal-NDP government's failed policies have put Canadians in these types of positions. We can only imagine how many more of these stories we will hear as we travel the country. It is a sad state in Canada today. It should not be. However, after eight years of the Liberal-NDP government, it is definitely not worth this cost.

We are talking to industry stakeholders and everyday Canadians. We are hearing that people cannot get into housing because of supply. We are also talking to the people who actually build the homes. The number one issue today is interest rates, which were fuelled by the government's deficits. Builders will be sitting on land, and they will not be able to build. In some cases it does not make sense, with all the bureaucracy and with all the red tape created by the government. Along with a willingness to let municipalities create more and more bureaucracy, it is getting harder and harder to build, let alone how much housing costs have gone up for the builders. In some cases it does not make sense to build.

That is why we need to see a balanced, fiscally responsible plan for back-to-balance budgets. I hope the Prime Minister finally understands that budgets do not balance themselves.

An hon. member: Don't hold your breath.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, my colleague says, "Don't hold your breath", and I will not.

Let us put this back into the context of why we brought forward this motion in the first place. It is because of a looming crisis that could take place in this country if the Liberal-NDP government does not bring back balanced budgets. I want to remind Canadians, once again, that it was the finance minister, back in November, who told Canadians, and promised Canadians in writing, that she would bring in balanced budgets in 2027-28.

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I will take a step back to before that. It was the same finance minister who told Canadians to go out and borrow as much as they want, that interest rates would be low for a very long time. People started getting mortgages. We saw a big boom in people wanting housing. What those borrowers did not expect, after she said that, was that she would dump hundreds of billions of dollars of fuel on the inflationary fire, which made their interest rates go up. Now there is a looming crisis.

In November of last year, the finance minister promised to bring in balanced budgets. We had a hope that maybe the Liberal-NDP government had seen the light. However, once again, it was only months after that when she said that she was just kidding, that she was never going to balance budgets anyway, and then promised to balance the budget in the year never. Canadians lost all hope.

What we need to do today, under our common sense leader, is bring in a common sense plan to balance the budget, to bring down the inflation and to make sure that Canadians do not lose their homes. When the member for Carleton becomes the next prime minister of this country, we are going to bring home more homes, which people could actually afford; bring down costs; bring home lower prices by axing the failed carbon tax, which is inflationary and making the cost of everything go up; make sure that once we bring down the inflation by controlling deficits, people will not lose their homes.

We are going to bring it home for Canadians.

• (1235)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know that before this member, the member for King—Vaughan made the comment that only Conservatives know how to bring in a balanced budget. I am assuming this member thinks the same thing.

An hon. member: That's right.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, she just yelled that I am right.

The unfortunate thing for her is that no Conservative has ever done it, not in Brian Mulroney's time and not in Stephen Harper's time. Let me correct that record. It is true that Stephen Harper had two surpluses in the beginning, but those came off the heels of Paul Martin's budgets. The only prime ministers since 1970 to actually run a surplus, a balance or have no deficit have been Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin. There is absolutely no historical record that would suggest that Conservatives actually have the know-how to do that.

Could the member please inform the House as to exactly how Conservatives would do that, and without the rhetoric of bringing down interest rates to lower inflation?

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, while the member was asking his question, I was looking for the Liberals' plan to balance the budget or how many times they have done so. I obviously could not find anything, and I will remind the member that it was the Prime Minister who thought budgets would balance themselves.

The Liberals were left with a surplus when they formed government in 2015, and they withered that away. It was the Liberal-NDP government that said it would not run deficits of more than \$10 bil-

lion. Now we are sitting at half a trillion dollars in deficit, which drove up interest rates, and now we are in this looming crisis.

The government needs to get its deficit under control so that Canadians do not lose their homes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives have all kinds of things to teach us on this opposition day. However, they need to be reminded that the last Conservative government ran deficits for seven years straight.

I would sure like to know what today's Conservatives, whose leader was part of the Harper government, would do differently from what they always did in the past—should they come to power—so they can finally stop being a party that habitually runs deficits.

• (1240)

[*English*]

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, this gives me the opportunity to actually let my hon. colleague know what our plan is. First of all, we are seeing today that productivity is as bad as it was back in the Great Depression. We would make sure to bring up productivity, including by getting more of our resources to market to make sure more of Canada gets our low-carbon intense energy and to bring better jobs and a better economy to this country.

We would also bring in a dollar-for-dollar law under our next prime minister, the member for Carleton, where we would have to find a dollar of savings for every dollar the government spends. Because of the failed policies of the Liberal-NDP government, Canadians are having to make the choice of finding a dollar of saving to spend a dollar, just because of how bad things have gotten and how much their taxes are hurting them. The government should work that exact same way. The government needs to work for the people, and that is how we would do it.

We would bring in a dollar-for-dollar law and make sure we got rid of all the wasteful spending, such as the \$22 billion that was spent on worthless Liberal insider consultants because the ministers are too incompetent to do their own jobs.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for bringing up today the impact the housing crisis is having on women. I had a visit yesterday from some members of Parliament from the United Kingdom, and they were saying that the mortality rate of children is on the rise in the U.K. because women cannot find housing, so I just wanted to ask the member a question.

In 1993, Brian Mulroney ended all new federal funding for social housing construction. Does the member agree with that decision?

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Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, if we look at the home province the member is from, we have a clear example of how bad of an impact Liberal-NDP policies are having on this country. Not only did they fuel the opioid deaths in the opioid crisis of our country, but there are also clear examples, in a riding that is close to hers, of municipal gatekeepers increasing bureaucracy while a Liberal-NDP government keeps shovelling more money into that municipality so that housing cannot get built. We need to fire those gatekeepers, get them out of the way, reduce the bureaucracy and make sure municipalities increase their permitting by 15%, so we do not have more and more Canadians living out on the streets.

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Davenport.

I am thankful for this opportunity to take part in today's conversation and debate.

To say Canadians are living in a turbulent world would be an understatement. Right now, it is clear the rising cost of living is one of Canada's most significant economic challenges, and the last three years have been hard. Canadians, like most people around the world, have been unable to avoid the financial pain caused by the last few years, but despite all these challenges, the Canadian economy represents resilience and stability amid the tumult.

In so many ways, we are faring much better than our international peers. Our government is tireless in its drive to build an economy with stable prices, consistent growth and abundant good-paying jobs for middle-class Canadians, and we have impressive results to show for it.

There are currently more than a million additional Canadians employed today than before the pandemic. Both the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development predict that Canada will see the strongest economic growth in the G7 next year. Despite the global economic headwinds and slowing growth across the world's economies, Canadian growth in July was 3.3% above its pandemic levels. DBRS Morningstar also recently confirmed Canada's AAA credit rating.

[Translation]

Our excellent credit rating proves how responsible our plan is. Through a number of measures that I will describe in detail in a few moments, we have strengthened the social safety net that millions of Canadians rely on. We have implemented these measures while ensuring that Canada maintains the lowest deficit and lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. Looking ahead, we will continue to focus on fiscal restraint. The government is strongly committed to reducing the federal debt-to-GDP ratio to ensure that the country's finances remain viable.

• (1245)

[English]

It is my pleasure to walk members through some of the powerful steps our government has taken since 2015 to support Canadians and address the cost of living concerns. These actions are having a real impact in terms of putting more money into the pockets of Canadians across the country. Our government has given Canadians a boost through the Canada child benefit, tax cuts for the middle

class, a commitment to implement a new dental care plan and affordable early learning and child care right across the country, with six provinces and territories already providing regulated child care for an average of just \$10 a day or less, significantly ahead of schedule.

Our affordable Canada-wide early learning and child care system has a record labour force participation rate; earlier this year, this was 85.7% for working-age women. It is also helping to grow the economy and to make life more affordable for families from coast to coast to coast.

[Translation]

The result is that in 2020-21, the most recent years for which we have data from Statistics Canada, close to 2.3 million fewer Canadians were living in poverty compared to 2015. In other words, in 2021, 7.4% of Canadians were living in poverty, a 14.5% decrease compared to 2015. Our government remains committed to reaching its goal of a 50% reduction in poverty by 2030 based on 2015 levels.

I would remind the official opposition that even the central plank of our climate plan, the federal carbon pricing system, is giving Canadian households more money back in climate action incentive payments than they pay in. Since 2019, there has been a price on carbon pollution, a measure that survived two federal elections and that was upheld by the Supreme Court. In April 2023, the price increased to \$65 per tonne. The money collected goes straight back into Canadians' pockets, as 90% of fuel charges are returned directly to households through climate action incentive payments. In the provinces where the federal system applies, a family of four can now receive up to \$1,500 per year under our plan.

[English]

The global economic environment has driven up the cost of far too many necessities, everything from housing to groceries. We know the urgency around affordability is even greater now, and we are responding to it.

In budget 2023, we announced targeted relief for Canadians that was carefully designed to avoid exacerbating inflation. These measures included a one-time grocery rebate for 11 million low- and modest-income Canadians and families; it provided, for example, up to \$467 for eligible couples with two children. We also increased the Canada student grants and raised the interest-free Canada student loan limit for the current school year to help post-secondary students pay for their education and pursue their dreams. Budget 2023 also announced a crackdown on predatory lending and hidden junk fees.

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Our actions have made an impact. In budget 2023, our government has continued to tackle affordability issues for Canadians. Just last month, we introduced Bill C-56, which would implement powerful measures to foster more competition in the economy, including the grocery sector. The government met with the leaders of Canada's largest grocery chains after calling on the industry to take immediate action to stabilize food prices. Each of the top five major grocery chains have since committed to an initial series of price-stabilizing steps that will be implemented in the coming days and weeks.

We know that we have to boost Canada's housing supply to address the cost of living challenges that Canadians are facing, and we have been doing that. New commitments in Bill C-56 would remove the GST on new purpose-built rental housing. This is one of the many steps that the government is advancing to help get more homes built in a fast way. I hope that all hon. members here today will support the swift passage of Bill C-56, the affordable housing and groceries act, to help us improve the financial footing of all Canadians.

We have recently announced several agreements under the government's ambitious \$4-billion housing accelerator fund, which my community has already benefited from. The cuts in red tape fix outdated local policies, such as zoning policies, and ensures that more homes are built in our cities in a fast way. Our agreements include one with the City of London, Ontario, which is my city; the fund will provide \$74 million to increase the city's housing supply.

Last month, the Prime Minister also announced the government's housing accelerator fund agreement with the City of Vaughan, to fast-track over 1,700 new housing units and incentivize thousands of additional homes over the next three years. This work in Vaughan, for example, will help spur the construction of more than 40,000 homes over the next decade and help meet the demand in one of Canada's fastest-growing cities. We expect many more agreements to come soon.

In conclusion, we have been dogged in our quest for real, concrete solutions to Canada's affordability challenges, and we will not let up. We have made much progress, while maintaining a robust economy and fiscal responsibility. We have had Canadians' backs all along, and we will continue to do more for them. We also know that more work is needed, and Canadians can stay tuned for more from our government.

Canadians can rest assured that our government has the strong plan to help navigate the stormy economic world, and we will continue to have their backs.

• (1250)

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, I happen to represent some of the same parts, from Elgin—Middlesex—London. We are talking about new homes being built, which absolutely needs to be done. We recognize that all the policies that were put forward by the government really did not have housing, immigration, health care and all those things working in parallel, so there is a lot of desperation right now.

One of the biggest concerns right now is for people who are renewing their mortgages, who were told by the government not to

worry and that it was okay to invest. People were getting up to their eyeballs in debt, and we now have interest rate increases that are causing them to face more difficult times.

What are the member's thoughts about individuals who have to renew their mortgages and who need help right now?

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga: Madam Speaker, the member is a neighbour in London, so I assume she would also know that an investment has been made in the city of London of \$74 million to add 2,000 extra homes. We are talking about the things that we have done to make sure that Canadians and Londoners are able to afford their lives, to send their kids to day care and to afford dental care.

These are all things that work together to make sure we are responding to this global challenge of inflation. We are responding to housing affordability to make sure that Canadians have everything they need and that, when this crisis is over, they can continue to live their lives.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, just a few minutes ago, a colleague talked about how, if we want to invest a dollar in a new program, then we should take a dollar away from an existing program. I am curious, and I have some ideas. The government could make cuts to its various support programs for the oil industry, which is fully capable of supporting itself, since it is making \$200 billion in profits a year.

I would like to know where my colleague will invest the amounts taken from the oil industry support programs.

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga: Madam Speaker, I think those are challenges that our government is continuing to consider, and we are working to find solutions. We are talking about how our government can continue to invest to support Canadians across the country. By investing in housing and child care services, we are ensuring that women can participate in the economy and that we can grow our economy and support Canadians across the country.

• (1255)

[*English*]

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague and I share having ridings in the city of London. I know a lot of people are quite happy and interested to move forward with the accelerator fund. However, renovation is a huge issue across this country, and certainly within the city of London. Constituents of mine living in the apartments on Webster Street are being renovated out of their affordable places to live. They cannot afford to live there anymore. I know this has happened in her riding as well.

We have called repeatedly for the government to create a not-for-profit housing acquisition fund, so co-operatives, non-profits and municipal governments could access a fund to buy those lower-rent buildings and apartment buildings. Can she talk about the fact that we have not heard anything from the government, her government, on an acquisition fund?

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga: Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague that there are many challenges we share as we serve the same city. Just recently, I announced a renovation project in my riding. These are challenges we continue to respond to as a government.

On the \$74 million that has been invested in the city of London, we can work with the City of London, as colleagues and as MPs, to make sure some of that money also goes to the co-ops.

The bigger thing I want to say is that we responded to a call to build homes in a fast way. We are doing it through the housing accelerator fund. The City of London was the first city to put up its hand, because it knows the challenges. I encourage my colleague to bring these issues to the City of London, so we can continue to respond to the most challenging issues in our ridings.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is wonderful for me to have the opportunity to participate in today's opposition day debate on behalf of the residents of my riding of Davenport.

The topic touches on Canadian debt levels, inflation and mortgages. It is not a surprise, as I am sure it is the case right across the country, that inflation is top of mind for Davenport residents. Affordability is a huge issue, so it is an important topic for us to be discussing today.

I always like to start with context. It is always good to remind ourselves of a few things.

In early 2020, we had the start of a global pandemic. During the first half of 2020, 95% of the world's economy suffered a simultaneous contraction. This has never happened before. Three billion adults were laid off from their jobs or tried to work from home.

The sum of lost earnings just in the first months of the pandemic was \$10 trillion U.S. That is more than one-tenth of the global GDP. It was a massive shock to the global economy, the Canadian economy and all economies around the world, and our economies have been recovering ever since.

Never mind that since then we have also had the unprovoked and brutal attack on Ukraine by Russia and the recent violent and shocking attack by Hamas on Israel and Gaza, among other events in the world. All of these events are putting a further strain on our global economy and its ability to fully recover.

In addition, during the pandemic the Canadian government spent a lot of money to support individuals, small, medium and large businesses and non-profits. We did everything we could to support Canadians and the economy, and to provide an economic foundation from which to pivot, as we knew we would inevitably start coming out of the pandemic at some point.

We spent a lot of money and accumulated debt. We had to do that because we needed to save lives, businesses, non-profits and pro-

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tect our jobs. We provided a strong financial foundation from which the economy could pivot.

Canadian economists have lauded our actions and have verified that federal government actions have provided that strong economic foundation we need in order to pivot away from a massive recession or depression. We have succeeded.

We have also recovered all the jobs that were lost. I think we have recovered more than 129% of the jobs lost from the initial days of the pandemic.

Given that the opposition day motion speaks to mortgages and the risk of higher interest rates on mortgage defaults, I would like to speak for a few minutes on the work we are doing to help Canadians have a safe and affordable place to live.

Let me begin by reminding everyone in the House that our federal government is focused on building an economy that works for everyone, with a strong social safety net, and where everyone plays by the same set of rules. An important component of that is ensuring that every Canadian has a safe and affordable place to call home. We know that for too many Canadians, including young people and new Canadians, the dream of owning a home is increasingly out of reach and paying rent has become more expensive across the country. This lack of affordable housing has an impact on our economy. That is why our government has launched the most ambitious plan that Canada has ever had to ensure they are able to afford a home sometime in the future.

We introduced a national housing strategy in 2017. We have committed over \$82 billion to that strategy and to other housing initiatives. We are investing in building more homes and bringing down the barriers that keep them from being built, with the goal of doubling the number of new builds over the next decade. We are ensuring that houses are being used as homes for Canadian families rather than a speculative financial asset class. We are investing in the rental housing that so many count on right now.

I go to the doors quite a lot in my riding of Davenport and housing is a big topic. In response to when people ask me if I think they will ever be able to afford a home in their lifetime, I tell them that I have full confidence they will.

• (1300)

Right now, if all levels of government are working, if we continue to invest the dollars that we have allocated, if we continue to get the red tape and road blocks out of the way, I have full confidence that we will have excellent rental supply, new affordable housing and housing for our most vulnerable come on stream, and the ability for people to live affordably in our cities and towns right across our country.

Let us get into some of the programs we have introduced.

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Our federal government is making the down payment on a first home more attainable with the first home savings account, also known as an FHSA. The new tax-free first home savings account is a registered plan to give first-time homebuyers the ability to save up to \$40,000 on a tax-free basis. Like a registered retirement savings plan, contributions are tax deductible and withdrawals to purchase a first home, including from investment income, are non-taxable, like a tax-free savings account. This means that savings for a down payment are tax free in and tax free out.

The first home savings account can be combined with the homebuyers plan, which allows Canadians to withdraw from an RRSP to buy or build a qualifying home. This means that individuals who can take full advantage of both the FHSA and the homebuyers plan can accumulate up to \$75,000 or up to \$150,000 per couple, plus the interest they have earned tax free within their FHSA, toward a down payment on a first home. They can also benefit from the first-time home buyers' tax credit, which our government has doubled to provide up to \$1,500 to eligible homebuyers to offset closing costs involved in buying a first home.

The FHSA has been available from financial service providers since April of this year, and as of the beginning of October, over 150,000 Canadians have already opened an account. This is an amazing uptake and proves how effective the program is in supporting a first home purchase.

I also want to talk about the housing accelerator fund. We are requesting that local governments put an end to exclusionary zoning and encourage building apartments and rental housing near public transit in order to have their housing accelerator fund applications approved. This was launched in March 2023. The housing accelerator fund is a \$4-billion initiative designed to help cities, towns and indigenous governments unlock new housing supply, about 100,000 units in total, by speeding up development and approvals, like fixing out-of-date permitting systems, introducing zoning reforms to build more density and incentivizing development close to public transit.

Every community across Canada needs to build more homes faster so we can reduce the cost of housing for everyone. I believe the City of Toronto has also applied for the housing accelerator fund, and I really look forward to that getting approved, because we need far more homes in the city of Toronto.

I could talk about a lot of other initiatives, but I know that I am running out of time. However, there is the rapid housing initiative, which has created a lot of homes in less than a year for our most vulnerable. It has been a game changer in my riding of Davenport, and in the city of Toronto, in providing spaces for those who are homeless or near homeless. There are two spots in my riding of Davenport, and I know hundreds of thousands are being built across the country.

Our global economy has had a huge shock with advent of the pandemic. Recovery from this, the global wars under way and other global events are impacting the global economy in its recovery. This is also having a huge impact on inflation and the cost of living.

Our federal government is taking action. We are doing all we can to support Canadians, while striking the right balance to ensure that

our efforts do not amplify inflation. We know this will make it harder for Canadians to keep up with the cost of living, and this extends to making Canada's housing market—

• (1305)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order, please. There is only a couple of seconds left, but there is a lot of noise. The Sergeant-at-Arms is looking into that right now.

The hon. member has 14 seconds left.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, I am thankful for this opportunity to speak to the opposition day motion, and I very much look forward to the questions by members in the House.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, in today's debate on a plan to balance the budget, I keep hearing the government, its representatives and its members say that they are investing in Canadians, that they will always be there for Canadians and that they are here for them.

Under the current circumstances, I wonder if someone can explain to me why the government is not investing in a robust EI program when there are workers who are struggling. That is a federal program. It is a federal jurisdiction. It could take action. I also do not understand why the government is so reluctant to significantly increase old age security for seniors starting at age 65. That is also a federal program.

Are you willing to invest in this area and make a significant contribution, Madam Speaker—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I think the member meant to ask her question through the Chair, and not directly to her colleague.

The hon. member for Davenport.

[*English*]

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, there were many questions in there and I could spend a lot of time responding to them. She first mentioned our deficit. I do want to mention that our deficit is down from a projected 1.5% of GDP last year to 1.4% this year. I know that the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance is going to give a fall economic statement, so we will get the latest numbers some time very shortly.

The hon. member ended off with a question on old age security. When we were first elected, we ensured that we reduced the retirement age to 65, so Canadians could have access to the old age security and GIS at that age. That was a huge benefit for our seniors. We have also increased GIS. We have also increased, by 10%, the OAS for those 75 and older.

Business of Supply

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know that we live in very different parts of the country. I am about two hours west of the Davenport area. Our area is a rural part of Canada, where the carbon tax has absolutely had a huge cost on the heating, food, food production and everything else. Being in different areas, it is difficult to understand what the rural parts of Canada are going through.

Has the member spoken to a farmer about the carbon tax, about the cost of food production and how it impacts Canadians?

• (1310)

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, I have not spoken to a farmer, but I will when I get the opportunity.

Climate change is real. It is happening and the changes of climate are impacting our country and our society even more quickly than scientists had ever thought before. We have put a price on pollution, which is what the hon. member calls the carbon tax. We are returning all of the dollars that we collect from the price on pollution back to Canadians, back to farmers, to ensure they are covering their costs. If we do nothing, the cost will be even higher.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, the Conservatives say that this motion is to help address housing so Canadians do not lose their homes. I do not think it is a great solution, but the Liberals have not done so well either.

I am glad she did not include URN on her list of investments that government has done, because URN does not do enough. There are still gaps in investments that need to happen. One of those gaps is to ensure that there is housing funding for the territorial governments. Territorial governments are not indigenous governments, so they would not be eligible to receive housing through URN.

I wonder if the member agrees that we need to ensure that territorial governments get a carve-out for housing.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, I mentioned \$82 billion, which is a significant amount of money. I am very proud of that amount of investment in housing. We need to do more at all levels, including to help support more of the indigenous needs in our country.

Last week, the Prime Minister was in the Northwest Territories. He did announce the construction of 50 new affordable homes in an apartment building in downtown Yellowknife. This project will support people who need it the most, including indigenous people, seniors, women, children and those living with disabilities.

We have to do more and we know we need to do more.

Mr. Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

It is a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to today's opposition day motion, because after eight years of the Liberal-NDP government and the Prime Minister, Canadians are hurting. The Canadian dream that my parents came to this country for is starting to slip away. Life is unaffordable.

Rent has doubled. Housing costs have doubled. The amount needed for a down payment has doubled. Mortgage payments have doubled. They have risen over 150%. Why? It is all because of the

Liberal-NDP government's inflationary spending and fiscal mismanagement, which have been continuously fuelling the inflationary fire.

Inflation is nearly double where it should be, and Canadians are now paying more for heating, eating and housing. Canada's federal debt for this fiscal year is projected to reach \$1.22 trillion. If we do the math, we are looking at nearly \$81,000 per household in Canada. The Prime Minister is simply not worth the cost.

The Prime Minister said, as I am sure many members remember, that deficits were supposed to be temporary, tiny deficits of not more than \$10 billion. He said he would only run modest deficits, but he broke that promise. He then promised to return to a balanced budget in 2019, but he broke that promise as well. Now the Prime Minister has broken the banks of Canadians.

To be perfectly clear, the Prime Minister and his Liberal-NDP government have added more national debt than all previous prime ministers combined. The current finance minister acknowledged that one of her goals was not to pour fuel on this inflationary fire, but she continues to spend, spend and spend. All this inflationary spending is causing a domino effect.

Mismanaged federal budgets, like budget 2023, which is adding an additional \$60 billion in new spending, are driving up our deficit. Deficits are fuelling inflation, and inflation is causing interest rates to rise. This cannot be argued because we have seen the Bank of Canada in action. The Bank of Canada has raised interest rates 10 times in the last 19 months. Even former Liberal finance minister John Manley said, per the National Post, "Trudeau's deficits press on the inflationary gas pedal, which forces the Bank of Canada to press harder on the brakes"—

• (1315)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the member is not allowed to use the names of members inside the chamber, just so he is aware of that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I think the hon. member got the information, but yes, hon. members are not to use names of parliamentarians who sit in the chamber.

The hon. member for Oxford.

Mr. Arpan Khanna: Madam Speaker, now Canadians are on the brink of losing their homes and their livelihoods.

Business of Supply

Just last week, I met with a home inspector who has done seven home inspections of homes in Oxford County that are going up for bank foreclosure. That is just in one week. Normally that would be in one year. That is the true impact of rising interest rates. The Liberal government encouraged Canadians to borrow when interest rates were at an all-time low, but now Canadians have one of the highest household debts of any other G7 country.

This is more than just numbers and dollars. It is about real people and the impact this has on their lives. I recently told this House of the single mother in Woodstock who cried at the door because she was struggling to put food on the table for her kids. There is the young couple in Tillsonburg who went to school and got a job but now cannot access the housing market because of the rising cost of housing. There is the senior who lives in Tavistock who now relies on handouts from his family because he cannot survive on his own. He has even looked at MAID as an option. These are real people with real, devastating human consequences.

The government needs a common-sense plan. If it stops the deficits, it will stop inflation from continuing to rise, it will stop the increasing interest rates and it will stop the defaults from happening. That is why we are calling on the government to bring its financial affairs in order. We are calling on the government to introduce a fiscal plan that includes a pathway back to balanced budgets so we can decrease inflation and interest rates. We need a plan because we know that budgets do not balance themselves. I hope all my colleagues will use common sense, cap spending, cut wasteful spending, balance the budget and bring home economic stability for all Canadians.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member made reference to the issue of deficits. He was not here at the time, so I will forgive him for not necessarily being aware of the fact that the Conservative members of his caucus voted in support of billions and billions of dollars to support Canadian businesses and individuals. A couple of years later, they are upset with the government for spending billions and billions of dollars.

I wonder if he feels there is any sense of hypocrisy when the Conservatives at one time were saying yes but now seem to be saying no. It sounds more like it is political wins that seem to be dictating Conservative policy.

Mr. Arpan Khanna: Madam Speaker, what I do remember is having a balanced budget under the Conservative government before the Liberals took office. I remember that very clearly.

My hon. colleague talked about spending during COVID. We did not sign up for the \$54 million of wasteful spending on the ArriveCAN app. We also did not sign up for the \$200 billion that they have spent that was not related to the pandemic during the COVID pandemic. Although my hon. colleague talked about that, I have a very clear memory and I know what it takes to get back to a balanced budget.

Right now, under the NDP-Liberal government, Canadians are struggling to put food on the table. We will fix that once we are in government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, to listen to the Conservatives, one would think that every bit of spending is inflationary spending.

Last week, the Government of Canada and the Government of Quebec finally came to an agreement on a program to speed up the construction of housing, something that we voted on a year and a half ago and from which we are now finally starting to see some results. The federal government will provide \$900 million.

I would like to remind the House that, at last count, there were 10,000 homeless people in Quebec alone. Does my colleague think that the \$900 million that will be used to build housing to help those 10,000 homeless people constitutes inflationary spending?

• (1320)

[*English*]

Mr. Arpan Khanna: Madam Speaker, I agree that because of the Liberal-NDP government's mismanagement, we have seen a crisis in housing. New Canadians, who come to this country with a dream of home ownership, are seeing their dreams fade away. We are seeing record numbers at food banks. We had 1.5 million Canadians going to a food bank in one single month. When I talk to local food banks, they tell me the same thing: When they saw interest rates go up, they saw an increase in local food bank use as well.

It is our job to keep fighting for the most vulnerable. We have to get our fiscal house in order. We cannot spend something we do not have. We do not run our households on our credit cards, and we should not run the government that way either.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, today's Conservative motion ignores the role of corporate greed and the rise of the cost of living. We know that working people and people on fixed incomes are going through very hard times, but we also know that the wealthy are getting wealthier.

Does the member support making sure that the wealthy pay their fair share of taxes, something they are not doing right now? Does the member support bringing in a wealth tax to begin to counteract the role of rampant corporate greed in our country and give Canadians a break?

Mr. Arpan Khanna: Madam Speaker, the member talks about greed. We have seen that with the Liberal-NDP government, which is greedy for taxpayer dollars. We have seen the government time and time again taking away hard-working Canadians' paycheques and then recklessly spending them on pet projects. We saw that with the ArriveCAN scam app, with \$54 million of hard-working Canadians' money going out the window. We saw that with the passport redesign, which cost \$161 million just to redesign the passport. We have seen government greed, with corporate insiders getting paid for insider contracts. We are going to stop that greed and put more money back into the pockets of Canadians.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to participate in this official opposition day debate on the cost of living, which is having a major impact on all Canadians.

[English]

First of all, let me pay my respects to my new colleague from Oxford, who delivered a very great and powerful speech, as everybody does here on this side of the House.

[Translation]

When we talk about inflation, that is a topic that, unfortunately, Canadians are concerned about the most today. Inflation is affecting everyone, but has the biggest impact on the least fortunate among us and on people who earn the least. That is the problem: Inflation affects everyone, but hits the least fortunate the worst. We have also seen that inflation is greedy and it infiltrates everything from housing to food to transportation.

The government has a major role to play in controlling inflation. Yes, inflation is affecting everyone, but it would not be so bad if we were fortunate enough to have a government that acted responsibly and controlled spending, which it has never done in eight years of governing. After eight years of Liberal governance, what do we see in this country? Inflation is too high and the cost of living is very high. Everything is more expensive and unfortunately the government is to blame for that.

We should remember that these fine people were elected in 2015 on a promise to run three small deficits and balance the budget in 2019. Many people thought it was bold to do that, ambitious even. Many people also knew that it would not work. Unfortunately, we were the ones who said that, and we were right because, in eight years, this government has never been able to balance the budget, control spending or keep its promise of zero deficit. This has a direct impact on inflation.

We should also remember that every time she is asked a question about this these days, the Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister keeps repeating to wait, that the economic update is coming and that we are going to see measures to control inflation.

I would remind the House that a year ago, almost to the day, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance tabled the economic update. What did she say at that time? Quite a lot, when you quote her. She said, "What all Canadians want right now is for inflation to keep coming down, and interest rates to fall....that is one of our primary goals in this year's budget: not to pour fuel on the fire of inflation".

What the minister said was ludicrous, to put it politely. A year ago, she said that we would have a balanced budget by 2028, and that anything less would amount to pouring fuel on the fire of inflation. Six months later, unfortunately, we got \$60 billion in new spending, \$60 billion worth of fuel that she poured on the fire of inflation. Today, we are struggling with that.

A year ago, the Minister of Finance said that the budget would be balanced by 2028. She did not meet that goal. Six months ago, she tabled a budget that not only ran a deficit, but, more important-

ly, did not include a plan for achieving a balanced budget. Last week, the Parliamentary Budget Officer observed that the deficit was set to exceed \$46 billion, 16% more than forecast six months ago.

These people have no management skills. After eight years of a government whose spending is out of control, Canadians are suffering the direct effects of inflation across the board.

Earlier, my colleague from Oxford was talking about food banks. My riding has the great privilege of having extraordinary volunteers, people whose hearts are in the right place and who work hard to help the less fortunate. However, they tell me over and over again, every time I see them, that food is a basic necessity and demand for their services is going up. Two years ago, people were bringing food to our most vulnerable to help them. Today, those same people are going to the food bank for help. It is outrageous that middle-class people in a G7 country have to line up at food banks. That is the reality of Canada after eight years of this government.

Inflation is affecting young people who want to buy a home. Mortgages, down payments and rents have doubled in the eight years this government has been in power. When people cannot afford proper food and a decent home, that means there are some deeply rooted problems. They are very significant problems that are hitting Canadians and Quebecers who are struggling with inflation.

● (1325)

That is why this government needs to seize the opportunity. Continued overspending will lead to broken dreams for the next generation.

This morning, the *Journal de Québec* and the *Journal de Montréal*, issued by the QMI Press Agency, published a survey conducted by Centraide of Greater Montreal, an agency that has been helping people everywhere for decades. This survey is quite worrisome because it reveals that people are experiencing increasingly high levels of financial anxiety. Some 85% of people say they feel anxious when they talk about their personal finances.

The survey reports on the financial anxiety index of Centraide of Greater Montreal and was conducted in collaboration with Leger. Claude Pinard, director of the Centraide of Greater Montreal, said the following:

People in poverty don't have a cushion, they're people who live day to day and try to get through the month. However, when you are this tight, your budget items are entirely occupied by housing and food. If you have credit card or other debts, and if they increase, you no longer have the capacity to pay the essentials.

This is increasingly the reality for many Canadians who are currently struggling with inflation and who see, as we do, as everyone does, that the government is doing nothing to curb inflation. As we know, the best thing a government can do to control inflation is to stop its uncontrolled spending.

Business of Supply

I was talking about young people. It is unworthy of a G7 country like Canada to let its young people lose their ambitions and dreams. The survey shows that 85% of Quebecers are experiencing varying degrees of financial stress. One of the fears reported is that young people aged 18 to 34 will never be able to own their own home. Nearly two-thirds of them think that way. Fully 61% of young Quebecers have given up on the possibility of becoming homeowners one day. What a sad reality. We need to get a handle on this situation.

To quote Mr. Pinard again, “When we know that it takes an annual income of more than \$100,000 to buy in Montreal, many young people say to themselves: we will never be able to buy. Many also do not see the suburbs as an option. They must therefore give up their dream”.

This is heartbreaking and gut-wrenching. At the ripe age of 59, I think I can say that we were all young once. We all had ambitions. We all dreamed of owning a home, as beautifully expressed in the song *Dégénération*, which was quoted by our leader in his speech at the Conservative Party convention in Quebec City. If young people lose this dream and see that home ownership in Canada has become impossible after eight years of this Liberal government, it means that we, as a country, as a nation, and despite all our pride, have really gone off the rails. We have to get back on track.

That is why today's motion aims to get the government back on track. The government needs to get its head out of the sand. The government needs to realize that after eight years of uncontrolled spending, we are now paying the cost. It is never too late to do the right thing. That is why we are asking the government to do what any manager should do when a crisis hits: Have a game plan for balancing the budget. We are not asking for a miracle. We are simply asking the government to do what it promised in 2015 but then promptly forgot, and that is to balance the budget. It is the very foundation of the economy. It is at the very basis of respecting the promise made in 2015. It is at the very basis of restoring the confidence and hope of young people who one day want to own their own home, but who today are seeing that dream being shattered by the inflationary crisis that has hit the country and by the irresponsibility of this government, which continues to spend, spend, spend.

In good faith and with the best of intentions, I invite the government to pull itself together, get back on track, and introduce a plan to return to a balanced budget, for the good of all Canadians.

• (1330)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is interesting. What the Conservatives fail to talk about or recognize with respect to Canada's inflation rate compared to that of the United States is that, at its worst, in June 2022, Canada hit its record of 8%, while the United States was, I believe, closer to 9%. If we fast-forward to today, Canada's inflation rate is still less than that of the United States.

As much as the Conservative Party likes to say how Canada is broken, which it is not, we still understand the importance of dealing with the issue of inflation in order to support Canadians. That is why we brought forward legislation to be able to provide things

like grocery rebates and housing support programs for new rentals. Why does the Conservative Party ignore that fact and, to top it off, continue to filibuster government legislation that would provide support to Canadians?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague from Winnipeg North for the victory of his daughter, who was elected two weeks ago in the provincial election.

Speaking of winning elections, let me remind him that he won in 2015. At the heart of his commitment in 2015 was a zero deficit by 2019. I know the member, and he knows this story very well. I am quite sure he is not very proud to be part of a government that, in the last eight years, has never brought the budget to a zero deficit. I hope that this time, he will listen to us.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I never doubted my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent's good judgment. I know that he is a seasoned, very rational parliamentarian.

That being said, should we not cut off the greedy barons of Canadian society when it comes to balancing the budget and supporting the less fortunate, those who are having trouble putting a roof over their heads and food on the table, the people the member often talks about? Should we not cut off the oil companies, which will be getting \$83 billion in financial support by 2025?

Yesterday, when we talked about this in committee, a Conservative member apologized to the representatives of Suncor because we were asking them tough questions. Does that not go against common sense? I would like to hear the reasoned comments of my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the quality of his question, because the last time he asked me a question, his tone was a little different.

That being said, it is rather curious to note that his party's policy is to dig deep into Quebecers' wallets, since the Bloc agrees with the second Liberal carbon tax. They had two opportunities to vote against it, but they voted in favour. Worse still, that does not go far enough for the Bloc Québécois, which wants to radically increase consumption taxes. I am sorry, but we really have to disagree with the Bloc Québécois, because voting for the Bloc Québécois is far too costly.

• (1335)

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I certainly have respect for my colleague across the way, but with the Conservatives, much of the common sense plans are usually on the backs of the people who can least afford it, the people currently living in poverty. We know the Conservatives' plans for helping those with mental health and addictions issues. We know through research, and certainly in my riding, that under a Conservative government, we are seeing record numbers of overdoses right now. To me, it is not common sense to not listen to public health experts. I am wondering whether my hon. colleague agrees with me that part of having a common sense plan is to ensure having a plan to help people struggling with addictions that follows public health advice, which is to support safe supply and safe consumption.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, the point is that in the last weeks, in the last months, and we can even say in the last years, governments applied some policies that did not work. Those policies are not working. This is the reality. This is why we need to have a more common sense plan to address this difficult and touchy issue. The point is that in the last years, those policies did not work.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in today's opposition motion debate. I first want to congratulate the Conservatives on bringing forward a motion that is not directly associated with the issue they have been bringing forward time after time in the House. Now, we get to talk about something a bit different, although I do have great concern with the premise of the motion they have brought forward. The “whereas” clauses and the assertions they have made are, I think, wholly inaccurate, and I look forward to explaining that in the next 10 minutes or so.

This country certainly took on a lot of debt in order to support Canadians from coast to coast during the pandemic, and we have certainly had to take on our fair share to do that, much of which was unanimously approved by the House, particularly at the beginning of the pandemic. However, it is always important to look at things in terms of context. Obviously, debt is significantly affected by GDP, the amount a country is able to produce in terms of economic activity, because that is exactly what will end up supporting that debt. When we talk about the debt in this country and when we look at the debt-to-GDP ratio, Canada is actually doing quite well.

As a matter of fact, if we look at our debt-to-GDP ratio, we are at 14%. Some people might ask whether that is good or bad. That is fair, because I do not think everybody is an economist and knows the default answer to that, but let us compare that 14% in Canada to the percentage for our G7 partners. France is at 99%. Germany is at 47%. Italy is at 129%. Japan is at 161%. Probably the two most comparable to us, the U.K. and the United States, are at 95% and 96%. When we talk about our debt levels, it is extremely important to compare where we stand on them to the position of our G7 counterparts, our most comparable economies in the world. In that regard, we are in an extremely good position.

I would add that I will be sharing my time with the member for Kings—Hants today.

Business of Supply

That is very important for context. I know that Conservatives, including this lot here, like to come into the House and routinely tell us about how theirs is the only party that knows how to introduce a balanced budget. They may want to go ahead and cheer and clap now, because usually they do that when I try to pay them a compliment, before I add the “but”.

It is really important to consider this: Conservatives will tell us that they know how to balance budgets, but if we look back to—

An hon. member: We do.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, they said “we do”. They will then have to explain the following facts to me and why they did the following. Since 1990, there have been only two prime ministers who have significantly added a surplus or balanced a budget. They were Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin. This is interesting, because Conservatives will always say that Stephen Harper balanced budgets, but no, he did not, and Brian Mulroney never had a single balanced budget. Stephen Harper did not really either, and I will explain why. The first two budgets Stephen Harper brought into Parliament were on the heels of Paul Martin's surpluses that he had been running for years. The Conservatives certainly squandered those surpluses and went into a deficit position very quickly.

Of course, Conservatives also like to tell us, and I have heard it already this morning, that they left the fiscal state of this country in great shape in 2015 with the last budget they presented in a last-ditch effort to get Canadians to vote them into office one more time. They brought forward a “balanced budget”, and for the purposes of Hansard, I should say I am putting “balanced budget” in quotes, but they did it on the backs of veterans by closing Veterans Affairs offices. They sold off our shares of GM at the time at bargain prices in order to get that off their balance sheet. They did a whole host of things in order to portray the illusion that they had balanced the budget, when they really had not. They did it at the expense of Canadians and the investments the government had on behalf of Canadians.

• (1340)

I know that many will say this was so long ago, 10 years ago for Harper and even longer for Mulroney. Fine, let us just get back to this lot of Conservatives right here. All of them who are here today ran on Erin O'Toole's plan in the last election, and that plan was to run deficits for a minimum of 10 years. Here we have a group of Conservatives who are now coming into the House with a motion that says to develop a plan for a balanced budget by October 25 of this year, a week and a half from now. Meanwhile, they had no intention of doing so when they were running in the last election. They did not care when they were knocking on doors and presenting their plan to Canadians. The plan from Erin O'Toole and the Conservatives was to run deficits for at least 10 years. That is the reality of it.

Business of Supply

This should be concerning to Canadians, because this is not the first time that we are seeing hypocrisy come out of the Conservatives. It is actually the second time. They also ran on a plan to introduce a price on pollution and to modify the existing price on pollution that this side of the House had. They ran on that, too.

This morning, somebody challenged them and asked a Conservative member why they ran on that. That Conservative member stood up and said, "I did not believe in it." That is funny, because that is the second or third Conservative I have heard say they were not running on a price on pollution or a carbon tax. However, they had no problem going along with the plan during the election. They did not say a single word in opposition to it at the time. Now, suddenly, they come in here and think that the buzz phrase of the day is going to be "axe the tax", and this would bring them into power. That is not the position that somebody who is aspiring to be the leader of this country should be taking, asking what buzzwords happen to work today that would get him into power.

I also find it very interesting when we talk about inflation specifically. Today we have seen that Statistics Canada has reported that the inflation in Canada has dropped to 3.8%. I should add that all the economists who were predicting this in advance of today said it would be anywhere between 3.8% and 4.2%. It ended up being on the lower end of that. Conservatives are laughing.

Maybe it is time to compare that. I did it earlier, and I can compare it again. Let us compare it to the G7 countries. Again, Canada and the United States are tied for second place in terms of the lowest inflation. I think it is extremely important when we talk about our comparative countries.

Canada is heading in the right direction when it comes to inflation, but interestingly enough, when we look at inflation and the different sectors of the economy, transportation is one of the only sectors of the economy contributing to inflation, and it is the biggest contributor. It is interesting because the member for King—Vaughan was up earlier, and I asked her what proposals she would have to reduce the inflationary impact around transportation. Of course, the exact answer that I think everybody in this room would have expected, and I certainly did when I asked the question, was to get rid of the carbon tax, because the carbon tax is contributing to inflation.

The reality of the situation is that the carbon tax is not contributing to inflation. Tiff Macklem, the Governor of the Bank of Canada, recently said that the overall impact of the carbon tax to inflation is 0.15%. I believe he was in Alberta at a Chamber of Commerce meeting. We could chalk that up to a rounding error. Now I know the default for my Conservative friends would be to jump up and say that they do not trust Tiff Macklem; they have already made their position on that very clear.

I have a whole list, and I will not bother reading it right now, of Conservative MPs who have stood up in this House and invoked the name of Tiff Macklem as the expert when he has all the right things that they want to say at the moment. They cannot pick and choose when they want to use somebody as an expert in the field.

It goes without saying for the rest of us in the House, other than Conservatives, that Tiff Macklem is an expert in this field. When he

says that the carbon tax contributes 0.15%, I am sorry to the member for King—Vaughan, but getting rid of the carbon tax is not going to be helpful. It is not going to be the solution as it relates to inflation specifically.

• (1345)

Once again, we are confronted with a motion by Conservatives. All they are interested in is political games and cheap shots at the Prime Minister.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate that my colleague always brings high-mindedness and elegance to his debate in this House of Commons. However, today in his speech, he talked about economic and financial numbers again. I know he is way out of his depth whenever it comes to those debate points.

He talked about our debt-to-GDP being 14%. Nobody says Canada's debt-to-GDP is 14%. As a matter of fact, he can google it himself. Canada's combined provincial federal debt is \$2.1 trillion, and our GDP is about \$2.3 trillion. It is almost the same. It is almost 100%, much like the other countries he brought up and referred to.

Would he take a lesson in this and say that, yes, it is much higher than 14% and, therefore, must be addressed? Can we do it with this bill?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, first of all, it is not a bill. It is a motion from the opposition calling on the government to, within 10 days, create a plan. It knows full well this motion is not going to pass. This is part of the politics of it. This is what we see from Conservatives time after time.

Based on what I have been listening to in this House, it does not appear that any political party is going to vote in favour of this, other than the Conservatives. They do not come into this room with an interest in trying to find consensus or build policy. If the member genuinely believes that, then I suggest he might want to take a lesson in the politics that his leader plays daily, because this is not the game that they are playing.

All they want to do is have a gotcha moment that they can put the government into. That is what they are doing, unlike some of the other parties in this House that genuinely come in here, although we have differences, and try to bring forward ideas on policies that we can work on together.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind members that if they have questions and comments, they should not think out loud. They should wait until it is time.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I am very sorry that the member is feeling a little traumatized by the member for Kingston and the Islands'—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is not really a point of order.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

Business of Supply

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I certainly do not support the Conservatives' nonsense plan.

The Liberals go on and on about how they help people, but I cannot see that in my riding. In fact, I have never seen anything look so bad, with a Conservative government that we just finally got rid of and a federal Liberal government.

We have a really bad housing crisis. We have record numbers of overdoses in our city, and people are finding it harder to make ends meet. Who are the Liberals helping? They are helping their corporate buddies in the grocery chains. While New Democrats are calling for a real plan, their plan is to meet with corporate leaders to see if they will do the right thing. Meanwhile, we have to cut coupons.

Does the hon. member agree that the Liberals need to do more?

• (1350)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, first of all, I would say that I have a really good feeling about the way that this federal government will be able to work with the new government, although not of the same political stripe, in her province. I have great faith in that.

Perhaps the member has not heard it, but in this House, from this spot, I have been very outspoken about the greed that I see, particularly within the grocery sector. If she has ideas, because I know the NDP has been talking about this quite a bit, I am all ears in listening to them.

I will just say one thing about something she said at the beginning of her question that I thought was very interesting: the Conservatives' non-common sense plan. It reminds me of another Conservative politician from Ontario, Mike Harris. He came up with the same slogan of the "common sense revolution", and we know how that worked out. We know what that did to water throughout the province of Ontario and what ended up happening.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again I would remind members that if they have thoughts, they should hold on to them until it is time for questions and comments.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I want to go back to something that the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands was discussing, and that is the impact of the carbon tax on inflation and the numbers that have been found.

I noted, as to the member's comment, that the impact of carbon pricing has been up to two cents a litre, but the impact due to war profiteering from the oil and gas sector has been up to 18¢ a litre. Does he have any comments on that?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I am not sure if this is a set-up, because the member recently watched a video that I did on this exact topic, but it is true.

The carbon tax last year, year over year, contributed two cents per litre on average. The profit margins, or the wholesale profits of the oil and gas sector, was 18¢. Where is the outrage from Conser-

vatives when it comes to those wholesale profits, when they are nine times what the carbon tax is?

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as always, it is a privilege to rise in this place and talk to opposition day motions. As I said before, and will say again, it provides an opportunity for the opposition parties to put forward some level of policy intent and ideals. For Canadians watching at home, opposition day motions are not binding on the government in any way whatsoever, but they allow us to debate the topics that opposition members want to raise.

Today, of course, the motion is broadly around fiscal prudence and the idea that the Government of Canada needs to continue to focus on maintaining fiscal balance. I could spend a lot of time going through the text of the motion, but folks at home will know that it is there. However, I want to talk a little bit about some of the concerns I have.

I will build upon what the member for Kingston and the Islands said, which is that I feel as though, with these opposition day motions, there is always a poison pill. There are always lines in there that, in my personal view, become disingenuous and are then used as a political tactic.

Canadians do not watch this place every single minute of the day; they are busy, and they are working. However, they get highlights, such as clips on social media, to see what we are up to.

For example, last week, the Conservative Party put forward an opposition day motion on carbon pricing. There are a number of reasons I voted against it, but, in part, it was because the carbon price motion in question had a lot of elements that I felt were not factually true. The motion talked about such things as removing all elements of carbon pricing and not just adjusting the federal backstop, which I am on record for saying. However, of course, the Conservative Party takes that, without context, and puts together a little montage of images and puts it out, in my mind, to gin up a lot of animosity and misinformation around what does and what does not happen in this place. I suspect today will be the same, as has been said by the member for Kingston and the Islands. I have not been part of the debate all day, but the member had said that the government, the NDP and probably the Bloc will vote against this, and the Conservatives will go out with some fake outrage on social media to drive concern about it.

I will start by saying that, of course, the concept of fiscal responsibility is an extremely important one. I was pleased to see this government actually announce on October 3 that the President of the Treasury Board was asking all ministers and all departments to look at ways that they can find cost efficiencies so that there can be an ability to reduce departmental spending without impacting the programs that really matter to Canadians. That is a responsible approach.

Statements by Members

The Minister of Finance will have a fall economic statement forthcoming in this House, presumably in the next couple of weeks, or certainly before Christmas. It seems to me that the fall economic statement will highlight the finances of the country and how we are striking a very difficult balance between making sure that we have programs that matter for Canadians and at the same time making sure that we manage the debt burdens that the country and the government have.

Again, I have chastised some of my Conservative colleagues over the years for being very quick to point to certain elements that they would like to see changed, but they do not highlight a whole lot of the programs that they would cut. In the middle of the pandemic, we would hear one Conservative member stand up in this House and say that the government is not doing enough to support businesses that are being impacted by the pandemic. The next member would stand up, literally on the same question, and say that this government is spending too much money on programs in the middle of the pandemic. In fact, the leader of the official opposition is on record saying that the pandemic-related programs that mattered to small businesses and individuals at a time of great uncertainty were “big fat government” spending. He can tell that to the small businesses in my riding, to the restaurant owners and the people who were supported through a very difficult time, which helped give them a bridge to where we are today.

The Conservatives will offer this opposition day motion without any detail on what they would cut in terms of spending. Of course, they will cherry-pick certain elements for political gain, but the question is this: Would they walk back child care if they were to form government? I do not know, but I would love to hear from them on that, and I am sure Canadians would too. Would they walk back environmental progress? Well, we know that is indeed the case, and they have been very clear on that. What about such programs as the dental program, which we have worked as a Parliament to help introduce and which this government has put forward? That program is really going to matter for seniors in Kings—Hants. In fact, I know that my seniors are eagerly awaiting the announcement before Christmas about what those programs could look like.

• (1355)

That is not to say that I do not believe in making sure that the government is balanced in terms of its spending. In fact, in this House, any time I get the chance to do so, I am up on my feet talking about it. What is not recognized in the text of this opposition day motion is that Canada has one of the best debt-to-GDP ratios in the G7. Our deficit size in relation to G7 countries is also one of the best. That is never mentioned from the opposition benches.

I know there are challenges right now on affordability. In the House, the member for York—Simcoe said we cannot eat a AAA credit rating. I guess he was saying people cannot eat AAA. We could eat a AAA steak, but we are trying to balance a credible pathway on finances versus delivering for Canadians.

There are a couple things I think are important. The text of the motion says that in order to try to avoid future interest rate increases, the government needs to introduce a balanced budget essentially by October 25. The government is going to introduce its fall eco-

nomic statement, and it will talk about those things in the days ahead.

Let us make no mistake about the interest rate increases we are seeing. The Conservative Party would like to suggest they have to do with government spending, and yes, that may play a marginal part. However, there is a war in Ukraine. There is a war in Israel and the Palestinian territories. There are factors like climate change-related events and demographics.

A lot has happened around the world that is actually driving interest rates. I think, when having an intellectually informed policy debate about interest rates and how they correlate to bringing down consumer spending when there are broader events, there is a lot to be said.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, October 17 is the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. This day is a moment to reflect on the amazing strides we have made as a world in reducing poverty, but also to recognize that there is still much to do.

Between 1990 and 2014, the world made remarkable progress, with Canada being a leader in helping more than a billion people to move out of extreme poverty. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine have caused the cost of food to skyrocket throughout the world, putting 150 million people on the verge of returning to extreme poverty.

Canada has long been a leader in the fight to eliminate global poverty and we are well positioned to continue that leadership. I would like to thank Results Canada, a non-profit agency with over 500 volunteers across the country, for its more than 35 years of work to end extreme poverty. Let us continue together to explore ways to eradicate poverty in Canada and around the world.

* * *

MARK TENNANT

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the late Mark Tennant. For over a quarter century, Tennant was the face of the University of Saskatchewan women's volleyball program. He coached the Huskies to three straight national titles in 1979, 1980 and 1981. He was named national coach of the year four times in his career.

Mark Tennant's contribution to the sport of volleyball spanned over four decades as a player, coach, technical leader and international representative. He was inducted into numerous halls of fame. Tennant single-handedly changed the game, establishing Supervolley, one of Canada's largest and most prestigious open tournaments, which ran for over 20 years.

Our deepest sympathies go to his wife Gail; their three children Darcy, Derek and Breanne; and grandson Wick.

* * *

CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK

Mr. Shaun Chen (Scarborough North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, October 16 is World Food Day, established by the United Nations to drive change and raise awareness of worldwide hunger and poverty. One of the organizations doing just that is the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, a national partnership of 15 Canadian churches and church-based agencies acting for the future of food.

Today, Canadian Foodgrains Bank representatives from across the country are here in Ottawa for Hunger on the Hill, meeting with elected officials to discuss the global food crisis. They are engaging in courageous conversations about the connections between food systems and climate change, gender equality and food insecurity. As the world experiences a period of heightened conflict, sustainable solutions are now more important than ever.

Tonight, I am co-hosting this year's parliamentary reception with Canadian Foodgrains Bank and I invite all parliamentarians to join us in the fight against hunger.

* * *

[Translation]

VIOLENCE AROUND THE WORLD

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since Hamas's terrorist attacks on Israel, there have been acts of violence around the world that could end up turning the Middle East conflict into a global one.

In the space of just a few days, a teacher in France was killed by a radicalized former student, two Swedish tourists in Belgium were murdered in the name of the Islamic State and a six-year-old boy in the U.S. was killed and his mother seriously injured by their landlord because they were Muslim.

This murderous madness must end. Nobody can take justice into their own hands no matter how angry they are. Peace cannot be achieved that way, only a chain reaction leading to more violence and more tragedy.

The Bloc Québécois laments these innocent victims, stands strong with their loved ones and vigorously condemns all who give themselves over to hatred that serves no cause but chaos.

* * *

[English]

CANNABIS

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, exactly five years ago today,

Statements by Members

Parliament passed the Cannabis Act, legalizing access to recreational cannabis in Canada. It created a \$43.5-billion boost to our GDP, 98,000 jobs and over \$1.2 billion a year in tax revenue to the provincial and federal governments.

It also created a regulated cannabis market that protects public health and has not increased youth consumption of cannabis or realized any of the other fears that were raised in the debate in this place. Rather, legalization has meant that people no longer get criminal records for simply possessing cannabis, which unjustly constrained the ability of Canadians to secure housing, employment and travel for many decades.

Canada became a world leader by legalizing cannabis in 2018, but our experience since shows that we must continue to work on the legal framework to maintain our advantage. We need to reform the regulatory structure that is causing significant challenges to the industry and those who would consider joining it. We need to improve enforcement to displace the ever-existing illegal market and facilitate the expungement of records for those who have been criminalized in the past. As this legislation is reviewed, I look forward to working with all members in this place to bring these and other changes into effect.

* * *

● (1405)

LAWRENCE ROBIDOUX

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great Canadian, Corporal Lawrence Robidoux, a veteran who paid the ultimate price during the Korean War.

Corporal Robidoux was born in Radville, Saskatchewan in 1928, to parents Joseph and Eva. He moved to Rhode Island following World War II.

Lawrence joined Company B, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, U.S. Army, at age 19. In June 1950, his battalion was the first to be sent into Korea, and in November of that year, Corporal Robidoux and 77 others were officially listed as missing in action.

For 60 years, his family tried to locate his remains and, in January 2023, through DNA testing, the army announced that he had been found. Sadly, he died as a prisoner of war in North Korea, in May 1951. This past Friday, Corporal Robidoux's remains were laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honours, giving some much deserved peace and closure to his family.

His country needed him; he answered the call. We shall not forget.

*Statements by Members***FAMOUS FIVE**

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on October 18, we celebrate the courage of the Famous Five, trail-blazing women who, in 1929, succeeded in the challenge to the Supreme Court, when they referred the matter to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, thus leading to the historic decision that, yes, women were indeed persons and could become senators. The new definition was then adopted by many countries, that the word “persons” always means women and men.

Last week, I was proud to attend and speak at the unveiling of the Famous Five maquette at Mount Saint Vincent University, a fitting host, given that the Mount is celebrating its sesquicentennial, 150 years of opening doors to women and girls.

I thank the leadership at the Mount, Famous 5 Foundation CEO Frances Wright, maquette sculptor Barbara Paterson and all women leaders who contributed to such a meaningful event.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Milton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the violence in Gaza, the West Bank and Israel has left many Canadians in deep pain and in a state of trauma. Our neighbours in Milton have shared how the violence and bloodshed have caused them immeasurable pain, fear and heartbreak.

Islamophobia, anti-Arab racism and anti-Semitism are on the rise in Canada and that is a direct result of the violence in the Middle East. This is completely unacceptable. I unequivocally condemn the brutal terrorist attacks by Hamas on innocent Israelis and I want to reiterate the words of the Prime Minister. Hamas are not freedom fighters or a resistance. They are terrorists and they do not represent the very legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

Nothing justifies violence against innocent civilians. This senseless violence must end immediately. I call for the release of all hostages and strict adherence to all international law. I urge the establishment of a safe humanitarian corridor for essential aid for Gazans.

Everyone I have talked to is desperate for genuine allyship and support. We must be there for one another.

As Canadians, we are an example to the world of how neighbours of different backgrounds can live in harmony, how diversity is a strength and that peaceful coexistence is always something worth striving for.

* * *

● (1410)

CARBON TAX

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, mortgage rates and the cost of food and fuel are making it impossible for Canadian families to live. I have heard from neighbours and friends who have expressed that the NDP-Liberal government is out of touch with Canadians and is driving in the wrong direction.

The Prime Minister promised to bring down the cost of food, but Thanksgiving has come and gone, and food costs continue to escalate.

With the exception of only one Liberal member of Parliament, the NDP-Liberal coalition continues to support the increased costs of production and transportation of food by supporting the carbon tax. The only thing the carbon tax is doing is uniting Canadians against it. They are exhausted, desperate, failing and falling far behind.

Canadians deserve relief, and the Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

* * *

MARY LAMB

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Mary Lamb, a palliative care pioneer, passed away recently in Oakville. She became the director of nursing at Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital in the 1980s, where she and her colleagues helped to pioneer the development of a palliative care program at the hospital.

Mary's passion for dying with dignity led her back to the Royal Victoria Hospital for special training in palliative care. She always said that it was not about the quantity of life, but the quality of life.

In 1983, she hired the first part-time palliative care coordinator at OTMH. She always had a deep passion for promoting evidence-based care practices, which led her to her interest in therapeutic touch, a recognized modality with the College of Nurses of Ontario.

I presented Mary with a well-deserved pin in honour of her work to ensure that all people in Canada can die with dignity.

I offer Heather and her family my deepest sympathy. May they know that Mary's work and legacy will live on.

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[Translation]

BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this Liberal government, after eight long years of disastrous mismanagement, the government is introducing a second carbon tax with the help of the Bloc Québécois, which wants to radically increase this carbon tax by twice voting with the government. The Bloc Québécois is not thinking about Quebecers who are struggling to make ends meet, families or our seniors when it supports a second carbon tax.

Voting for the Bloc Québécois is making our meals more expensive. Voting for the Bloc Québécois is making it more expensive to put gas in our cars. Voting for the Bloc Québécois is making it more expensive to keep a roof over our heads. What is more, the Bloc Québécois voted to repeal minimum sentences and voted against our motion on housing.

The Liberal government is worn out. Canadian families are dealing with thousands of dollars in new costs because of massive deficits and punitive tax increases introduced by this government. The Liberal government refuses to withdraw its second carbon tax from Quebec, a decision supported by the Bloc Québécois.

Quebeckers must not be misled by the Bloc Québécois, which supports the Liberal-NDP coalition.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on October 7, the world woke up to an unspeakable horror. Hamas terrorists had brutally invaded Israel, intentionally killing over a thousand Israeli civilians and taking hostage over 100 more.

More Jews were killed that day than on any single day since the Holocaust, for no other reason than they were Jewish. They were children, babies, men and women. They were young people just out listening to music at a dance party. This was an unprecedented, brutal, intentional attack.

We must not let anyone tell us that Hamas is the legitimate voice of the Palestinian people. It is not a government. Its members are not activists or freedom fighters. It is not a resistance movement. It is a genocidal, murderous terrorist death cult and it must be defeated.

The Conservatives unequivocally condemn the invasion of Israel by Hamas terrorists and affirm Israel's right to defend itself against these barbaric acts.

* * *

• (1415)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the significant role that both mining and forestry have in my riding of Nickel Belt, northern Ontario and throughout Canada in ensuring economic opportunities for everyone.

Strong supply and services mining companies part of MineConnect provide thousands of well-paying jobs all over northern Ontario.

Last week, I chaired a round table group in Espanola concerning the closure of a local pulp and paper mill. The municipality has shown really true resilience. I commend Mayor Gervais and the council for their efforts to support local businesses.

Mining and forestry are both at the heart of northern Ontario's heritage, with a highly skilled workforce, good careers to many

Statements by Members

generations of families, jobs for indigenous people and a strong culture of innovation.

Canada continues to be a global leader for sustainable mining and forestry.

As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, I ask all members of the House to thank the countless dedicated workers of the mining and forestry industry, FPAC, the Forest Products Association of Canada and the Mining Association of Canada.

* * *

MEL BEVAN

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour the memory of Sm'ooyget Satsan, Mel Bevan, a remarkable leader who dedicated his life not only to his beloved Kitselas First Nation but to the advancement of indigenous people right across the country.

Mel wore many hats in his 82 years. He was a band councillor, chief councillor, band manager, chief executive officer, treaty negotiator, consultant and author. He was also a hereditary chief, a day school survivor, a fluent Sm'algyax speaker, a father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

Mel's greatest legacy by far is the Kitselas treaty, something he spent the last three decades of his life negotiating. When that treaty goes to a ratification vote sometime next year, it will stand as a great testament to Mel's vision and his love for his people, the Gitselasu.

T'oyaxsut nuun, Satsan. May he rest in peace.

* * *

[Translation]

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Though rarer in men, breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in women. One in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime. Some 28,000 Canadians are diagnosed with breast cancer every year.

Of course, the survival rate has improved, which is good news. To do even better, we must continue to screen for cancers to detect them early and, above all, we must continue to support the development of ever more effective treatments by increasing research budgets and providing talented researchers with the support they deserve.

Our hearts go out to all those who are battling cancer.

*Oral Questions**[English]***GROCERY INDUSTRY**

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after inflationary policies and eight years of the tax and spend-NDP-Liberal government, Canadians are paying more than they ever have for food, over 17% the last two years alone.

The Prime Minister promised by Thanksgiving that he would freeze prices. Perhaps he meant by American Thanksgiving.

However, it gets worse for Canadian families. For the 20 million Canadians who have a pet, pet food is up over 25%. Families struggling to put food on their tables are also struggling to put food in their pet bowls. Even pets know the Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

The industry minister today said that he wished he knew what the plans were to lower grocery prices. The answer is simple: cut the excessive inflationary spending and axe the carbon tax.

All Canadians know that with grocery prices up 17% and pet food prices up 25%, the government's handling of grocery prices is for the dogs.

* * *

• (1420)

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's Jewish community has been here since 1760. We have had high and low points in our history, but never in my lifetime has the 400,000 strong Jewish community in Canada felt so vulnerable.

The dramatic rise in anti-Semitism over the last decade has been compounded by Hamas terrorists brutally attacking our friend and ally Israel.

This week, hundreds of Jewish community leaders from across Canada are in Ottawa for a conference presented by CIJA, JFC-UJA and Canada's Jewish federations.

[Translation]

They are here to speak directly to parliamentarians about the anti-Semitism that they face both online and in their communities, and to make important recommendations for action.

[English]

Tonight there is a reception at the Shaw Centre. I encourage each and every member of the House to join me there so we can show solidarity with the Jewish community at this difficult and emotional time.

ORAL QUESTIONS*[Translation]***HOUSING**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, eight long years, this Prime Minister is not worth the cost of mortgages. The cost of housing has in-

creased by 100% since he took office. He printed \$600 billion, which inflated real estate prices and forced people to take out large mortgages. Then, his deficits drove up interest rates.

When will he reverse his inflationary policies to lower interest rates and allow Canadians to keep their homes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the austerity being preached by the Leader of the Opposition will not help anyone access housing. That is why we are taking bold steps to get more affordable housing built faster.

The Minister of Housing is working directly with municipalities across the country to find ambitious, community-specific solutions to the housing challenges they face. We have signed housing accelerator fund agreements with London, Vaughan, Halifax and Hamilton, and we have just signed an agreement with Quebec. We will continue to be there to help people.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years under this incompetent Prime Minister, Canadians are already living with austerity, while the government, which is not worth the cost or effort, is living large. I met a worker from the Seaspan shipyard who bought an ordinary house in Vancouver. Because of interest rate hikes, he is now paying \$7,500 a month for his mortgage, and \$4,000 of that is interest.

Will the Prime Minister finally reverse his inflationary policies so that this worker can keep his house?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the Leader of the Opposition does not seem to understand is that the cuts he is proposing will not help these workers or Canadians. We are here to help Canadians with investments and agreements with municipalities to create more housing while ensuring that we keep the lowest deficit and the best debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. We have kept our AAA rating.

At the same time, Canadians have the right to know where the Leader of the Opposition wants to make cuts. Does he want to make cuts to child care or dental care? Those are programs he campaigned against.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight long, miserable years, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. He massively increased the money supply by \$600 billion, inflating housing costs by over 100%. That forced one Seaspans shipyard worker, who I met last week, to buy a normal house for over a million dollars. Now interest rates have gone up because of inflationary deficits, something the Prime Minister promised would not happen, and he is forced to pay \$7,500 a month on his mortgage while supporting his three kids.

Will the Prime Minister reverse his inflationary spending so that this gentleman, his wife and three kids can afford to keep their home?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one thing is clear. The cuts, the austerity, that are proposed by the leader of the official opposition would not help that family, would not help Canadians from coast to coast to be able to afford a new home or the homes they are living in even. That is why we are continuing to work right across the country to bring forward ambitious and community-specific solutions to the housing problems they are facing. We have signed housing accelerator fund agreements with London, with Vaughan, with Halifax, with Hamilton, with the Province of Quebec and have more to come.

The cuts he is proposing will not help Canadians. Our investments, done responsibly, will continue to help Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the middle-class shipyard worker paying \$7,500 a month on his mortgage is living austerity now. What the Prime Minister is talking about is abundance for the government and austerity for working class people, who must carry him and his overpriced bureaucracy around on their backs.

That gentleman has three kids, in their adolescence, to raise, paying for their sports while keeping a roof overhead. How does the Prime Minister expect them to pay \$7,500 a month to fund his overpriced interest rates that result from his deficits?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is proposing to cut spending. The reality is that we have the lowest deficit in the G7, we have the best debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7 and we have preserved our AAA credit rating. We are fiscally responsible, as we support people with things like the grocery rebate, with investments that are bringing down inflation and by working with the different grocery chains.

The reality is that Canadians have a right to know which programs he would be cutting. Would he be cutting child care for families? Would he be cutting dental care for kids? Would he be cutting pensions for seniors? He has campaigned against all three of those measures for Canadians.

The Speaker: Before the hon. Leader of the Opposition asks his question, I would ask members to please restrict their comments to the time they are recognized by the Chair to have the floor.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the Prime Minister is just not worth the cost.

What would I cut? I would start with the \$54-million ArriveCAN app, which is now under police investigation. Then I would get rid of the \$35-billion Infrastructure Bank, which pays bonuses but has not completed a single infrastructure project. Why do we not throw in the \$100 million-plus contracts to McKinsey, a company that helped cause the opioid crisis.

Speaking of all the waste that the Prime Minister forces on Canadian taxpayers, when it comes to the ArriveCAN app, it is now under police investigation. He covered up previous bad behaviour under SNC-Lavalin. Will he at least co-operate with the RCMP investigation into the ArriveCAN app?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again we see that the Conservatives are all about cuts, not about investing and building a stronger future. I recommend that the Leader of the Opposition take a ride on the great REM in Montreal, which the Canada Infrastructure Bank helped build. It has helped thousands of Canadians see themselves being part of the future in a responsible way.

We are going to continue to build a stronger future for Canadians by making the right investments, by keeping fiscally responsible and by staying away from the kinds of cuts that the Conservatives continue to put forward.

The Speaker: Once again, I am going to ask colleagues to please restrict their comments to when they are recognized to have the floor.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of co-operation, I asked the Deputy Prime Minister a few questions yesterday. Perhaps this came as a surprise to her, because the answers we received left much to be desired and were rather vague. I would like to put them directly to the Prime Minister this time.

The Quint group, which is made up of the United States, Germany, Italy, France and the United Kingdom, has become quite a force, with a tremendous capacity for diplomatic and political intervention. It is surprising that Canada is not part of it. I asked the Deputy Prime Minister about it yesterday, and now I am asking the Prime Minister. Has he spoken with President Biden about being added to the group?

Oral Questions

• (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as our colleagues are well aware, Canada is working very closely with all of its allies around the world. We had a call with the G7 foreign ministers this morning to better coordinate our efforts and ensure that aid gets into Gaza. We must be there to provide humanitarian assistance while this terrible crisis continues in the region.

We have evacuated Canadians. We have been working with our allies. We continue to push for evacuations of civilians from the affected areas. We will continue to work with all of our allies and we will keep the lines of communication open.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we agree that this is very much a humanitarian situation. The international community must take humanitarian action, but it must do other things too. The Prime Minister's answer was long, but what he meant was that, no, he will not be part of the group, which has a lot more power to influence and intervene than even the G7 does in this context.

Because I want to know more and understand better, yesterday I suggested that the Prime Minister invite all party leaders to meet and discuss these matters privately so we can all be on the same page and more easily build consensus around this crisis, which is bigger than our debates here and our current political issues. Will that happen?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that was a very good suggestion. I have asked my team to follow up, which they will do in the coming days, to make sure the party leaders have access to all the necessary information. This is a time for Canadians to stand united. I know people in various communities across the country are worried. They fear for their loved ones. They also fear for their children and their communities.

Our job is to try to reassure people. I think all 338 members of the House have a responsibility to reassure people, to focus on our shared values and to be there for one another.

[*English*]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, hundreds of Canadians are stranded in Gaza. We have heard the distressing accounts of Canadian citizens who have been told to evacuate but have nowhere to go. Water, food and medicine are running out. Canadians waiting at the closed Rafah border crossing are pleading for help, saying they are looking for any glimpse of hope. Lives are at risk. We cannot abandon them or the hostages.

Will the Prime Minister ensure today that all Canadians can safely get out of Gaza?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the past 10 days, we have been directly focused on the safety of Canadians and all innocents in the region. We have effectively airlifted out over 1,300 people from Tel Aviv. We have seen more buses come out of the West Bank, and we continue to be extremely concerned about the hundreds of Canadians and their families in Gaza.

We are working with the international community. I spoke with President al-Sisi about the Rafah border crossing. I spoke with many allies about that. We are working directly to ensure humani-

tarian corridors into Gaza and exits for civilians, particularly foreign nationals like Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have to put a stop to the death and destruction going on in Israel and Palestine.

We just learned that a hospital may have been hit in Gaza. The New Democrats have called for the release of hostages and a ceasefire. Some Liberal members also called for a ceasefire, but the Prime Minister rejected these calls.

Is the Prime Minister willing to agree today that Canada must now push for the release of the hostages and a ceasefire?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have called for the release of hostages from the start. The situation is devastating. We are also calling for compliance with international and humanitarian law. Being there to help civilians is important.

The news about the hospital is shocking and unacceptable. We are there to ensure that we are doing everything in our power to make sure international law is upheld, civilians are protected and hostages are released.

* * *

• (1435)

[*English*]

FINANCE

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, do members remember the middle class and those working hard to join it? Do they remember that the Liberals would take on more debt so Canadians did not have to? Do they remember that the budget would be balanced in six years? Those were the promises, and after eight years there is no talk of the middle class anymore because it is underwater from Liberal-NDP spending sprees. Now the budget will be balanced in the year never.

Has the finance minister completely lost control of the books, or is there a new promise this week about when she will actually stop the inflationary spending so that Canadians do not lose their houses?

Oral Questions

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am always happy to work for the middle class. We are always happy as a government to continue supporting the middle class. The Conservatives, on two occasions, voted against a tax break for the middle class, and now they pretend to care about the middle class. I am confused. We have legislation on the floor of this House that would stabilize grocery prices and would help build more homes from coast to coast in this country. I know that many Conservatives are voting in favour of that bill; they have said so publicly. What about the leader of the Conservative Party? Will he vote for this bill?

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not working. It has been eight years, and the only thing Canadians know after eight years is that the Liberals are not worth the cost. Canadians are struggling, and the Liberals are continuing their ballooning deficits that drive up inflation. Even the Liberals are saying that deficits increase interest rates.

Will the finance minister finally confirm for Canadians that she will balance the budget in a specific year so that interest rates can come down and Canadians can keep their homes?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would remind my colleague opposite that Canada continues to have the lowest deficit among all G7 countries. I would also advise her, in case she missed the news this morning, that Statistics Canada announced inflation has come down in Canada. That is because our plan is working.

However, we know that Canadians still need support, which is why, before this House at this very moment, we have legislation that would help to reduce grocery store prices for Canadians. Why are the Conservatives playing partisan games with the interests of Canadians and of the middle class?

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, the federal deficit is projected to exceed \$46 billion this year according to the independent budget officer. This spending is driving up interest rates and mortgage costs to the point where people are worried they will not be able to afford to keep a roof over their head.

We know the Prime Minister is not worth the cost, so when will he finally stop his inflationary spending and reduce the deficit so that Canadians can afford to keep their homes?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the questions coming from the Conservatives, but I wonder if they are keeping up with the announcements made by our government. About an hour ago, we announced new measures that will help reduce costly banking fees, which Canadians have told us are a very real irritant for them. This is real support for Canadians.

We are going to enhance low-cost and no-cost chequing accounts for Canadians. We are going to make sure that Canadians get repay-

ment relief from their banks. We are acting every single day in the interests of Canadians in order to help them meet the moment. Where are the Conservatives? They are nowhere.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, after eight years of the government, it is too little, too late for many struggling people. We know the government's housing crisis brings with it a generational divide. According to a survey reported on by BNN Bloomberg, nearly 70% of young people have chosen to delay their home purchase. Why is that? They cite rising interest rates and rising home prices. That is why people are overpaying for an individual room or are simply trapped in their parents' basement.

I ask this again: Why does the government not stop its inflationary spending so that Canadians can afford a home?

● (1440)

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an example of recklessness is the Conservatives' record on housing. There was \$300 million spent when they were in power on housing, and less than 100 homes were built. What is also reckless is the fact that they would abandon municipalities that want to build more homes.

We have put on the table \$4 billion for municipalities to assist them in building more units. The cities of London, Hamilton and Vaughan have signed on. Other communities are coming to the table. Halifax is there.

We have more to do. We are serious on this agenda. The Conservatives have no plan on this issue.

* * *

[Translation]

FINANCE

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years under this Prime Minister, the situation in Canada continues to deteriorate. That is what the Parliamentary Budget Officer says. It is hard to believe that things could get worse, but they can. Spending and the deficit are even higher than projected. That is nothing new with this government, which only knows how to do one thing: waste taxpayers' money.

Will the government finally admit that the budget will not balance itself? Will it be responsible and stop this inflationary deficit?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it seems the Conservatives once again failed to look at what we presented. We presented an action plan to stabilize prices in Canada. The first thing the plan will do is ensure that Canada's grocers are accountable to Canadians, something that the Conservatives would never have considered. We also helped consumer groups, another thing that the Conservatives would never have considered.

Oral Questions

Will the do-nothing Conservatives at least vote for Bill C-56 to help Canadians for once?

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what does the minister have to say to Montrealers who have to earn \$116,000 a year if they are thinking of buying a property? Elsewhere in Canada, in Toronto for example, a house hunter would need an income of \$235,000, and in Vancouver, they would need an income of \$250,000.

It is easy to understand why young people have lost hope of ever becoming homeowners. This government has abandoned our middle class and abandoned young people.

After eight years of catastrophic mismanagement, will the government commit to immediately putting an end to its inflationary spending so that our young people can one day hope to become homeowners?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I represent a riding in Montreal. Having spoken to Montrealers, I can say that they are afraid the Conservatives will set us back. We can expect cuts from the Conservatives, cuts in pensions for our seniors, cuts for families with young children. They will certainly set us back—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Colleagues, it is important that just one person speak at a time, that being the person who has been recognized by the Chair.

I will ask the parliamentary secretary to start her answer from the beginning.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to my colleague because I know for a fact that Montrealers are afraid that the Conservatives will set us back, because the Conservatives are going to cut pensions for our seniors and subsidies for families with children. They will certainly set us back on the environment and the fight against climate change.

I am surprised to hear a Conservative colleague talk to me about Montreal, because right now I can tell you that Montrealers are not interested in the Conservative plan.

* * *

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this summer, the CEO of the Suncor oil company told his shareholders that he was fed up with the fight against climate change. Poor thing. According to him, Suncor has been too focused on the energy transition and needs to get back to selling oil, which means producing more oil and more pollution.

However, the federal government renewed \$83 billion in subsidies in the last two budgets, particularly with the intention of helping oil companies reduce their pollution. Suncor admits that it can-

not be bothered to pollute less, but that it still wants taxpayers' money. Greed is part of its DNA.

When will the federal government cut public funding to Suncor?

• (1445)

The Speaker: I would like to ask members once again not to talk while another member is speaking. I would like to direct my comments in particular to the hon. member for Calgary Signal Hill because I can hear his voice clearly from across the House.

The hon. Minister of Environment.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have good news for my colleague.

We have already cut fossil fuel subsidies. We are the first G20 country to do so. We did it two years sooner than all of the other partners. We even went a step further. We committed to eliminating public funding as well, unlike any other G20 nation, and we will do so by next year.

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Suncor's CEO added insult to injury yesterday in committee. He thinks the energy transition is an exercise in futility.

Did members grill him during the meeting? No, the Conservatives protected him by preventing me from asking him questions. Not only that, but one Conservative actually apologized to Suncor on behalf of Canadians. The Liberals were just as bad because they never raised doubts about their subsidies, even though Suncor plans to produce more oil and pollute more.

Are the Conservatives and Liberals registered oil lobbyists now?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have more good news for my colleague.

We implemented measures to make sure the oil and gas sector does its fair share to fight climate change in Canada. We have regulations to reduce methane emissions by at least 40% by 2025. We will hit 65% by 2030. That is one of the most ambitious targets in the world. We are also about to table draft regulations to cap greenhouse gas emissions for the oil and gas sector. We are the only oil-producing country in the world to do so. We are committed to fighting climate change and to working with Canadians to do it.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, according to S&P Global, Canada will be one of the global drivers of oil production in 2024. With the 5.3 million barrels a day it wants to produce, Canada will be one of the main sources of the world's increased crude oil supply. With support from the Liberals and Conservatives, it is not just Canada's climate change targets that the oil companies are threatening, it is the whole world's targets.

When will these two parties realize that Canada is the engine of a train that is heading straight for a wall?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have more good news for my Bloc Québécois colleagues.

Between 2019 and 2021, our greenhouse gas emissions in Canada declined by 50 million tonnes. That is the equivalent of removing 11 million vehicles from our roads. The pandemic was over in 2021, something my hon. colleague on the Conservative side fails to understand.

On this side of the House, we are committed to fighting climate change, developing an economy that will be there for decades to come and create tens of thousands of jobs across the country.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every day I hear from Canadians that after eight years of the Liberal-NDP government, they are unable to pay their bills. Recently, Rob wrote to me, telling me that he can barely afford his mortgage payments, so he and his wife have started selling off their personal possessions to pay their monthly bills. He realizes that the Prime Minister is just not worth the cost.

When will the Prime Minister stop his irresponsible spending, which is driving up inflation and driving up interest rates, so Canadians can afford their homes again?

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the housing crisis, as we know, is underpinned ultimately by a crisis in supply or the lack thereof. What the government is doing is partnering with municipalities across the country. For federal dollars, municipalities have the chance to build more. In London, for example, 2,000 more units of housing will be built in exchange for a \$74-million investment.

What we have also done is to put forward Bill C-56, which, if members look at it, is a serious bill that would remove the cost of taxes, of GST specifically, for rental construction. The Conservatives have nothing to say on that.

• (1450)

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the housing crisis is directly related to inflationary spending. This inflationary crisis is also impacting communities all across this country that are losing volunteers. Specifically, some volunteer firefighters have told me that they are unable to afford their mortgages, so they have stopped volunteering and have taken on second and third jobs just to make ends meet.

When will the Prime Minister admit that after eight years of the current government, they have failed Canadians and they are just not worth the cost?

Hon. Jenna Suds (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it terrifies me to think of the reckless cuts that the Conservatives would make on the backs of Canadians. We have supported families with our national \$10-a-day early learning and child care program, saving families hundreds of dollars, as well as the Canada child benefit. The best part is this: empowering parents by empowering mums and dads to get back into the workforce, giving them economic independence and contributing to our economy.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after years of irresponsible Liberal governance, inflation rates are rising, and so are mortgage rates.

However, let us remember that almost a year ago today, the Minister of Finance very proudly said that her government would balance the budget in 2028.

Six months ago, when the budget was tabled, that promise was scrapped. It was just not kept. Just last week, the Parliamentary Budget Officer determined that the next deficit will be 16% higher than expected.

Are the Liberals aware that their completely irresponsible management is hurting all Canadians?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for my Conservative colleague, so I would like to correct him. Statistics Canada confirmed today that inflation in Canada has dropped.

With regard to his questions, I would also like to mention that our government will, of course, update the House on our revenues in this fall's economic statement. That is coming soon, as members know. My colleague will, of course, have access to the numbers and will be able to analyze them. I would be pleased to answer his questions after that.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is precisely the problem. This time last year, they said they were going to eliminate the deficit. That is not true at all. That is why we are very skeptical when they announce such things.

Anxiety is a growing reality among young Canadians. Today's Journal de Québec and Journal de Montréal report that 61% of young people fear they will never be homeowners. Claude Pinard, the head of Centraide of Greater Montreal, has said that many young people are realizing that they will never be able to buy a home, so they are giving up on their dream.

To be young and have your dreams crushed is very un-Canadian. Will this government finally understand that in order to curb inflation, the government must at the very least control its spending?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent, but does he know what is really causing anxiety among young people? It is the idea of having the Conservatives in power, which means cuts, cuts and more cuts. That is what young people are afraid of. That is what my colleague does not understand.

We on this side of the House understand that we had to invest in Canadians, invest in the economy and invest to fight climate change. That is what Canadians expect from a responsible government. The last thing they want is a Conservative government.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my region has seen the largest increase of unhoused people on record, with a 106% jump in the Comox Valley and almost 70% in Campbell River. This is a catastrophe. The Prime Minister says housing is not a federal responsibility, while people and communities move beyond a crisis point. This is while Conservative council members at Campbell River have begun targeting non-profits that provide essential services to the unhoused.

When are the Liberals going to be an actual federal partner and build people homes?

• (1455)

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in fact, if we look at the record not just in British Columbia but also across the country, we see that the federal government has been a partner. To not-for-profit organizations that are doing the outstanding work on the ground, the result is obvious. Sixty-nine thousand people who were on the street are no longer on the street. They are housed now, quite often with the wraparound supports that they need in order to transition to something better. Add to that 122,000 people who were very close to homeless who are no longer in that position. They are housed as well through the national housing strategy.

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GROCERY INDUSTRY

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' out-of-touch plan of nicely asking rich grocery CEOs to lower prices has not worked. Wishing and hoping that rich CEOs will do the right thing will not help families put food on the table. Grocery prices are still going up after 22 months. Canadians expect action, but the Liberals are out to lunch, and the Conservatives are all words and have no real plan.

When is the minister going to get real about helping Canadian families, and support the NDP's plan to lower food prices?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure members that there was nothing nice about my meeting with the five grocery CEOs in Canada. I expressed the frustration of 40 million Canadians who are struggling to put food on the table, and I asked them, on behalf of all Canadians, to do their part to stabilize prices in Canada.

If all the members of Parliament want to do something to help Canadians, they can vote for Bill C-56. It is that simple: more competition, lower consolidation and more food on the table for Canadians.

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HEALTH

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want a strong health care system that allows them and their loved ones to get the care they need when they need it. Last week, the government signed the first bilateral funding agreement with British Columbia, investing more than \$1.2 billion over

the next three years to improve access to family health services, support our health workers and increase mental health and substance use support in B.C.

Can the Minister of Health please update the House on how the recent agreement will help the health care system and impact the lives of British Columbians?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Cloverdale—Langley City, who continues to be a champion for better health and for health transformation. He is absolutely right. Last week was a huge week for British Columbia and a huge week for Canada. We saw the investment of \$1.2 billion in collaboration over the next three years, but that is part of a 10-year plan to help transform health care in B.C. and, indeed, across the country.

It is going to mean reducing wait times. It is going to mean increasing support for health care workers. It is going to mean providing more support for mental health and substance abuse. It is also going to mean that people in B.C. would see in indicators exactly how their health system is getting better.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the minister of industry has just admitted that 40 million Canadians are struggling to put food on the table. Eight years of out-of-control spending by the NDP-Liberal government has caused that inflation. This harmful inflation has pushed up interest rates, doubling and tripling mortgage payments and rent. Ninety per cent of Maritimers are having to make tough choices between eating, heating and paying the rent.

When will the Prime Minister stop harming Canadians with his inflationary deficits and balance the budget to lower costs on Canadians?

Hon. Gudie Hutchings (Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, down east in Atlantic Canada, we have a saying: "Tory times are hard times."

What people in Atlantic Canada tell me about is their fear of the Conservative cuts. I would like to remind members and give a little history lesson on what happened when the previous government was formed by the party opposite. It closed the marine search and rescue centre in St. John's, Newfoundland. That centre looked after over 500 call-outs every year. What did we do? We reopened that centre. We know how important search and rescue is for the Maritime provinces and Atlantic Canada.

• (1500)

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal minister is talking about search and rescue when Canadians cannot put food on their tables.

Melody Horton of Bridgewater had to sell her dream home because of the increase in her mortgage costs. She does not agree with these Liberals that they have never had it so good. The new projected deficit of \$46 billion for this year means higher costs and higher monthly payments for Melody and for all Canadians, including that Liberal minister's constituents.

The Prime Minister is not worth the cost. When will the Prime Minister stop harming Canadians with his inflationary deficits and balance a budget to lower costs on Canadians?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what can we expect from the Conservative Party of Canada? We can expect cuts and more cuts. Being the minister responsible for Veterans Affairs, I know that, when its members were in power, they slashed our employees by 1,000. They cut nine Veterans Affairs offices, including one in Corner Brook, Newfoundland. When we formed government, that was the first office we opened because we recognize our veterans need the help and the support. We will be there for them.

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SENIORS

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Mr. Speaker, seniors, such as Ford Snow of Gander, are finding out after eight years that the Prime Minister and his Liberal-NDP coalition are not worth the cost. Reckless inflationary deficits have driven up interest rates, forcing landlords to raise their rents. They have had no choice. Ford's rent has gone up by 22% in a year. He is left without a nickel to spare.

Will the Prime Minister stop his inflationary spending to reduce interest rates and give renters like Ford a break on their rent?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the poverty rate among seniors has gone down significantly since we formed government in 2015, and that is because we increased the OAS, increased the GIS and reversed the Conservative policy of increasing the retirement age to 67.

This was a policy that was not announced here in this chamber, nor was it announced in this country. It was announced by the prime minister of the day in Davos at the World Economic Forum, where the former prime minister also added in his speech that the Canada pension plan does not need to be changed. On this side of the House, we agree. The question is, do they?

* * *

[Translation]

HOUSING

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers are worried about debt. Young people fear that they will never be homeowners. That is what we read this morning in a Quebec newspaper this morning. After eight years of

Oral Questions

this Liberal government, with the complicity of the Bloc Québécois, our young people are pessimistic about the future. They see that it is costly to vote for the Bloc, just as it is costly to vote for the Liberals.

What new measures will be taken now to help our young people realize their dreams of home ownership?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the tax-free first home savings account is a perfect example of how we are working to help our young people become homeowners. It is a way for them to save money on their tax return and invest more in their down payment for their first home.

* * *

CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we hear a lot of talk about the CBC's upper management these days, but never for the right reasons. There was the n-word incident, then there was the podcast translated in Paris because, as everyone knows, the Quebec accent lacks international appeal. The latest is a memo to reporters reminding them not to call Hamas terrorists. We all know that Hamas's horrific attacks constitute terrorism. Journalists know it, and they also know how to use words, even the most loaded ones.

Will the minister remind CBC management that newsrooms must remain absolutely free not only from political influence but also from ideological influence?

• (1505)

[English]

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has been clear. Hamas has been recognized as a terrorist organization and a terrorist group. We have said that repeatedly, and the Prime Minister has said that, but we also believe in an independent CBC. That is what the CBC is. It has been that way under Liberal and Conservative governments.

Conservatives may want to meddle in independent journalism. They cannot seem to keep their hands out of public institutions, but we will keep working hard to ensure that Canadians get access to—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Colleagues, I frankly could not hear the answer from the parliamentary secretary. I would ask that we have good decorum in the House.

I will ask the hon. parliamentary secretary to take it from the top.

Oral Questions

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: Mr. Speaker, our government has made it clear that Hamas is a terrorist organization. We have said that, the Prime Minister has said that, and we will keep saying that, but on this side of the House, we will also keep working for an independent CBC that is well funded to do the good work of providing quality journalism to Canadians. This is, on this side of the House, a priority for us, as it is a priority for all Canadians.

If Conservatives or others have a challenge with the CBC, they are welcome to write to the ombudsman.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives may not applaud as vigorously for me. I agree with my colleague that the CBC and Radio-Canada do outstanding journalistic work, and that must be protected. Journalists, however, know how to use loaded words. Journalists know how to describe the despicable acts committed by Hamas on October 7. That is their job.

However, CBC management's directive is something else entirely. It looks a lot like censorship. CBC higher-ups are actually muzzling the press. They are taking a political stance. That is absolutely not the broadcaster's mandate. Yes, CBC management is independent, but I do want to ask the minister the following question.

Does she think that, as a matter of principle, CBC management should be getting involved in journalists' work?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have always been clear. Hamas is a terrorist group that has committed countless atrocities. That has always been clear.

CBC/Radio-Canada is independent, but we see the translation issue as unacceptable. We have some incredible talent here at home and the translation could very well be done here by Quebec artists or francophone artists from across Canada.

* * *

• (1510)

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight long years, one would hope that the government would figure out that sound, responsible, economic and monetary policy is key to keeping inflation low. Instead, inflation is nearly double what it should be, resulting in massive increases in food, heating, rent and mortgages. Canadians living paycheque to paycheque recognize that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. To make matters even worse, we have the NDP supporting the government's fiscal incompetence.

Will this NDP-Liberal Prime Minister start listening to Canadians, stop inflationary spending and cancel the carbon tax?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the colleague for the question, but I am really surprised that she is not talking about the historic investment announced in her riding yesterday. Umicore invested \$3 billion in her riding, creating 600 jobs for young people to stay in her riding.

We are building the economy of the future. We are investing in electrical vehicles. The member should be rejoicing that we are making smart investments to create growth in this country.

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, grocery inflation is up this year over \$1,100 for families. Emissions are up 2.1%, making Canada 58 out of 63 in its commitments. The job-killing, no-more-pipelines Bill C-69, coupled with the carbon tax, now quadrupled, comes precisely at a time when our energy would secure the world, lower emissions and guarantee Canadians could eat, heat and house themselves.

Will this Prime Minister admit that, after eight years, his NDP-Liberal government is not worth the cost?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it really is shocking that Conservatives are claiming to be on the side of Canadians and helping them with affordability when their very allies in the Alberta government in the UCP are trying to take the pension plans of Albertans out of the Canada pension plan to have a reckless, unstable Alberta plan.

While those Conservatives stand on the sidelines and do nothing, we are going to defend the Canadian pension plan in Alberta and across the country.

* * *

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's Supreme Court has verified what Conservatives have been saying for a long time, and that is that the Liberal government is out of line, out of step and out of touch when it comes to respecting provincial jurisdiction.

Its reckless spending is only outdone by its unconstitutional attack on Canada's energy sector, the very sector that we will need to pay off Canada's debt. After eight long, miserable years of this Liberal-NDP government, Canadians know this Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

Will the government, for once, work with Canada's provinces and industry, and commit today to repeal Bill C-69?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the very sorry things about the conversation coming from that side of the House is the complete rejection of the need to ensure we have a sustainable environment going forward, that the price of entry, in terms of building a strong economy, means actually having a view about environmental sustainability.

When that party was in power, Conservatives gutted the environmental assessment process. They destroyed the faith that Canadians had that we were protecting the environment and we were respecting indigenous rights. We have put in place better rules. We certainly respect the decision of the court, and we will be making the appropriate amendments to ensure the environment is protected and the economy moves forward.

* * *

● (1515)

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was happy to join the Minister of Small Business to kick off Small Business Week in Montreal, where we met amazing small businesses such as Camillette Jewelry, Unel and Cookine. Les Délices Lafrenaie, a small must-try bakery located in my riding, is one of the many businesses that form the backbone of our economy.

Can the Minister of Small Business tell us how the government is supporting the hard-working, innovative and diverse entrepreneurs across our country, who represent 98% of our businesses in Canada?

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Small Business, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, happy Small Business Week to the small business owners and entrepreneurs all across this country. It was terrific meeting with some of these incredible folks in Montreal. I want to thank my colleague for joining me.

Since 2018, our women entrepreneurship strategy has helped over 22,000 women start up and scale up. Yesterday I announced a nearly \$3-million investment for École des entrepreneurs du Québec to support close to 2,000 women entrepreneurs in Quebec and across Canada.

Despite the Conservatives voting against this program and others like it, we will always support Canada's incredible women-owned and minority-owned business.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, media reports reveal the RCMP could not pursue their criminal investigation against the Prime Minister and his SNC-Lavalin scandal because he was hiding secret documents from the federal police.

If any other Canadian hid documents from the RCMP, they would end up in jail. After eight years of this Liberal-NDP government, the Prime Minister thinks he is above the law. Canadians know that he is not worth the cost.

What are the documents that are so damning that the Prime Minister is hiding them from the RCMP? Why is the NDP trying to help him get off the hook?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the RCMP have confirmed, there is no active investigation. The case is closed, and authorities did not pursue any charges.

Oral Questions

My hon. friend knows very well the RCMP operations are conducted independently from government. If he has operational questions for them, I would suggest he contact the RCMP.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Iranian regime supports Hamas and is responsible for death and destruction throughout the world.

Yesterday I asked the House to support my Bill C-350 to list Iran's IRGC as a terrorist organization, and therefore to shut down their operations in Canada. However, the Liberals refused.

After eight years, why are Liberals still refusing to hold this regime accountable, and why are they continuing to allow the IRGC to operate here in Canada?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is well known that Iran is a state sponsor of terrorism. We share the understandable concern of many Canadians with regard to Iran's role in the state sponsorship of terrorism.

As my colleague knows, decisions around listing terrorist entities are based on the advice of our security professionals. I have obviously asked them to update this advice for the government and we will take all necessary decisions as soon as it is appropriate.

* * *

JUSTICE

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, we hear reports of Canadians crying out for help with their mental health, but being offered assisted death instead.

The government refused to listen to mental health experts, to veterans, to disabled people and to indigenous Canadians. It did not listen to the family whose mother begged for help, but instead was euthanized before her kids could even say goodbye.

Canadians overwhelmingly oppose this overreach on assisted suicide. Tomorrow, we can end this madness by passing Bill C-314.

Will the government give Liberal MPs a free vote? This is for the whip, yes or no?

Oral Questions

• (1520)

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the mental health of Canadians is a fundamental priority for me and everyone in this chamber. The issue of MAID is a deeply personal and complex choice. It involves balancing the protection of the vulnerable, as well as the autonomy and freedom of choice of individuals. Those decisions always need to be made commensurate with the charter protections that exist.

This is why we need to be vigilant in terms of ensuring our decisions are informed by evidence and expertise. Our government is moving to restrike the joint committee of parliamentarians to deliver that expertise and advice. I hope the official opposition can support us in that endeavour.

* * *

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is undeniable that technology is progressing at an unprecedented rate, significantly transforming our society faster than ever. Artificial intelligence continues to advance and reshape the world around us.

Could the minister share with the House the steps the government is taking to ensure that Canadians are prepared for the massive societal and ethical implications of artificial intelligence?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague knows, and as Canadians know, Canada is a global leader in AI and Canadians have created many of the world's best AI innovations. At the same time, Canadians take the potential risks around AI very seriously. That is why we are committed to ensuring that Canadians can trust the AI system. Through our voluntary code of conduct, leading Canadian companies will adopt responsible frameworks for advancing their AI systems to strengthen safety and trust.

We will work to ensure that Canada's AI policies are adapting to a rapidly changing world.

* * *

CHILD CARE

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day in Ontario, but where is the respect when the government keeps their wages low?

A new report from the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care shows the staffing crisis is threatening the success of the national child care program. This is not a worker shortage; it is a respect shortage, a dignity shortage and a wage shortage.

Will the Liberals implement a wage floor of at least \$25 an hour for child care workers now?

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the people who take care of our children day in, day out deserve to be well respected and well compensated. Building out a national early learning and child care system takes time, it takes effort and it takes hard work with our partners. We need to attract and retain our ECEs across the country. To

do that, we need them to have better working conditions and competitive pay.

We have been clear with the provinces, the territories and our partners that we are working toward that and we expect that along with them.

* * *

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is time for a wealth tax. Canadians For Tax Fairness revealed that most of us are taking key steps to tackle climate change. At least 90% of us have cut down our carbon footprint by over three tonnes per person in the last 30 years, but the ultra-wealthy are working against us, increasing their pollution by 34 tonnes per person over that time. This is a result of decades of Liberal and Conservative governments giving the ultra-wealthy a free pass while Canadians are doing the heavy lifting.

Why are the Liberals refusing to make the ultra-wealthy pay their fair share?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my hon. colleague that in a recent podcast on a very popular Canadian show, one of her ex-advisers to the federal NDP and many provincial NDPs was asked, point-blank, what he thought people would remember of this Liberal government. He said that they would remember it as the first government to take climate change seriously in the history of Canada.

I agree with this NDP adviser. We are the first government in the history of Canada to take climate change seriously, which is why we have put forward more than 100 measures to fight climate change. It is working. We have reduced emissions in Canada by the equivalent of removing 11 million cars from our roads.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1525)

[*Translation*]

**CANADA—NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
ATLANTIC ACCORD IMPLEMENTATION ACT**

The House resumed from October 16 consideration of the motion that Bill C-49, An Act to amend the Canada—Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: It being 3:25 p.m., pursuant to order made on Monday, October 16, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment of the member for Cariboo—Prince George to the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-49.

Call in the members.

● (1540)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 419*)

YEAS

Members

Aboulttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chambers
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Deltell
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Gallant	Généreux
Genuis	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Khanna	Kitchen
Kmieciak	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Lawrence
Lehoux	Leslie
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	Maguire
Majumdar	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Moore	Morantz

Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Poilievre	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Scheer	Schmale
Seeback	Shields
Shiple	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vis	Vuong
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Williams	Williamson — 114

Government Orders

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bérubé
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Champagne
Champoux	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Gainey	Garon
Garrison	Gaudreau
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gill	Gould
Green	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen

Government Orders

Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Joly	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouhillier
Lemire	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
McPherson	Mendicino
Miao	Michaud
Miller	Morrice
Morrissey	Murray
Naqvi	Ng
Noormohamed	Normandin
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Pauzé
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Rayes	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Rota
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Sinclair-Desgagné	Singh
Sousa	Ste-Marie
St-Onge	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thériault	Therrien
Thompson	Trudel
Turnbull	Valdez
Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vignola	Villemure
Virani	Weiler
Wilkinson	Yip
Zahid	Zarrillo
Zuberi — 209	

PAIRED

Members

Bergeron	Jones
Sorbara	Zimmer — 4

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

[*Translation*]

The next question is on the main motion.

[*English*]

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.

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

• (1550)

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

(*Division No. 420*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bérubé
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Champagne
Champoux	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Dancho
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Desbiens	Desilets
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Dong	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fillmore
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Frasier
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Gainey
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Khalid	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Kwan	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lametti

Business of Supply

Lamoureux
Larouche
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendicino
Michaud
Morrice
Murray
Ng
Normandin
Oliphant
Pauzé
Plamondon
Qualtrough
Robillard
Rogers
Rota
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Singh
Ste-Marie
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Therrien
Trudel
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Villemure
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

Lapointe
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lemire
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Miao
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
O'Connell
O'Regan
Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski
Rays
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sahota
Saks
Savard-Tremblay
Schieffe
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sinclair-Desgagné
Sousa
St-Onge
Tassi
Thériault
Thompson
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Vignola
Virani
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi — 210

Jeneroux
Khanna
Kmiec
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lantsman
Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lobb
Majumdar
Mazier
McLean
Moore
Morrison
Muys
Patzner
Perkins
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Rood
Scheer
Seeback
Shiple
Soroka
Stewart
Stubbs
Tochor
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson — 113

Kelly
Kitchen
Kram
Kurek
Lake
Lawrence
Leslie
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
Maguire
Martel
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Melillo
Morantz
Motz
Nater
Paul-Hus
Poilievre
Reid
Richards
Ruff
Schmale
Shields
Small
Steinley
Strahl
Thomas
Tolmie
Van Popta
Vidal
Vierson
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams

PAIRED

Members

Bergeron
Sorbara

Jones
Zimmer — 4

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

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

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

* * *

● (1555)

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—FISCAL PLAN

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I left off talking about the importance of the government, and ultimately the Liberal Party, being somewhere between the two prisms that we see in the House. As I said, the Conservative opposition day motion is not binding on the government. The opposition party has not put forward any detailed plans of what exactly it would cut in terms of program spending. I think it is important, and it is incumbent upon the government to find that fiscal pathway.

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Arnold
Barlow
Berthold
Block
Brassard
Calkins
Carrie
Chong
Dalton
Deltell
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferreri
Gallant
Genuis
Godin
Gourde
Hallan

Aitchison
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Bezan
Bragdon
Brock
Caputo
Chambers
Cooper
Davidson
Doherty
Dreeshen
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Findlay
Généreux
Gladu
Goodridge
Gray
Hoback

Business of Supply

It has been mentioned in the House, both during question period and indeed during this debate, that Canada has the lowest deficit in the G7. We also have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. We have an AAA credit rating. Those things are important, but they are never recognized on the other side of the House.

Can we do more? Absolutely. I am proud of the work that the President of the Treasury Board has done in terms of signalling a program review to look at departmental savings. I think that is a great start, and members know that part of what I talk about a lot in the House is non-cost measures. I am evangelical in terms of reducing red tape, and I think that there is more work, respectfully, that the government can do on that front. However, it is incumbent upon all members of Parliament to actually be providing reasonable solutions, ways that we can do that. I will be presenting a private member's bill tomorrow, in which I will be calling on the government to adopt, either in the fall economic statement or in budget 2024, reduction of the regulatory tape around approvals for products that matter for farmers. I will have more to say about that. There is a lot we can do, but at the same time, we have to walk a careful balance because Canadians are relying on the programs that we have.

The point I want to make before I give way to my hon. colleagues and engage in some great debate questions is on the assumption of getting back to balance tomorrow, which I think is a laudable goal and something we should be working towards. The assumption is that if we did that tomorrow, all of a sudden interest rates would drop precipitously. I do not think that is going to happen. With respect, I think that it is a bit immature or disingenuous for the opposition party to suggest that interest rates, tomorrow, would go from 5.5%-plus all the way down, back to normal rates. That is not going to happen, and there are a lot of global factors that play into that.

As I have said, I think we could actually welcome a very mature debate about monetary policy and how, of course, the Bank of Canada is working to do its job. However, there are other factors that are global in nature in the way that our economy actually works right now and that are fighting against our monetary policy. There are global conflicts that we have talked about, such as the war in Ukraine. There is a new war between Israel and Hamas. There is climate change, and there are demographic challenges and supply challenges. These challenges are leading to increasing costs such that the Bank of Canada, notwithstanding its work, is going to struggle to be able bring down interest rates.

I will leave it at that, and I look forward to taking questions from my hon. colleagues.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been a pleasure to work with my colleague on a number of committees along the way. I heard his comments with respect to our immaturity. However, I would call the Liberals' policies an abject failure. The price of housing has doubled. Rents have doubled. Food bank usage is up three to five times. We have had numerous witnesses before the finance committee come and say that things have never been worse, yet the Liberals keep telling Canadians that things have never been better.

Maybe it is different in Kings—Hants than it is in Northumberland—Peterborough South, but times are tough. We need serious government and not this immaturity.

● (1600)

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, my comments were never meant to draw the ire of the opposition. It is simply that when I read the text of the motion and what the Conservatives are proposing, the idea that it would bring interest rates back to balanced is unrealistic. I do not mean to offend the opposition party. I know they have tough skin on that side. This government is trying to walk a balance between being fiscally prudent and making sure the programs that matter to Canadians are in place.

They talk about going back to balance. I think that is important. The government has already shown some steps in the right direction. My question for the Conservatives is this: What programs that matter to Canadians would the Conservatives like to see taken away to help us get back there? That is an extremely important question.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think that there are some things on which we can agree. First, public spending is needed in times of crisis, that is obvious. Even when we are not in a crisis, public spending is needed, which can sometimes create deficits. Of course, balancing the books must not be synonymous with brutal austerity, like in the disastrous days of triumphant neo-liberalism.

At the end of the day, what this motion calls for, despite the Conservatives' usual overblown rhetoric, is the introduction of a plan. To govern is to anticipate, as they say. The government will table a plan. When this plan is before us, we will debate it to see whether it is a good plan to get back to a balanced budget.

What is wrong with that?

[*English*]

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, I apologize. In normal times, I would try to respond in French, but that was an extended question. I want to give the best answer possible.

We are going to have a great debate on the fall economic statement, where the Minister of Finance will provide an update on the fiscal finances of the country, including what the government intends to do in the days ahead. Therefore, that debate is coming. I agree with the hon. member that the conversations that need to happen are important. The opposition day motion, as I said earlier in my speech, and the member may not have heard it, is not necessarily constructive public policy discussion on where we need to go, what programs we need to consider or whether we are able to actually extend programs that I know some members in this House would like to see. However, maybe now is not the time to be able to extend them in the extenuating circumstances that we are in.

I would encourage the member to look to the fall economic statement. Hopefully, he and I can continue this really important discussion at that moment.

Business of Supply

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I only caught the last three minutes of the member's speech, but I heard him touch on some things, and he has presented to the House that he is indeed fiscally responsible and looking for some cost recovery in some of the programs and services. However, when he speaks of balance, I have never heard that particular member talk about the out-of-control compensation for CEOs and the profiteering of big corporations.

It seems that much of the discussion around inflation is centred on the Bank of Canada, where we have Conservatives blaming the government and the Liberal government blaming workers.

Whether it is regarding this particular matter, the fall economic statement or the budget he has proposed, we have a scenario where, in 2021, the highest-paid CEOs made \$14.3 million or collectively brought in \$1.4 billion, while the good hard-working people I know in Wolfville are still struggling to get by on their average salaries for everyday Canadians. What does he have to say about that?

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize that my hon. colleague has ties to Acadia University, having played on the men's football team. We share an affinity for the beautiful Annapolis Valley.

We differ on ideology. I think it is important and incumbent on corporate leaders that they are mindful of the circumstances we are in. That is exactly why the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry called grocery CEOs to talk about the fact that they need to be part of these responsible solutions. However, suggesting that corporate CEOs might be rigging a system or that they are against Canadians is dangerous talk. I do not want to say the word "vil-lainize", but it is very similar to the extreme right, which sometimes projects itself either in Canadian or federal politics. We have to understand and be proud of our Canadian leaders, as well as to call upon them when necessary to make the difference alongside government.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to start my remarks by saying I will be splitting my time with the spectacular member for South Surrey—White Rock. My comments are in no way related to the fact that she happens to be our whip. That is just a bit of levity.

I want to paint a picture here because, as I said in my question for the member for Kings—Hants, we are in serious times. We are in perilous times. When we look around the world with respect to foreign policy and see what is happening in Israel and Ukraine, we see that it is a time that requires serious leadership.

Back here in Canada, things are not all rosy either. Canada's debt for 2023-24 is projected to be \$1.2 trillion. That might be hard for the average individual to contemplate and get their head around. I know it is for me. However, that is \$81,000 per household. That means people wake up in the morning and their starting place is \$81,000 in debt. That is particularly troubling, because Canadians themselves, as individuals, are the most in debt in the G7. Therefore, the amount of debt and burden that is being piled on Canadians is, at some points, overwhelming.

As has been famously said, the first step to getting out of a hole is to stop digging. Unfortunately, the Liberal government continues

to dig the hole deeper. This year, the PBO said that the deficit will be closer to \$46.5 billion. We have heard some chatter in this House already with respect to the fall economic statement. I look forward to seeing that document. I am the eternal optimist. I am hopeful that there will be some type of path for fiscal sustainability, a fiscal anchor and a return one day to a balanced budget. However, given the last budget, in which the government pushed back the date for a balanced budget from 2030 to never, perhaps my optimism is a little exaggerated.

Canada's debt-to-GDP ratio, which is the other number the Liberals use, is the fiscal anchor that the Minister of Finance put before Canadians and said would never go up. Then, six months later, it did go up. The challenge too, even with the debt-to-GDP ratio, is that it does not take into consideration the per capita calculation. Canada's population is growing. Of course, as all Canadians do, I think that is a great thing. We are growing the number of Canadians, and that is terrific; however, the challenge is that the GDP is not keeping up with the population growth. Our per capita GDP, which in layman's terms just means the amount of money Canadians are earning, is going down. Therefore, while there are more Canadians, they are earning less money. That is challenging. We are getting poorer as a nation as the government takes a larger portion.

After eight years, we have a debt at \$1.22 trillion and a deficit approaching \$50 billion at the end of this year. We are digging that hole even deeper. We simply can no longer afford the Prime Minister and the Liberal government, as they continue to pound Canadians into the ground with more debt, which is now \$81,000 of debt per Canadian household.

It does not stop there. Obviously, that money will have to be recovered somehow. The former governor of the Bank of Canada, David Dodge, recently said at the finance committee that the government will have to do one of two things, which is to cut spending or raise taxes. The money has to come from somewhere. We have no doubt that the government will be raising taxes. If I were a homeowner, I would not be shocked. However, I would be a little worried that the government will start taxing the principal residence exemption. It has a track record of seeking taxes wherever it can get them, and it will be increasingly desperate as we go forward to collect revenue from Canadians.

• (1605)

There would be not only direct taxation but also indirect taxation. When there is deficit spending, and the government continues to spend, that increases the money supply, which increases inflation. If members do not believe me on that, they can just ask a former Liberal finance minister, John Manley. He recently stated that, because the government keeps pushing on the inflationary pedal, the gas pedal or the spending pedal, that is forcing Tiff Macklem, the Governor of the Bank of Canada, to push down on interest rates in order to fight inflation.

Business of Supply

Therefore, we have fiscal policy, which is what the Liberals are doing. They are spending more and more money increasingly recklessly, such as \$50 million on the arrive scam. This is causing inflation, which is making everything more expensive. As a result of that increased inflation, the Governor of the Bank of Canada is having to increase interest rates, which is increasing the cost of housing. As I said, after eight years, Canadians simply cannot afford the current government.

Let us look at the current housing situation and how it is going. It might be different in other provinces and other communities, but in the towns of Cobourg, Port Hope and Brighton, it is nearly impossible to get a rental property. If someone wants to get so much as a one-bedroom apartment, they are looking at \$2,500, at least. That is a wild amount of money. If someone is fortunate enough to be able to buy a house, mortgage payments have now gone up from an average of \$1,500 a month to \$3,000 a month. Therefore, inflation is taking a larger and larger chunk of paycheques.

We have taxation that actually takes up more than transportation, housing and food combined. The government is taking a larger and larger share of Canadians' increasingly smaller paycheques. As I said, if someone is trying to rent in Port Hope or Cobourg, they are looking at a cost of \$2,500 or \$3,000. They are looking at a mortgage payment well in excess of that.

I want to share a little anecdote. This is an actual email that I received from one of my constituents. It says the following:

"[My wife and I] have good jobs and are very thankful to have what we have. We have yet to own a home together in our 5 years of marriage and have been continually renting with our two young children.

"We are again very thankful to have what we have. We are able to secure approximately \$400k for a down payment from selling a property I owned in a different city before we were married....

"We were recently trying to purchase our first home together with a listing price of \$800k. This means we would be putting 50% down".

They are two well-heeled individuals, making good incomes and they would have a mortgage payment of approximately \$2,200 a month. The email continues: "After redoing our budget with the rising costs of groceries, gas, and everything else, we would be in a monthly deficit of between \$1,000-\$3,000. We have no debts, no car payments and believe we are financially responsible people." The constituent goes on to ask, "if people like us have decent jobs and a large amount saved and cannot even afford a home these days, who can?"

These are serious times. These are people who have done everything right. They have had their priorities right. They have saved their income. They got good jobs. They have worked hard for the community, for our country and for their children. The deal is broken. It used to be, in 2015, when houses cost half as much and when food was a fraction of the cost, that these individuals would be rewarded with being able to afford a house, being able to afford a steak dinner once a week and maybe even, God forbid, being able to go on vacation.

Increasingly, the great thief of our prosperity is the current Liberal government. Canadians cannot afford the Liberals. After eight years, they have done nothing but bring us into poverty and away from prosperity. We need a common-sense leader, and I cannot wait for the member for Carleton to be our next prime minister.

• (1610)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member started off by being critical of the amount of debt that the Government of Canada has acquired. They understand very clearly that most of the debt that was accrued was during the pandemic. Billions and billions of dollars were spent to support small businesses, individual Canadians, seniors, people with disabilities and so forth; the Conservative Party supported a lot of that. With hindsight, the Conservatives are saying we should not have spent the billions of dollars that they supported at the time. That is one issue.

Actions speak louder than words. The member says he is concerned about inflation. The government is also concerned about inflation; that is the reason we brought forward Bill C-56, which would provide literally hundreds of thousands of new homes in the years ahead for rental properties. The Conservatives' response is to filibuster the legislation. They will not even let the legislation pass. Why is the Conservative Party so out of touch with the reality of what Canadians are facing today?

• (1615)

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy the member's passion, if not the substance, of his remarks.

Let us look at history and the facts. Every year prior to the pandemic, the Liberal government had a deficit. The government is now spending \$120 billion more than prior to the pandemic. In addition to that, there was \$200 billion of non-COVID-related expenditures during the pandemic. These monies were spent on things like arrive scam. There was millions of dollars for fridges for Loblaws and millions of dollars for Mastercard. These are not proper ways to spend money.

Yes, we will debate this, and if we are skeptical of some of your solutions, forgive us since you have doubled household costs and put us into poverty.

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind hon. members that I did not do that as the Chair. Let us make sure we run our questions through the Chair.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Drummond.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, sometimes, once in a generation, the Conservatives have an idea that makes a modicum of sense. Unfortunately, they always hide their good ideas behind wacky political stunts.

Last June, the Bloc Québécois supported a similar motion calling for a plan to return to balanced budgets. We believe that this is the reasonable and responsible thing to do for a government. Governments need to have some idea of what is ahead.

The Conservatives are once again trying to force the government to table a road map to balanced budgets. However, they want it in a few days only, by October 25.

If it is so important—and we believe it is—why are the Conservatives once again sticking this inside a political black pill that is impossible to swallow and that they will then use to show that the Liberal government has stumbled and not delivered? The Liberals are perfectly capable of doing that themselves without “gotcha” motions.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his good questions and good work.

[English]

One day, before I retire, I hope to answer completely in French.

We agree that we need to balance the budget. If the member is asking us why we are blaming the Liberal government, it is because of eight years of failure. After eight years, it has driven the car in the ditch. I do not know who else to blame.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I often enjoy my debates with the hon. member for Northumberland—Peterborough South. He likes to reference his economic theory. He did some of that today in talking about the out-of-control housing crisis we have, what I affectionately call the crisis of capitalism.

I would like the hon. member to reflect on this. In 2013, in Hamilton, the average house cost was \$350,000. The high end of a unionized carpenter's salary was \$42 an hour. Fast-forward 10 years and the high end for a unionized carpenter's salary is \$48 an hour, but the same home the carpenter builds has now doubled in price, to over \$700,000. That is what we are looking at now. The reality is that the surplus value of the labourer's work, the money he or she is building and wealth he or she is creating in this country, is going somewhere, but who is not going to? It is not going to the worker.

My question for the hon. member is on his economic theory. When he looks at the crisis of capitalism and the housing crisis, would he at least have the courage today to stand up and talk about where the surplus value of labour is going? It is not going to the working class but to Bay Street, the banks and big developers.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I will tell the member exactly where that money is going: It is going here, to Ottawa. That is where the money is getting burned. It is not a crisis of capitalism.

By the way, I enjoy the debates with the great member as well, and I get passionate about them, so my apologies.

The money is being burned in Ottawa. We have far too many resources going to unproductive government, away from the productive cycle of the private sector. Wealth is only created in one place, and that is with the workers of Canada. I could not agree with the member more. The workers are getting cheated and ripped off by

Privilege

the government. We need the next prime minister, the member for Carleton, to fix this and bring prosperity back to our land.

* * *

● (1620)

[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED MISLEADING RESPONSE TO ORDER PAPER QUESTION

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to comments made yesterday by the member for Winnipeg North on the question of privilege raised by the member for Calgary Nose Hill on Thursday, October 5. Yesterday, in his remarks, the member for Winnipeg North misled the House. I would like to quote a few of his statements concerning the question of privilege raised by the member for Calgary Nose Hill.

The issue we are discussing has to do with the government's written responses to questions about the Prime Minister's travel. I submitted those three questions to the government myself, in writing. Yesterday, the member for Winnipeg North spoke about the last two questions that I asked. I would like to quote what the member for Winnipeg North said yesterday:

The crux of the questions posed is based on the notion of “total costs incurred by the government”. The government takes the view that “the government” includes all core departments of the public service and not independent arm's-length agencies, such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

This is what the member for Winnipeg North stated and alleged yesterday. I will continue with the quotation:

The fact is that neither of these questions specifically asked for that information. It is not for the government to make assumptions about what the member means to ask when submitting an Order Paper question. The government simply responds to the precise question that was asked.

I feel that the questions were well formulated, that they were entirely in order and that the government was asked to provide all the information requested. The proof is in Question No. 1180, which I asked on January 31. I will read the questions that were asked and the specific requests that were made at the time:

(a) what were the total costs incurred by the government for (i) accommodations, (ii) per diems, (iii) other expenses for the flight crew and government officials who travelled to Jamaica in connection with the Prime Minister's trip...

That was the wording of the question asked on January 31.

I will now read Question No. 1417, which I asked on April 19 and to which the member for Winnipeg North referred yesterday:

(a) what were the total costs incurred by the government for (i) accommodations, (ii) per diems, (iii) other expenses, for the flight crew and government officials who travelled to Montana in connection with the Prime Minister's trip...

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Other than the destination, both questions are identical. The difference is that, in its answer to Question No. 1180, the government included all the costs, including those incurred by the RCMP. This leads me to conclude that the government deliberately omitted the costs incurred by the RCMP in its answers to the two subsequent questions. All three questions were written in the same way.

I thought this was extremely important information for the House to consider, especially given that the answer to Question No. 1180 was signed off on by the members for Winnipeg North and Hull—Aylmer. The people saying that the questions were not properly written, specifically the member for Winnipeg North, actually answered the first question properly. They should have answered the other two in the same way by including the costs related to the RCMP's participation in the other two trips.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for the additional information.

* * *

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—FISCAL PLAN

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are facing an affordability crisis. Everything costs more, from the grocery store to the gas pumps. Mortgages have doubled, rents have doubled and down payments have doubled. The dream of home ownership is dead for nine out of 10 Canadians. Liberal inflationary spending has caused food prices to skyrocket, and one in five Canadians is skipping meals because they cannot afford to eat.

Families are struggling to make ends meet. Food banks are overwhelmed. In my community, food banks are at risk of bankruptcy because of a surge in demand, and 33%, or one-third, of food bank users are children. Overdose deaths have increased 300% in B.C. The leading cause of death among 10- to 18-year-olds is drug overdose.

This is heartbreaking, and the people in my province need some good news. Unfortunately, StatsCan reported today that inflation remains high. After eight years of reckless spending, Canada's national debt sits at \$1.2 trillion. Think about that for a second. That means debt servicing costs will be almost \$44 billion this year alone. These are tax dollars that could have been used to invest in addiction recovery services or to help address the housing crisis. Instead, those tax dollars will go to rich bondholders.

At a time when everything feels broken, the Prime Minister has spent the cupboards bare and has no plan to bring the nation's finances into a better position to respond to the real needs of Canadians. This is because of years of blatant disregard for fiscal prudence and monetary policy. We now have a tired, desperate NDP-Liberal government that is out of ideas. It has resorted to recycling broken campaign promises and adopting Conservative policy, albeit watered down.

Its housing accelerator fund has not built a single home. It is nothing more than a housing hoax. The Prime Minister has added

more debt than all other prime ministers combined. There is no plan to balance the budget and no plan to get his inflationary deficits under control.

This is the Prime Minister who thinks budgets balance themselves and asks Canadians to forgive him for not thinking about monetary policy. His laissez-faire attitude toward public finance has put the well-being of far too many Canadians in crisis. Government spending has driven up inflation rates, and those rates have put Canada at the brink of a mortgage default crisis.

That is why the leader of the Conservative opposition brought a common-sense motion to the House today. Our motion calls on the Prime Minister to table a fiscal plan that includes a pathway back to a balanced budget. He must do so before the Bank of Canada announces its next rate decision later this month. This motion is urgent and necessary. The government must start spending within its means, something that Canadian families do every day to balance their own household budgets.

In June, the Minister of Finance took to social media to declare victory over inflation. She told Canadians the Liberal plan to tackle inflation is “working” and that the Liberals were making “real progress”. Since then, inflation has gone up 43%. She fails to learn the lesson that excessive government spending and cruel tax hikes are the reason she is losing the war against inflation. After eight years, it is clear that the Liberal fiscal plan is not working and that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

Common-sense Conservatives have a plan to reverse these deficits so we can bring down inflation, bring home lower prices and bring homes that people can afford. We will cap government spending, cut waste and bring in a dollar-for-dollar law that requires the government to find a dollar of savings for any new dollar of spending. That is common sense.

We will also axe the punitive carbon tax. When we tax the farmer who grows the food, the trucker who ships the food and the store that sells the food, we are taxing the hard-working Canadian family struggling to pay for that food. The Liberal government has failed to reach any of its emission reduction targets, so all of this financial pain is for no environmental gain.

● (1625)

Liberals and their enablers in the NDP justify their position by suggesting that the carbon tax is not high enough. Speaking about the carbon tax, the Liberal member for Halifax said, “Ultimately they don't want to pay for it, but that's what changes behaviour, so if we rebate them everything they've paid for the pollution price, it defeats the whole purpose. There needs to be a bit of pain there. That's the point of it.”

How out of touch can they be? Other Liberals, such as the member for Avalon, finally admitted that the carbon tax is causing harm to Canadians. When asked about the political consequences the Liberals will face because of the carbon tax, the member for Avalon said:

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I think it's hurting them a fair bit. Everywhere I go, people come up to me and say, "We're losing faith in the Liberal Party".

I've had people tell me they can't afford to buy groceries. They can't afford to heat their homes....

It is too little too late. That member voted to implement the carbon tax, and his party continues to punish Canadians with it.

On housing, the Prime Minister does not think it is his responsibility, but the buck stops with him. It used to take 25 years to pay off a mortgage. Now it takes 25 years to save for a down payment.

Vancouver is the third most unaffordable housing market on the planet. In my community, mortgages now cost thousands of dollars more per month, forcing people out of home ownership. We are not building homes quick enough to keep up with demand because big city gatekeepers impose unnecessary delays and red tape.

A C.D. Howe study determined that gatekeepers and regulations add nearly \$1.3 million to the cost of an average home in Vancouver. Meanwhile, CMHC bureaucrats in Ottawa are rewarded with millions of dollars in bonuses for a lackluster performance.

Conservatives know we need to build homes, not bureaucracy. We will reward cities that are getting homes built with additional infrastructure dollars and a building bonus, and we will withhold transit and infrastructure funding from cities until sufficient high density housing around transit stations is built and occupied. We will cut the bonuses and salaries for ineffective bureaucrats, and if needed, we will fire the gatekeepers at CMHC if they are unable to speed up approvals for housing programs to an average of 60 days. We will list 15% of the federal government's 37,000 buildings and all appropriate federal land to be turned into homes people can afford.

Conservatives will turn the hurt the government has inflicted into the hope Canadians deserve. Canada should be a place where our citizens can afford to buy a home, put food on the table and save for the future. This is common sense. Only Conservatives will bring it home.

• (1630)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives, at times, just want to put their heads in the sand and stick with their slogans and bumper stickers, quite frankly. The member talks about inflation. Back in June of 2022, inflation in Canada was at around 8%. In the United States, it was at 9%. Today it is 4% and 3%, or just under 4%. Let us put it that way.

The Conservatives will go around Canada and say that Canada is broken. Does that mean the whole world is broken? The Conservatives are so extreme. They like to get those slogans on the bumper stickers.

Does the member not believe she is misleading Canadians when she tries to give this false impression? Yes, inflation is hurting. That is the reason we bring forward good legislation, such as Bill C-56, which is legislation the Conservatives is filibustering. Why?

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Mr. Speaker, my Conservative colleagues, this caucus and our leader are out there talking to Canadi-

ans every day. They tell us a very different story than the story this member wants to portray. When they tell us they cannot pay their rent and they tell us they cannot pay their mortgages to hold on to the home they bought some years ago, they have tears in their eyes. This is real. The food banks facing bankruptcy in my community are real. The demand is so high they cannot keep up.

Liberals are the ones with their heads in the sand. They are the ones who do not know the reality on the ground. They better wake up.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am going to repeat a question I asked my Conservative colleague earlier, because I may not have worded my question correctly. The fact is, we are not at all opposed to the idea put forward today by the Conservatives, which is to ask the government to offer some predictability, act responsibly and introduce a plan for returning to a balanced budget.

However, the Conservatives want to give the government about eight days to do this. They are demanding that it be done by October 25, when we know that this government is not necessarily the quickest at getting things done.

Does my colleague think that we could perhaps give it a little more time, for example, until the next fall budget update? Are the Conservatives really insisting on this October 25 deadline as a way to once again play political games and blame the government for what it has not yet done?

[*English*]

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Mr. Speaker, I am always happy to see when members of the House from other parties are able to come together with the Conservatives and agree on something. That is always a pleasure.

With respect to timelines, the government has had eight years to get this right. It certainly has been many years that we have been telling the government that the way it is going about things, with its unnecessary flagrant spending, is going to result in inflation, and what we have now is rampant inflation. The PBO agreed with us that 40% of its spending during COVID was not COVID related. The government also drove up debt before COVID even happened. It cannot run with that cover anymore.

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• (1635)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about the carbon tax, as Conservatives are wont to do. Of course, in British Columbia, the federal carbon tax does not apply at all. We have had a provincial carbon tax there since 2008, brought in by a small conservative government.

Over the past three years, in her riding and my riding, the gas prices that people complain all the time have gone up about a dollar. The carbon tax has gone up five cents, so 95¢ of that increase is something else. What is it? It is corporate greed.

The price of oil has gone up and the oil companies that are producing that gas have had a windfall profit of billions and billions of dollars. The CEO of Shell Canada said that, if they were taxed more, they would be turning money back into the Canadian economy to help people who are suffering. The government is afraid to do that, and the Conservatives do not want to talk about it. The Conservatives in the U.K. have done just that.

I am just wondering if my colleague could comment on the fact that Conservatives and Liberals do not like to talk about the revenue side of the fiscal situation. We should have a windfall tax to bring money to Canadians, to help all Canadians in this time when people are suffering. A windfall tax on groceries and on gasoline would do just that.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Mr. Speaker, I just love the way socialists talk about taxes. They always find a way to somehow reach into someone else's pocket to find money to spend.

We believe in free people who live with free markets and free choice. We are the party of freedom. We will give freedom back to Canadians, and we will do it in a more prosperous economy where a rising tide floats all boats. We will see people with powerful paycheques and homes they can afford. Yes, we will use the God-given resources that Canada has and create prosperity with it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House on behalf of the people of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook to speak to the opposition motion. I would like to point out that my voice is not very strong today, so it is going to be much quieter.

[*English*]

The Conservatives, in their motion, are making reference to the fall economic statement. Of course, they know that every November the fall economic statement comes forward. Our government will move forward with much of the legislation, but I am very happy that, as a result of the opposition motion, we will hear all of the good things they have to suggest. We will see if any of them work, and then we can fine-tune them if there is something valuable for us to use to support Canadians.

However, let us talk about the framework of our Canadian economy today. Members must keep in mind that the economy just a year ago was at 8.1% inflation. Today, as we speak, it is down to

3.8%. Already we have seen a quick drop in inflation. Now it is about keeping it going downward.

Canada's economy is strong. We have the lowest deficit in the G7 and the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7 as well. Last week, it was once again confirmed that we have maintained a AAA rating, which is extremely important. That shows our strength to the world as well. Both the OECD and the International Monetary Fund have clearly indicated that Canada will have the strongest economy in the G7 in 2024.

• (1640)

As we are trying to cool the economy, it is obvious that the economy is extremely strong. Over the month of September, over 64,000 jobs were created. The unemployment rate is down to 5.5%, which is exceptional for our country. The lowest was 5.2% a couple of years ago, before the pandemic. We have not only recaptured the million jobs Canadians created prior to the pandemic, but also created another million since the pandemic. Those are impressive numbers.

That is why we are able to support the most vulnerable Canadians. That is why we are able to support and invest even more in the public health care system. We know the Conservatives believe in the private sector in that section. As well, we have invested in the future prosperity of the country. It is a two-way street. It is a balance between supporting and investing in Canadians long term and investing in capturing more revenue.

Affordability is an issue. There is no question about that. There is no denying that. My kids, going to the grocery store, send me a text or a picture, saying, "Look at the price of this." We could use the example, as has been used in the House, of the price of lettuce. We understand that.

That is why our government has come forward with many initiatives, and more initiatives are being spoken about and brought in through bills as we speak. The child care benefit brings \$5 million a month to families in Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, which is \$60 million a year. The same thing is happening in the riding of my colleague who is speaking across the floor. In his riding, young families are benefiting from the \$60 million in support from the child care benefit.

The early learning initiative, which we brought in last year, was a big investment. Early learning is in 50% of the provinces, bringing the cost down to \$10 a day. The rest will follow in the next two years. That is not only a very important investment for young families, but it also allows for more women in the workforce, as well as more flexibility for families.

We have doubled the GST payment for two quarterly payments, helping 11 million Canadians. There was a one-time grocery payment that helped 11 million Canadians. We brought forward the dental plan, and so far we have seen 350,000 children benefit from it. By 2025, we will have more.

Business of Supply

Mr. Speaker, I thought I had already mentioned this, but I will be sharing my time with the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

I want to finish with another big, important framework bill that we brought forward for people with disabilities—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Let us take a moment to allow the hon. member to take a drink of water to get his voice back. I would just remind folks that the member is having a hard time talking, so I will ask members to try to not hold him back too much. We are so used to vibrancy and energy from the hon. member.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, another initiative that we are bringing forward, as we speak, is the investment in housing and removing the GST on new rental construction. That is essential. We already have five provinces, including Nova Scotia, that have joined this initiative.

It will drop the cost of a building for affordable housing, for example, from \$10 million down to \$8.5 million. That is \$1.5 million in savings. That is why these contractors and developers are jumping to get these projects going so they can benefit from those investments. I want to share some quotes.

Tim Richter, CEO of the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, said that the federal government is being very serious about taking measures to ensure it is answering the housing crisis.

Carole Saab from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities said, “This is an important and very welcome decision that will have an immediate impact.”

The executive director of The Federation of Community Social Services of BC said, “Big kudos to the federal government. Removing the GST on new rental construction is probably the biggest thing it could do to stimulate construction.”

As I indicated, those are very important for developers and for Canadians. It is also very important to talk about how we can help Canadians. We brought forward the new tax-free first home savings account to save up to \$40,000. People saving for their first home can put away \$8,000 a year for five years for a total of \$40,000, or over 15 years.

This is like an RRSP. People do not pay taxes going in or on the way out. This is a win-win-win for Canadians. We already have 150,000 young people who have taken advantage of this program within the first six months. I say *félicitations*. It is excellent.

• (1645)

[Translation]

Since 2015, we have found housing for nearly two million people. We have invested \$4 billion in the housing accelerator fund. We have already seen houses being built, and up to 100,000 more units will be built soon.

We just signed an agreement with the City of London, Ontario, where 2,000 housing units will be built in the next three years. There will also be 1,700 units built in Vaughan, Ontario, and 2,600 units built in Halifax in the next three years.

[English]

Those are big, successful numbers for the quick construction of housing.

I want to finish with something very important. Today, I witnessed, sadly, the Conservative Party members voting against tweaking the Atlantic accord that would allow Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador, with the fastest winds in the world, to invest not only on land wind farms, but in offshore wind farms. We have none in Canada right now.

The sad thing about it is I saw a tweet from my colleague, the Premier of Nova Scotia, this afternoon and he is a Conservative. Let me read what he said. He said, “Bill C-49 is a necessary first step in unlocking our energy potential. There will be many steps along the road but we are hopeful that Bill C-49 passes so we can get started.” It did pass, but without the support of the Conservatives, which is sad.

A quick example of offshore wind is next to Sable Island. We can construct, based on the information, 1,000 turbines that would supply 6.5 million Canadians with energy. That is almost twice as much as what all of Atlantic Canada is using today. This is potential. This is growth. This is revenue.

The Conservatives often ask how we are going to pay for it. We are going to bring in more revenue so we can continue to support Canadians. We will not be making the cuts to our veterans, by closing nine offices and firing 1,000 employees.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is quite a spectacle to watch my friend from across the floor speaking. His blood pressure must be right through the roof.

He is talking about all the wind farms to go around Sable Island.

How many non-indigenous fishermen's organizations were consulted in the forming of the bill? I have spoken with many of them, and they are very discouraged with their involvement in the forming of the bill. They are going to want to get into committee.

How does the member feel about the point of view of all those fishermen in his province?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, what gets my blood pressure going up is when you people vote for something that is really important to Atlantic Canadians. That is what is bringing the pressure up. I just do not understand how, when we have an opportunity—

An hon. member: Answer it.

Business of Supply

Mr. Darrell Samson: I will answer it. If you had voted for it, it would have gotten into committee—

• (1650)

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

It is through the Chair. The hon. member knows very well whom he is supposed to be talking to.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will have to sing a song to calm things down in the House. I really appreciate all of the passion and conviction of my colleague opposite.

I would like to come back to something essential. The Canada emergency business account, or CEBA, has repayment terms that force businesses to pay back the subsidies they got during the pandemic. The deadline is coming up. In my riding, there are a lot of SMEs that are on the verge of bankruptcy and shutdown because they are required to repay this amount when they are not ready or able to do so in the current economic context.

Does my colleague not agree that the deadline to pay back the CEBA should be extended or that, given the circumstances, every business should have the opportunity to come up with a plan with the government to pay back the money when they can without losing the subsidy?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, that is a very important question, because we are talking about small businesses all across Canada. It was tough, but the government was able to give them up to \$60,000. They could keep \$10,000 of the first \$40,000. Of the remaining \$20,000, they could keep another \$10,000, so that means \$20,000 was available.

We also made changes that allow small businesses to defer their loan repayments for a year, so plenty of tools have been offered. I do not know whether this meets the needs of all businesses, but it does meet the needs of some of them. I am sure of that, based on the discussions I have had.

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the problem I have with the motion that is being brought forward by the Conservatives today is that it ignores the real cause of inflation in Canada. We only need to look at publicly available figures to see that in the last three years, in whatever corporate sector we want to name, their profits have skyrocketed over the last three years. With the Bank of Canada, the old saying is that when the only tool one has is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail. In response to that corporate greed-driven inflation, the Bank of Canada raises interest rates, and that is why we are seeing the pain and suffering.

The Conservatives want to completely ignore corporate greed. That is okay. If they want to defend corporate Canada against the interests of their own constituents, I am fine with that, but the Liberals cannot be let off the hook here. There is an incredible amount of wealth being generated in Canada, but it is going to fewer and

fewer people. I want to know why the Liberals are not doing more to tackle corporate greed, which is hurting too many Canadian families.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, that is a very important question. We have already started moving toward that, and I appreciate the support we are receiving from my colleague in the NDP. We brought in the top five grocery CEOs. We had some very productive conversations. We are starting to see prices drop, but they are not stabilized as much as they need to be, and we need to bring others in. We need to bring the manufacturers in; we need to bring the banks in; we need to bring the gas companies in. There are a lot of strategies to be had, and I am definitely going to continue to push for those types of approaches and strategies as we move forward.

The Deputy Speaker: 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 Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Democratic Institutions; and the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni, Health.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise to represent my constituents, because cost of living, affordability, is a major issue for many of them.

I hesitate to say that it is an honour to rise to speak to this motion. I want to start by saying that I find the opposition day motions put forward by the official opposition are, for the most part, very repetitive. They do not add to the debate. They do not add to trying to solve these problems for Canadians. Rather they seem to be yet another platform for Conservatives to repeat the gimmicky phrases they have come up with, the cute little phrases.

They really do not seem to be addressing the issues. In fact, when I look at this opposition day motion that addresses the affordability crisis, what the Conservatives put forward as a solution is really not a solution at all. What they say to all those listening, those people who are struggling with the cost of living right now, is to ask for a pathway back to balanced budgets. If anybody thinks that is going to help Canadians who are struggling today, then they are sorely mistaken. People are struggling today in my riding.

On this side of the House, we are working to put forward real programs, many of which my colleague before me has discussed. These motions simply serve to put Canadians down, to insult their intelligence, by putting forward half-truths and hoping that by repeating the same phrases over and over again, as is often done in question period, somehow this misinformation will convince Canadians that these are facts and not simply half-baked truths and beliefs, and political speech that is meant to hurt our country by making people feel badly about Canada itself.

Business of Supply

I find the negativity and the lack of true concern about coming up with real solutions for Canadians to be disheartening. I find it a waste of time. For a party that presumably puts a lot of emphasis on using scarce resources wisely, I find the time in question period and in opposition day motions is really an insult to this place and to Canadians. That is why I did not say it was an honour to rise to speak to this motion.

Since I have risen to speak to this motion, I would like to address a few things. We all agree that there are major challenges facing Canadians. Most of the motion put forward referred to these challenges. Where we really differ is when it comes to what the cause of that is and what should be done about it.

The Conservatives like to say, constantly, that the reason we have inflation in Canada is because of our deficits and because we are tackling climate change. However, common-sense Canadians can look around the world and see that inflation is not just a problem in Canada, it is a worldwide problem. In fact, there are many countries that do not have a price on pollution but have been suffering from inflation.

We can also look at the fact that inflation was 8.1% a year ago, and it is now 4%. It has come down drastically. Yet, in that same time period, the price on pollution did not change. If their explanation for why inflation is happening is due to the price on pollution or the carbon tax, they need to look at the numbers. I have mentioned it before, but there seems to be a mistaken belief on that side of the House that, because something happens during the same period of time as something else, it is somehow attributable to that. Anyone who took introductory statistics understands the difference between correlation and causality, and because something occurs over a period of time, it does not mean it is caused by that.

I wish the messaging would stop being so simplistic and based on polling of what slogan resonates with Canadians or gets them angry, and rather would try to address the real facts here. Inflation across Canada and the world has been caused by many things, and we all know that.

• (1655)

It has been caused by the climate crisis, it has been caused by the illegal invasion of Ukraine by Russia and it has been caused by the post-COVID economy. In fact, many economists say that this is a different kind of inflation because a lot of it is from the supply side as opposed to the demand side. Of course, as I am sure everyone knows, the inflationary government spending, if we want to call it that, contributes to the demand side, not the supply side. Therefore, much of this inflation has been caused by the contraction of supply as opposed to an increase in demand.

Having hopefully corrected some of that, I also want to talk about the price on pollution. We know on this side of the House that we must battle climate change and that many of the inflationary pressures, the cost increases we are seeing today, have been driven by the climate crisis. I think it was only two weeks ago that many opposition members were quoting the price of lettuce, carrots and onions. The increase in those prices has been mainly driven by droughts in California. Romaine lettuce is mostly grown there. We can look at what experts are saying and they will tell us that this is why prices have gone up as much as they have.

Tiff Macklem, whom the opposition likes to quote when blaming inflation on government spending, has said that the price on pollution is responsible for about a 0.15% increase in inflation. We are talking about inflation that has gone up by 6% or 7% and has come back down to 4%, but experts and economists would tell us that very little of that has been caused by the price on pollution. These same experts and many others would say that our price on pollution is one of the most effective and efficient ways to battle greenhouse gas emissions. Given that we have a climate action incentive rebate, most Canadians get back more than they pay, so when we talk about affordability, households are better off with this program.

If an opposition day motion were to put forward some realistic programs, some plans that could contribute to tackling these problems and helping us improve the programs we have in place, it would be welcome. However, to hear the same rhetoric over and over again is tiresome, insulting and, quite frankly, a waste of time. The Conservatives should contribute to the programs we have in place or give us some ideas. We have, in fact, already incorporated a few ideas that have been put forward. We welcomed them. We want to better things for Canadians. We are fighting for Canadians every day, and we encourage the Conservatives to join us in doing the same.

• (1700)

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this question would apply to any member of the House.

After eight years, we have seen that the Prime Minister has added more to the national debt than all prime ministers in the past. However, I would like to take us back to just over 40 years ago, when the Prime Minister's father was prime minister and was running out-of-control deficits and inflation was out of control. When he rolled through my town in North Okanagan—Shuswap, he gave the one-finger salute to a few previous Liberal supporters who were standing on the railway platform protesting his car when it stopped.

I would ask the member if she believes there is any difference between that prime minister, who rang up deficits and inflation so incredibly, and the current Prime Minister, or if this one really does not care and is simply not worth the cost.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for making the points I made earlier, using the lines they have developed and must think resonate with Canadians in his question. He has asked a question that in no way helps us focus on the problems facing us today.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at the end of her speech, my colleague mentioned how important it is to support people. We can all agree on the need for better control of the public purse, but we have to recognize that inflation affects some people more than others.

I am reaching out to my colleague. Tomorrow, there will be an important vote on Bill C-319, which would increase old age security for every senior 65 and older. Groups in Quebec have been asking for this. I visited them all this summer. I keep getting letters of support for this bill. Tomorrow, my colleague will have an opportunity. I do not want to hear any administrative arguments worthy of a banana republic. Last time, I heard someone argue that OAS could not be increased for everyone at age 65, that it was impossible because it had just been increased for people 75 and older, so technically, there would be no way to increase it for people starting at age 65. What kind of nonsense is that? OAS is available to every senior starting at age 65.

I hope my colleague will seize that opportunity tomorrow and vote for the bill.

• (1705)

[English]

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Mr. Speaker, it is very important to support our seniors. I agree wholeheartedly.

I disagree with the opposition that we are causing inflation through government spending. These are investments in people. At the same time, we do need to watch government spending right now, because we have a AAA credit rating and the cost of debt has gone up. We need to be careful with spending, and we are doing that. We are being fiscally responsible.

While I agree with the member opposite, I am not sure this is the time to put in place that policy given the other policy we are putting in place to support seniors and all people. We are trying to be very selective and targeted with our supports at this time.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I enjoy serving with my colleague on the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

I would agree with her that the Conservatives have concocted a false narrative about the real causes of inflation. They are willfully ignoring what all of the evidence can show anyone who takes the time to look. The unfortunate thing is that the Liberals have been asleep at the switch and have allowed that false narrative to take root.

We have seen 22 months of rising food inflation and people are making difficult choices at the grocery store, yet the minister responsible for that file is only just now giving a stern talking to to grocery CEOs. Canadians are suffering and watching massive corporate profits, and what are those same corporations doing? They are laying off workers and using all of that profit to do stock buybacks and massive dividend payouts, which are often going to foreign investors and not benefiting people in Canada. We have all of this stuff happening.

Does my hon. friend across the way believe her government should be doing more, and what should those steps be? We have an incredible amount of wealth being generated in Canada, but it is going to fewer and fewer people. That is what needs to change for people to have confidence in the economy again.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Mr. Speaker, corporate profits have been rising, and I am concerned about the level of competition. I am concerned about what is happening in Canada on that front. Our government is moving forward to address competition, increase competition in Canada and meet with these corporations. As I think the member opposite knows, there has been an excess profits tax put on banks and insurance companies, and it is certainly something we would consider doing in the future. However, we are trying to work jointly with these corporations, as we know that is the first and best way to do that.

I did want to mention one more thing. A lot of the problem with capitalism right now I put on Milton Friedman. Milton Friedman's *Capitalism and Freedom* book, which is the bible of the Leader of the Opposition, is the problem that caused a lot of what is happening. Businesses have stopped caring about other stakeholders and are only focusing on shareholder value.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, off the top, I note that I will be splitting my time with my colleague, the member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier.

The policies and decisions of government have real-life impacts on Canadians. Unfortunately, in the case of the NDP-Liberal coalition, that impact has been truly devastating. After eight years of the Liberal government, Canadians are now faced with a cost of living crisis that is a direct result of failed policies.

There are moms and dads across this country who, despite going to work every day to earn a paycheque, are still struggling to put gas in their tanks, put food on the table and keep their family housed. Seniors on a fixed income are being forced to choose between groceries or keeping warm during the winter. With housing costs having more than doubled under the government, more and more Canadians are giving up on the dream of home ownership. That is not okay, but that is the record of the Prime Minister and his government, and the out-of-touch NDP-Liberal government has yet to offer Canadians hope that there is a plan to bring down sky-high costs and mounting interest rates.

In fact, not only is this NDP-Liberal coalition failing to bring down inflation and interest rates, but it is actively making it worse, and its high-tax agenda is only further eating away at the paycheques of Canadians. Life is too expensive, and Canadians have never paid so much to bring home so little. This is a difficult time for many Canadians and they simply cannot afford the NDP-Liberal government.

Business of Supply

The Prime Minister has added more to the national debt than all previous prime ministers combined, and that half a trillion dollars of inflationary deficits has directly led to record inflation highs and repeated hikes to the interest rate. Instead of acknowledging and reversing course, the Prime Minister and his government continue to pour fuel on the inflationary fire at every turn they take. Expert after expert has warned that the Liberal government's spending is driving up the cost of inflation. Even Liberals have told the government that its deficit spending is driving up inflation.

We know that Tiff Macklem, the Governor of the Bank of Canada, has said that if governments increase their spending, it makes it more difficult to get inflation on track. Dispelling the often-heard Liberal claim that inflation is a global problem and not a result of the government's own decisions, he has also said that "inflation in Canada increasingly reflects what's happening in Canada." We know Mark Carney, the former governor of the Bank of Canada, also said that "inflation is principally a domestic story". Even former finance minister Bill Morneau has now admitted that his Liberal government put more money into the economy than it needed to.

The inflationary results are crushing. To try to get inflation under control, the Bank of Canada has been forced to increase interest rates 10 times in just 19 months. More than half of Canadians are said to be within \$200 of not being able to pay their bills. Half of Canadians are already saying that their mortgages are unaffordable, and Canadians already have the highest household debt in the G7. Also, the International Monetary Fund has said that Canada's housing market is the most at risk of any developed country.

Behind those statistics and troubling findings, there are real Canadians who are trying and who are barely hanging on. Canadian families are set back further and further in their personal finances every time the Bank of Canada raises interest rates. There are families whose dollars are not going nearly as far as they once were and who are desperate for the cost of living crisis in this country to come to an end.

● (1710)

They remember when the Prime Minister told them during the pandemic that the government would take on debt so they would not have to, but there is no comfort in that. It is taxpayers, not the Prime Minister, who took on that debt, and it is that debt that is contributing to high inflation and interest rates.

I have been listening to this debate, so I know that some members across the way will try to justify all of their deficit spending by telling us that it was a result of emergency supports to Canadians and businesses. However, in a 2022 report, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has already exposed the fallacy in that argument. That report confirmed that over \$200 billion of new spending introduced by the Liberal government during the pandemic had nothing to do with its COVID response. In fact, I will remind those same members that their dangerous and reckless deficit spending habit began long before the pandemic. In 2015, the Liberal government promised Canadians that there would be a tiny, temporary \$10-billion deficit. It immediately broke that promise to Canadians, and after that, it has been broken promise after broken promise. The most

honest thing the Prime Minister told Canadians was that he does not think about monetary policy.

Perhaps the finance minister might think about monetary policy herself, but she has failed to take the fiscal steps necessary to put the country's finances on solid footing. She told Canadians that the country's debt-to-GDP ratio was her fiscal anchor, that she was committed to ensuring that it continue to be reduced, and that it was a line she would not cross. Then, in budget 2023, she crossed that line. Ahead of that budget, she also acknowledged that bringing down inflation and interest rates was a priority for Canadians and that it was her goal to not pour fuel on the inflationary fire. Then, she introduced \$60 billion in new spending, adding fuel to that inflationary fire. Not to be forgotten is that in budget 2023, she also abandoned the government's path to balanced budgets that she had projected for 2027 just months earlier.

Deficit spending drives up inflation and the costs of goods that Canadians are buying, but let us not forget that Canadians are being squeezed from all sides because of the NDP-Liberal government. The money to pay for its spending has to come from somewhere. Not only has the government printed mountains of cash to pay for its spending, but it has also hiked taxes on Canadians. The increased federal tax burden leaves Canadians with fewer dollars in their pockets to spend on their own families' priorities. Payroll taxes have gone up, directly eating into the paycheques of working Canadians. The government's failed carbon tax is adding to the cost of everything, punishing Canadians for basic necessities like gas, groceries and home heating. Of course, now it has added a second carbon tax that will cost Canadians even more, and the plan is to keep increasing those taxes.

Canadians need a break. Today's Conservative motion calling on the government to introduce a fiscal plan that includes a pathway to balanced budgets before the Bank of Canada's next policy interest rate decision is, I believe, perfectly reasonable and is desperately needed by all Canadians, especially those who are barely hanging on. Balancing the budget to keep inflation and interest rates low is common sense, and the NDP-Liberal coalition needs to get its spending under control before it is too late. It is time we restored hope to Canadians.

Business of Supply

• (1715)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the member could provide some clarity to Canadians. When the Conservatives talk about austerity and cut-backs, one of the issues they like to bring up in the House is that of housing. As a government, we are investing literally hundreds of millions of dollars in housing. In fact, we have Bill C-56 before the House now, which would allow for literally hundreds of thousands of new purpose-built rentals to enter Canadian markets over the coming years. On the one hand they say that we should not spend money, and on the other hand they say that we need to do something about the housing crisis.

Not only are we spending money, but we are also working with other levels of government. Does the member believe that the federal government should be spending money to ensure there is housing for Canadians into the future, or does she oppose that expenditure too?

• (1720)

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Mr. Speaker, I oppose the government's taxing Canadians literally to death, and that is what the government is doing. The member across the way is very proud to be doing it. I totally support cutting the carbon tax, not just carbon tax 1.0 but also carbon tax 2.0. I have seen the bills of farmers for tens of thousands of dollars, and they do not get a rebate for that.

It would be great if the government, when it spends money, actually had results by which to measure its success. We see CMHC taking bonuses like it is nobody's business, but where are the houses being built? They are not.

[Translation]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I hear the Conservatives' concern. I agree that we need firm control of our public finances. Obviously, predictability is a must.

However, we also need to recognize that some people require extra support because of inflation. Apart from the carbon tax, what seniors want, especially those who are affected by inflation, is a 10% increase in old age security benefits for all seniors starting at age 65. The Conservative critic for seniors said it was unfair not to provide the 10% increase to all seniors at age 65.

I am reaching out to my colleague and urging her to take the first step and provide a little extra help to seniors in need. I am asking her to vote for Bill C-319 tomorrow.

[English]

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Mr. Speaker, my colleague wanted to dismiss the carbon tax. In my province, we can see the federal carbon tax written on our electricity bills and gas bills. To say that it may not be affecting our constituents, Canadians, I do not believe is true. I believe we need to axe the carbon tax because in a riding like mine, it is very common for seniors and students to have to drive half an hour, 45 minutes or even an hour to get to a pharmacy, a doctor or a grocery store. I absolutely think it is important that we have supports for the vulnerable, but we also have to recognize the tax hikes the government has implemented.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I note that the motion from the Conservatives talks about fiscal discipline, and Conservative fiscal discipline is an oxymoron. We lived through nine years of the dismal Harper regime. One thing that characterized that was absolutely appalling financial decisions. Members will recall the \$116 billion that Harper showered on Canada's big banks to maintain profits, taking money out of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation that should have gone to affordable housing. That helped contribute, thanks to the Conservatives, to the housing crisis that we are seeing today.

The Conservatives also put in place the Harper treaties. Notoriously, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has said that these hand-outs to billionaires and profitable corporations cost over \$30 billion a year, thanks to Mr. Harper and the Harper regime. However, the Conservatives used fiscal discipline all right; they cut back on veterans services and forced seniors to work years longer.

My question is very simple: What are they going to do now? Are they going to end the dental care for seniors that the NDP is bringing in at the end of this year?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether the member did not hear me, but I am for cutting taxes for Canadians so they have more of their own money in their own pockets to spend on their own families.

Why is it for the government to tell families how and where to spend their money?

[Translation]

Mr. Jo l Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin my remarks, I want to turn my attention to the people of Gaza and Israel. I think we have to set both organizations aside and focus on the people themselves. My thoughts are with them.

I want to thank my colleague from Battlefords—Lloydminster, who gave an excellent speech.

I rise this afternoon to speak to an official opposition motion. I believe it is the role of the official opposition to call on the government to be more diligent and responsible and to deliver concrete results for Canadians. I will quote the different parts of the motion because that is what we are debating, and I think people who are watching at home on the House of Commons network deserve to know what we are talking about.

(i) after eight years of this Liberal government, this prime minister has added more to the national debt than all previous prime minister's combined,

(ii) a half-trillion dollars of inflationary deficits has directly led to 40-year inflation highs,

(iii) prior to budget 2023, the Minister of Finance said, "What Canadians want right now is for inflation to come down and for interest rates to fall [...]"

Business of Supply

If I may say so, that is not what is happening right now.

...and that is one of our primary goals in this year's budget: not to pour fuel on the fire of inflation," and then proceed to usher in \$60 billion in new spending,

(iv) in order to combat inflation, the Bank of Canada has been forced to increase interest rates 10 times in just 19 months,

There is a problem somewhere, but the Liberals do not seem to want to acknowledge it.

(v) interest rate increases have increased mortgage payments, and since this prime minister took office, monthly mortgage payments have increased 150% and now cost \$3,500 on a typical family home...

Then it mentions the Liberal-NDP government, because it is important to understand that this is a minority government and that, if this government is kept in power, it is because there is a coalition. The NDP and the Liberal Party are committed to keeping this government in office, despite the fact that it is not delivering results and Canadians are paying the price. Therefore:

(vi) the Liberal-NDP government must exercise fiscal discipline, end their inflation driving deficits so that interest rates can be lowered,

in order to—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, may I have some quiet?

• (1725)

The Deputy Speaker: Let us take a moment to make sure everyone is listening.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I just wanted to tell my friend that he should be saying, according to the Conservatives, "the Liberal-Bloc government". I just wanted to correct him.

The Deputy Speaker: That is not really a point of order, but more a matter of debate.

The hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier.

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my NDP colleague for his intervention.

I will continue to read from the written motion, which is an official House of Commons document. If my colleague would like to have the full version, he can ask the table clerks, who are very helpful.

... inflation driving deficits so that interest rates can be lowered, in order to avoid a mortgage default crisis, as warned by the International Monetary Fund, and to ensure Canadians do not lose their homes, the House call on the government to introduce a fiscal plan that includes a pathway back to balanced budgets, in order to decrease inflation and interest rates, and to introduce this in the House of Commons prior to the Bank of Canada's next policy interest rate decision on October 25, 2023.

Yes, the timeline is short, but this government has been in power for eight years. I hope the government members see things the way we do. We are back in the House after a week in our ridings. I have to say that everyone I met in Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier told me that they are struggling to balance their budgets, that they do not know how they are going to put food on the table and heat their homes properly. Unfortunately, in Canada, and particularly in Quebec, winter is pretty harsh. We have to heat our homes, we have to eat and, yes, we have to put gas in the car. My riding covers a low-density area, which means that people need a vehicle. There is no

public transit. Unfortunately, that is the reality. We cannot bury our heads in the sand. We cannot ignore the facts. That is a reality, and we have to take it into account.

The Prime Minister stated, with a completely straight face, that budgets balance themselves. I am a father, and there are probably many parents here who have responsibilities and have to manage a budget. I have some news for the Prime Minister. I do not know whether budgets balance themselves in his ivory tower, but down here on earth, on the ground, in our homes, we have to balance our budgets. If not, we will be headed for bankruptcy, so we need to be responsible.

What is worse, at a certain point, the Liberals also said that it was time to borrow money because rates were low and they would not go up. We can see that today's reality is drastically different. Yesterday, I met with representatives of the Quebec Professional Association of Real Estate Brokers. They travelled here to Ottawa, and I met with them. I think it is important that members of Parliament meet with people to find out what is happening on the ground. I think that the government members should adopt such a practice. According to what the association representatives told me, we are going to hit a wall. It will not be long until the banks will have to start collecting house keys because people cannot pay their mortgages. That is a reality.

Today I met representatives from Pets Canada, a network of manufacturers, retailers and pet enthusiasts. Many of us have pets like cats and dogs. These pets are part of our families. Customers who buy dog or cat food are worried, because they will have to forgo buying food for their pets so that they themselves can survive. We are in Canada in 2023. I think that is important.

I will read other quotes from the Prime Minister, just for the fun of it.

"You'll forgive me if I don't think about monetary policy." That was from August 19, 2021.

Here is another one: "We took on debt so Canadians wouldn't have to."

However, as my colleague mentioned, it is taxpayers' money we are talking about. Governments do not make money, they simply administer the taxes collected from Canadian taxpayers.

Here is another quote from the Prime Minister, this one from 2015: "We're proposing a strong and real plan, one that invests in the middle class, so we can grow the economy, not from the top down...but from the heart outwards. That's what Canada has always done well".

Business of Supply

• (1730)

Now I want to talk about the Prime Minister's broken promises. This Prime Minister said the government would run a small deficit in 2015, tiny, temporary, no more than \$10 billion. That was a broken promise. Then he said it would never go over \$30 billion. Another broken promise. The Prime Minister said he would return to balanced budgets in 2019 and that this commitment was set in stone. What does he take us for? Once again, another broken promise.

As I mentioned, after eight years, the Prime Minister has added more to the debt than all of our country's prime ministers combined. This is serious. During question period yesterday, the Deputy Prime Minister again stated that Canada has the lowest deficit and the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio. I would like to ask the Deputy Prime Minister to go for a walk in the streets with me to talk to people. What will they tell her? They will tell her they are struggling to get by. There needs to be an action plan, and soon, to get the budget back into balance. It is about being responsible.

Now, on the other side of the House, they do not understand that. It is the job of the official opposition to force them to do their job and do it as quickly as possible, because it has been eight years. I hope they are not just waking up today because of the motion we moved. I hope they woke up several months ago and are working on finding a solution to balance the budget as quickly as possible.

• (1735)

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for that passionate speech. I know he is a hard-working member of his party. We appreciate his work and his suggestions.

I would like to ask him a question. Does he agree that there are several ways to pay off our debts? We can pay off our debts if we grow our country's revenue. Does that not help pay our debt?

If the answer is yes, and I expect it will be, why did he and his party vote against Bill C-49 today? We asked for changes to the Atlantic accord to open up a market in offshore wind energy with incredible global potential for Canada, and especially for Atlantic Canada.

Mr. Joël Godin: Madam Speaker, I am always happy to hear from my colleague from Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, with whom I enjoy spending time on Parliament Hill. He is a passionate man. We are hearing it less today because his voice will not let him be as passionate, but we can feel the underlying passion in the depth of his voice.

My colleague gave me the answer in his question. There are many ways to get results, and I think that the method proposed by the government today is not effective. We saw that in the past.

Yes, we believe in prosperity, but we simply want action and an effective and prosperous plan.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my col-

league from Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier. I have the pleasure of talking to him regularly in a relatively constructive way.

I am wondering about the Conservative narrative. They are claiming to have a magic wand and, once they are in power, they will be able to snap their fingers and build housing and balance the budget without any austerity measures.

On the one hand, we have a Prime Minister with outrageous spending habits and no budget plan. On the other, we have an offer to cut everything and build it all back up again without any impact on the support offered to our constituents.

I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about supporting seniors. I think that seniors are the ones who are being hit hardest by inflation, as they were by the pandemic, yet the government is doing practically nothing to help them.

Will the hon. member support my colleague's bill with that magic wand?

Mr. Joël Godin: Madam Speaker, I salute my colleague, who represents the riding east of mine. My riding covers a very large territory. It is always a pleasure to collaborate with her, and I appreciate the respect she shows me. I can tell her that it is mutual, and I will always have a great deal of respect for her.

Now, I want to make it clear that we are prepared to help people who are in need. During the pandemic, this government sent money to various groups across Canada that it could not get back. We were there from the start during the pandemic to help these people. We will always be there.

As for the magic wand, we do not claim to be magicians, unlike the Liberals. We will work responsibly and we will help people who are truly in need, but only them.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague, but I know that during the Harper years, the Conservatives brought in a system of tax havens that now cost us \$30 billion a year, according to the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

My question is simple. How can we believe the Conservatives when their approach of imposing fiscal discipline was such a dismal failure in the past?

Mr. Joël Godin: Madam Speaker, the context is very different. It is now 2023, and we have to make decisions based on our current reality. There were constraining factors in the past. I think we can be proud of what the Conservative government did when it was in power.

• (1740)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 5:40 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forth with every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

Private Members' Business

[English]

The question is on the motion.

[Translation]

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.

[English]

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask for a recorded vote.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, October 18, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[English]

On a point of order, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I suspect if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent at this time to call it 5:55 p.m., so we can begin private members' hour.

[Translation]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

The House resumed from June 6 consideration of the motion that Bill C-320, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (disclosure of information to victims), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill C-320, a bill that makes a fairly significant statement. I truly believe that it does not matter what side of the House a member sits on as we all recognize that, whenever a crime is committed, there is a victim, whether it is collectively or individually. We want to be there in a very real and tangible way to support victims.

When I look at Bill C-320, I see a bill that moves us forward in being more transparent, and ultimately more accountable, through providing supports directly to victims. I do not say that lightly because I have had experiences, while I was an MLA a number of years ago in the mid-nineties, where I had the opportunity to participate in a youth justice committee.

For those who are not aware, youth justice committees were an alternative to young people having to go to formal court. I found

out something very quickly when young people came before the committee, which in my case was based in a community in the northwest end of the city of Winnipeg. We were classified as honorary parole officers of sorts, and we listened to cases involving anything from shoplifting and automobile theft to some cases of minor assault types of situations. What I found was that, the more we gained experience as a justice committee, the stronger our desire to incorporate victims.

I believe that at the time we were one of the first justice committees looking for restorative justice. In that case, having restorative justice meant that we had young offenders sitting down to work out some sort of a disposition with us along with the victim. We felt that that was a good alternative to having the victim outside of the process. Rather, the victim was on the inside of the process, able to contribute to the disposition of an individual, a young person in the community, to ensure that justice was being served. What I found in a couple of the cases that I was able to participate in was that there was a much higher sense of relief in different ways, in part by the victim.

Since the mid-nineties, I have always had an interest in how we can support victims of crimes. The types of crimes that are out there are obviously exceptionally wide in the spectrum. The ones that have a strong element of violence against a person are, from my point of view, the most offensive. I am more sympathetic to having victim's rights being looked after.

When I look at Bill C-320, what I see are amendments to the CCRA that would require Correctional Services Canada and the Parole Board of Canada to provide victims with an explanation of how dates were calculated initially and at each time there is a change. I think that is the core of the content of the legislation that we are talking about today.

• (1745)

When I think of what we have done as a government to support victims, there are a couple of things that I want to highlight. Whenever we think of the role that the government plays, one can talk about legislation but I would also suggest that one can talk about budgetary measures.

For example, budget 2021 proposed to provide just over \$85 million, over five years, to support a national program for independent legal advice and independent legal representation for victims of sexual assault and to support pilot projects for victims of intimate partner violence. I believe this demonstrates that the government is looking at supporting victims in a very tangible way.

I have seen legislation that we have passed that makes it easier for the victim; when a perpetrator goes before a parole board, the victim does not have to appear in order to present what had taken place, thereby making them a victim once again.

As a government, we have acted on budgetary measures and legislative measures to be able to protect the interests of victims.

Private Members' Business

Through the victims fund, we have made more than \$28 million available to provincial and territorial governments and non-governmental organizations to increase awareness and knowledge of victim issues, legislation and available services.

The bill would amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act. I believe that this disclosure of an offender's parole eligibility dates to the victims also includes the explanation of how such dates would be determined. This is consistent with what that the government has been doing, from a budget process and a legislative process previously.

The government is committed to supporting victims of crime and their families. Their right to information about the individuals who have harmed them should be respected at all stages of the corrections and conditional release process.

This disclosure of information to victims provides transparency and accountability.

We have seen legislation pass when we believed that it would receive unanimous support. I believe that this piece of legislation has wide support, possibly from all political parties in the chamber.

I hope that the mover of the legislation would be open, as the government is when it brings forward legislation that goes to committee, to possible amendments.

I reflect back on Bill C-48, which was dealing with the whole issue of parole and bail hearings, in particular the importance of having the reverse onus in specific areas of proof. I witnessed during the debates of that legislation an overwhelming desire to see it ultimately pass. It received unanimous consent.

I do believe that a vast majority of, if not all, members realize the importance of more accountability and transparency in protecting the victims of crimes. That is why I feel very comfortable in wanting to see this bill go to committee.

● (1750)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will start by stating that the Bloc Québécois supports Bill C-320. Simply put, our party is committed to supporting initiatives that keep women safe and that address violence against women.

I believe that victims have everything to gain from getting as much information as possible about their assailant and the situation surrounding the assailant's potential release. Our position is therefore in keeping with the Bloc Québécois's support for Bill C-233. That bill amended the Criminal Code to require a justice, before making a release order in respect of an accused who is charged with an offence against their intimate partner, to consider whether it is desirable, in the interests of the safety and security of any person, to include as a condition of the order that the accused wear an electronic monitoring device. I sincerely believe that measures like this are good for victims. Members of the Bloc Québécois will always stand up to protect victims of crime and strengthen the relationship of trust between the public and our institutions. It must be said that that relationship keeps getting undermined these days.

The bill before us now seeks to amend the Criminal Code to enable victims of a criminal offence to get an explanation about how certain decisions were made about their assailant. This includes the eligibility dates and review dates applicable to the offender in respect of temporary absences, work release, parole or statutory release.

Adding a mechanism that would give victims access to additional information about their assailant's situation and decisions being made about that person is, in my opinion, certain to strengthen the justice system. That is why we support this bill.

Over the past few years, Quebec has positioned itself as a world leader in enhancing victim protection and strengthening victims' confidence in the justice system. For example, the Government of Quebec has launched a pilot project in a number of courthouses to create courts specializing in sexual assault cases. There is also the electronic monitoring device pilot project, which was successful and has been deployed across the province.

These advancements meet the objective of recognizing how vulnerable victims of an offence are and putting all the tools at their disposal so they can be safe. This way, the justice system can evolve and adapt to better serve the needs of victims of crime.

If it passes, these legislative changes will represent an added value for the victims, including female victims of domestic or sexual violence, for example. I would like to thank the member who introduced this bill because, although we are talking about a fairly simple change, it is these small changes that can really make a difference in the lives of many people who really need it.

The justice system has to be more effective in general and more transparent, not least to facilitate the legal process and ease the long-term effects on victims or their family, especially when a decision is made about releasing the assailant. As I have already stated, we need to strengthen public trust in the justice system so that no other victim of a crime will hesitate to report their assailant to the police.

Unfortunately, the numbers are representative of this lack of confidence in the justice system. According to the Institut de la statistique du Québec, only 5% to 6% of sexual assaults in Canada are reported to the authorities. According to data obtained by Radio-Canada through the Access to Information Act in 2018, 77% of women who came forward did not see their assailant get formally charged. We can understand why they would not want to embark on a lengthy and often costly legal process that could ultimately let them down and force them to relive and retell their experience again and again.

Private Members' Business

While the vast majority of women remain silent before a justice system that lets them down, statistics show that there has been a rise in femicide and domestic violence. Between 2009 and 2019, for example, femicides increased by 7.5%. As parliamentarians, we have a responsibility to help reverse that trend.

• (1755)

The reality on the ground highlights the deficiencies in the justice system status quo. For example, many victims continue to fear their assailant even while that person is being detained. My team and I wanted to do a tour on the ground to see what is happening back home in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Lower St. Lawrence.

Regarding violence against women, the numbers are troubling. Community organizations that support victims are stretched to the limit. A women's shelter called L'Émergence, in Maria, in the Gaspé region, says it is receiving more and more requests for outreach services, meaning services for non-shelter residents, because the shelter is almost always full. With only 11 second-stage units and a housing shortage, women stay in their homes in spite of the risks they face. In the past few months especially, the number of high-risk cases has increased. High-risk cases refer mainly to the risk of femicide. Increasingly, the women seeking out the shelter's services face intersectional challenges, such as mental health issues on top of domestic violence and substance abuse. Very few of the women receiving services from the shelter report their abuser, and most of the ones who do come to regret it because of the complex procedures they have to deal with and the burden of proof that they have to bear. The results are also very often disappointing. As I mentioned earlier, the abuser either will not be formally charged or will get a sentence that is little more than a slap on the wrist. The number of women at the shelter who file an incident report, forgoing formal charges, is also declining dramatically.

In Matane, requests for assistance have increased by about 80% since the pandemic. At La Gigogne, shelter services are also constantly stretched to the limit. Management is forced to either turn women away or refer them to centres outside the region, uprooting them from their communities. Requests for outreach services have at least doubled since the pandemic. Across all organizations, less than a quarter of women ever file a complaint, mainly because of a lack of confidence in the justice system.

If this bill can restore victims' confidence in the slightest, so they do not feel they will be left to fend for themselves during the process or once the abuser is behind bars, I will definitely be voting yes. I think I can speak for the shelters and organizations in my riding that help women when I say that this bill is a good thing. We asked them, and they think it is a step forward. Why do they think that? It is because these organizations benefit when the women they help regain their trust in the justice system.

This is a step forward. Bloc Québécois members will always support initiatives that help victims of crime. We are pleased to vote in favour of this bill so that it can go to parliamentary committee. I heard the member who spoke before me say that there may be some amendments to propose, but we are quite willing to work on this bill.

• (1800)

[English]

Mr. Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to my hon. colleague from Oshawa's private member's bill, Bill C-320, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (disclosure of information to victims).

When I was asked to speak to this bill, the answer was an easy yes. It is easy to support Bill C-320 because this crucial piece of legislation prioritizes victims' rights in the Canadian justice system. It is the government's responsibility to ensure that victims of crime are treated with the utmost respect and dignity. It is time that victims and their families are prioritized by our justice system, not continuously revictimized by it.

However, the Liberal government repeatedly fails on that account. It has been easy on criminals while tough on families. After eight years of the Prime Minister's failed catch-and-release bail and soft-on-crime policies, crime has never been worse.

Ever since the Liberal government passed Bill C-75, it unleashed a wave of violent crime across our country. Since 2015, total violent crime has increased by almost 40%, homicides have increased by 45% and are up for the fourth year in a row, gang-related homicides have increased by over 100%, violent gun crime has increased by over 100%, total sexual assaults have increased by almost 75%, sex crimes against children have increased by over 125% and kidnappings have increased by almost 40%. With more crime and chaos across our country, there are more and more victims, and it seems that the system is putting the rights of criminals over the rights of victims.

That is why victims and families of victims like Lisa are speaking out and are the inspiration and driving force of this bill. Lisa's father was brutally murdered in 1991, and the offender received a conviction of 25 years to life. Lisa and her family, like many victims of crime, were caught off guard when they were notified that the offender was eligible for parole before the 25 years indicated on the conviction record. Her father's killer was eligible for early parole only 20 years into his sentence of 25 years to life. Victims usually think life means life. She believes, and I agree, that the lack of transparency regarding how parole dates and eligibility are determined causes the victims of crime to experience confusion, frustration, trauma and resentment of the criminal justice system.

Private Members' Business

This legislation makes a simple amendment to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to provide respect and dignity to victims and their families. It would require that information regarding the review eligibility for all forms of parole be communicated in writing to the offenders' victims, including explaining how the dates were determined for parole and explaining this process, to be as transparent as possible. Victims deserve accurate and timely information regarding the parole process.

Hearing about this bill and Lisa's story, I was reminded of a similar case in my own riding, a story I am sure all members are familiar with, the tragic case of Tori Stafford, a young girl whose life was cut short by a horrific murder. It serves as a stark reminder of why we must advocate for the victims' rights.

In April 2009, Tori, an innocent eight-year-old, was abducted, raped and murdered by two individuals. It was a senseless act that sent shockwaves not only through Oxford but through our country. The pain and anguish that Tori's family and loved ones endured was unimaginable. This traumatized Tori's family, our community of Oxford and our country.

Unfortunately, the Stafford family's journey with the justice system has not been a smooth one. Michael Rafferty and Terri-Lynne McClintic were both guilty of murdering Tori. McClintic pleaded guilty in 2010, and in 2013, after his appeals, Michael Rafferty received the same sentence. Both were sentenced to life in prison with no chance of parole for 25 years in maximum-security facilities. However, in 2018, we saw that McClintic made headlines for being transferred to a minimum-security healing lodge.

● (1805)

With the advocacy of Tori's family, the public outcry was strong and swift, and McClintic was returned to prison after the public safety minister intervened. However, this raises the question of how we have gotten to the point that, eight years after raping and murdering a child, a violent offender can be transferred to a low-security facility. Why is the criminal justice system providing false comfort to the families of our victims?

When I spoke to Tori's father about this incident, he stated that the Parole Board did not notify him of McClintic's transfer. He shared how, each time the offenders were transferred, it brought back the terrible memories, picked at the wounds they were trying to heal and caused them pain. At times when the offender of the crime was transferred to a lower-security facility or granted temporary leave from a prison for various reasons, it was not always communicated to them. It was traumatic for their family.

Tori Stafford's story is a heart-wrenching example of the dire need for comprehensive reform of our parole and justice systems. We need greater transparency. We must prioritize victims and victims' families, rather than allowing criminals to dictate how the process will progress.

While this incident is older, Rodney Stafford, Tori Stafford's father, was again in the media this summer when we heard about Paul Bernardo's transfer happening without much warning to his victims' families. Rodney discussed the need for transparency surrounding the incarceration of his daughter's killers, especially when they become eligible for parole. He knows that there is a chance that one

or both will one day be released, but until then, he says that victims' families deserve more respect. He said, "The victim families, we don't have any rights". He went on to say, "They've been eliminated."

Ultimately, that is why we are here today. Bill C-320 would address the fundamental issue of victims' rights and aim to provide them with the support and recognition they deserve. This legislation would acknowledge that victims such as Tori Stafford and her family, and advocates such as Lisa and Rodney, should be at the forefront of parole board considerations.

The bill would seek to rectify the power imbalance that often exists between victims and offenders. It would ensure that the system itself does not revictimize the families. That is why this bill would be a crucial step forward in making our justice system more compassionate, supportive and responsive to families' needs.

It is necessary reform that pays homage to victims who have suffered immeasurable pain and deserve better. This policy has the support of the victims' rights community, and this amendment is a very simple one. It is the addition of a single sentence that would put victims first and make a world of difference.

Bill C-320 is an essential piece of legislation that acknowledges the pain and suffering endured by victims. By passing this bill, we would send a clear message that Canada stands with the victims and not the criminals. We would stand with victims by providing them with the rights and support they deserve throughout the parole process.

Let us not forget the lessons learned from cases such as Tori Stafford's and Lisa's: We have an urgent need for further parole reform and a justice system that would put our victims first. I urge my honourable colleagues to support Bill C-320 and make our justice system a more compassionate and just place for all.

We will and we must do more to support victims and their families. It is the right thing to do.

● (1810)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to speak in the debate on Bill C-320.

As my colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia said earlier, the Bloc Québécois supports Bill C-320. The Bloc's position is part of its commitment to supporting initiatives that ensure women's safety and that combat violence against women. We believe that victims will significantly benefit from obtaining as much information as possible about their abuser, as well as the situation surrounding his release, if applicable.

The Bloc Québécois's position is consistent with our support for Bill C-233. As my colleague said earlier, that bill amended “the Criminal Code to require a justice, before making a release order in respect of an accused who is charged with an offence against their intimate partner, to consider whether it is desirable, in the interests of the safety and security of any person, to include as a condition of the order that the accused wear an electronic monitoring device.” The Bloc Québécois will always stand up to protect victims of crime and to strengthen the bond of trust between the public and our institutions. That last point is very important.

Our justice system is undoubtedly one of our most precious assets. We live in a society that is the envy of a lot of nations around the world. Section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms reads, “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person”. These are the rights that the justice system has the duty to protect for all Quebecers and all Canadians. This duty is the guarantor of a strong democracy that protects fundamental rights. As elected representatives, we are responsible for protecting and safeguarding these rights.

We know that our criminal justice system has many shortcomings, as shown by many studies and testimonies. According to the 2022 national justice survey, nearly 49% of Canadians believe that the justice system is not really fair. That is half the population. Almost 39% of them think that the justice system is not accessible to all. One cannot be against the idea of periodically reviewing a system that is mired in red tape and where the human element is commonly pushed aside.

We think that more transparency is needed, particularly with respect to victims. We need to strengthen and, in some cases, even rebuild the relationship of trust, which does not always seem to mean much.

It is vital that victims feel safe throughout the legal process and that they believe that the rulings handed down are enough to keep them safe. Otherwise, many people will not feel comfortable reporting their attacker. That is something that we have seen and continue to see far too often. Some think that the risks outweigh the benefits. When a person comes to that conclusion, then the system has failed in its primary purpose.

With the marked increase in family violence over the past five years, as demonstrated by Statistics Canada, women and girls are the greatest victims of this flaw in the system. It is already hard enough to report an attacker. These victims have to deal with judgment, prejudice, and procedures that are often far too long. They need to be very resilient and courageous to get to the end of the process, all the while hoping that the court will decide to put their attacker behind bars for a time.

Private Members' Business

Once that happens, survivors can catch their breath. They can feel a little safer. They resume their lives and go about their business. They regain their confidence. However, after a few months, sometimes years, they learn that their abuser has been granted a temporary absence, parole or statutory release, and they are given no explanation of the procedure that led to that decision. For many of them, it is back to square one. The feeling of insecurity returns with a vengeance. Our criminal justice system, at least in its current form, does not always know how to adequately protect victims.

In my riding, I had the immense privilege of speaking with a sexual assault survivor. I did so with great humility, and I must say I was impressed. Moreover, she was a victim of a repeat offender. Before assaulting my constituent, this individual had already been incarcerated as a serial rapist. It was not just one assault; it was a series of rapes. He was released on parole. He went back to prison for a few years because he assaulted a few women while on parole, but he was released again and he reoffended. Again, he assaulted more women.

What message are we sending to victims when we release such an individual without offering his past victims adequate reassurance or, if necessary, support?

My constituent that I was talking about is a real fighter. She stood up and fought to prevent the release of this offender despite her own injuries. I have deep respect for her.

● (1815)

I also have deep respect for every woman who finds the strength to stand up and urge her politicians to adapt our laws to guarantee her safety and peace of mind.

It seems clear to me, under these conditions, that providing victims with an explanation for the release of their attacker is a matter of basic respect. It shows the empathy we should demonstrate in enforcing legislation and in shaping our justice system.

It gives the survivors of such crimes the right to question decisions made by the system and to file an appeal, if needed, if they feel that it is necessary. It is about properly supporting them in the very essential healing process.

Although Quebec may not be perfect, it has always stood out as a leader in protecting victims, including by bringing in electronic bracelets and setting up courts specializing in cases of sexual violence. It certainly plans to continue to serve as a model within Canada and globally. It is always important to keep the interests of the victim at the heart of the process.

Private Members' Business

For the benefit of Quebecers and Canadians, the Bloc Québécois supports Bill C-320. It is a small step, to be sure, but it is still a step toward building an effective justice system capable of fulfilling its mission.

This bill strengthens the right to safety of victims of crime, especially victims of domestic and sexual violence. It is somewhat in keeping with the spirit of section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms that I mentioned earlier that guarantees everyone the right to security of the person.

In short, when passed into law, this bill will strengthen the protection of victims, the transparency of the criminal justice system, respect for everyone's rights and, above all, democracy as a whole.

More importantly, it will help build confidence in our justice system among women who, all too often, still do not dare to report their attackers because the system does not always seem to be on their side.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Oshawa has the floor for his right to reply.

[Translation]

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like begin by thanking all of my parliamentary colleagues and particularly the new member for Oxford for his speech.

[English]

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my colleagues who participated in this debate and who expressed support for the bill. I also want to take this opportunity to thank Lisa Freeman, the person who inspired Bill C-320, a bill we like to call the truth in sentencing bill.

As stated before, this bill is intended to help families who are plunged into unfathomable situations. They can be retraumatized and demoralized by actions of the Parole Board of Canada and Correctional Service Canada, institutions that say they are supportive of victims of crime, but unfortunately, this is at best an illusion.

Lisa's father was tragically bludgeoned to death by an axe murderer in 1991. I think it is also worth noting, as colleagues have spoken tonight of this happening in their constituencies as well, that this murderer was out on parole when this horrific crime took place.

Lisa's family was shocked to hear that life did not mean life for this murderer. Transparency for victims was not a priority for our parole system. Victims did not have the right to know or the right for information, for transparency, so Lisa bravely took it upon herself to right this wrong and fight to improve the system for victims, victims' families and future victims. It is a reminder that it is the responsibility of the government and our responsibility as elected officials to ensure that victims of crime are treated with the utmost respect and dignity.

As stated earlier, this legislation is a simple, very short legislative change. It would make a simple amendment to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act for disclosure of information to victims that would provide such respect and dignity. It would require that information regarding the review and eligibility of all forms of

parole be communicated in writing to the offender's victims, including the explanation of how the dates were determined for parole and explaining this process in an effort to be as transparent as possible. We cannot argue with the logic of this bill, and I hope that we shall have full support among members in the House.

Sadly, victims do not have any support compared to the support our government gives to criminals. I would like to remind my colleagues that it is the job of the Minister of Public Safety and this government to keep the public safe. The job description is public safety, not criminals' safety. A murderer's rights should never trump a victim's rights.

A sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole for 25 years is meant to imply a severity of punishment. This is simply not true, and it is misleading to families and the general public. Offenders serving a life sentence without parole for 25 years can actually be released on other forms of parole well before then for personal development, temporary absences and community service work. In prisons across the country, offenders who have committed some of the most heinous crimes, such as murder, can be housed in minimum-security prisons, and families are constantly aware that the level of security does not match the severity of the crime. This is exemplified from an update from Lisa Freeman and the recent, outrageous communication she received from our soft-on-crime parole system.

Lisa Freeman said:

I was notified in July that:

My father's killer's day parole was extended for 6 months and when it goes up again for renewal in January of 2024 and even if he doesn't request full parole, he can be automatically granted it at the same time. No hearing I can attend, and no opportunity for me to object...just an in-office, paper decision.

Also at the same time I was notified that the 'conditions on parole' that I have in place—no transfers to the province of Ontario, and parts of BC—can be lifted at any time his Case Management Team feels that he 'would benefit from attending courses in these areas'.

What an outrage that the only comfort for me and my family from this axe murderer can be lifted at whim of his team.

The system needs to be recalibrated. The rights of victims should be made equal to, or better than, the rights of the offenders.

So here we have it. A killer can be released into the community where victims live at the whim of his case management team, and no need to explain to the victims how the decision was made and when the release will take place. I know that we all agree that this is unconscionable. Victims deserve better, and at the very least, they deserve accurate information.

I want to thank my colleagues here this evening, and I hope I get full support when this bill comes up for a vote in the House.

• (1820)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The question is on the motion.

[*Translation*]

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.

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Carrie: Madam Speaker, I would request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, October 18, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1825)

[*English*]

HEALTH

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am here tonight on behalf of the 40,000 Canadian families that have lost loved ones since 2016, since the Liberals formed government, due to the toxic drug supply. I am here also on behalf of those living with problematic substance use and recreational substance use who are dying from preventable deaths.

Just to give some context, right now in Canada, about 180 Canadians per million die due to toxic drugs. In British Columbia, my home province, it is 430. In the Island Health region, it is over 500, and in the Alberni Valley, where I live, it is over 1,000. For those under the age of 49, it is right now over 2,100 people per million who are dying from toxic drugs. It is off the chart.

I have been asking, and New Democrats have been asking, for the federal government to come up with a plan, a timeline and resources to respond to this health emergency. In fact, not only has the Liberal government failed to do that, but it also has not spent even 1% of what it spent on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Why is that? It is because of the stigma. That is the only reason it has not responded. There are solutions out there.

I took it upon myself to go to Portugal last summer, on my own dime, to learn from Portugal, because it had six deaths per million. To paint the picture of how many people are dying in Canada, just to put things in perspective, more people have died in Canada from a toxic drug supply than in all of the European Union, with a population of over 450 million people.

The Portuguese story is quite interesting, because that country had a massive drug crisis that was claiming the lives of many people in the mid-nineties. Over 1,000 people were dying, primarily heroin users. There were 1,000 heroin users in a population of 10

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million people. Just to put things in perspective, in my home province of British Columbia, we have 100,000 chronic substance users in a population of five million people. We have double what they had, in terms of per capita usage, of chronic substance users.

The Portuguese realized it was a health emergency and responded like it was a health emergency. They convened a table of experts. They decided to move forward with expert-based policy. They created treatment on demand and a safer supply of substances. They scaled up. They had 250 people on methadone at the start of their program, and they scaled that up to 35,000 in two years. They used the military to create labs, to lower the cost and to get supply out the door. Today, they have 20,000 chronic substance users. They focused on harm reduction, making sure that people got the support they did.

I will talk about the politicians and what they did. They were the heroes. They took the gloves off, stepped out of the way, stopped playing politics and got rid of their ideology. Portugal focused on evidence-based decision-making led by experts, and put forward a plan with resources, a timeline and a strategy. It was unbelievable.

We actually had an expert task force on substance use from Health Canada. What did the federal government do? It chose to ignore them. There is still no plan, no timeline and no resources. When is the government going to treat this as a true public health emergency? Where is the urgency?

Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for his passion on this topic. I have spoken to him several times already since I started in this role, and I can only learn from this member and continue to appreciate his passion and knowledge on this topic.

This toxic drug and overdose crisis is having a tragic and unrelenting toll on Canadians, their families and communities, and the member knows this. There are four pillars recognized internationally that are necessary for a successful substance use strategy: prevention, harm reduction, treatment and enforcement. We are committed to a comprehensive approach that implements policies and supports in all four of these essential areas. The member opposite is a key ally in solving this crisis.

Every person who overdoses is somebody who has a family and somebody who has people who care about them. I believe these deaths are, as the member said, preventable. Many of these individuals have perhaps hidden their drug use and feel unable or afraid to seek help. Many died alone. We must take urgent action to save lives and protect the health and safety of Canadians.

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We have committed more than \$1 billion for a full range of evidence-based actions focused on prevention, harm reduction, treatment and enforcement. Sadly, this crisis is evolving and worsening. The drugs are getting more toxic. Substance use intersects with other issues like poverty, homelessness and mental health. We need to evolve our understanding of the crisis and continue to improve the government's work to save lives, and protect the health and safety of Canadians.

Substance use is a health issue and health care is a shared responsibility across all levels of government. Most importantly, because I know some members in this House still disagree with this, harm reduction is health care. This is why we continue to support provinces, territories and indigenous communities to improve access to integrated, evidence-based substance use services and supports for all Canadians when and where they need it.

Creating false narratives is not useful to anyone. I am happy that the member for Courtenay—Alberni agrees with us on this and is helping us fight misinformation. We are providing nearly \$200 billion to the provinces and territories over the next 10 years to support health system reform across Canada, and \$25 billion of that money is for shared health priorities such as improving access to mental health and substance use services.

These historic investments will seek to integrate mental health and substance use care across the entire health system. This means that no matter where, when or how someone reaches out for help, there will be no wrong door, and I am optimistic we can get there. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to address this complex crisis. Each person's circumstance is unique. Solutions to the crisis must recognize that people use substances for different reasons and in different ways.

Offering treatment alone is not enough. Providing a broad array of care options and wraparound supports allows people to access the right services at the right time to improve their overall health and well-being.

We cannot end this crisis alone. It is our collective responsibility to work together as parliamentarians, with the member for Courtenay—Alberni, local communities, provinces and territories, as well as indigenous communities. We cannot be working in silos or through an approach that is not integrated.

• (1830)

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, I am glad the member talked about an integrated approach because the Portuguese model is a coordinated, integrated, compassionate model. Here in Canada, we do

not have coordination. There are no resources. In fact, we are in a health crisis.

I will say this: The Liberals' incremental approach costs lives in a health crisis. The disinformation from the Conservatives costs lives in a health crisis. What we need is action. We need a timeline to invest in harm reduction, treatment, recovery, prevention, education and a safer supply to replace the toxic street drugs.

Where is the plan? Where is the timeline? Where is the compassion? When is this going to be a priority? When are they truly going to end the stigma? Do I have to keep coming back here every week to fight the same fight? When is the plan going to be tabled in this House of Commons? The families deserve it.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Madam Speaker, I agree, and we do know that substance abuse is an extremely complex issue.

Discrimination and trauma can place individuals at an increased risk for substance use harms. We are focused on improving the availability and accessibility of a range of services and supports as a means to address the overdose crisis. This complex issue calls for a comprehensive and integrated response, as I said and as the member acknowledged. People who are struggling need everyone at the table. They need everyone in the House of Commons, including the federal government, working with the provinces and territories on a system that includes health and mental health teams and services.

This is a public health issue, not a criminal one, and it must be addressed that way alongside well-trained, monitored and resourced public safety components. I look forward to discussing the trip you took and learning a bit more about the model in Portugal.

• (1835)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I remind the member that he is to address questions and comments through the Chair.

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes not being present to raise during Adjournment Proceedings the matter for which notice has been given, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

[*Translation*]

The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:36 p.m.)

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