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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, November 28, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)
[*English*]

WAYS AND MEANS

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1), I would like to table, in both official languages, a notice of a ways and means motion to implement certain provisions of the fall economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 21 and certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28.

Pursuant to Standing Order 83(2), I would ask that an order of the day be designated for the consideration of this motion.

* * *

VETERANS OMBUDSPERSON

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), it is my honour to table, in both official languages, the 2022-23 annual report of the Office of the Veterans Ombudsperson.

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TAXPAYERS' OMBUDSPERSON

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2022-23 annual report of the Office of the Taxpayers' Ombudsperson, entitled "Upholding Your Rights".

* * *

[*Translation*]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-367, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (promotion of hatred or antisemitism).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that a modern Parliament worthy of its name needs to address certain things that we are long overdue in addressing, things that perhaps never should have happened in the first place.

There is a cost to living together and to living in harmony in society. That cost may simply be to refrain from giving inappropriate and undue privileges to people within a society who use them to disturb the peace and harmony, especially if those privileges enable people to sow hatred or wish death upon others based on a belief in some divine power.

That is even more true in a country that claims to be secular or that claims that there is a separation between church and state. That is why it is high time that someone took action.

I would ask the House to quickly support the act to amend the Criminal Code throughout the process in order to prevent the promotion of hatred and antisemitism.

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

* * *

• (1010)

[*English*]

PETITIONS

AQUACULTURE

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be tabling two petitions today.

The first petition is for the Ministry of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard. It talks about the importance of wild salmon stocks, which are currently under threat. Wild salmon support first nations cultural traditions and complex ecosystems, including contributing to coastal forests, which produce the oxygen we breathe. Pacific salmon runs on the British Columbia coast are in a state of emergency.

The petitioners, from my constituency, acknowledge and express support for the closure of the Discovery Islands fish farms and urge the Ministry of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to continue to save Pacific wild salmon by not issuing any more licences to open-net pen fish farms.

Business of Supply

EXPANDED POLYSTYRENE

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I will be tabling today is on expanded polystyrene, commonly known as styrofoam. The impacts of it are in the marine environment and cause significant harm to marine life, seafood resources and ecosystems. We know it is incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to clean up from the shorelines and that it has a high likelihood of entering the marine environment from damaged marine infrastructure, whether encased or not.

The gathet Regional District and Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities have unanimously endorsed the prohibition of EPS in marine environments. My constituents agree with this and call for the Canadian government to step up and prohibit the use of expanded polystyrene.

FIRST RESPONDERS TAX CREDIT

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour and privilege to table a petition today on behalf of constituents of mine from Bowser, Dashwood, Deep Bay, Union Bay, Denman and Hornby islands, and the other 20 communities that have volunteer fire departments in my riding and three search and rescue stations.

Volunteers get a \$3,000 tax credit if 200 hours of volunteer service are completed in a calendar year. The petitioners are calling on the federal government to allow that to be a \$10,000 credit. Given that Canada has a climate emergency and had the worst wildfire season in the history of our country, the petitioners are calling on the government to make this increase because it would help with recruitment, soften the burden of inflation and help with retention.

I hope the House receives this petition and that all parliamentarians who are hearing this will stand in support of calling on the federal government to adopt the request made in this petition today.

* * *

● (1015)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—PASSAGE OF BILL C-234 BY THE SENATE

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

That the House call on the unelected Senate to immediately pass Bill C-234, An Act to amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, to remove the carbon tax on the farmers that feed Canadians, as passed by the democratically elected House.

He said: Madam Speaker, why is it that the House of Commons is green? The answer is that the first commoners met in the fields. They were overwhelmingly farmers who harvested a living from the fields of England. They were overwhelmingly taxed, though, by a greedy Crown that took out of their pockets and out of their hands the bread they had earned. As a result, they imposed upon King John, in 1215, the Magna Carta, the great charter, which required a whole series of restrictions on the power of the Crown. Among the most important of these was that the Crown could not tax what the commoners had not approved. Thus began the tradition that only the House of Commons can pass a bill to raise spending or taxes and only the House of Commons has the power of the purse.

That principle remains in place today. I have the rule book, O'Brien and Bosc, which the Speaker follows in his chair as he administers this chamber. It says, "The Constitution Act, 1867 provided that any bill appropriating any part of the public revenue or imposing a tax or duty must originate in the House of Commons", with the commoners. It follows that the same principle be that if the commons votes to remove a tax, that tax must be removed.

This House of Commons has voted for a common-sense Conservative bill, Bill C-234, to take the carbon tax off the farmers who feed us. The farmers who feed us, of course, need energy to do so. They need the ability to power their drying machines to transport their grains and heat and cool their barns for their animals, all of which requires energy. The more tax the government imposes on that energy, the more expensive it is for them to produce the food we eat. Thus we have the misery and poverty that have resulted today in the same way they always have whenever the Crown, or in this case the state and the Prime Minister, takes too much.

We see what has happened. The government is rich and the people are poor. After eight years of the Prime Minister and his NDP government, there is record food bank use. This week we learned that under NDP policies imposed through the Prime Minister, 800,000 people in Ontario alone visited a food bank six million times. This is a record-smashing number. Nationwide, two million Canadians are going to a food bank. This is a 32% increase from when the Prime Minister took office.

Business of Supply

After eight years of the Prime Minister, housing costs have doubled, rent has doubled, mortgage payments have doubled, down payments have doubled and tent cities have formed in every major city in this country. In Halifax, in the province of the federal housing minister, there are now 30 homeless encampments. This is in one city. We never had this before the Prime Minister.

What is his response? He divides to distract. He turns Canadian against Canadian. He gives out taxpayer-funded opioids to medicate people out of their misery. Later next year, he intends to bring in medical assistance in dying for the mentally ill so that people who are living with the total misery and isolation that his economy has created can have their lives ended altogether. We could not even have imagined that life would be this hellish for our people eight years ago.

What is his solution now? He wants to quadruple the carbon tax. He wants to raise it to 61¢ a litre on gas and diesel. Obviously this will make it unaffordable for people to drive to work and heat their homes. However, then there are the indirect costs, because when we tax the energy of the farmer who makes the food and the trucker who ships the food, we tax all who buy the food.

• (1020)

Let me give an example. In my riding we have Carleton Mushroom Farms. They supply mushrooms across the Ottawa-Carleton region and into western Quebec. They are spending \$150,000 a year on carbon taxes, and now the Prime Minister wants to quadruple that tax. We can presume that their tax bill would go up to \$600,000 a year for one farm. How is that farm supposed to feed people? The answer is that it will become mathematically impossible to do so. As the member for Foothills will tell the House, as I am splitting my time with him, we will see more of our food produced by foreign farmers in countries with poorer environmental standards.

This is the famous story of SunTech tomatoes, another great farm in my riding where the Prime Minister taxes the CO₂ they release into their greenhouse even though it is absorbed by the plant life. Apparently, he missed that day in science class. The problem is that it is now more expensive to buy a Manotick tomato in Manotick than a Mexican tomato. Therefore, the price signal the Prime Minister and the NDP send to the Manotick consumers is to buy the tomato that had to be trucked and trained across North America, burning fossil fuels from a less environmentally responsible country, to feed foreign food to our people.

This policy of quadrupling the tax on our farmers will mean more expensive food for consumers and more foreign food that sends our money, our jobs and our future out of this country, at the same time as sending more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. We would be better to repatriate food production to Canada. We have the sixth biggest supply of arable land per capita in the world. We should not have to import any food, but here we are, more dependent on the rest of the world because the Prime Minister punishes the very farmers who try to feed us every day.

This tax compounds again and again. It is a tax that does not apply once like, for example, the sales tax. Sometimes on a single product, it can apply 20 or 30 times. It applies, for example, when the farmer buys the fertilizer. That fertilizer has already been car-

bon taxed. Then he has to bring the seeds to his field. The transportation of those seeds has to be carbon taxed. When the harvest comes out and he brings it in from the field, he has to be carbon taxed to dry those grains. Then, if it he is feeding those grains to his livestock, they might be in a barn. That barn has to be heated during the winter and so the barn is carbon taxed. Let us say they are hogs. When they are slaughtered, the slaughterhouse is carbon taxed. The trucker who ships the hogs to the slaughterhouse is carbon taxed. Then when the final cuts of pork are packaged and put in a truck to go to our grocery store, that truck is carbon taxed. Then heating that grocery store, which has a lot of space to heat, that heat is carbon taxed as well. By the time that piece of food gets onto someone's plate, it may have been carbon taxed 15 or 20 times.

People wonder why we have had the worst food inflation in 40 years after eight years of the Prime Minister. They wonder why food is so much more expensive in Canada than it is in the United States of America. They wonder why seven million people are skipping meals and not eating enough to remain healthy. They wonder why we have lineups around streets, around blocks; if the images were put in grainy black and white, they would assume they were watching something out of the dirty thirties. The answer is the Prime Minister is taxing the farmer who makes the food, the trucker who ships the food and every other person who works hard to bring that food to our table.

Common-sense Conservatives have a bill that has been passed by this House that would take the tax off. The Prime Minister has deployed his carbon tax minister to pressure senators to block that bill, in an undemocratic attack on the prerogative of the commoners to decide who pays what. The government cannot tax what the people do not approve and the people do not approve of this carbon tax. They want us to axe the tax; to bring home lower prices; to bring home our food production, our self-reliance and independence to this country; and to bring home more powerful paycheques, affordable food and decent homes to our Canadian people, the common people, the common sense of the common people, united for our common home; their home, my home and our home. Let us bring it home.

Business of Supply

• (1025)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one of the tactics that the Conservatives have been using in order to pressure senators into moving quickly on this bill was developing something that looked like a wanted poster that was distributed by the House leader of the official opposition, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle. One senator has received a number of threatening phone calls and emails and has been very outspoken about that aggressive tactic used by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

I am wondering if the Leader of the Opposition can comment on whether he regrets his House leader's decision to employ those types of intimidating tactics.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, the senator's contact information is widely available on websites. The member is simply trying to distract.

I want to tell the member what intimidation looks like. Intimidation is when a single mother opens the fridge in the morning and there is nothing there. She looks over at the empty lunch bag that she needs to fill for her children and there is nothing to put in it. Intimidation is when, at the end of the month, she looks at the bills that have stacked up, then at her bank account and the former is way bigger than the latter. She does not know where she is going to live the next month. That is the real intimidation that the government has imposed on working-class people right across this country.

If he wants to talk about threats, it is the threat to the quality of life of the people who do the work in this country that I am most worried about.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, what we are seeing again today is not only intimidation, as my colleague pointed out, but also disinformation. I have heard the leader of the official opposition tell the House that people wanted medical assistance in dying because they had nothing to eat. The leader of the official opposition has also said that the ballot issue in the next election will be the carbon tax even though he is well aware that tax does not apply in Quebec.

I have one very simple question for the leader of the official opposition. Does he even believe himself when he says things like that?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Yes, Madam Speaker, I do believe those things, and I know it.

For starters, I am not the one who said that people are asking for medical assistance in dying because they are going hungry. That was the CEO of Food Banks Mississauga. My colleague can read her comments about how people went to the food bank to request medical assistance in dying. They did so not because they were sick, but because they were hungry. The Bloc Québécois members do not know this because they spend all their time travelling around Europe to talk about sovereignist movements over there. They could not care less about the people in their own ridings.

Furthermore, the carbon tax does apply in Quebec. Food produced elsewhere in Canada is taxed when truck drivers transport it

to Quebec, and there is another 17¢-per-litre carbon tax coming that will apply and that the Bloc Québécois wants to drastically increase.

Only the Conservative Party wants to eliminate those taxes and bring prices down for Quebeckers.

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am astounded at the sheer audacity of the Conservatives lecturing us on the Senate. After all, this is a party that has a history of appointing party bagmen and failed candidates. This is the party of Nigel Wright and Mike Duffy. This is the party that has 15 senators who still caucus with it every week, the only party, and this is a party that has their senators frequently block private members' bills in the past.

Is the member for Carleton aware of his own hypocrisy and why does he think he can stand here and lecture us on the Senate?

• (1030)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, I will tell the member why I think I can lecture him. It is because the member betrayed his constituents. They elected him to be a member of the opposition and, instead, he works for the Prime Minister. Every time I go to Vancouver Island, people say their MP sold them out, sold them down the river. He voted to ban their hunting rifles while allowing violent gun criminals onto the street. He voted to hand out dangerous drugs that caused crime and chaos in tent cities all over Vancouver Island. He voted to quadruple the carbon tax in order to fund the extravagances of the Prime Minister.

New Democrats, especially those from Vancouver Island, are working for the Prime Minister instead of working for the common people in their constituencies. It is not only me who should lecture the member. It is every single Canadian who should lecture New Democrats that their job is to work for the people, not for the Prime Minister.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, every single Canadian wants one thing in life, or one thing among several in life, which is to have nutritious, sustainable and affordable food produced right here in Canada. However, the Prime Minister's carbon tax coalition with the NDP is making that almost impossible for Canadian farmers and for Canadian consumers.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer was very clear that Bill C-234, which we are trying to pass through the Senate, would save Canadian farmers close to \$1 billion by 2030. These are not insignificant costs we are talking about that Canadian farmers are trying to absorb. We are seeing farmers struggle with higher input costs, higher interest rates and the paying of the carbon tax again and again.

This is reality, but there are consequences to this reality, which seem to be lost on the Liberal government. There are 800,000 Ontarians who made close to six million visits to the food bank last year, which is an increase of almost 40%. This is the highest single-year increase ever recorded. They cannot afford to feed their families.

Business of Supply

The Liberals will say, every single question period, that all the Conservatives are going to do is cut. The cutting that is happening right now is Canadian families cutting meals for their kids and Canadian families cutting the heat down at night and putting on a sweater or a blanket because they cannot afford to heat their homes. These are the cuts happening every single day by Canadians, who are having to face extremely difficult choice of either feeding their family or heating their home. These are not choices that should have to be made in a country like Canada, but that is exactly what an ideological activist agenda by the Liberal-NDP government is forcing Canadians to do.

We have a common-sense Conservative bill, Bill C-234, that would help reduce costs for farmers and make food more affordable for Canadians, but the Liberal government is going out of its way to bully senators to block Bill C-234. This is disrespectful to this House of Commons, which is elected by the people to represent our constituents. This House, by a very strong majority, and in fact by every single opposition party in this House, supported Bill C-234. This is because every opposition party in this House understands the importance of Canadian agriculture. Every member of the official opposition understands the importance of ensuring Canadians have affordable food to put on their table, produced right here in Canada by Canadian farmers, ranchers and producers.

What we are seeing is the Liberals play games with the Senate, disrespecting, as I said, the decisions made by this House of Commons. My colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills has talked a great deal about the fact that this is a taxation bill that was passed by this House. The Senate does not have the jurisdiction or the authority to override a taxation bill decided upon by the House of Commons, and yet that is exactly what is happening. The Senate is playing games with the livelihoods of Canadian farmers. It is playing games with the lives of Canadian families who are struggling to put food on the table. Food should not be a luxury and it should certainly not be a plaything in the political gamesmanship of the Liberal government.

I want to take a moment to talk about the real-life consequences this is having on Canadian farmers. I had a phone call from a dairy farmer two weeks ago who was basically in tears. She has come to the conclusion that she is going to lose her farm by Christmas to bankruptcy. She has a number of loans on her farm, as every single farmer does. They have lots of assets but a lot of debt. Her interest rate on her debt went from 1.9% to 7.2%. She can no longer afford the interest payments. On top of that, her carbon tax and fuel bills have doubled over the last year, making it impossible for her to maintain her operation. This is yet another lost farm for Canadian farmers. It is lost jobs, but also lost production and lost yields.

• (1035)

A mushroom farmer from Ontario sent me a note. His carbon tax went up last year and he was going to be paying \$173,000 in carbon taxes alone. When it goes up in 2030, his carbon tax bill will be \$450,000 a year. How is that economically sustainable? I will tell us. It is not.

The government talks about environmental sustainability all the time, but it never talks about economic viability, which is the most

important element. One cannot be environmentally sustainable if one no longer exists.

The note said, “It is difficult to see how our farm or any farm will remain in business if this continues. It will be unsustainable for our next generation to take on our farms, killing the food chain within Canada. This is not fair to farmers, families or the farming generations to come. It is not fair to Canadian consumers who want to eat food grown in Canada, which has a lower carbon footprint.”

Another letter from a poultry farmer in Alberta states that, last year, he paid \$120,000 in carbon taxes. This year, he is paying \$180,000. By 2030, his carbon tax bills will be \$480,000 a year. He said, “We are a chicken business and just simply can't afford the crippling carbon tax. If this is allowed to continue and go to \$170 a tonne, we will need to shut down. The tax we pay is not going to do anything to eliminate carbon emissions. Our best hope is that we increase our selling price to the consumer to recover these costs, which is the last thing you or I want to see in these inflationary times.”

We are seeing record-high food inflation in Canada as a result of farmers paying the carbon tax again and again. Not only do they pay it when they are heating and cooling their barns or drying their grain, but they are also paying it when they buy fertilizer, seed and chemicals. They are paying it again when they transport their grain or their cattle and when the rail line sends them their bill for moving their grain to port.

There are very few other industries that I can think of that pay the carbon tax more than Canadian farmers, yet they are dedicated to the job that they do and always finding better ways and new innovations to reduce their emissions. However, that is not taken into consideration whatsoever with bills that are being blocked by the Liberals.

A veteran retired from the military and moved to Saskatchewan. He said that, in 2020, his fuel bill was \$7,000. In 2021, it was \$9,000. In 2022, it is now \$12,000. He said, “The weird part is that I drive my machinery the same amount and the same number of hours each year.”

His land is the same size, which means taxes are making up the difference in costs. “I am only farming a half-section, and I am farming organically. If I didn't, I would be broke by now.”

These are stories that we are getting in our office every single day. These are the real-life consequences of the carbon tax and the impact it is having on farmers. This is then increasing the cost of food, and Canadians are having to deal with that every single day.

Business of Supply

When one increases the cost and carbon tax on the farmers who are growing the food, the truckers who are moving the food, the processors who are manufacturing the food and the retailers who are selling the food, do we know what happens? Food becomes unaffordable for the Canadian consumer. That is why we are seeing one in five Canadians skipping meals and record-breaking numbers at food banks.

This is not lost across Canada. We have letters from five premiers who are asking the Senate to pass this bill. Premiers across Canada understand the importance of this legislation. Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are begging the Senate to do its job, respect the will of the House of Commons and pass this legislation.

However, we have the Prime Minister's environment minister threatening to resign if this bill is passed. He says there will be no more carbon tax carve-outs. This comes days after the Prime Minister already admitted that his carbon tax is unaffordable and had a carve-out for home heating oil.

This is clearly common-sense legislation. It will make food more affordable. The most important thing is that Canadians want nutritious, sustainable, affordable food produced by Canadian farmers. Bill C-234 will make that a reality.

• (1040)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives say they are begging senators. That is not what they are doing. They are actually inciting violence toward senators.

I have a news report with me, titled “Canadian Senator Flees Home Amid Safety Concerns Following ‘Wanted Poster’ Incident”.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Can they at least stop heckling me while I talk about something so incredibly serious, Madam Speaker? It is outrageous.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Now they are laughing, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Scot Davidson: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member for Kingston and the Islands is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member is not in his seat, so he cannot raise a point of order.

The hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington.

Mr. Dave Epp: Madam Speaker, I was not heckling the member across the way, so I do not know what he is talking about.

Can he please explain?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member is not the one he is accusing of heckling.

The hon. deputy House leader.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, here is what the article says:

In a disturbing turn of events, Canadian Senator Bernadette Clement was reportedly forced to leave her home due to fears for her safety. The incident came about after a provocative post, akin to a ‘wanted poster,’ was shared online by former Conservative Party leader [the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle]. The post included Senator Clement's picture and office phone number, triggering a deluge of abusive calls, including racist comments, and even a threatening phone call from an unidentified man.

Does the member agree that this was a good tactic by the Conservative Party of Canada?

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, I find it interesting that the member for Kingston and the Islands, of all people, is bringing this up. Members should take a look at his Twitter feed. It is the epitome of hypocrisy that the member is raising this.

Of course, I do not agree with any member of the House or of the Senate being threatened. However, the Senate is receiving tens of thousands of phone calls and emails, through its information that is publicly available, from farmers and Canadians across this country asking senators to do the right thing and pass Bill C-234.

What is happening in the Senate is that it is trying to bring in amendments that have been turned down in the House of Commons and at the committee. There is no alternative for Canadian farmers to power grain dryers and their barns.

I agree that no one should be threatened or intimidated, but the Senate is being held accountable for the decisions it has made.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is amazing to hear the hypocrisy of Conservatives talking about the Senate and democracy. They pick bums such as Larry Smith, who could not get elected, came in third, but got appointed to the Senate twice, as well as Leo Housakos, party bagman, who gets paid for life.

What is even more astounding is that this party had the gall to stand in this House and vote against a trade deal with Ukraine. Meanwhile, we see Tucker Carlson's pro-Putin propaganda, Republican pro-Putin propaganda, the Danube Institute and Stephen Harper pro-Putin propaganda. The Conservatives claimed it was on carbon pricing, which Ukraine has had for years.

The fact that the Conservatives would use carbon pricing to undermine Ukraine's war effort to support their right-wing hack friends in the United States is the height of hypocrisy for the Conservative Party.

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, I am not sure if there was a question there other than a diatribe. The epitome of hypocrisy from the NDP member is that they are propping up—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

• (1045)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I ask the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay to allow the member for Foothills to address the comment, as this is a period of questions and comments.

The hon. member for Foothills.

Business of Supply

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, the member of the NDP-Liberal government, unfortunately, never made it into cabinet with this agreement. I find it shocking in itself when someone sells their soul and does not really get anything for it. The member supports a government that sold a turbine to Putin to help him move his gas and helped fund Putin's war machine. That is the epitome of hypocrisy.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I think we are going to hear the two words “disinformation” and “bullying” over and over again today. We are going to hear those words a lot today.

What happened to the two senators in recent days is exactly what the Conservative Party tried to pull with the member for Richmond—Arthabaska: to tell people to call his office and voice their discontent. They are trying to fire up the worst in people for political reasons.

Does my colleague agree with me on that?

[*English*]

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, no, I do not agree. We have encouraged Canadian farmers, who have done so by themselves. For example, the Agriculture Carbon Alliance, a group that represents hundreds of different agriculture stakeholders and commodity groups across the country, has encouraged its members to phone and call senators.

When senators assume or accept that invitation to join the Senate, they accept the fact they are public figures. I know senators are upset by the fact that they are being held accountable for their votes. However, it is the democratic right of Canadians to hold elected officials and senators, who are not elected, accountable for the decisions they have made. That is exactly what is happening.

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 address an issue Conservatives have brought forward. They often like to use the term “common sense”. I would suggest that the common-sense approach the Conservative Party takes today is nonsense. In fact, today's motion highlights the degree to which it is out of touch with reality and what Canadians believe.

I do not believe for a moment that Conservatives understand the depth to which they are prepared to go to get “Axe the carbon tax” on a bumper sticker, which I believe will become the bumper sticker for the Conservative Party. They are prepared to sacrifice principles and, ultimately, attack parliamentarians, not only directly but, I would suggest, also indirectly.

It is amazing that Conservatives here are talking about this important piece of legislation and blaming senators because the Senate is not passing it based on the Conservative Party of Canada's political agenda. Members might recall the bail reform bill, which was not that long ago, in September. I spoke to the bill. There were a few people who spoke to it. In essence, the bill ensured there would be a reverse onus for repeat violent offenders when it comes to bail requirements.

The provinces, other stakeholders, law enforcement agencies and our whole judicial system were appealing to the government and the opposition parties to see that legislation come before the House and, ultimately, pass. That is what we were hoping to see. Back in September, we were pleased, as a government, when the Conservative Party suggested that we pass it with a UC motion. Here in the chamber, the Conservatives felt it was worthy enough to pass unambiguously through the different steps, so we could get it to the Senate. Interestingly enough, today, the bill still has not passed at the Senate. Why is that? Arguably, it is because Conservative senators are playing games with the legislation. Where is the concern from the official opposition today with respect to that piece of legislation?

Conservatives sure liked to talk about it back in September. They wanted to make sure people had the impression that they wanted to see it pass. They do not today, because now they are playing games with it at the Senate. It seems to me that, when there are accusations coming from across the way about the behaviour of the Senate, they are very selective. Today, they are highlighting the price on pollution. They are offended because of it. Do members know how risky they are prepared to be on that issue? For them, everything is based on the price on pollution.

We now have a bill at committee called the Canada-Ukraine trade agreement. When that bill first came to the legislature, much like the bail reform bill, I honestly thought it would pass with unanimous consent. It is incredibly difficult to understand and believe that the only party in the chamber that voted against the Ukraine trade agreement is the Conservative Party of Canada.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: If Conservatives do not understand its relevance, Madam Speaker, that is beyond me. It speaks to why they are so upset today at the Senate: the price on pollution.

● (1050)

Why, at least in part, did they vote against the Canada-Ukraine deal? Publicly, what they say is that it was because of the price on pollution, even though there is a price on pollution today in Ukraine and even though when it comes to trade agreements, the European Union has made it very clear that a price on carbon, a price on pollution, is important and is part of the process. That is the lame excuse the Conservative Party is using. Time and time again, Conservatives want to talk about the price on pollution. Their sole focus is to try to make that the election issue, and that is why I say it is so risky. Conservatives were prepared to sabotage the Canada-Ukraine trade agreement because of the price on pollution. I suspect it probably has a little more to do with the far right element that we see day in and day out within the Conservative Party, and how the leadership office is run virtually by the far right today.

Business of Supply

It is disappointing, because the Conservative Party of Canada is more concerned about the election in the next two years than it is about good, solid, sound policy. That is not in the best interests of Canadians. It might be in the best interests of the Conservative Party of Canada today under its new leadership, but it is not in the best interests of good, sound public policy. That is where the Conservative Party is found wanting. It was able to look at legislation and make a determination with respect to the bail reform bill, and I believe that was a good decision by the Conservative Party at that time. When Conservatives saw there was a great deal of effort that went into the bill from stakeholders and provinces saying this was legislation they wanted to see passed, ultimately, it passed with unanimous consent. Then it hit the floor of the Senate. We do not hear Conservative members of Parliament today asking where that particular piece of legislation is. They should put that on their caucus agenda and ask their caucus colleagues in the Senate, and there are about 14 or 15 of them, why they are not supporting that piece of legislation.

I am an optimist. I think the Conservatives could be shamed into ultimately supporting the Canada-Ukraine trade agreement. Let us see what happens at third reading. Even if somehow the Conservative caucus could collectively out-maneuvre the leader of the Conservative Party today and get the bill through the House with some of them supporting it, we still have to get it through the Conservatives in the Senate. Are we going to see the Conservative wing in the Senate do what it can to prevent the Canada-Ukraine trade agreement? I remember standing in my place and talking about the trade agreement, saying it would be wonderful to see the legislation pass through the entire system before Christmas. What a wonderful, powerful statement that would make in support of Ukraine. More and more, it is looking like that will not be the case. Why is that? It is because of the fixation the Conservative Party of Canada has on the price on pollution.

The member who spoke before me talked about how the Liberals are bullying the Senate. That is an unbelievable comment. First of all, we need to recognize that we have a Prime Minister who has kept his word in terms of ensuring that the Senate is, in fact, independent. We saw this with the Senate appointments that have been made. At the end of the day, the only political, partisan senators are the ones who sit in the official opposition caucus meetings every Wednesday, the Conservative Party of Canada senators. They are the only ones who are aligned with a political party, but the party accuses the government of bullying the Senate.

• (1055)

My colleague put forward a question. Let us imagine, if we will, the former leader of the Conservative Party's developing and posting a wanted poster highlighting a senator's phone number and intimidating independent senators to take action. I got a copy of the one news article, and I would not mind making reference to some of the things that were said:

In a disturbing turn of events, Canadian Senator Bernadette Clement was reportedly forced to leave her home due to fears for her safety. The incident came about after a provocative post, akin to a 'wanted poster,' was shared online by former Conservative Party leader, [the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle]. The post included Senator Clement's picture and office phone number, triggering a deluge of abusive calls, including racist comments, and even a threatening phone call from an unidentified man.

Following the threatening phone call, Senator Clement instructed her office staff to cease answering the phone. In a clear reflection of the heightened sense of fear, she decided to relocate from her Cornwall home to Ottawa, where her location could be safeguarded. The incident underscores the potential risks public figures face amidst escalating political tensions.

Senator Raymonde Saint Germain, a fellow member of the Senate, addressed this incident by raising a point of privilege with the Senate speaker. She called out attempts at intimidation and allegations of bullying, stating that one Conservative senator had labelled the independent senators as fascists. Furthermore, Senator Clement detailed a confrontation with Don Plett, the Conservative leader in the [Upper] House, who allegedly berated her and two other senators in a threatening manner.

Do the Conservatives really have the audacity to say that we as a government are bullying or intimidating senators, when they have the opposition House leader doing what he did, and a Conservative senator doing what he did to his senator colleagues? Can members imagine if something of that nature took place here on the floor of the House of Commons, if a member of the House of Commons made those sorts of threats? I do not know what allegations have been made, but I would be taking them very seriously. I would suggest that it might be a borderline privilege issue, and I would probably suggest that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs take a look at it. It comes from the leadership of the Conservative Party today, and that is why I say it is so risky.

When we asked earlier the leader of the Conservative Party what he thinks about the actions of the former leader, his House leader, what did he say? He said that senators' phone numbers are already publicized. In essence, he does not have a problem with the behaviour of the opposition House leader. When we posed the question to the previous speaker, he seemed a bit more rational on the issue, implying that he would not support any sort of violence. However, that was the member who accused the government of using inappropriate tactics to intimidate, when the situation is the absolute opposite.

• (1100)

It all comes down to the issue of the price on pollution and the degree to which the Conservative Party is prepared to push that issue. We have seen that. As has been pointed out on numerous occasions, the Conservative Party, in the last federal election, was against what is being proposed in the Senate today. According to an election platform document, in order to be a Conservative candidate, one had to support the party's election platform, and the election platform clearly indicated there would in fact be a price on pollution. Every member of the Conservative Party was involved in the issue, and it is only since we had the new leader put in place that we saw a change of heart, or a change of mind, and the mind was concerned about the next election as opposed to public policy, which I talked about previously.

Business of Supply

The consequence of that change has been very profound. As a result, we now see a Conservative Party that jumps at every opportunity to highlight the price on pollution at all costs in order to condemn the government and the other opposition parties, because it stands alone on this issue. It jumps at every opportunity to try to discredit the issue of climate change, a price on pollution and measures that are progressive in nature and are there to support Canadians. I do not say this lightly, because when we talk about the price on pollution, there is no doubt that if the Conservatives get into government, they will get rid of it. However, what they do not tell us is that in a riding like Winnipeg North, more than 80% of the constituents actually get more money back than they pay on the price of pollution. The member stood in his place and talked about the issue of affordability, but the price on pollution in Winnipeg North ensures that there is more money going into the pockets of residents than there is in contributing towards the price on pollution. There is a net benefit, and Winnipeg North is not alone.

However, Conservatives, in taking that risk and that extreme position, are today emphasizing farmers. As a government, we have been very supportive of our farmers, and maybe in a question or two, I might be able to expand on ways in which we have been supportive of our farmers. The Conservatives are so fixated on the issue of a price on pollution that every one of them who voted actually voted against the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement, contrary to what Canadians as a whole, let alone people of Canadian-Ukrainian heritage, feel on the issue, how the ambassador of Ukraine to Canada feels on the issue or how the Ukrainian Canadian Congress feels on the issue, not to mention the widespread benefits. They voted against the agreement because of their fixation on the issue, which is all based on the far right, extreme element that is alive and well in the leader of the Conservative Party's office. Like lemmings, they all follow the leader with respect to votes, which is why we saw opposition members ultimately vote against the Canada-Ukraine agreement. It was because of something Ukraine already has in place, a price on pollution. The Government of Canada and all the other parties except the Conservatives see the merit of that particular issue.

• (1105)

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North is my neighbour in Manitoba. He should get out of the city more often to talk to some farmers. He says there is so much great stuff for farmers. I wonder why farmers are not voting for the Liberals if they are doing so many great things.

I would like to explain something to the member for Winnipeg North. When carbon taxes are put on the cost of growing our food, it increases the cost of food for everyone, whether it is because of the propane or natural gas used for drying grain or to heat the barns that keep our poultry and livestock warm. The member would just as soon let all those animals freeze to death and allow piles of crops to go unharvested because we would not be able to dry it and properly store it.

The policies the Liberals are pushing upon Canadians are creating food insecurity. He is doing no different than what Putin is doing in Ukraine in creating food insecurity. Why does the member of Winnipeg North hate farmers?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the farmers in Ukraine have a price on pollution, just like the farmers in all regions of Canada. There is support for a price on pollution. Countries around the world, and all political parties in this chamber, with the exception of the Conservative Party of Canada, understand that climate change is real and it can be addressed, in good part, by things like a price on pollution.

Only the Conservative Party of Canada says no to a price on pollution. It is so fixated on that issue that it voted against the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement, which demonstrates it is taking Russia's side over supporting Ukraine at a very important time in world history. Shame on the Conservatives.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, people often say flamboyant and outrageous things in the House, but today I would like to make an apology. I would like to apologize to the leader of the Conservative Party because I have accused him of never having a job. Apparently, he has had a paper route.

However, that is not fair of me to say because he did have a job. When Stephen Harper needed someone to defend the secret bribery of \$90,000 to Mike Duffy, of all the members of the Conservative caucus, nobody wanted to take the job, but the present leader of the Conservative Party did not mind defending Mike Duffy, who might be the worst choice for senator since Caligula appointed his horse. He could be on a list of all the other Conservative hacks, bums and friends of the party who were there to raise money for Stephen Harper.

With the Conservatives now being led by the leader of the Conservative Party, the man who defended a secret \$90,000 payout to someone who was facing bribery and fraud charges, it shows what the Conservative Party is up to. I am amazed that he comes here with the gall to talk about democracy.

There is nothing democratic about appointing bagmen such as Leo Housakos or Larry Smith, who was so bad as a candidate that Conservatives appointed him to the Senate. He ran in the election and lost, coming in third, and then Stephen Harper put him in the Senate for life.

I would ask my hon. colleague what it is about the Conservatives and their use of the Senate for friends, cronies, bums and corrupt allies, who the leader of the Conservative Party will stand up to defend day after day after day.

• (1110)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, allow me to give a good example of the leader of the Conservative Party and the risk that we all take with him as leader.

Last summer, the leader of the Conservative Party said that we should be resuming Parliament because the Conservatives wanted to pass the bail reform bill. He wanted us to come back early so the bill would be passed. In September, when we were back in session, we passed the bail reform bill. We passed it with unanimous consent.

Business of Supply

Today, that bill is stuck in the Senate because Conservative senators have chosen to play games. The games being played in the Senate are, for the most part, by those in the Conservative caucus. The Conservative caucus is made up of Conservative members of Parliament and Conservative senators. It is a bad combination because they can be a destructive force on the floor of the House, as we saw with the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement, and they can also be a destructive force—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Peterborough—Kawartha.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, to my colleague across the way, there seems to be a lack of common sense that has been percolating from the other side for a long time. We have farmers. We heard earlier from my colleague that they are paying \$480,000 a year in carbon tax. That is absolutely outrageous and unsustainable because food is not a luxury.

I would like the member to talk to farmers directly, through the camera, to tell them that they also have to pay GST on that amount.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member put out a challenge, but rebates also go to rural communities. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been invested in our rural communities.

My question to the member, and also to the leader of the Conservative Party, is about what I would classify as a big lie. There is an issue out there when the leader of the Conservative Party says they are going to axe the tax. What he never says is that he would be axing the rebate, which is a part of it. Eighty per cent of Canadians have a net gain, so he would be taking money out of the pockets of Canadians, not to mention he is continuing to deny climate change. The price on pollution is a good sound policy.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is no secret that the Conservatives have tabled this opposition day motion today when we could have been talking about so many things. New Democrats supported this motion because we believe that farmers deserve a break. However, we do not believe that Conservatives and Liberals would take seriously the issues that are present to Canadians, including a crumbling health care system that lacks funding from this place and a terrible situation when it comes to our economy, where we are looking backward rather than forward. We need to be debating the protections of workers today in this place. Time is of the essence.

Why is it that, from what the member believes, the Conservatives would take a whole day of the important business of this place to speak to how they themselves have always participated in the Senate? Now, all of a sudden, these same members, who have Conservative senators within the caucus who they meet with every Wednesday, are asking for that debate in this place. Canadians deserve so much better. If this is the type of leadership the Conservatives have in this place today, members can imagine what they will do tomorrow.

• (1115)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, there is a certain amount of irony here. As I indicated, the only partisan politics that take place when a political entity is involved both here in the House

and in the Senate are those of the Conservative Party of Canada. The Conservative senators, on a weekly basis when the House is sitting, meet with the Conservative MPs at their national caucus. That is where they set their agenda for both places. I would suggest that it is somewhat hypocritical for them to be criticizing the independence of the Senate here on the floor of the House when they are the political side of the Senate itself. I think this takes away from recognizing the fine work that many senators put in on a daily basis inside the chamber.

I really do believe that the decision of the Conservative Party to have this particular debate is fairly consistent with other aspects, such as the price on pollution. It is so fixated on the price on pollution. Members can look at how many opposition days during that has been the issue debated. There are so many other issues, such as affordability, inflation and jobs, they could be debating. They choose not to do that. That is why I say they are risky.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak on this Conservative opposition day. I would like to say that I will be sharing my time with my wonderful and handsome colleague from Jonquière.

First I would like to say something to the Conservatives, who may want to make a meme about my speech. The Bloc Québécois is in favour of Bill C-234, and all parties voted unanimously in favour of it at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food. I will talk about it a little later, but it is important to clarify this from the start.

Today, I want to talk about something I experienced, to give context to the Conservatives' motion that we have been discussing and debating since this morning. Today we are watching a finely orchestrated scene of intimidation. It makes no sense. There are women from all parties sitting here in the House, and I do not understand how the Conservative Party can deliberately orchestrate an intimidation campaign targeting two women senators over Bill C-234.

These two senators have been named and are doing their job. As everyone knows, the Bloc Québécois could do without the Senate, but today these two senators are here and the Senate is sitting. This has nothing to do with the fact that they are senators. The fact is they are here, they have a role to play and they are being deliberately intimidated. We are talking about senators Bernadette Clement and Chantal Petitclerc. As we know, Ms. Petitclerc is a Paralympic athlete, an admirable woman and role model in our society. The same applies to Ms. Clement, whom I have met. She is the former mayor of Cornwall. She and I shared the responsibility for maintaining relations with indigenous people from the Akwesasne reserve. These two inspiring role models are being deliberately intimidated.

What surprises me most is that this came from a Conservative member who, frankly, I respect. I am surprised to see that it is the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle who launched this intimidation campaign by tweeting photos of Ms. Clement and Ms. Petitclerc. As we know, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle is the House leader of the official opposition. I believe that whoever holds such a position should exercise it with a sense of propriety. They cannot engage in petty politics, resorting to intimidation to coerce two women senators, as he did. He published two photos on the social network X, one of Senator Clement and the other of Senator Petitclerc. Frankly, I may not be the most creative person on earth, but it did not take much imagination to see these two pictures looked like mugshots, such as those one might see on wanted posters in a western.

The two women received many threats. They received so many threats that Senator Clement, on recommendation by security personnel, even had to leave her home and family to take refuge in her official apartment in Ottawa, a much more secure place than her home.

How can we, in 2023, accept the use of such partisan politics—indeed dirty politics, a term I rarely use—to attack individuals and their private life?

• (1120)

The member for La Prairie and I have also been victims of such nasty intimidation, and I can say that what we experienced at the time was serious. Our children, partners and family were all involved. What the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle did is unacceptable. If the Conservatives think the Bloc Québécois will play their game and support a motion that encourages the intimidation of two women, they are wrong. We have no intention of playing that role. I understand the Conservatives are on a quest, that they feel like kings in waiting, but I will tell them quite frankly, if they think they will appeal to Quebecers with such tactics, they are wrong. They do not understand Quebecers at all.

In Quebec, we do not like people who viciously attack others, who bully them and who put so much undue pressure on them that it affects their personal and family lives. In the case of Ms. Petitclerc and Ms. Clement, I would even say it is affecting their professional lives. How would any of us feel coming to work, knowing that tons of people are writing to us? I, for one, know how it feels. The member for La Prairie and I received hundreds, if not thousands, of hateful emails. Do my colleagues know why I received them? It was because I stood up in the House and asked the Chair to reprimand a member who had done something serious. I wanted an apology. The Chair thought I was right and asked the member to apologize. He never did apologize, but that is not the point. The point is that my personal life, and the life of the member for La Prairie, were severely affected. I went through sleepless nights because my children were getting death threats. That is serious. If the Conservative Party hopes to govern Canada in the near future, it should know that this is not the type of thing that will inspire Quebecers to trust it. Quebecers abhor bullies. They abhor people who deliberately set out to hurt other people on a personal level. This seems like a ploy borrowed from the Americans, and that is not who we are.

Business of Supply

In addition to bullying, the Conservatives are moving a motion with a false premise. Its content supports some highly questionable tactics. With this motion, they are trying to make us believe that Bill C-234 will eliminate the carbon tax. It does not eliminate the carbon tax. It extends the exemption for farmers who use propane to dry their grain by eight years. I will say it straight off: There is no carbon tax in Quebec. Bill C-234 has no effect on Quebec farmers.

If Quebec Conservatives are listening to us, maybe this will make them want to work for our farmers and say that the federal carbon tax does not apply in Quebec. Again, passing Bill C-234 will have no effect on Quebec farmers. If Conservatives want to work for Quebec, the Conservatives in the Senate should get a move on and work to pass Bill C-282, which does affect Quebec. It affects dairy farmers, poultry farmers, all farmers under supply management.

That would really be working for Quebec. The Bloc Québécois will always be there to stand up to bullies and fight for Quebec's interests.

• (1125)

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question about her previous comments.

The Bloc is saying that the tax addressed in Bill C-234 does not apply in Quebec, but I think that is false. My colleague should look into it for herself. Just last weekend, I met with both chicken and pork producers again. Young piglets need heat, heating in the barns.

Could my colleague please explain and prove to me that this does not apply in Quebec?

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, I do not know how to explain it. I know the member well. We met in a previous life, when he was president of Quebec's federation of municipalities, the Fédération québécoise des municipalités.

I will say it again and, honestly, I cannot be any clearer than this: The carbon tax does not apply in Quebec because we have the carbon exchange. The tax does not apply. Quebec farmers will not pay a carbon tax because it does not apply.

I do not know how else to say it because he simply does not want to understand. I am surprised to hear this from an MP who knows a lot about agriculture and Quebec. He is playing his party's game. He is trying to mislead Quebecers and farmers.

I cannot be any clearer than that. It does not apply.

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I do not think I heard my Bloc Québécois colleague clearly state whether or not that applies to Quebec.

Points of Order

I am asking him again to clearly tell the House whether the carbon tax applies to Quebec, as claimed in the disinformation campaign by Conservative members from Quebec who have the audacity to rise in the House. I do not think they are very interested in talking about the Conservative government's record under Harper, which cut \$200 million intended for farmers. That affected Quebec producers.

I am therefore asking my Bloc Québécois colleague again: does Bill C-234 apply to Quebec?

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for giving me another opportunity to provide a few details.

We supported Bill C-234 because we understand that farmers in other provinces need support to help them make the transition and therefore be exempt from the carbon tax for eight years. However, this does not apply in Quebec because there is no carbon tax, so Quebec farmers will not see a carbon tax on the propane they use to dry their grain on their bills, as a certain member has claimed.

Still, I understand that all farmers currently have needs, especially vegetable producers, who have had an extremely difficult year, the toughest year in quite some time. People are beginning to realize that the government has not been there to respond to emergencies.

I would urge my feisty colleague to convince his friends to support farmers who need help getting through the current crisis.

• (1130)

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened to part of my colleague's speech. I would like to ask her the following question. When and why was the Senate abolished in the Quebec National Assembly?

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, this is not a history class. My colleague and I are well aware that the Bloc Québécois is in favour of abolishing the monarchy and the Senate. This is not the first time we have said it.

Right now, we have to work with the Senate. We are not in the House to talk about swearing an oath to the King or praying.

However, there is something that we have in common, and I am sure that the member will agree with me that we are both against intimidation. We are against people who use their position, their notoriety and their media visibility to intimidate two women senators because they are not doing what the Conservatives want them to do. I think that is unacceptable.

I am sure that the member who asked me a question disagrees with his party but that he has to remain silent because he has to toe the party line.

* * *

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

ALLEGED UNPARLIAMENTARY COMMENTS IN THE HOUSE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to add some extra information to the point of order that was raised yesterday after question period with respect

to the government House leader, the member of Parliament for Burlington, when she said, "Is it because there is a group of Conservative members of Parliament who are pro-Russia and anti-Ukraine and they have to cover for them?"

Yesterday, the Speaker ruled that the Conservatives could no longer say the NDP were Hamas supporters. In that light, we are saying that the Liberals should not be saying that we are pro-Putin when we are not. The Conservatives stand with Ukraine. We have always, unequivocally, stood with Ukraine in their fight.

I want to bring to the attention of the Speaker, when he considers his ruling, that—

An hon. member: Point of order.

Mr. James Bezan: I am making a point of order.

Madam Speaker, in consideration of Russia and a reference made by the government House leader, I want to remind the Chair that on March 17, the International Criminal Court issued a warrant, a red notice, for Vladimir Putin for crimes against humanity and for the unlawful deportation of population and the unlawful transfer of population from the occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russia Federation, in prejudice of Ukrainian children.

As members know, currently over 110,000 war crimes are being investigated by Ukraine against the Russian Federation during its war of aggression. We know that over 9,000 children are currently being held in military camps in Russia and are being reprogrammed or brainwashed by the Russian Federation. All these are crimes against humanity and are war crimes. These atrocities have to stop.

For anyone to imply that the Conservative Party supports Russia is unparliamentary and is in contravention to the ruling that the Speaker made earlier yesterday, saying that we could not make these correlations.

I would ask that this is taken into consideration as the Speaker rules on whether those types of utterances are allowed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is duly noted and it will be taken into consideration.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, in making the point of order, my colleague, once again, mentioned something that one of his colleagues has to apologize for.

I understand that the member is making a point of order in regard to my colleague across the way, the member for Winnipeg North, however, it is a problem for me that he is asking for the comment to be removed when he is doing exactly the same thing his colleague has to stand up and apologize for, as well as withdraw his comment.

• (1135)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I think the hon. member was referencing it to make the comparison, and I get it. However, it will all be taken under advisement. It was the member for Burlington, not the member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, it felt like my colleague had verged well into the area of debate in order to defend the Conservative record.

The facts that have been raised here are very clear. The Conservatives are the only party that voted against the Canada-Ukraine free trade deal. That is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is going into debate. I am going to let the Speaker make the ruling on the point of order with the elements that have been brought to his attention.

* * *

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—PASSAGE OF BILL C-234 BY THE SENATE

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, it was rather funny to see my whip “whip” the House leader of the official opposition. What a thing to see.

First of all, defending an argument does not mean bullying someone; debating does not mean spreading disinformation; sharing political views is never to be done by pitting people against each other.

I say that because I get the impression that, more and more, the danger I have seen lurking in Canadian politics is becoming all too real. It is the use of polarizing strategies like we have seen in the United States. Far too often the purpose is to disinform and intimidate, strategies that replace reflection and democratic dialogue. I get the feeling that is what we are facing today with the Conservatives' motion.

Essentially, if people have watched the events of the last few days with Bill C-234, what the Conservatives are saying is that not only are they not too shy to heckle, but they are moving a motion to show us that they will keep heckling and that is what they want to do.

I will not reiterate what my whip said earlier in her speech. Unfortunately, we all know that the leader of the official opposition and the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle posted some nasty tweets about two senators to encourage people to intimidate them. My colleague explained it in detail earlier. A Conservative senator had to apologize for saying ridiculous things. We know all that.

We are seeing more and more examples of the Conservatives' intimidation and disinformation strategy. It all seems to come down to one thing for the Conservatives: their fixation on the carbon tax. The Conservatives have a passionate love affair with oil, which makes the carbon tax a cardinal sin in their eyes. This is version one million of my opposition day carbon tax speech. This has got to

Business of Supply

be the millionth time I am giving a speech on this topic. It is the Conservative obsession. It is a constant.

Speaking of disinformation, In recent days and weeks, we have seen the Conservatives vigorously defend the notion that the carbon tax applies in Quebec, even during oral question period. There is no credible political player in Quebec who would say the carbon tax applies in Quebec.

Furthermore, during oral question period, I recall seeing the member for Bellechasse-Les Etchemins-Lévis, brandish a sheet of paper, insisting that the infamous carbon tax existed and that she had an invoice. Afterward, we clearly saw that the invoice referred to the Quebec carbon exchange. There are people in Quebec who would say this kind of behaviour is illegal. The oddest part is that the member for Bellechasse-Les Etchemins-Lévis was herself a minister in the Quebec government when the carbon exchange was implemented. This is part of the disinformation, much like the many false ads we have seen, that is, the carbon tax ads that often play in Quebec and that everyone ignores. This is part of this disinformation approach.

They scraped the bottom of the barrel this week, when the leader of the official opposition refused to clearly say, when he spoke of a terrorist attack, that he was likely citing one of his favourite media sources, Fox News. He accused CTV and scolded journalists, saying it was their fault, that CTV was confused, not him. He will not even admit to his own mistakes. Not to belabour the point, but let us recall the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement, where they used the carbon tax as an excuse, saying they voted against the agreement because of the carbon tax.

I believe this only proves that the leader of the official opposition—I will not be overly harsh—is not prime minister material. A good chief and leader usually brings out the best in others. They inspire people to excel and, most importantly, follow one of the basic tenets of politics, which is to never mix lies into political discourse—a truth that should apply to everyone—and to never get careless with the truth.

• (1140)

What we have been seeing for the past several weeks is a leader of the official opposition who plays fast and loose with the truth. Then, if anyone disagrees with him and resists his lies, he bullies them.

I will say it: People have talked to us about this. Alarm bells are ringing about how the member for Carleton operates, and those warnings are coming from none other than the Quebec Conservatives. Keep in mind that, during the Conservative leadership race, seven out of ten MPs from Quebec did not support Mr. Poilievre, sorry, the leader of the official opposition and MP for Carleton. Why did they not support him?

Business of Supply

There were some rather puzzling quotes. I am talking, for one, about the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent. He said that Jean Charest, who was a candidate in that race, was likely the godfather of the Liberal family. He was even ordered to retract his statement. He also described Mr. Charest as one of the most corrupt politicians in Quebec. That said, he preferred to support Mr. Charest over Mr. Poilievre. One wonders why. I—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That would be the hon. member for Carleton.

Mr. Mario Simard: I apologize, Madam Speaker. I am talking about the member for Carleton. Sometimes I get carried away and make mistakes.

Why did the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent make that decision? It is because he is well aware of how the member for Carleton operates.

The member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier was also very informative on this point. He said that, if the member for Carleton became the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, he would have some thinking to do.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, I am hearing some noise.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Can we avoid side conversations while members are giving their speeches?

Order, please. The hon. member for Jonquière.

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, before I heard the noise, I was saying that the member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier stated that he would think long and hard about his future if the member for Carleton became the leader of his party. He said, “I will resign, or join another party in the House of Commons, or sit as an independent, or help form another party.” In other words, he was well aware of how the member for Carleton operates.

Here is another quote by my colleague for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, who said, “I had a lot of respect for Stephen Harper as an economist, and I have a hard time understanding how he could support a candidate who wants to fire the Governor of the Bank of Canada and base the economy on Bitcoin.”

Here is a final revealing quote by the member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier. He said, “I have never seen such an aggressive race or such vicious personal attacks”.

That is why I say that even members of the Conservative Party from Quebec warned us about the Poilievre approach, which consists of two main elements, intimidation—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): You used the member's name again. Members are not allowed to refer to other members by name in the House of Commons. It is a well-known rule.

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, we were told about the Carleton doctrine, which is based on intimidation and disinformation.

The same goes for Senator Jean-Guy Dagenais, who said that he was going to tear up his membership card, affirming that the Conservative Party of Canada was putting its entire future within the Canadian political landscape on the line in the last leadership race. He referred to Marine Le Pen's France and Donald Trump's United States, and then concluded by asking whether we really wanted to have this person, the member for Carleton, as prime minister.

To top it off, the member for Richmond—Arthabaska was the victim of a hateful campaign. Members will recall that he left the party after the leadership race. When he left the Conservative caucus, he was being bullied by his colleagues. They called his office and told people in his riding to do the same, to pressure him. People like the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles even personally contacted his constituents to suggest they demand his resignation—

• (1145)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I must interrupt. The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: I do not know what is the matter with the member for Jonquière today. He has a long list of smears. What he just said is totally false. I would like him to withdraw his words.

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, I would say to my friend that when the truth strikes a nerve it can sting sometimes, but it is for the best. It is better to tell the truth—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member says that the statement is incorrect so I will give the hon. member for Jonquière the chance to correct that.

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, the member for Richmond—Arthabaska said that he was the victim of intimidation, pure and simple, and that the member for Carleton is the one who came up with that tactic. I am quoting the member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

What I am saying is that the members from Quebec themselves know that the member for Carleton was using what we might call the Carleton approach. The members from Quebec themselves warned us that there was a danger, that there was cause for concern. Today we are seeing it become all too real.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, after all this smearing of Conservative MPs from Quebec, I would like to reiterate my point. I never did what the member for Jonquière is accusing me of, and I would like him to retract his accusation.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is really not up to me to decide what is true and what is not. I will let the hon. member for Jonquière answer the member's request.

Business of Supply

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, I was referring to an article in which the member for Richmond—Arthabaska said that he had been the victim of what I would describe as rather unorthodox treatment. My aim was not to smear anyone. I simply stated the facts. It is a fact that Conservative MPs preferred to support Jean Charest in the leadership race. It is a fact that Conservative MPs said it was irrational to make Bitcoin Canada's currency. I was simply referring to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): This is a matter of debate. I was simply responding to the request of the hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

The member for La Prairie wishes to speak on the same point of order.

Mr. Alain Therrien: Madam Speaker, the member rose in the House to say that my colleague from Jonquière is telling lies. What lies is he talking about? Can the member explain why they are lies? None of this makes sense. The member stood up and accused my colleague of telling lies. What lies? Can he prove that it was a lie? I think it is up to the person rising on a point of order to prove that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Indeed, the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles will be able to demonstrate to the hon. member for Jonquière that what was alleged is not true.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, in his speech, the member for Jonquière personally accused me of calling people in the riding of Richmond—Arthabaska to ask them to call the member and ask him to resign. I never did that. He directly accused me of doing that as the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles. I am just saying that I did not do that.

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, what I told my colleague is that some newspaper articles refer to calls he allegedly made to the member for Richmond—Arthabaska's staff at the time, asking him to resign. I could send him the newspaper references.

Not more than half an hour ago, I asked the leader of the official opposition if he was prepared to repeat comments he has made many times in the past, that people are asking for medical assistance in dying because they have no food. He said that his remarks were based on a newspaper article he had read.

If my colleague is unwilling to live with quotes from newspaper articles in the House, then the same also applies to his leader.

• (1150)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We will now move on to questions and comments on the speech of the hon. member for Jonquière.

The hon. member for Beauce.

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, in his speech, the hon. member for Jonquière spent a lot of time not talking about this morning's motion in which we call on the Senate to pass Bill C-234 as quickly as possible. I was told that this bill does not apply to Quebec. I am going to try again and ask my colleague from Jonquière to check and see what is happening in his riding. If he has the opportunity to speak to farmers who use propane and natural gas to heat their buildings, I would ask him to check with them to see whether there is an additional amount on their bills.

The carbon tax also applies indirectly, because not everything we grow and eat in Quebec comes from Quebec. It is therefore really important to eliminate this tax and to get Bill C-234 passed as quickly as possible. I hope we can all agree on that.

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, it is rather confusing.

My colleague is telling us that the carbon tax applies but that it applies indirectly. It is hard to see what he is getting at.

If we really want to help farmers in Quebec, then we need to defend the supply management bill. My advice to my colleague is to talk to the Conservative senators and ask them to pass Bill C-282 and move it forward a bit more quickly. I am sure that all farmers in Quebec will be much happier with him for doing that than for fiercely defending a tax that does not apply to us.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I agree that there is a disturbing Donald Trump type of pattern that we see from the Conservative leader today, which is consistent with what we heard in regard to the Senate intimidation and with how the leader of the Conservative Party responded to a question, in essence, supporting it, as well as what the member gave rise to with regards to the member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

My question to the member is this: Would he not agree that there is a pattern the leader of the official opposition has taken that is in fact quite disturbing? It is a pattern of intimidation that I would classify as a Donald Trump style. We saw it with the media confrontation, and there was the example of eating an apple. All those types of things come together.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, I have to agree with my colleague from Winnipeg North, which rarely happens. Not only that, but I would use another metaphor, one borrowed from my colleague from Winnipeg North.

He often talks about the Homer Simpson awards. The big winner of the Homer Simpson award in recent weeks is definitely the member for Carleton. He lambasted CTV, saying it was the network's fault that he said there had been a terrorist attack, when it was later proven that that was a terrible lie. He can say that he will be voting against the Canada-Ukraine agreement because of the carbon tax, except that it will be easy to demonstrate that the carbon tax does not apply to that agreement.

We have a double nomination today. There is the Donald Trump award as well as the Homer Simpson award, which could be handed out at the end of the day.

Business of Supply

[English]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, it has to be acknowledged that Bill C-234 would not have passed the House of Commons if not for the support of the NDP, the Bloc and the Green Party. However, I am amazed at the audacity of the Conservatives to lecture us on the Senate when this is a party that appoints failed candidates and party bagmen, and they have a history of using their own senators to block private members' bills in several parliaments past.

However, on the principle of it, does my hon. colleague agree that ultimately the Senate should respect the democratic will of the House of Commons and that no matter what the bill is, if we pass it here, based on the will of the people, the Senate should accede to those wishes?

• (1155)

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague. Then again, the best course of action would be to abolish the Senate altogether.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Madam Speaker, listening to the Conservatives is confusing. It is hard to tell where they are going.

We talk about the carbon tax. We say that it does not apply in Quebec. They continue to say that it does. We saw that earlier. We say again that it does not apply, and they keep saying that yes, it does apply in Quebec. We repeat that it does not, and they say that it applies indirectly. We simply do not understand them anymore.

When they talk about Ukraine, they stand up in the House and say that they are for Ukraine because they voted against Bill C-57, which implements the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. They are so twisted that now the Ukrainians are wondering what is happening with the Conservatives and why they are against Ukraine. The Conservatives need to stand up and set the record straight.

My question is very simple. When someone has no substance to offer, the only weapon they have left is intimidation, correct?

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, as always, my House leader said it best. That is what I called the Carleton method.

That is it.

[English]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today as we debate an opposition day motion the Conservatives decided to present to the House, which states:

That the House call on the unelected Senate to immediately pass Bill C-234, An Act to amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, to remove the carbon tax on the farmers that feed Canadians, as passed by the democratically elected House.

Essentially, today's debate is on a motion to try to get a Conservative private member's bill through the Senate. I am amazed because today Conservatives are acting with outrage that the Senate is not moving quickly enough. It is as if they have not done far worse to move bills slowly in the past.

The cognitive dissonance and the absence of any historical grounding in today's debate is absolutely shocking. When thinking of my remarks for today's speech, two words came to mind: irony and hypocrisy. At best, we could be talking about the irony of this moment, but I think this is just plain and simple hypocrisy because I believe Conservatives are self-aware, and they know exactly about the entirety of their sordid history with the Senate.

Irony is about highlighting the human relationship with reality. It teases out the inconsistencies that reside in all of us, but this is far more than inconsistency. Hypocrisy is simple. It is about contradicting ourselves but with a more forceful and a more deliberate vein. Quite simply, hypocrisy is the pretense of consistency to hide one's inconsistency. Today's motion, if we look at the history of Conservatives' relationships with senators, is definitely one of inconsistency.

Again, I am absolutely flabbergasted at the sheer audacity of the Conservative Party of Canada to come to the House today to lecture members of Parliament and the Canadian public on the Senate. I will get into that in far greater detail in my remarks today.

I want to start with Bill C-234. It is important to acknowledge that the bill was duly passed by a vote of 176 to 146 in the House of Commons earlier this year. It is also equally important to note that the bill would not have passed the House if it had not been for the support of all opposition parties. They include the Green Party, the Bloc Québécois and the NDP. There were also three Liberals who lent their support to the bill. The electoral math in this place shows that those kinds of numbers are needed for any bill. I want to highlight that because often, when I hear speeches by the Conservatives, they tend to conveniently leave out that little fact.

It is also important to note in today's debate that we are not here to relitigate Bill C-234. That was done by the House. The bill went through second reading and then to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, of which I have been a proud member for the last six years. I was present for those meetings. I listened to the witnesses. I participated in the clause-by-clause review of the bill, the amendments to it, the reporting of it back to the House and its third reading. The House voiced its opinion on the matter. A clear majority of MPs decided to pass it, and we do not need to spend time talking about what was done.

At the time, I highlighted my support for Bill C-234 because I thought the provisions in it were consistent with the act it is trying to amend, namely the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, which was passed by a majority Liberal government in 2018. If members read the parent act carefully, they will see exemptions listed in the act for qualifying farm fuels, farm machinery and farming activities. After careful consideration of the bill and after listening to the many farm groups that appeared before our committee, I agree with them. There are no commercially viable alternatives to propane and natural gas for certain farm activities. I thought this amendment was quite in line with the original document the Liberal drafters put together.

Business of Supply

● (1200)

We did our due diligence on this bill. I do not think we need to spend much time dwelling on Bill C-234. I was quite happy with the amendments made to Bill C-234 at the committee stage. Its focus was narrowed so there is more clarity on what it would specifically be applied to. There was also a sunset clause introduced to signal to industry that there is a narrow window of time to start developing commercially viable alternatives. I know, from witness testimony, those efforts are well under way. It is a price signal sending a signal to the market that it needs to step up its game.

I have had the honour of spending, as I mentioned, six years on the agriculture committee. One thing I heard consistently from our farmers is that they are on the front lines of climate change. They are the ones dealing with shifting weather patterns caused by fossil fuel driven climate change. We had entire crops fail, whether from a drought or a flood. There was a shortage of feed, like we had in many parts of British Columbia, due to water sources drying up. That is now the norm in many parts of western Canada, and it is only going to get worse in the years ahead. Anyone with a simple knowledge of scientific facts can see this situation is going to get worse.

When I hear my Conservative colleagues talk about support for farmers, I try to put that in conjunction with their support for the oil and gas industry, or their lack of effort in going after the intense corporate profits of the oil and gas sector, which are fuelling the planet's burning right now. There is a dichotomy where my Conservative friends like to say they stand on the farmers' side, but meanwhile, farmers tell us the greatest threat to their livelihood is climate change. I do not see any viable policy alternatives to address that fact.

Let us get to the heart of the matter today: the Senate. Canadians have legitimate questions about the Senate. In Canada's Parliament, we have a bicameral system. We have the lower house, which is the elected House of Commons, and we also have an appointed Senate. If someone is one of the lucky few who are selected for a senator's position, then one has a locked-in job until age 75. One never has to face the electorate. One gets to enjoy all the trappings that office has, with none of the accountability.

I, like every member of Parliament in this place, have to reapply for my job every certain number of years. I have to be accountable for the votes I make, for the speeches I make and for the policy positions I take because that is the heart of democracy. I am not here just by myself. I am here representing the entire riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, and those are the people I report to. I have reported to them through three federal elections. Senators do not have to do that.

Only a handful of democracies around the world have an appointed upper chamber. I think many Canadians listening to today's debate would agree with me that in a modern, functional, 21st century democracy, an appointed upper house, with all the nominal powers of the lower house, has no room in this kind of system. The system we have has been begging for reform for many years. The NDP's position on the Senate is quite well known. We have certainly called for its abolishment. We note there are many countries

around the world that do quite well with a single chamber of elected representatives.

Other places have indirect elections or have direct elections for their senators. Whatever system it is, at least those senators are accountable to the people they serve, unlike our upper body. This is an important context for today's debate. Ultimately, what we are doing here in the lower house is complaining about the appointed upper chamber thwarting the democratic will of the House of Commons. This is a moment in time, but it has to be placed in the context of history because this is not the first time it has happened.

I also want to underline that I have a good working relationship with a handful of senators, and many serve on the agriculture committee. I have had the pleasure of getting to know them and their work, and I do not question their commitment to their line of work. My comments today are based solely on the Senate as an institution and on the inherent contradictions it has in a 21st century democracy.

● (1205)

Let us go, as I mentioned in my earlier remarks, to the Conservative hypocrisy and the Senate. I agree with the Conservatives that they have the right idea in today's motion in calling on the Senate to quit delaying the passage of a bill, in this case Bill C-234. We in the NDP have called on the Senate to do this many times over our history, so this is well-trodden ground for us. I would like to welcome my Conservative friends to the club. They may not be used to this, but trust me, as New Democrats we have a long history of calling for this.

For the Conservatives to bring in today's motion, given their history, is quite something. I really want to underline this for Canadians who are watching today's debate. It is a fact in this place that both the Conservatives and the Liberals have a sordid history with the Senate. They have both been guilty of not only appointing failed candidates, loyal donors and party operatives, but using—

An hon. member: Bagmen.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, my colleague used the term “bagmen” and that is absolutely a legitimate term.

They have used this appointed and unelected body to block bills from the democratically elected House. One only needs to look at our parliamentary history to see this is not a one-off situation. It has happened many times. To watch Conservatives and Liberals point fingers at each other goes to show that ultimately when it comes to this issue, these two parties are but different sides of the same coin.

Business of Supply

With respect to the current Conservative Party, let us take a little walk down history lane. This is the party of Mike Duffy and Nigel Wright. The leader of the Conservative Party, the member for Carleton, stands in this place and gives us a lecture on the Senate, when he is the person who, when in government and a representative of former prime minister Stephen Harper, had to day in and day out defend chief of staff Nigel Wright, who gave a \$90,000 cheque to Mike Duffy because of living expenses. That is what the member for Carleton had to stand up in this place and do time and time again.

Mr. Gord Johns: Selective amnesia.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, we do have selective amnesia in this place. I thank the member for Courtenay—Alberni for referencing that, because we lose sight of our history in this place.

The member for Carleton has been an MP for 19 very long years. I know the Conservatives have spent millions of dollars on burnishing up his image, but he has a long history in this House of Commons. If we do some digging, there are a lot of comments, a lot of questions and a lot of speeches from the member for Carleton that will give truth to who he really is.

However, it gets better, because the Conservatives have stood in this place accusing Liberals of bullying senators and imposing their will, when the Conservative Party is the only party in this House that still has 15 senators at caucus every Wednesday. Fifteen Conservative senators join their MP counterparts for every Wednesday meeting, and they get their marching orders from the member for Carleton on how to play games in the Senate. This has been the case for several Parliaments and we have seen it in the past.

Conservative senators have taken their marching orders from former prime minister Harper and have done the very thing that Conservatives are mad about today with Bill C-234. Senators took their marching orders from the Conservative Party in the House of Commons and used their procedural shenanigans in the red chamber to block multiple bills on multiple occasions that were passed by the democratic House. Again, it is rank hypocrisy from the Conservatives.

I will outline a few notable examples.

Our former beloved leader Jack Layton, several Parliaments ago, had a bill that was passed by the House called the climate change accountability act. My God, how things would be different now if we had actually paid attention back then and passed that law. However, right now in 2023, we are dealing with the consequences of years of inaction from both Liberal and Conservative governments. That bill was held up. It died in the Senate because of procedural shenanigans instigated by Conservative senators.

● (1210)

We have also had other cases. Former NDP member of Parliament Paul Dewar, who represented Ottawa Centre, introduced Bill C-393. It was a bill to permit the shipment and provision of generic drugs to Africa, a worthy cause, but it died in the Senate because of Conservative senator procedural shenanigans.

Then of course, in the 42nd Parliament, there was the bill that brought us to where we are today. It was the bill introduced to fully implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a groundbreaking piece of legislation, Bill C-262. It was ahead of its time, ahead of where the puck was going, and it directly led to the government introducing its own legislation in the subsequent Parliament to make sure Canada's federal laws were in harmony with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. That bill, which was duly passed by the House of Commons in the 42nd Parliament, was held up because of procedural shenanigans and games by Conservative senators at the request of their leader.

This is the amazing thing about the Senate. We cannot do that here in the House. With the rules there, one senator can throw in a wrench and jam up the entire works for days on end, and this tactic is used again and again. Conservative senators, under orders from their leader, have been doing precisely the same thing that Conservatives are mad about today when it comes to their own legislation.

These are the things we have to highlight. They are incredibly important because we have short memories in this place.

I am coming down to my final three minutes, and I very much look forward to the questions that will come. However, it does us well to understand that, first of all, Bill C-234 would not have passed in this place if it were not for all opposition parties working together to pass it because they saw merit in the bill. That is number one. Number two, we fundamentally agree with the principle that the Senate, as an unelected body, needs to respect the will of the House. The only party that has been consistent on that position through several parliaments is the NDP. We are the only party that comes out squeaky clean in a debate about the Senate, and all members would do well to acknowledge that fact.

Consistent with our third reading vote on Bill C-234, we will be voting in favour of today's motion, because that is consistent with the approach we have always taken. Had there been motions on our own private members' bills from several previous parliaments, we would have done the same thing. It is important to remind senators that we are the ones who have to face the electorate. We are the ones conveying the wishes of the people of Canada. Every seat in this place represents a distinct geographic area of Canada. We are the ones bringing the voice of the people here, and senators need to be reminded of that fact.

I will end by again highlighting the hypocrisy. I like serving with many of my Conservative colleagues, but as a party, we cannot take any moral lessons from them on the Senate given their history with appointing failed candidates, with party bagmen and with the instructions they give to their 15 caucus members who are members of the Senate. With the entire history they have of blocking bills, Canadians who are listening to today's debate need to understand that the last place we would ever go for a moral lesson on the problems with the Senate is the Conservative Party of Canada. I just want to make that very clear.

I will end my remarks there. I thank everyone for taking the time to listen, and I look forward to any questions or comments.

Business of Supply

• (1215)

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his impassioned speech, but there is something I disagree with. Conservatives have been standing up for farmers non-stop. I come from a very heavy grain area where farmers right now are telling me that their corn is coming in at 30% moisture or 28% moisture, and they need to get their corn dried down to 13% or 15%. Well, guess what. They have to use natural gas or propane to dry the grain because there is no other commercially viable option to dry grain in such huge amounts.

In northern Ontario, there are grain farms of 15,000 acres and 20,000 acres, much like in the Prairies. There are senators in the Senate stalling this legislation who are from northern Ontario and who should know that the cost for these farmers to dry their grain is exorbitant.

I am wondering if my colleague could comment on why the senators from northern Ontario should not be held accountable by the constituents they are supposed to represent and why Canadians should not be able to call their senators to voice their concerns.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, those are all good points. That is why I voted for the bill. We understood very clearly from committee hearings on this bill that there are no commercially viable alternatives. The problems with drying grain and with getting appropriate levels of feed because of future droughts, as I said in my speech, are going to multiply because this is the new reality that our farmers are facing.

It is not just Conservatives who support farmers. One of the reasons the agriculture committee gets along so well is that all parties around the table understand that they have farmers as constituents. I think it is the only committee of the House of Commons that regularly works and makes decisions by consensus.

I would argue with one point, though. Senators do not have constituents. We have constituents. I acknowledge that it is a problem; I do not agree that the Senate should be holding up a bill. However, I gave countless examples of where Conservative senators did the exact same thing for other bills. That is the hypocrisy people need to understand when it comes to the Conservative Party.

Senators should not be doing this. They should be listening to the democratic will of the House. I simply wish the Conservatives would have a consistent position no matter what bill is being discussed in the Senate.

The Deputy Speaker: I am wondering why we cannot use the air in here to dry grain.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is because there are not enough Conservative speakers standing to breathe the hot air.

At the end of the day, this is an interesting bill, but I suggest that the member give some thought to the bail reform bill. If the member can recall, sometime in June, the Conservative leader said there was really important stuff we needed to pass and that we should

come back in session to get that particular bill passed. Then, when we came back in session in September, we passed the bill unanimously through the whole process. Today, it is being held up and still has not passed because of the Conservative Party.

Here we have the Conservatives now saying we should pass this bill. They seem to have forgotten this other important piece of legislation, which has a wide spectrum of support from different stakeholders. Every member of the chamber is supportive of it. I wonder if the member sees any irony there. Why are they being very selective about raising this issue on the floor? Why not the bail bill?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, that is a great question. The Conservatives have suddenly taken it upon themselves to have a greater interest in the beautiful Vancouver Island area, but I would remind them that in my riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, every single municipality I represent wrote to me asking that that bill get passed quickly. I am sure it is the same up and down Vancouver Island and in many communities right across Canada.

Again, I think it goes to the theme of hypocrisy. There is a selective memory in this place about how different parties have used the Senate to further their own ends or block an opposing party's piece of legislation.

I would agree with my colleague from across the way, the member for Winnipeg North, that that is an important bill. I was proud to support it. I was proud to see how we all came together, because the municipalities in Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, mayors and councils from every single town, wrote to me urging me to pass that piece of legislation quickly. I am glad I was able to report back as their member of Parliament, something that senators do not have to do, that the House did its job. I would like to see the Senate recognize and respect that fact.

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Cowichan—Malahat—Langford for his speech. I appreciated almost all of it, except the part where he said the NDP was the only party that has supported the abolition of the Senate. I would like to remind him that this is also the position of the Bloc Québécois.

On this matter, our decisions are predictable. This allows the people who vote for us to know why they vote for us and to anticipate the decisions we will make in the House. I find it a bit sad that the Conservatives' decisions depend on what will serve their ends in the moment.

Business of Supply

Consider Bill C-234, but also Bill C-282, which was passed by the House to protect supply management. The Conservatives are doing exactly what they are now scolding senators for doing, namely slowing down the passage of a bill. The only thing the Conservatives are consistent about is that if they can insert the words “carbon tax” somewhere, they will use it as an excuse to vote against something. This makes for some particularly bizarre decisions, like their decision to vote against the bill to implement the free trade agreement with Ukraine.

I would like to hear from my colleague as to whether he thinks this lax approach, this cherry picking, is disappointing for the public, because it does not give voters a sense of where the Conservative Party is generally headed.

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, allow me to withdraw the comment and apologize. I want to recognize that the Bloc absolutely is in line with the NDP on abolishing the upper chamber.

The member is right. In addition to Bill C-234, there is a very important bill that we were proud to support, Bill C-282. There are a lot of supply-managed farmers in my riding who personally met with me. I met with many of their industry groups.

We were proud to support that piece of legislation, because we simply cannot trust Liberal and Conservative governments to honour the spirit of supply management. We agreed with the Bloc Québécois in putting that in legislation so that we can prevent future governments from negotiating away our supply-managed industries.

I want to give another shout-out. The member for York—Simcoe has Bill C-280 in the Senate. I hope that the Senate will respect the will of this House, because that is another important bill dealing with the Canadian Produce Marketing Association and the fresh fruit and vegetable sector.

Again, strong agricultural bills are coming from the House of Commons. I think one thing that Canadians deserve from us is for us to have consistency in our positions. If we look at the Conservative history at the Senate, it has been anything but consistent.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the issue of Conservative hypocrisy in the Senate is one of the reasons the Canadian people threw Brian Mulroney out. They gave him the bum's rush after he imposed eight senators to force through the most hated tax of all time, the GST. Canadians were stuck paying for these dudes until they were 75. They cannot be fired. The price of a Conservative sock puppet is enormous.

Stephen Harper came in and said he was going to reform the Senate. What did he do?

It is just one long list of pals and cronies. Let us talk about Larry Smith. Larry Smith gets appointed to the Senate, and he is outraged when he finds out how much money he is going to make. He says it is “a dramatic, catastrophic pay cut” that he had to serve the Canadian people. This is how out of touch the guy is. He then runs for office. Needless to say, the Canadian people want nothing to do with Larry Smith, so he comes in third. This man is unfit for public service. Stephen Harper puts him back in, a loyal sock puppet, and

we are stuck with this guy until he is 75. He cannot be fired. He does not have to show up for work. All he has to do is be loyal to the Conservative Party.

When I see the member who is living in Stornoway, a 19-room mansion, talk about the common people and the Senate, I am amazed. Does he not meet with them every week and know exactly how entitled and how out of touch and what cronies of the Conservative Party they are?

• (1225)

The Deputy Speaker: Before I move on, I just need to remind members of Standing Order 18. It says:

No member shall...use offensive words against either House, or against any member thereof.

I think the hon. member comes pretty close to impugning other members in the other house. I would just remind folks to be judicious in their referral to hon. members of all our houses that represent Canadians.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that, and in that I do not actually deal with the unelected Senate on a regular basis, is it “crony” or “pal”? Is there a particular term that I should be aware of?

The Deputy Speaker: We'll move on to the next speech.

The hon. member for Huron—Bruce.

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time today with the member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington.

With regard to Bill C-234, I would like to recognize a couple of people, the first being the member for Brandon—Souris. Before he was elected, he worked in the private sector. He was one of the people who gave the idea for the beginnings of this bill in the last Parliament to the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South, which was Bill C-206, which, at that time, talked about taking the carbon tax off the drying of grains.

With Bill C-234, we look to, as we always do in life or in legislation, trying to make it better. We included the heating of livestock barns and buildings used to grow food, such as mushrooms that we see at grocery stores.

I wanted to recognize those individuals, as well as the Conservative agriculture critic. He has done a great job and was a big advocate after the last election to include this.

Business of Supply

Like I said, these are the basics of the bill. At a time when farmers are seeing increased costs due to inflation everywhere they look, this bill is very timely. Over the last two years, farmers have seen a tremendous increase in the cost of purchasing farm machinery, such as tractors. Some of the costs have skyrocketed, including the cost of carrying debt, such as mortgages on farms. For a lot of farmers, a portion of it is fixed and a portion of it is variable. They may also carry operating lines of credit, maybe for inputs or livestock, whatever it may be at the time. All these things have become more expensive, in large part, due to government spending. The amount of debt, inflation and printing money have caused this. Farmers have borne a terrible amount of the brunt on this.

In addition to that, a couple of years ago, we will remember how much the cost of fertilizer increased for farmers, even when some farmers had prepaid. In the previous fiscal year, farmers had prepaid, only to find out they had to pay more when it came time to put the fertilizer on their land. They have had some really challenging times, but they are still committed to being farmers and they are still committed to feeding Canadians. Canadian farmers, as we know, help feed the world many times over.

That is why this bill happens to be the right bill at the right time. It has been almost two years since I introduced this bill in the House of Commons. It will, hopefully, be voted on tonight or in the near future.

Farmers need a break. We have heard in question period, statements and speeches what farmers are facing with the carbon tax. The other thing that is frightening to farmers is they know this is not the end of it. They know that on April 1 every year, the carbon tax will go up until 2030, to the point where, in many cases, the profit margin will no longer be there at all for small farmers. They will have to make a decision whether to carry on or what to do.

That is why this bill is so timely and it is so important for the Senate to make a decision on it. I am open to whatever way the Senate votes. If it votes it up or down, I can live with either result, but what I find unfortunate is that there are some games being played. I do not mind if a committee takes the time to study it, which it did. I appeared at committee and it was a great honour. However, when amendments are put forward after virtually the same amendments were voted on at report stage and defeated, it does resemble a bit of a game, which is unfortunate.

The people having the games played on them are Canadian farmers. It is not me or the members of Parliament in this House of Commons who suffer. It is Canadian farmers who suffer.

• (1230)

There is another thing that really hits home. I hear it every week-end when I am at community events at home. I see the farmers in my area, when I drive up and down the county roads. They are still taking their corn off. The corn that is being taken off on November 28 needs to be dried. That is the reality. That uses propane and natural gas. Had the Senate dealt with this bill in the spring, farmers drying their crops today would not be paying the carbon tax. Farmers heating their broiler barns, their turkey barns, their layer barns and their hog barns would not be paying the carbon tax.

People have come up to me, and I imagine they are of all political stripes, and they cannot believe that this bill has not been passed. They understand. As many members have talked about today, this is not the only place it has touched the price of food. It is passed along many times. One pork farmer in my riding told me that the fuel surcharge, just the surcharge, for him to ship his 20,000 hogs a year to the processing plant, was \$20,000.

In the big scheme of a significant operation, it is not going to put the fellow out of business, but it is \$20,000. That is \$20,000 he could have put into his operation. That is \$20,000 he could have put on his line of credit or paid down his debt.

There is a pork farmer in my riding whose carbon tax bill in the month of March 2023 was \$3,500. The member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands, who sits right beside me, talked about one yesterday. It was \$1,500 a month. The leader of the Conservative Party has a mushroom grower in his riding who pays \$10,000, \$11,000, \$12,000 a month. Farmers cannot afford this any longer. They need Canadian lawmakers, senators and members of the House of Commons to make a decision and move forward on this.

The other key point is that when it becomes more cost-effective, cheaper, for grocery stores and retailers to buy food, vegetables or whatever, from Mexico, California or Colorado, put it in a transport truck and ship it for five days to Ontario, where I live, there is something wrong with the cost structure in Canada and in my province of Ontario. Carbon tax is one of them.

We need to address this. It should not be political. One of the most important things a country can do, in addition to defending its citizens, is be able to feed its citizens, to have enough adequate food and nutrition to feed its citizens. We have had a lot of discussion about food banks, but the very idea of having a sustainable food production system, a full cycle in our country is one of the most important things.

In the last eight years, we have seen an erosion in food sovereignty in Canada. A number of processing plants have closed because of cost and mismanagement at the government level on trade. There are all sorts of issues on that. It is very important.

The last thing I will say is that we can drive up and down the rural roads and see people we have known pretty much our entire lives, people who have worked hard around the clock. They can be seen out at 11 o'clock at night combining their corn, harvesting their corn. We know they are doing it for Canadians. They like to make a little money, but it is a passion, a livelihood. It is their life.

Business of Supply

We have to make sure that we get this right. We have to make sure that we take the carbon tax off and make it affordable for the consumer, make it right for the environment and make it right for the farmer.

• (1235)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all know that the price on pollution gets such a reaction from the Conservative Party that its members will actually vote against, as they have, the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement, all because of that red herring of an excuse.

When it comes to the Senate, again, there is legislation that is dealing with bail reform. The Conservative Party of Canada itself, in August, said that we should come back in session so we could pass the bail reform bill. The provinces and stakeholders were saying that it was important that we pass it. Why has it not been passed? All members of the House passed it unanimously, but the Conservative senators are now actually proposing amendments to it. They are preventing the bail reform bill from passing. There is no word now from the Conservative Party in regard to that important legislation; it completely evaporated, and why? It is because the Conservative Party is so fixated on the price on pollution that it will do anything on the issue. It is completely high-risk as a political entity.

My question is this: When the Conservative caucus meets tomorrow, and the Conservative senators meet with the Conservative MPs, will they ask what the holdup is with the bail reform bill?

Mr. Ben Lobb: Mr. Speaker, first of all, with respect to trade, the former ag minister blew it on the South Korean import rule concerning beef cattle over 30 months of age. The current finance minister pretty well blew it on the European free trade agreement; the Stephen Harper government had it to the one-yard line, and she just about fumbled it into the end zone.

With respect to the environment, farmers get no credit for ethically managed woodlots and no credit for planting fall cover crops. They get no credit from the government for crop rotations, for environmental farm plans or for nutrient management plans. They do all that, and the Liberal government gives them zero credit. That is even further frustrating to farmers. They are paying all of this carbon tax and treating their farm like their child, beautifully, but they get no credit, and that is a real shame.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague from Cowichan—Malahat—Langford mentioned, the debate has been had in the House, and all opposition parties voted in favour of the bill. I am sure the member has heard the members for Timmins—James Bay and Cowichan—Malahat—Langford about the hypocrisy with respect to the bill, because there are ample examples of Conservatives filibustering in the Senate; they are guilty of the same crime.

However, my question is related to tactics. There was a member of the Senate who had to vacate her house as a result of the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle's putting up a wanted poster for her. We know that violence against all members of Parliament is very common, and I am wondering whether my colleague agrees with the political tactics that have been employed by Conservatives to virtue

signal to alt-right members who live in Canada to harass elected officials and now senators. Does he agree with those kinds of tactics?

Mr. Ben Lobb: Mr. Speaker, I have never heard the member get up and say anything about somebody like Denise Batters. I have never heard her have any concern for some of the stuff that Senator Denise Batters goes through. With respect to the particular senator that the member spoke about, I really do not know what the whole deal is with what happened, to be honest; I have other things to think about. However, I can say that posting somebody's office phone number, which is on the website anyway, and their email—

Ms. Leah Gazan: In a wanted poster.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Mr. Speaker, they are just saying to call her up and let her know, and she had no problem playing games. As far as her safety goes, I do not know about that, and the member who asked the question does not know either, because I am sure she never talked to her. We just hope that everybody is safe when in politics, and I would leave it at that. Our focus is that we want the bill to be addressed in the Senate. We have never asked for any special favours on the bill; we just want the vote to occur.

• (1240)

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would like to put on the record that, while I would like to take the credit my colleague just gave me for Bill C-234, I think he meant the member for Portage—Lisgar, because he wrote the legislation. I do support it wholly and just want to commend him for his thanks to the colleagues for their work on the bill.

The Deputy Speaker: While I appreciate the point of order, that was really just part of debate.

The hon. member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to rise in this place and speak in favour of our opposition day motion to expand the pause on home heating to all forms of heating. The goal was to lower costs for Canadians as they prepare to heat their homes for the cold Canadian winter ahead.

Unfortunately, and unsurprisingly, the government continued in its staunch refusal to accept common-sense solutions being brought forward by opposition parties that would result in much-needed financial relief for struggling Canadians. However, today, we have another opposition day motion, and the House has another opportunity to do the right thing and vote in favour of our motion to help our farmers. The very straightforward motion reads as follows: “That the House call on the unelected Senate to immediately pass Bill C-234, An Act to amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, to remove the carbon tax on the farmers that feed Canadians, as passed by the democratically elected House.”

Business of Supply

Allow me to give a bit of background. The private member's bill, sponsored by the member for Huron—Bruce, was sent over to the Senate in March of this year, with all parties in support of the legislation except the Liberals. Every single opposition party with status, in addition to the two Greens and two of the three independents, support the legislation. There is support from across the political spectrum, save for the one party that seems hell-bent on staking its political future on a deeply unpopular and deeply flawed carbon pricing scheme.

I would also like to point out that the legislation's support transcends jurisdiction too. Several premiers have taken the unusual step of throwing their support behind the legislation. Premier Ford said, "This legislation would help farmers in Ontario and across Canada by lowering their costs, which would help lower the grocery bills of hardworking families in need of extra support right now." Farther down, he states, "While the federal government has finally admitted that the carbon tax is hurting families by pausing its tax on home heating oil, all Canadians deserve a break right now. This includes removing the carbon tax from all forms of home heating and passing Bill C-234 as soon as possible."

One farmer in my riding wrote, "Grain drying and heating for livestock barns (for young livestock) has come a long ways in efficiency, but we have no alternatives. Heat pumps cannot be built large enough to be effective. Hopefully the Senate can move C-234 forward without further delaying a bill in which the Liberal government has used multiple unusual procedural tactics to stall." I hear the same sentiments repeatedly, whether at a hockey game, a local event or in a grocery store in the riding of Hastings—Lennox and Addington.

Given the unique nature of this opposition day motion, this speech is as much for our friends in the upper house as it is for Canadians at home. Recent media reports have indicated that flaring tempers and procedural games have reared their heads in the red chamber, and it has attracted the attention of the provinces. Premier Scott Moe of Saskatchewan touched on this unfortunate development. He writes:

The House of Commons recently took an important step in this direction by passing Bill C-234, which would exempt agricultural producers from paying the carbon tax on natural gas and propane used to dry grain and to heat and cool farm buildings like barns and greenhouses. This would reduce the cost of food production, which in turn would reduce the cost of groceries for Canadian families. I commend all MPs who voted for this bill for taking this important step to reduce the cost of living for the people they represent.

It is extremely concerning that the Senate now appears to be blocking the passage of this bill, which was passed by our elected MPs. While Senators are not elected, you are appointed to represent the residents of your province who are struggling with high grocery costs. It is unacceptable that the Senate would stand in the way of providing Canadians with a break on grocery costs by blocking this carbon tax exemption, which has been approved by the House of Commons.

Similarly, Premier Higgs of New Brunswick wrote, "I urge you to support passage of Bill C-234, An Act To Amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, which is now before the Senate. This legislation would remove the carbon tax from fuels used by farmers in the production of their crops, which would have a beneficial impact on the price of food."

• (1245)

The neighbouring premier, in Nova Scotia, Tim Houston, also wrote in support of Bill C-234:

The carbon tax has a significant impact on the Nova Scotian agricultural sector. For example, it will cost an average poultry producer an estimated \$400 in propane and \$1,300 for heating in 2023 (pre-exemption) and \$2,900 in 2030.

Farmers across our country are struggling to deal with the impact of the carbon tax on their activities. The pain is also being felt by ordinary Nova Scotians and Canadians with out-of-control food inflation forcing citizens to skip meals or choose between rent or groceries. Food is not a luxury; it is a necessity. Bill C-234 will save farmers close to \$1 billion by 2030 and bring desperately needed relief both to farmers and consumers.

There is another point I would like to touch on, which was raised by the member for Carleton earlier today: the capacity of Parliament, more specifically, the House of Commons, to raise monies. The long struggle that this legislature and its predecessors have gone through is to secure our ultimate and most basic function: to oversee the expenditure of public monies. This was not achieved without the shedding of blood. Lord Durham, sent to investigate the rebellions taking place in Upper Canada and Lower Canada, wrote:

The Assembly, after it had obtained entire control over the public revenues, still found itself deprived of all voice in the choice or even designation of the persons in whose administration of affairs it could feel confidence.

It is difficult to conceive what could have been their theory of government who imagined that in any colony of England a body invested with the name and character of a representative Assembly, could be deprived of any of those powers which, in the opinion of Englishmen, are inherent in a popular legislature.

In short, only the House of Commons may propose the expenditure of public funds. The House has been extremely clear in our intention: We want the legislation passed. I urge the senators who are opposed to the legislation to take phone calls from their constituents, to listen to small businesses in their provinces and to listen with empathy to what struggling Canadians have to say. If they are truly willing to stand against a piece of legislation that received support from across the political aisle, except for the party that appointed most of them, they are going to have to explain their reasoning, and it is not a very good look. They are going to have to justify the actions of an institution that is supposed to be a chamber of sober second thought, not of blind political ideology. We already know the government is fanatically devoted to its carbon tax. I hope its political appointees in the Senate can come to some common sense.

It is imperative that all parliamentarians, elected or not, respect the will and the voice of Canadians, and about Bill C-234, Canadians and their elected representatives have been exceedingly clear. They want the legislation and need this legislation, and they needed it yesterday. It has been sitting on the dockets of both houses for nearly two years. Thankfully, it is in the final stage of the process. I look forward to seeing the legislation come into force so the wallets of our farmers and of Canadians at large can finally get some relief.

Business of Supply

• (1250)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the member would provide her thoughts on the following media report:

...Canadian Senator Bernadette Clement was reportedly forced to leave her home due to fears for her safety. The incident came about after a provocative post, akin to a 'wanted poster,' was shared online by former Conservative Party leader [the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle]. The post included Senator Clement's picture and office phone number, triggering a deluge of abusive calls, including racist comments, and even a threatening phone call from an unidentified man.

...Senator Clement instructed her office staff to cease answering the phone. In a clear reflection of the heightened sense of fear, she decided to relocate from her Cornwall home to Ottawa....

My question for the member is this: Does she support the type of intimidating factors used by the Conservative Party today being applied to the Senate of Canada?

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Mr. Speaker, I certainly disagree. While I do not agree with anyone ever being threatened or intimidated, I do agree with holding the upper chamber accountable. The intimidation that the member is suggesting is mere distraction.

The intimidation imposed by the member of Parliament and the Liberal-NDP government on hard-working Canadians is insufferable. Therefore, the question is this. Who is being intimidated?

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a simple question. She made a long speech about the Senate respecting the decisions of the House of Commons. Would she be willing to repeat her speech in its entirety and present exactly the same message, but simply replace Bill C-234 with Bill C-282, which deals with supply management?

[English]

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Mr. Speaker, my suggestion remains. Canadian farmers, growers and ranchers are growing our economy. Bill C-234 is a vote for Canadian farmers, for rural communities, for sustaining farm practices and for food security. I think that answers the question.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to the debate today. I have heard a lot of Conservatives talk about trying to hold the upper chamber to account, but of course they cannot, by design. Because senators are appointed by the prime minister, they never face the electorate and they serve until they are 75.

We have heard complaints today about this bill being held up in the Senate. We have seen bills, including a bill having to do with the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, killed by the Senate in previous Parliaments. The Conservatives complain, rightly, about the intervention of the Senate in respect to the medical assistance in dying debate. We know that the Senate costs Canadians \$125 million-plus a year.

Will the member join with me today in calling for the abolition of the Senate?

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Mr. Speaker, I would certainly call on the member of Parliament for betraying Canadians. When

he was elected to the House of Commons, he was elected to be the opposition. Instead, he has been propping up the government, for how long? Canadians are catching on.

I am here representing all people of Hastings—Lennox and Addington. I would encourage the members of the upper chamber to reflect on their role.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals and the New Democrats continue to come here with their carbon-tax religion, failing to recognize that carbon is actually a building block of life and it is plant food, and that the carbon tax is not a climate change policy and has nothing to do with the environment.

Does the member think the carbon tax is making our farmers less competitive, less productive and less profitable? At the end of the day, it is creating food insecurity in the country. Like the Liberals are doing in Canada, Putin is doing the same in Ukraine?

• (1255)

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Mr. Speaker, what we need to do is make it right for the consumer, for the farmer, for the environment and for all Canadians. We need technology, not taxes. Canadians are looking for nutritious and affordable food right here in Canada. Food is not a luxury. Eight hundred thousand Canadians in Ontario alone had to go to a food bank. Something needs to change.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always great to rise in this most honourable House. I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Steveston—Richmond East. It is great to see everyone this afternoon. I hope that all my colleagues and their families are doing well on this Tuesday.

I am pleased to take part in today's debate. Rather than indulge in Conservative partisan attacks on the pollution price, let us talk about what matters most to Canadians: making life more affordable and ensuring that Canadian families have good jobs and good futures for themselves and their children. That has been the focus of our government since day one and we will continue to be on that tangent.

As Canadians continue to feel the effects of global inflation, our government understands that it remains difficult for too many families to make ends meet.

We are seeing very strong indications that global inflation is rolling over. We have seen that in Europe where inflation is at 1.8% or so. We have seen that in the United States where some indicators have it down below 3%. We have seen rent inflation in the United States actually roll over to the downside. We have seen that in recent indicators in Canada. I strongly believe, as an economist and someone who worked on Bay Street and Wall Street for many years, although I grew up in small-town Canada, we will see that in the months ahead in Canada. When we look at the price of containers or look at leading indicators of the TRI index and so forth, inflation is rolling over to the downside. That is the way our economy is going. It will be a benefit to all Canadians.

Since 2015, our government has taken many actions to make life more affordable for Canadians who need it most, but we understand that some Canadians still need more support.

[Translation]

That is why, last week, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance introduced new measures to support Canadians in the 2023 fall economic statement.

Of course, we are undertaking this while continuing to deliver the government's economic plan, and while also making important progress on the government's existing commitments that are helping to make life more affordable across the country.

It is clear that our measures are having a very real impact on Canadians' budgets.

[English]

I would like to give a few concrete examples.

A family with two children in British Columbia, with an income of \$88,000 in 2023, could benefit from about \$17,700 as a result of reduced child care costs, the Canada child benefit, the Canada dental benefit and tax relief from the increased basic personal amount, which we raised to \$15,000 in 2023-24. That will provide Canadians \$6 billion of tax relief from coast to coast to coast. This is money in the pockets of Canadians.

For my family, my little daughter is at day care. The families that use that day care in the province of Ontario have saved 50%, which literally means up to \$8,000 in after-tax dollars, while before-tax dollars it is over \$10,000. Going into 2024, they are going to see a further reduction in their day care costs, which means real savings for families across Canada. That, again, will make life more affordable for all Canadians.

In Nova Scotia, low-income students could receive more than \$5,800 in additional support in 2023, thanks to increased Canada student grants and interest-free Canada student loans, the grocery rebate and pollution price rebates, known as the climate action incentive payments.

If students have a disability or dependants, they could receive an additional \$12,800 in specialized student grants, plus an extra \$640 per dependant and up to \$20,000 toward devices that support their learning. After graduating, all their federal student loans will remain interest free. Again, student loans to youth or older folks go-

Business of Supply

ing to school are interest free, with full repayment assistance available until their income surpasses \$40,000 per year.

• (1300)

[Translation]

A 78-year-old senior in Quebec with a maximum GIS entitlement could receive more than \$2,000 in additional support in 2023. That is \$2,000 in seniors' pockets thanks to the grocery rebate, the GIS top-up increase for single seniors, and the 10% old age security increase for people 75 and up.

[English]

However, we know that more needs to be done to support Canadians, especially through these times when global inflation has had an impact on all economies throughout the world. That is why our government has taken further action in the 2023 fall economic statement to support the middle class and build more homes faster.

To help Canadians with mortgages, our government is moving forward with the new Canadian mortgage charter, which details the relief Canadians can expect from their banks if they are in financial difficulty.

We also understand that when it comes to housing, there is an important issue on the supply side. There is simply not enough homes for Canadians. We have known this for years. We know that we need to increase the supply of homes. We have no choice; we need to do it. There are many reasons for this. We are attracting newcomers from all over the world, whether it is in the global high-tech stream, family reunification, express entry or firms putting forward LMIA's.

We are a magnet for talent from all over the world wanting to come to live, work and invest in Canada, which is a foreign concept for the official opposition. Foreign companies wishing to invest in Canada is a great thing. We need to champion it. Literally millions of Canadians work for foreign companies that have invested in Canada, and I cannot believe the official opposition does not like that.

We also understand that when it comes to housing, we need more supply. That is why we are accelerating our work to build more homes faster. Indeed, the Deputy Prime Minister announced last week in the 2023 fall economic statement that we would introduce billions of dollars in new financing to build more homes faster.

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[Translation]

To make housing in this country more affordable, we will put forward measures to crack down on short-term rentals. We really want homes to be used for Canadians to live in. We will also take steps to increase the number of construction workers from coast to coast to coast.

I have been talking about housing measures, but cost of living challenges also include basic needs, such as groceries. Obviously, we see that as a major problem, so we are putting forward concrete measures to tackle it.

[English]

For example, we are going to amend the Competition Act and the Competition Tribunal Act to ensure Canadians have more choice, through competition, in where they take their business. The Competition Tribunal is something I hold dearly. We need to modernize it, and we are. We have done this with Bill C-34 and with other bills, as well as measures in Bill C-56. We need to move forward on that.

Capitalism is a wonderful thing, but capitalism only exists when there are rules and regulation and competition is encouraged, which fosters innovation, choice and lower prices. The more competition we have, the better our economy functions and better jobs happen. I am a big believer in new processes and new industries being created, and that is what is happening in Canada, whether it is in artificial intelligence, fintech or the many sectors across our beautiful country.

Together with Bill C-56, we will strengthen the tools and powers available to the Competition Bureau to enable it to crack down on abuses of dominance by bigger companies, including those intended to keep out competition, such as predatory pricing. Companies should pay for predatory pricing.

We will further modernize merger reviews, including by empowering the Competition Bureau to better detect and address killer acquisitions and other anti-competitive mergers. This is very important. Canadians deserve better, always—

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I hate to do this to my colleague, and I do appreciate what he is trying to do here, which is to talk about anything other than Bill C-234 and its impacts on Canadian agriculture and the carbon tax farmers are paying. I would really appreciate it if, at some point in his 20-minute speech, he would at least hint at or even mention Bill C-234 and the fact that Liberal senators are doing all they can to block the legislation in the Senate. This motion today is about it that, and I would appreciate it if he would address it.

• (1305)

The Deputy Speaker: I appreciate the hon. member's input.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. I have two quick points. First, there are no Liberal senators. The only politically aligned senators are Conservative senators. Second, I am sure, if we are a little more patient, that we will find

the member in fact referencing it. He is highlighting some very important points for the debate.

The Deputy Speaker: I will do a quick round, but ensure the comments are short on any point of order coming before the table.

The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, I want to correct the parliamentary secretary on his comments. As he knows, it was the Liberal Prime Minister who appointed all those senators, making them Liberal senators.

The Deputy Speaker: That is debate.

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

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, it is not that I am always opposed to the member for Winnipeg North, but I think it is inappropriate for him to claim to know what another colleague is going to speak of in the future. Maybe he has a Ouija board on his desk.

To contradict my Conservative colleague, it is not about the carbon tax. It is about the instruction to the unelected, unaccountable Senate, which is full of bagmen and friends.

The Deputy Speaker: I always question whether I should actually listen to some of these points of order. These are all debate.

The hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank all my colleagues in the House for their points of order. Obviously, we are here to learn from each other, make legislation better, make sure we represent our constituents and make this country not only the best place to live today but the best place for our children to grow up tomorrow and in future years.

I will say that the agriculture sector here in Canada is key to the future of our country. Food security and food affordability are paramount issues. We always need to support not only our farmers but also our agriculture sector, along the entire continuum.

My riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge is a food cluster and food processing centre. I have great relationships with the folks down in Leamington and Windsor, as well as the greenhouse growers in the Holland Marsh. I know this sector well. Our government will be there today and tomorrow for the agri-food sector and along the entire continuum.

I look forward to some very learned questions and comments from all sides of the aisle today.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my hon. colleague's whole speech. He did not mention Bill C-234 or the Senate at all.

Business of Supply

Very simply, over the last week, how many Liberal-appointed senators did the environment minister call to try to bully them and convince them to vote against this bill?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that, unlike the Conservative Party of Canada, whose senators still caucus with that party, there are no senators who caucus with the duly elected members of Parliament who represent Liberal ridings—

Mr. Warren Steinley: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe my colleague did not hear me. I said “Liberal-appointed senators”, because the Prime Minister is a Liberal and he did appoint these senators. Therefore, there are Liberal-appointed senators.

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order. That is a point of debate.

The hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, whether it is a point of order or a point of debate, I think that is something that is always good to clarify.

With regard to the senators that have been appointed, there is a process that all senators have to do. Here in Ontario, there are members appointed by the Conservative provincial government, which appoints members to put forward names for the Senate process, along with federal representatives. They do it together in collaboration. That list goes forward as an independent process that happens here in the province of Ontario.

I know independence is a foreign word to my opposition friends and colleagues, but independence it is.

The Senate is a place for sober second thought. It is doing its job. It should do it judiciously and diligently and move forward.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I too was disappointed that, in the whole speech, we did not hear reference to the bill that the motion we are debating today actually talks about. I was also frustrated on the opening day of debate on anti-scab legislation, when the Conservative opening speeches did not mention it at all.

Why did the member adopt the Conservative strategy of refusing to speak to the business of the day when it is politically inconvenient for him? Will he release the Liberal-Conservative coalition tactic book?

• (1310)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, I think I need to review the tape on that question.

Our government will always work in the best interest of Canadians and for the residents who sent us here. It is a privilege and an honour to be in the House.

With reference to the legislation on replacement workers, that is something we need to get done.

On making all sectors of the economy more competitive, with more choice, lower prices and higher incomes for our farmers and our workers, that is something we are doing. We have been deliver-

ing for Canadians since day one, since 2015. We will continue to do so.

I have yet to see an idea on the economic front by the official opposition, whether it is the economy, the environment, health care or any sector of the economy that impacts Canadians.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in a very real way, it is about the price on pollution. The Conservative Party, under the current leadership, is so anti-price on pollution that it even voted against the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. Given his highlighting of the importance of the Canadian economy, could my colleague provide his thoughts on that?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, as someone who believes in free trade and trade agreements, on principle, I think we need to support trade agreements. It may be CETA, CUSMA, CPTPP, the Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement, which was negotiated by the other side, if I remember correctly, or the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement.

Whether members agree or disagree on minor details within the agreement, at this time, when Russia has invaded Ukraine, it is a moral imperative that every single person in this House votes, and in the past tense, should have voted for that agreement, *fait accompli*. There is no argument on that front. It is silly to me. There are Ukrainian soldiers on the front lines fighting for freedom and democracy. Why is there a debate in the House over whether we should support a free trade agreement?

It is a moral imperative for us as MPs and as a democratic country to stand with democracies all over the world, including Ukraine. It is a shame that some members in the House did not do that. They should answer to their constituents for that.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as someone who is proud of my Ukrainian heritage, I am disgusted by that tirade from the member.

He is sitting here, defending putting more taxes on our farmers and creating more food insecurity at a time when we have record numbers of people lining up at food banks across this country. Does the member not realize that the food insecurity he is creating here in Canada is the very same food insecurity that he is aligned with, with Putin in Ukraine?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, I have the utmost respect for this member of Parliament. I know he is proud of his heritage. I know he supports Ukraine in its fight against Putin with every inch and every ounce of his body. I will say that. I will take the high road. I will leave it at that.

What I will say on food security and food affordability is that we know it is an issue. Our farmers are on the front line, and they are being impacted by climate change, something that folks should think about when we adopt policies.

Business of Supply

Mr. Parm Bains (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the opposition is aware, Canadians across the country are facing more and more dramatic impacts from climate change, and farmers are on the front line of all the challenges. They deal with droughts, intense rainfalls, flooding and wildfires, which is very evident in my home province of British Columbia. At the same time, Canadians are struggling with sharp increases in the cost of living across the board, and they have charged us all with taking serious action on both of these issues.

I am here today to say that we can take and are taking action on both of these challenges. As we know, our government has put in place a comprehensive emissions reduction plan, the most comprehensive national climate plan ever implemented. I can say that every measure in this plan is designed with the following goals in mind: reducing carbon pollution to stop climate change, growing our economy and positioning Canada to be a leader on the clean technologies of the near future, as well as keeping life affordable for all Canadians.

A recent example of this is the new support we have put in place for moving from highly polluting oil heating to clean and efficient cold climate-adapted heat pumps, as well as the many other programs we already have in place. These are exciting programs that are making a real difference for households across the country, particularly low- and medium-income households.

I would like to take a few minutes to focus on carbon pollution pricing and how it has been systematically designed to keep life affordable for Canadians. Putting a price on carbon pollution has been a pillar of our climate policy since 2019. It sends a signal across the market that gives flexibility for households, businesses and organizations to choose when and how they will reduce pollution. This flexibility is the key to how pricing seeks out the lowest-cost, most effective ways to reduce pollution. It takes advantage of the collective intelligence of Canadians and Canadian businesses, which make thousands of individual decisions each day, based on the information that only they may have about the costs and benefits involved in their specific cases.

That is the power of market-based policies, and that is why economists across the world agree that carbon pollution pricing is smart, critical and a good policy. It is one of the most effective and lowest-cost tools we have to reduce emissions. It is also a policy, as has been said before, that has been designed from the ground up to protect our most vulnerable households. We take every dollar paid on pollution and return it to Canadians in the province or territory in which it was collected.

Where the federal fuel charge is in place and the federal government returns the proceeds directly, we return about 90% to households via quarterly climate action incentive payments. This is done in such provinces as Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, P.E.I., and Newfoundland and Labrador. Because the climate action incentive is a flat amount based on the number of people in a household, these payments do not affect the powerful incentive of carbon pricing to encourage Canadians to choose cleaner alternatives. However, the payments protect the affordability of daily life. More than eight out of 10 households get back more than they pay, on average, and lower-income households benefit even more.

Where proceeds go back to the governments, such as in Yukon and Nunavut, they have their own programs that use the proceeds to protect against affordability impacts. We have demonstrated that we can take action on climate change and help keep life affordable.

Our approach also takes the realities of rural living into account. Every rural and remote resident gets a 10% top-up to their climate action incentive payment, and now we have announced this will double, to become a 20% top-up. The top-up makes sure that affordability is protected for rural households, which often face higher energy and transportation costs and may have fewer options to reduce their emissions in the short term. Doubling this top-up will protect those households even more.

Our government is very concerned about the impact of increased energy costs on household budgets, and we see how more households are struggling. However, as I hope I have made clear, putting a price on pollution is not what is causing the strain on household budgets. In fact, it can be part of the solution to this challenge. The climate action incentive payments actually mean there is less stress, rather than more, on lower- and medium-income households, since so many households get back more than what they pay at the pump or on gas bills.

● (1315)

When we stack the carbon price paid up against those four quarterly payments, people come out ahead. For example, a family of four will receive \$986 this fiscal year in Ontario and \$1,544 in Alberta, and rural households in each case will receive an additional 10%. Those payments happen ahead of time so householders will have the money in their accounts before they are paying the carbon price on energy bills. We can address climate change and affordability using the same well-designed policy.

I am sometimes asked how this works. If we collect the carbon price and then return all of the money back to households, how does it help us reduce pollution? The key is the way we return the proceeds. Because the payment is the same for all households, Canadians still get a benefit from reducing pollution. For example, after choosing cleaner vehicles, switching to a heat pump to heat their home or insulating their home, they would get the same payment regardless and come out ahead.

Business of Supply

Canadian farmers are on the front lines of the fight against climate change and play a key role in the solutions. While Bill C-234's intent of supporting farmers in an increasingly uncertain landscape is laudable, the changes proposed are misguided. Our carbon-pricing system is already designed specifically with the competitiveness of farmers in mind. The vast majority of emissions on farms are not priced. This includes emissions from livestock, which are the majority of carbon pollution from the sector. Gasoline and diesel used in tractors and for farm machinery are also exempted, and greenhouse operators get 80% relief on the natural gas and propane they use for heating. Importantly, we have addressed the concerns raised by the sponsors of Bill C-234 by putting a refundable tax credit in place to address cost impacts of natural gas and propane use by other farmers.

Beyond this, farmers can also earn revenue from reducing emissions under a provincial and federal offset system. All of this is before considering the many funding programs also available for farmers who are taking action to reduce emissions. We remain committed to helping our farmers meet the world's need for food while safeguarding resources for future generations.

Carbon pricing is an important policy, but it is one of a whole suite of complementary policies we have put in place to address climate change. Some policies deal with specific sources of pollution, such as the historic phase-out of coal-fired power generation. Other policies work to accelerate innovation by funding research and development, and the deployment of new, cleaner technologies. Seizing the opportunity of the clean energy transition and protecting our children and grandchildren against the ravages of climate change requires an all-hands-on-deck approach.

These initiatives work hand in hand with our efforts to deal with the affordability crisis. Just like addressing climate change, keeping life affordable means taking comprehensive action. Our affordability plan has given Canadians \$12.1 billion in new supports to help make life more affordable. From the Canada workers benefit in 2022 to our increase of the old age security pension, along with support for affordable day care and for lowering the cost of going to the dentist for lower-income households, we are helping Canadians with concrete steps. That is the kind of effective climate policy our government delivers: programs that are designed in lockstep with affordability policy and that support innovation at the same time. This is all within a comprehensive climate plan that is delivering the action Canadians demand.

• (1320)

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the speech by my colleague from British Columbia. York—Simcoe is now classified as being part of Toronto, which is entirely unbelievable. We talk about the Liberals playing games. They have actually played games by changing the CMA census data. Ridings that are supposed to become urban are being kept rural.

With respect to the choices for people in York—Simcoe, we do not have subways and we do not have transit. The member from B.C. knows that my riding is rural, being home to the soup and salad bowl of Canada. How does my colleague think it is fair for the riding of York—Simcoe to be looked at as urban, as though it were part of Toronto?

Mr. Parm Bains: Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member enjoyed my speech.

I was talking about relief for farmers and all the measures we have already exempted, such as gas and diesel for farm use from pollution pricing, and all the measures we have already taken to help the farming community.

Being from British Columbia and my riding of Steveston—Richmond East, I have spoken to farmers, and they want to be a part of the solution. There are blueberry and cranberry farmers whose farms have gone underwater. There is also the impact of drought and all of those other issues that climate change and climate events have brought upon their farms, so they want to be a part of the solution. They believe in this policy.

• (1325)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the concern I have with the Liberals is that they talk about this climate vision, but they have missed every single target they have ever promised. We see the Conservatives, who are dead set against investment in EV technology, ridiculing the investments in the battery plants. However, the Liberals are putting billions into it when they do not have a plan for the supply chain for critical minerals.

We have mineral deposits in Thompson, Manitoba, and in northern Ontario that could supply the EV technology that is needed, but without a coherent plan on tax credits, or a coherent plan from this government for an all-of-government approach, we are going to end up seeing the United States using our metals while we import metals from China, the Congo and Indonesia. This has been raised with the finance minister again and again, but we do not see any coherent strategy from the Liberals in comparison to Biden's IRA, which is creating billions in opportunities. Why is the government making promises without having the coherent plan to actually follow through?

Mr. Parm Bains: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the member's question, but I am a little confused by the thought of incoherence. If we were to look at our investments in the national supply chain corridor alone, we would be looking at solutions for those issues. I am a little confused by the question.

Business of Supply

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, part of the debate here today on the motion at hand is about the Conservatives trying to have the House dictate to the Senate what bills it should pass. Bill C-48 is a bill that is incredibly important to provinces and territories, including B.C. The Conservatives have not been too concerned about it in the Senate, shown by the fact that it has taken them two months to get through it.

Could my hon. colleague speak to the fact that Conservative games in the Senate are stopping the passage of crucial legislation that provinces, such as British Columbia, have asked our government to implement?

Mr. Parm Bains: Mr. Speaker, I welcome that question.

I think that every member in the House, across the aisle, are getting a little tired of some of the procedural games that are taking place not only here in this House but also in our committees. If we look at the collaboration needed to move this country forward, we are not really seeing these things being met when it comes to the work that we are expected to do by our constituents, which we need to take into consideration.

I welcome collaboration when I do my work. It is expected of me when I am working with all levels of government, including with members of the Province of British Columbia and the City of Richmond. I think we need to get on with it.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to join the debate today on Bill C-234, the carbon tax exemption for heating buildings, grain drying and irrigation on farms. We are also talking about the role of the Senate in the parliamentary democracy of a two-house system.

My civics is a little rusty, but I do remember that the Senate does not have any ability for taxation because they are unelected. I cannot remember when the Senate has held up a taxation bill. My colleague from B.C. brought up a few bills, but I do not believe they were taxation bills.

First and foremost, we have to realize that what the Senate is doing right now is not within its purview. The Senate has no power of taxation because, as appointed senators, they are not accountable to their constituents. They are not elected every four years. One of the main points of democracy is taxation with representation. The Senate does not have the authority to hold up a taxation bill.

I wanted to get that on the record because the crux of the argument today is whether the Senate is doing what it is allowed to do. The other discussion is on how important Bill C-234 is and how quickly should we pass it.

My colleague, the member for Huron—Bruce, has put on the record that he is the Conservative member who brought forward the private member's bill. I am very proud I was on the agriculture committee that talked about this bill, and we had the support of the committee to pass it on to the House for third reading.

The opposition came together and voted in favour. A majority of members from across the country, along with three Liberals, and I will not forget that, voted to move this bill forward to third reading

because they knew it was important to Canadian farmers. That is what this comes down to.

Our leader put it very succinctly. One of his constituents is paying \$10,000 a month in carbon tax. How can anyone be expected to run a business when the carbon tax is \$10,000 a month? This has to be paid to the federal government on a taxation policy that does not do what it is supposed to do.

I am also very happy to say that I will be sharing my time with the brilliant member for Lethbridge.

Getting back to the \$10,000 a month on carbon tax, no business can eat that kind of a bill. When the farmer who produces the food is taxed, and the trucker who ships the food is taxed, every Canadian who goes to the grocery store will be taxed. The fallacy the Liberals and NDP bring forward is that this is a rural and remote issue, hence the carve-out, for political reasons, in the Maritimes.

This is not a rural issue. It is not an urban issue. If people go to the grocery store to buy food for their family, it affects them each and every time. What we are trying to do in the House today is make the upper chamber realize, again, because we have already passed this bill, that this is an important bill to fight the ever-increasing cost of groceries across our country.

I am not sure that has sunk in for some of the members across the aisle. Maybe their chef has not told them that they have to pay extra for the food. Maybe they live in downtown areas and do not go to the grocery store often. I can say that my wife and I have to go grocery shopping, every now and then when I am home in time, and our grocery bills have continued to climb. We have talked to neighbours and friends, and people at the hockey rink, and they are feeling the pinch every day when trying to feed their families. We see mothers adding water to milk to make it go a little farther.

We see two million people in our country using a food bank every month. That is a staggering fact, and they are not just numbers. They are parents, grandparents and children. The majority of them are children. That is not the Canada I grew up in. It is not. It is not the Canada we want to leave for our children. It is something we need to have a very open discussion about.

Our leader, the member for Carleton, made it very clear that in two years we are going to have a carbon tax election. Canadians will be asking whether or not they want our common-sense Conservative approach, which would include axing the tax so people could afford groceries and getting spending under control to lower interest rates so people could afford to buy a home or pay rent.

Business of Supply

• (1330)

Rents have doubled over the last long eight years of the NDP-Liberal government. Rents have doubled. Mortgages have doubled. It used to take 25 years to pay off a home in Canada, but now it takes 25 years to afford a down payment on a home in Canada. That has happened all in the last eight years under the Prime Minister and the Liberals' reckless spending.

This is where it comes back to the argument around Bill C-234. It is something that can be done immediately to lower the price of food for Canadians. It is something that can be done to ensure that our producers can continue to produce the world-class foods we have.

When \$10,000 is taken out of the pockets of producers, they cannot invest in new farm technologies. They cannot invest in new fertilizer options or new machinery that would lower emissions. What we are doing right now is kneecapping our farmers so they cannot be innovative. It is not a slogan. Technologies over taxes is a way to lower our environmental emissions.

I am so proud to be from Saskatchewan. We have innovative policies in the agriculture sector, but we do not get credit for them. We have crop rotation. We have zero till. We have straight cut combines. We have precision agriculture. For example, when someone is adding fertilizer, it lowers and raises the rates depending on the field moisture. These are innovative technologies that have lowered emissions over the last 20 years. However, for some reason, the government has given no credit to those producers who have adopted this technology. I do not understand why.

The Liberals put a benchmark of 2018 as the year when people get credit for innovative farming practices. Why are we not praising all the Canadian agriculture producers who have been doing it right for the last 15 or 20 years? We can talk about some of the things we have done. The National Cattle Feeders' Association said it very well. It said:

Canada's feedlot sector embraces innovative practices that support competitiveness and sustainability. To compete in an integrated North American market, cattle feeders carefully manage input costs including feed and fuel.

Feedlots rely on propane and natural gas for essential practices, including on-farm drying, steam flaking and barn heating. These are necessities on a feedlot to make sure they are producing the best opportunities for cattle to grow and have those gains for when they go to plants.

Why are we not promoting what we are doing on an international stage? The Liberals will always say the carbon tax is an environmental policy, not an economic policy. If the Liberals are so concerned about the environment, though they have not reached one target in the last eight years, why are we not taking Canadian agriculture to the world? Why do we go on the world stage, pretend it is a poor cousin and we are embarrassed about our agriculture sector?

Our ag minister should be going around the world saying how good our farming practices are here on Canadian soil, and promote that across the country and across the world. That is what we should be doing on the international stage, but we are not.

I asked the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge about the Liberal-appointed senators, because they are appointed by the Liberal Prime Minister. Why would they not vote in favour of this bill that would see all food prices in Canada lowered? It defies common sense.

When I talk to people in my riding and in my community in Regina, they talk about the cost of living. They talk about choosing between paying the heating bill, because it does get cold in Regina, and paying their mortgage. It is choosing between paying the heating bill or buying groceries they need for their kids to go to school with packed lunches. These are decisions in our country in 2023 that parents should not have to be making.

It is time we put this bill into practice, lower the price of food across our country, and use common-sense principles to bring home lower prices for my home and everyone's home. Let us bring it home for Canadians and pass this bill. Let us call on the senators to make sure it does happen.

• (1335)

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I found it interesting. At the beginning of the member's speech, he spoke about the pillars of democracy and what is so important in a democracy.

Is it the Conservative Party's and the Leader of the Opposition's desire that, in their terms, common-sense democracy means that when someone does not agree with another parliamentarian who does not share the same beliefs, it is okay to resort to bullying and aggressive tactics to the point where safety and security have now been an issue for two women in the Senate that the House leader of the opposition specifically targeted?

Are they learning lessons from January 6 in the United States and the MAGA Republicans? Is that how they view democracy in this country?

Mr. Warren Steinley: Mr. Speaker, that is a very interesting question from a person who supports a Prime Minister who wore blackface, a person who supports the Prime Minister who elbowed a female MP on the floor of the House of Commons because he was not getting his way in a vote, a person who divided Canadians, called them undesirables and people who do not deserve to be in the same country when they just wanted to talk to the Prime Minister, and supports someone who will not ever talk to people if they do not agree with the Liberals and the Prime Minister.

Business of Supply

The member asked what my opinion of democracy is. My opinion of democracy is when someone has a public phone number, and people can call it and ask for the person's stance. At least people can have a conversation, not being divisive or calling people undesirable, saying they should not have the same freedoms because they made a personal health choice. What a disgusting question.

• (1340)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am trying to see both sides of the issue.

I understand that the carbon tax, as applied in the Canadian provinces and territories aside from Quebec, makes it possible to build up funds that will help people when disaster strikes. That said, I also understand that our farmers, who make up 3% of the population, feed us and are already overburdened with expenses. I understand all that.

We really need to find a happy medium between helping disaster victims, including farmers, and enabling farmers to produce our food at a price that is good for both them and us.

In the case at hand, we have a bill that was passed here in the House by elected members. Now it is being studied in the Senate, and the Senate has decided to delay or stonewall it, despite the fact that members of the Senate are not elected. Basically, they do not represent the people of Canada and Quebec.

I would like to know my colleague's opinion on this subject. From now on, should senators be elected, instead of being appointed for partisan reasons?

[*English*]

Mr. Warren Steinley: Mr. Speaker, some senators are elected. Alberta has elections for senators already, but the Prime Minister will not appoint the senators that have already been elected by the people of Alberta. This is another way he thumbs his nose at democracy.

To the member's point, I agree that 3% of Canadians are farmers. They help feed Canada and the world, and they deserve this carbon tax exemption because it will help them innovate on their farms. One thing I will always believe is that a dollar in the pocket of someone who earned it is always worth more than a dollar in the government coffers that was taken from that person or company in the first place.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this motion because it is consistent with my third reading vote on Bill C-234.

What the Conservatives are complaining about today is precisely the same behaviour they have used in previous Parliaments. They have used their Conservative senators to upend private members' bills in previous Parliaments. How can we take the Conservatives seriously when they call out behaviour that they are guilty of in many occurrences in the past?

Mr. Warren Steinley: Mr. Speaker, as a member of the NDP-Liberal coalition, I am sure we would not want to cast the sins of the father onto the son. The NDP leader would not want that to happen.

I was not around when this supposedly took place, but I appreciate the member's support for this motion. The member is an hon. member of the agriculture committee and I appreciate him being consistent in the application of his vote on third reading of Bill C-234 and this motion. I thank him for that.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reason I am standing today is that last week, we had an opportunity to debate a common-sense Conservative bill that would remove the carbon tax from all farm fuel. That debate took place in the House, then moved to the Senate and then it stalled. The reason it stalled is that the members opposite from the Liberal Party of Canada asked the Senate to stall it, to delay, to use every tactic in the book to try to prevent the legislation from going through. That is incredibly sad. What that means is farmers will not benefit from a carbon tax being taken off of such things as drying grain, harvesting their fields or heating their barns. Those are common functions for farmers, the people who produce food in our communities.

I am here to advocate for those individuals who produce our food, but I am also here to advocate for Canadians at large, those who buy food.

I was first elected about eight years ago. Shortly after I came into this place, I had a conversation with a member opposite. That member took an interest in my riding which, of course, is in Lethbridge, Alberta. It is a beautiful mix of a small city of about 105,000 people and a county, which consists of a lot of farmland and those who know how to make that land produce something incredible that is called food. The member asked me questions about my riding. He said to me, "That farmland that you have there, they are just growing for fuel, right?" I said, "Excuse me?" He said, "Yes, they are just growing for fuel, right?" I said, "No, they are growing food." He said, "Oh. Normally we just go to the grocery store now for food. We do not really need that."

It is interesting. In that moment, I realized just how out of touch Canadians at large are with where their food comes from, how it is produced and how important it is that we support those who produce it. It is easy to think that food just arrives on the grocery store shelves in a pretty package and maybe some nice marketing tools are used. We get to pick up that food, bring it home and consume it. We forget the process or maybe we never knew the process that it underwent in order to get there.

In my riding, I have the privilege of being able to see that process from start to finish. I watch as those farmers actually take the seed off their field. I watch as they actually process that seed and prepare it for use in next year's field. Then I watch as they till the ground and put that seed into it. I watch as they use water to care for it. I then watch as that seed produces plants which continue to flourish and eventually are harvested. Eventually, that harvest is taken, dried and processed. It is either shipped out like that or it goes for further processing locally. Eventually, it becomes food that is sold in our grocery stores. Much of that is sold right here in Canada in our grocery stores, but sometimes it goes to other places around the world.

Canada has this incredible gift called land. We have this second incredible gift called farmers. They are the individuals who work incredibly hard and with great innovation to make sure that Canadians are fed.

I will talk a little bit about these people in my riding, because if we care to learn, we can. These are individuals who are incredibly community-minded, who work collaboratively together. These are individuals who are incredibly hard working. These are individuals who care deeply about animal health and welfare.

These are individuals who are the original environmental stewards. They are the ones who take care of the water, land and air. They have done that from the beginning, because they know that to take care of those things is to take care of the food they produce and to be good at what they are doing. They are the folks who thrive in spurring on innovation, in bringing forward new technologies and great business practices. These are the individuals who are incredibly generous.

In my riding, it is these folks who have funded community swimming pools and community recreation centres. It is these individuals who have paved park pathways and created parkways. It is these individuals who have invested in our local hospital. It is these individuals who have given tremendous amounts of money to the underprivileged, especially those who are homeless.

• (1345)

It is these individuals who have helped to fund programs through our college and through our university. It is these individuals who are making a tremendous difference in our community day in and day out. These are the individuals the government insists on punishing through a punitive carbon tax. It is these individuals who feed Canada and feed those around the world.

To those in my community and to those who like to eat, we celebrate these men and women. We look at them as the individuals they are: people who are doing something wonderful, not only for my local community but for the nation and even the planet.

The member's opposite see these individuals as if they are the enemy. It is a mystery to me. Again, we are talking about women and men who are not only caring for us by producing food but taking care of the environment by sequestering carbon, by making sure soil health is good, by making sure the air quality is excellent and by making sure water is stewarded. These are the folks who get zero credit for those actions and instead are frowned upon for what

Business of Supply

they do and how tremendously wonderfully they contribute to society.

The government has decided to apply a punitive carbon tax, and yes, it is applied to farmers from the moment they put the seed into the ground to the moment they harvest to the moment food goes on to the grocery store. The carbon tax does not stop. It keeps going on and on, until finally it is picked up by the consumer at the store. The truth is that even then it does not stop, because the consumer pays the carbon tax at the till and pays the carbon tax again when they put the food in their trunk and drive it home. They then pay the carbon tax again when they turn on their stove and make that food. It just keeps going.

We are asking for the carbon tax to be taken off farmers. We are asking that this House exercise some common sense and make the determination that farmers are incredible people who deserve to be celebrated, not punished. It just makes sense.

When farmers have this punitive carbon tax attached to them, the carbon tax eventually makes its way to the consumer. When the consumer has to pick it up, they are detrimentally impacted too. There are more Canadians than ever before lining up at food banks. In my community of Lethbridge, since 2019 the number of people going to a food bank and relying on it as their primary source of food has doubled. The biggest group of people there, which is growing, is those who are working a consistent job. They are not able to make ends meet anymore, because under the government, things have become too expensive. They are desperate for help. They are desperate for a government to listen to them. They are desperate for a government to understand their concerns.

A woman recently reached out to me. She is in her sixties and has a disability, so she lives on a very small amount month to month. It is \$1,700. We can imagine what it might be like to live on \$1,700 a month and pay rent. She cannot just live anywhere because she is in a wheelchair. She has to pay extra because she needs to make sure it is wheelchair accessible. This an individual who then has to pay for her food, transportation and her phone. Then she might even want to engage in the human dignity of buying a birthday gift for someone once in a while. This is an individual who has to cut back on even the essential things of life.

The reason people are having to make these difficult choices among medication, healthy food, paying rent and paying their heating bill is that the government has made life so unaffordable. The ask on the table today is very simple, very straightforward and very tangible. It is to axe the tax on farmers. When we axe it there, we bring it down everywhere else and all Canadians benefit. That is what we are asking for today. It is common sense for the common people.

Business of Supply

• (1350)

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently and heard the member opposite talk about giving credit to farmers and celebrating them. I would like to give credit to and celebrate the National Farmers Union representatives who came to see me just last week. I had a wonderful conversation with farmers from New Brunswick, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba, who asked the government to continue moving forward with a price on pollution. The last time I checked, they were farmers like any others.

Could the member opposite please comment on whether or not she will join me in celebrating and giving credit to those representatives from the National Farmers Union?

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Mr. Speaker, for the sake of the farmers who pay into that union, I would ask the member to table the document that professes what he says it professes, because I am doubtful that it exists. Living in a farming community, I have not had one single person come to me to say they want the carbon tax to stay.

My request is simple. I would ask the member to table the document. Then I would be happy to concede.

• (1355)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am always surprised to see how the Conservatives bring everything back to the carbon tax. The conflict in Ukraine is all about the carbon tax. Now, the Conservatives are saying that the problems farmers are having are because of the carbon tax. The Conservatives' common sense boils down to one thing: eliminating the carbon tax, even if it does not apply in Quebec.

All of the Conservatives' efforts over the past 18 months have been focused on the carbon tax. I have a very simple question for my colleague, who says he wants to help and support farmers. If that is what he wants to do, then there is a very worthwhile bill that is also sitting in the Senate, the supply management bill. If the Conservatives want to help farmers, why do they not focus their efforts on Bill C-282?

[*English*]

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, there is a difference between the member and me. I exist here as a member who belongs to the Conservative Party of Canada and he exists here as a member who belongs to the Bloc. I exist here to defend all of Canada and he exists here to defend Quebec. My picture of a wholesome and united Canada includes Quebec and all other provinces and territories. When I stand in this place, that is what I contend for. I contend for all people everywhere across this country.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct the member. Today's debate is not about the carbon tax but about a motion to send a message to the Senate.

We are getting this motion from the party of the Nigel Wright and Mike Duffy scandal. This is the party that has appointed failed candidates and party operatives to its ranks. This is the party that has used its senators to block legislation. Now that the shoe is on

the other foot, how in the world can we take Conservatives seriously when they are guilty of such rank hypocrisy?

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Mr. Speaker, I think the sole purpose of that comment was to launch a scathing attack toward me, so I will allow the member to do that. Of course, it is his prerogative to use his time in that way. I do not know that I have a response to it.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for highlighting the importance of getting Bill C-234 across the line. Could she once again explain to the members opposite how the carbon tax escalates the cost of food throughout the supply chain?

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Mr. Speaker, this is an important question for all of us to understand, because many are without comprehension of how the carbon tax continues to accumulate.

The farmer puts the seed in the ground and uses fuel to do so. That seed is then watered and energy is used to bring the water up and apply it to the land. After watching that seed grow, it eventually has to be harvested and there is a carbon tax attached to that process. Then, when drying it, there is a carbon tax attached to the process. Eventually, when that material, that raw good, is transported, there is a carbon tax attached to that. Then when it is processed, there is a carbon tax attached to that. It is then transported again and there is another carbon tax attached to that. Eventually, it will make its way into the grocery store, and there is a carbon tax attached to keeping it there. Then it is purchased, and there is a carbon tax attached to that. Once it is transported home, there is a carbon tax on that. Eventually, once it is cooked and prepared, there is a carbon tax on that as well. There is a whole lot of carbon tax.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point order. Earlier today, there was a discussion about the appropriateness of talking about senators and their corrupt practices. If you seek it, I think you will get unanimous consent for the notorious Senate playing cards, with Mac Harb, Patrick Brazeau, Raymond Lavigne—

• (1400)

The Speaker: This is debate.

The hon. member for Pickering—Uxbridge.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am curious. The member opposite spoke about how important it is to send a message to the Senate, but where was she to send that message when the Senate was blocking legislation for judges to be trained in sexual assault cases? Will the member opposite stand up and explain why she did not stand up for women?

The Speaker: Unfortunately, we have run out of time for responses.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

LEBANESE HERITAGE MONTH

Hon. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, throughout the month of November, we celebrate Lebanese heritage thanks to the member for Halifax West, who introduced the bill.

Ottawa—Vanier is home to a large and dynamic Lebanese diaspora that is an integral part of our rich cultural mosaic. Through gatherings at the Lebanese festival, the Saint Charbel Maronite church or the Saints Peter and Paul Melkite Catholic Church, this community displays spirit and altruism.

Its past and present contributions continue to make our national capital region and our country more diverse, more prosperous and more inclusive. For generations, the expertise of the Lebanese community has touched every facet of our society, from the performing arts, entrepreneurship and business to cuisine, science and medicine.

I invite my hon. colleagues to join me in recognizing and celebrating the invaluable contributions that Lebanese Canadians have made to building the Canadian society of yesterday and today.

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[English]

HOUSING

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, indigenous peoples in urban areas cannot afford to wait any longer for transitional housing. In my riding of Brantford—Brant, 28 indigenous women have gone missing and 13 have been killed, three of whom were pregnant. They were left on the streets and were living in encampments or in abusive environments.

The demand for housing for urban indigenous people in Brantford—Brant and across this country has reached a crisis, and this will continue to compound by the lack of second-stage housing for women and girls and two-spirited indigenous peoples. This alarming situation is a direct consequence of the inadequate awareness and funding extended to urban indigenous communities. Immediate action is imperative.

In recognition of Housing on the Hill, I rise today to demand that the government prioritize indigenous housing. It is time for urban indigenous communities to receive a spot at the table and the funding they urgently require.

* * *

HMCS *GLACE BAY*

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this past November 11, I attended a Remembrance Day ceremony in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, within my riding of Cape Breton—Canso and my hometown. Each year, this annual ceremony at the Savoy Theatre is a solemn and meaningful event, but this year we had the privilege of welcoming a few special guests.

My constituents were thrilled to welcome the crew of His Majesty's Canadian Ship *Glace Bay* to the town of Glace Bay, for

Statements by Members

which it is named. These brave sailors took the time to be with our community on a day that commemorates the service of all Canadian military personnel. It was certainly a matter of pride to meet the ship that represents our community on operations both domestic and abroad.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to Lieutenant-Commander Paul Morrison and his crew for accepting the hospitality of the people of Glace Bay. We wish them fair winds and following seas. We thank them for their service, and we hope to see them again soon.

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[Translation]

ORDER OF LA VÉRENDRYE

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, every year since 1985, the City of Trois-Rivières has awarded the Ordre de La Vérendrye to residents who have made outstanding contributions to elevating the city's reputation. Recipients must have made a significant contribution to enhancing the well-being of Trois-Rivières residents through exceptional volunteer work.

This year's honourees were Jean-Marc Bouchard, founder of Emphase, an organization that helps male victims of sexual assault; Guy Gagnon, a frequent participant in many social inclusion projects; Jo Ann Lanneville, for her international expertise in print-making; and Marguerite Paquet, for her involvement with a large number of health and wellness organizations.

My heartfelt congratulations go out to each of these esteemed and remarkable individuals, who are now a part of Trois-Rivières's history.

* * *

● (1405)

JEAN-NICOLET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the young people of Jean-Nicolet elementary school in the riding of Bourassa. Every year, together with the school administration, teacher Kerline François introduces her students to good governance and the democratic process by running a mock election campaign.

For the ninth consecutive year, I had the privilege of swearing in Class 321 government made up of Bryan Daniel Lafortune, prime minister; Ève Bergeron, deputy prime minister; Esther Charles, minister of justice; Marshall Fils-Aimé, minister of environment; Ryan Fatimi, minister of sports and recreation; Adèle Badry, minister of communication and technology; and Hedley Wiguens Louis-saint, minister of the public service and auditor general.

I invite my colleagues to join me in congratulating these young parliamentary apprentices.

Statements by Members

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, I was in Israel to show solidarity with our friend and ally. I will never forget seeing burned and shot-up homes where ordinary people had their lives stolen by barbaric terrorists. One man told me that while he hid with his daughters, Hamas terrorists murdered his parents. A mother told me about her daughter being abducted and the anguish of not knowing her fate.

Here at home, another battle is raging. Canadians are shocked by public displays of anti-Semitism across the country. I am appalled at seeing people tear down posters of hostages. What kind of person tears down a poster of a kidnapped baby?

There is no place in Canada for targeting Jewish-owned businesses or for shooting up Jewish schools. There is no place for Jewish students to feel unsafe because of who they are. There is no place for anti-Semitism.

I call on all members of the House to show solidarity with our friend, the only democracy in the Middle East, the state of Israel. Only when Hamas is defeated can peace be within reach.

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TAIWAN

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to acknowledge a historic milestone for Taiwan's defence and technological prowess. The unveiling of Taiwan's first indigenous defence submarine, the first domestically made submarine, in September this year stands as a testament to Taiwan's commitment to security and innovation.

This achievement is not merely a symbol of maritime strength but a testament to the dedication and the expertise of Taiwan's engineers, scientists and visionaries. The submarine represents a leap forward in self-reliance, showcasing Taiwan's ability to defend itself and to contribute to regional stability. With cutting-edge technology and a determination to safeguard its waters, Taiwan exemplifies resilience in the face of challenges.

This submarine underscores a vision of peace through strength, and a commitment to protect freedom and to uphold democratic values in the region. May this submarine serve as a guardian of peace, security and prosperity for Taiwan and for the international community.

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RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Alberta's Premier Danielle Smith is doubling down on fear and fiction. I am disappointed but not surprised. This is a premier who wasted millions of Alberta taxpayer dollars on an anti-national clean electricity misinformation campaign; a premier who paid her old Conservative friend to write a partisan report about COVID to help get Poilievre's Conservatives elected, again using taxpayer dollars—

The Speaker: The hon. member is now an experienced member in the House. He cannot refer to other hon. members who sit in this place by their last names, but only by their riding names.

Mr. George Chahal: Mr. Speaker, this is a premier who lied to Albertans when she said she was asked by electricity regulators and the association of rural municipalities to impose a recent ban on renewables. It is a troubling pattern.

Last month, I called on Premier Smith to lift the renewables moratorium so we can continue building Alberta's clean energy sector. Premier Smith can continue to waste our money on melodramatic driving billboards or invest in job-creating clean technology. It is her call.

* * *

● (1410)

CARBON TAX

Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in last week's mini-budget, the Prime Minister doubled down on his plan to quadruple the carbon tax on gas, groceries and home heating. Does he understand that Canadians cannot afford his excessive tax grabs? Feed Ontario's "Hunger Report 2023" shows that over the past year, the number of people who have accessed food banks has increased by 38%, while visits have increased by 36%. These are the largest single-year increases ever recorded by Ontario's food bank network.

However, the Conservatives' Bill C-234 would create a carbon tax carve-out for hard-working Canadian farmers and would make food prices more affordable for Canadians. The Prime Minister's activist environment minister has promised to resign if this bill passes, which would be a welcome early Christmas gift for Canadians.

Will the Prime Minister tell his appointed senators to put Canadians before his environment minister and pass Bill C-234 so that Canadian families can afford to feed themselves?

* * *

GURPURAB

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, Sikhs in Canada and across the world celebrated the birth of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of the Sikh faith.

His values and teachings continue to guide millions around the world. On this day, we reflect on Guru Nanak Dev Ji's important message for humanity on three pillars: *naam japna*, meditation; *kirat karni*, honest living; and *vand ke chakna*, sharing with others. These values reflect Canadian values. He stood for the rights of women centuries back and believed that the Creator of this world is one.

I want to thank all organizations in Brampton and across Canada that are selflessly serving the communities representing those values.

Statements by Members

[Member spoke in Punjabi]

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[Translation]

CARBON TAX

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years under this Prime Minister, it remains clear that there is no respect for decisions made in the House of Commons.

The common-sense bill, Bill C-234, creates a carbon tax exemption for Canadian farmers so they can continue to feed us. It was passed by a majority of elected members and is now in the Senate. However, Bill C-234 is currently at an impasse.

The Prime Minister once again has the gall to force his senators to vote against the bill in the Senate. He needs to stop obstructing and interfering in the business of the Senate and let Bill C-234 pass.

Conservatives have always stood up for Canadian farmers and will continue to be the voice of reason with common-sense bills like Bill C-234.

It is time to pass this bill in the Senate so that farmers can continue to feed our families and agriculture can once again become the economic engine we need.

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[English]

CARBON TAX

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Prime Minister, Canadians are struggling to afford food.

The Prime Minister's mini-budget shows no relief, and instead, the NDP-Liberal government is committed to quadrupling the carbon tax on gas, groceries and heating. As Canadians battle the rising cost of living, food banks face record demands. In Ontario alone, over 800,000 people accessed food banks, a 38% increase from the year before and the largest increase ever recorded by Ontario's food bank network.

Conservative Bill C-234 proposes a carbon tax carve-out for farmers. This measure would directly reduce food prices. The environment minister threatened to resign if Bill C-234 passes.

The Prime Minister should instruct his senators to pass this bill. It is a win-win: Canadians would get financial relief, and a minister who is in a different reality from struggling Canadians would step down. The government needs to finally help Canadians instead of its tax agenda.

* * *

LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, two years ago, the community of Sudbury was stunned by the news that Laurentian University, facing a dire financial crisis, chose to pursue the CCAA process.

The results were significant job losses, programming cuts and far too many students' education placed in jeopardy. These losses rep-

resent a generational impact to Sudbury. When we met with faculty, unions and members from the community, it was clear we needed to take action to ensure this never happens again, not in Sudbury and not anywhere in Canada.

Last week, as part of the fall economic statement, our government announced its plans to amend the CCAA to prevent any and all post-secondary institutions from accessing the Bankruptcy Act as a means of dealing with financial hardships.

Our government is taking the necessary steps to preserve the security of students' education and the employment of university faculty and staff. The people of Sudbury have been heard on this important matter.

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● (1415)

SENIORS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, seniors deserve better.

We have the fastest-growing senior population ever, and the federal government should have a plan. Here are some examples of gaps. Seniors between 65 and 74 are receiving less OAS. Single seniors, largely women, are facing more economic challenges. They are not seeing any tax fairness.

On housing, too many seniors call my office and describe themselves as house-rich but financially poor. They share that they have housing beyond their means to maintain, but the market is not building houses that they need. One senior told me that her kitchen is upstairs, but she cannot handle stairs anymore, so she lives downstairs and uses a hot plate.

Far too many seniors are now unhoused. Medication continues to be too expensive, and across Canada, too many seniors cannot afford the costs. They are making choices that hurt their health.

The NDP would create a national seniors strategy, working with all levels of government to create solutions that make sense locally. We would address unfair taxation and find ways to support seniors so that they could age with dignity. Is it not time for that kind of government?

Oral Questions

[Translation]

UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTRÉAL CARABINS

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, just a week after the Montreal Alouettes, boasting the most Quebec players ever, brought home the Grey Cup, my alma mater's team, the Université de Montréal Carabins, won the Grey Cup, the top prize in Canadian university football.

Led by quarterback Jonathan Sénécal and an indomitable defence squad, head coach Marco Iadeluca's Montagnards allowed not a single touchdown during the post-season series. How about that third-down tackle by Nicky Farinaccio that sealed the 16-9 victory against the University of British Columbia Thunderbirds? That is how we brought the two most important trophies in Canadian football, the Grey Cup and the Vanier Cup, home to Montreal, Quebec.

Thanks to football and the Montreal Carabins program, we are going to have to start calling it Quebec football instead of Canadian football. Congratulations to the Université de Montréal Carabins. Congratulations to the Montagnards. Go Carabins, and long live Quebec football.

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[English]

CARBON TAX

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has seen the highest use of food banks ever in history. In Ontario alone, food banks had six million visits in one year. Why? Because people cannot afford the cost of food. Why is food so expensive? Because the Prime Minister is taxing farmers into bankruptcy. The Liberals are planning to quadruple the carbon tax.

One farmer in Alberta pays \$180,000 a year in carbon tax and that does not include the GST on top of that. This is not sustainable. Food is not a luxury.

This can be fixed. Conservative Bill C-234 is a carbon tax exemption for farmers. It passed in the House, but the Liberal-controlled Senate is blocking the passing of this bill. Why? Because the radical environment minister has threatened to resign if any more carbon tax carve-outs are permitted.

Let us end this nonsense and implement common sense. Pass Bill C-234 and support the people who feed us, farmers.

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INDIGENOUS DISABILITY AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, November is Indigenous Disability Awareness Month, a time to recognize the contributions of Métis, Inuit and first nations persons with disabilities to Canada's social, economic and cultural fabric.

Included in Canada's action plan to implement UNDRIP is a measure to ensure that the equality and rights of indigenous persons with disabilities are respected in the design and delivery of government programs, policies and services.

The government is also working with indigenous communities and their representatives on the realization of the United Nations

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and has funded numerous projects to support the social inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Together with the disability community, stakeholders and other levels of government, Canada is creating more inclusive workplaces and communities, providing additional opportunities for persons with disabilities, including indigenous persons with disabilities, to reach their full potential.

Mahsi cho.

ORAL QUESTIONS

● (1420)

[Translation]

FINANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, this Prime Minister is not worth the cost. He said that doubling the national debt would not have any consequences because interest rates were low, but those same deficits drove up interest rates and, next year, the government will be spending \$52 billion, or \$3,000 per Canadian family, on interest on the national debt. That is more than the government will be spending on health.

Why is the Prime Minister spending more on bankers than on nurses?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that, since last week, more and more Canadians are having a hard time believing what the opposition leader says. Let me set the record straight. Canada has the lowest deficit in the G7 and the best debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. Inflation continues to drop, while we maintain the services that Canadians depend on. The Conservative leader would cut child care, dental care for seniors and pensions for seniors.

We know that in order to invest in the future of the country and to be there for Canadians, we need to invest responsibly, and we are continuing to do that.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is false. Seniors and Canadians are the ones who now have to make cuts to their grocery budget. The head of Food Banks of Quebec says it is an unprecedented and tragic situation, adding that organizations in his network are facing exceptional and growing pressure, with 71% of them reporting a shortfall of food. That is what misery looks like after eight years of this Prime Minister, who is driving up the price of food with his inflationary deficits and his taxes on our farmers.

Oral Questions

Will he finally reverse his inflationary policies so that Canadians can eat?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is becoming a bit hard to believe what the opposition leader is saying, because instead of speeding up passage of Bill C-56 to help Canadians by increasing competition in the grocery sector and others, he has stalled and found ways to slow down the passage of this bill, which is there to help Canadians.

We will continue to be there to help Canadians by investing in the economy and in support for them and by staying on a responsible financial path.

* * *

[*English*]

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is impossible to believe anything the Prime Minister says. First, when he gave \$15 billion to one battery plant, he said there would be no foreign workers, that it was all a rumour. Then he said it would be one. Then his minister said there would be a few. Now the company says there will be 900.

This is \$15 billion, \$1,000 in costs for every single family. Now the Liberals are giving money for 900 foreign workers to do a job that the Canada's Building Trades Unions said could be done by our people, at a cost of \$300 million of lost wages for our union workers.

Will the Prime Minister release the contract so we find out how many Canadian tax dollars are going to foreign replacement workers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am going to have to correct the facts in the House of Commons given what the Leader of the Opposition continues to say. There will be 2,300 local Canadian construction jobs and 2,500 permanent Canadian jobs when the Stellantis plant is completed. There will be 3,000 jobs in the region when the Northvolt plant in Quebec is completed.

We would think the Leader of the Opposition would support those, but he does not. His uncontrollable urge to make everything a partisan issue means he is not supporting the investments that are going to help in Windsor, in St. Thomas, in Quebec or elsewhere across the country. He wants cuts; we want investments in the future of Canadians.

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CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has forced seven million Canadians to cut back on their diets, to a point where they are no longer healthy. The Prime Minister has forced Canadians to cut their budgets for food. Therefore, a record-smashing two million people are lined up at a food bank every month, around corners in ways that we have not seen since the Great Depression. That is the austerity he has imposed on Canadians. Now he wants to quadruple the carbon tax on the farmers who bring us our food.

We have a common-sense Conservative bill, Bill C-234. Will the Prime Minister stop blocking this bill in the Senate and let it pass so that our farmers can produce food and our people can afford to eat it?

● (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition actually cared about Canadians being able to afford their food, the Conservatives would not have dragged their heels on the passage of Bill C-56, which would increase competition in the grocery sector.

Indeed, there are a lot of factors that deliver higher food prices not just for Canadians but for people around the world. One of the key ones is Russia's continued illegal invasion of Ukraine. On this side of the House, we can affirm clearly that we will stand with Ukraine with everything necessary for as long as necessary. As we saw last week, no Conservative politician can say the same in the House.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, actually, we are the only party that has stood with Ukraine rather than trying to impose a carbon tax.

I understand what the Prime Minister is doing. He has imposed so much misery here at home, whether by doubling housing costs, forcing people into tent encampments or forcing two million people to go to a food bank. These are the problems here at home at the kitchen table. He is so desperate to talk about anything else that he avoids talking about what is happening in our country.

Will he answer the question? Will he take his tax off our farmers so our people can afford to eat?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition knows full well that 97% of fuel emissions in the agricultural sector, in the farming sector, are already exempt from our price on pollution. However, he is so desperate to try to score partisan points that he actually refused to stand in support of something Volodymyr Zelenskyy asked us for in the House.

How is the Leader of the Opposition explaining to Ukrainian Canadians right across the country that he no longer stands with Ukraine on things it needs right now to win this war against Russia?

* * *

[*Translation*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, gunfire has been heard in Montreal over the past few days. Windows have been broken, and graffiti has been directed specifically against the Jewish community. There are fears that these actions were in some way encouraged by an exception in the Criminal Code that allows hate speech and the incitement of violence.

Oral Questions

In light of recent events, would the Prime Minister agree to remove the religious exemption from the Criminal Code?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with my hon. colleague that the rise in Islamophobia and anti-Semitism in Canada is alarming. The rise in acts of hatred is even more unacceptable. I strongly condemn the attack on the Jewish Community Council. We condemn all violence.

We will be looking at my hon. colleague's bill to see whether it can help combat hate and incitement of violence. This is a complex issue, but we are here to work constructively to protect Canadians.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am cautiously optimistic about this.

I hope that we will get somewhere quickly, but we need to reach agreement. The bill is very short. All that we need to do is remove the exceptions, two sections of the Criminal Code, which are used to excuse, permit and perpetuate hate speech. Does the Prime Minister agree that we should move quickly on a bill that is necessary and easy to pass in the House?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, hate in any form has no place in Canada and must be condemned. More things unite Canadians and Quebecers than divide them. Obviously, our Criminal Code does not tolerate hate speech. Calls for genocide, public incitement to hate and the deliberate promotion of hatred are already prohibited. We will examine the legislative measure proposed by the leader of the Bloc Québécois carefully. We will be there, working to keep Canadians safe while respecting the free society in which we live.

* * *

● (1430)

LABOUR

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, thanks to the Quebec and Canadian labour movement and the NDP's insistence, we will have anti-scab legislation. This law will make it possible to negotiate better working conditions and wages for workers, but we had to force the Liberals to do it.

The Conservatives, who claim to be friends of workers, are not sure how they will vote on this bill that will help increase families' purchasing power. This anti-scab legislation needs to be passed and implemented quickly.

Is the Prime Minister going to do it, or is he going to drag his feet again?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that the NDP likes to say it is the workers' party. However, since 2015, we have demonstrated that we are here to work hand-in-hand with unions. We did that by reversing the Harper government's anti-union bills, in which the current Leader of the Opposition played a part. We have been doing it for eight years, and we are going to continue doing it.

We are very pleased with the replacement worker bill. We are happy that the NDP is supporting our bill, and we hope that the Conservative party will understand that building a stronger middle class requires union support. We need to support the unions, too.

[English]

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for decades, New Democrats and the Canadian Labour Congress have fought Liberals and Conservatives for anti-scab legislation. This session, the NDP used its power to force the Liberals to finally respect collective bargaining rights. While the Conservative leader pretends to have the backs of workers, when push comes to shove, he is nowhere to be found in standing up for them. CLC leaders are here on the Hill today demanding that the anti-scab legislation be implemented sooner than the 18-month Liberal timeline.

Will the Prime Minister commit to the necessary changes to truly support workers and implement the anti-scab legislation, Bill C-58, as quickly as possible?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know to what extent strong unions and collective bargaining are essential to the prosperity of the middle class in this country. That is why, from 2015 onward, the government has been a friend to organized labour and has worked with it to overturn the anti-union legislation that the Stephen Harper government brought in, including the Leader of the Opposition as a minister in that government.

We have continued to stand with workers. We are very pleased that the NDP is supporting our replacement workers bill. We really hope the Conservatives will understand that supporting workers means supporting unions. We hope the Conservatives will stand up and support our anti-scab legislation.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister continues to dodge the question about the tax he plans to quadruple on Canadian farmers. One farm alone in my riding is spending \$150,000 a year on carbon taxes, and the Prime Minister wants to quadruple that number, for up to \$600,000. That might put the farm out of business, which would mean we would have to buy more foreign, expensive food from more polluting countries.

The Prime Minister is blocking a common-sense Conservative bill, Bill C-234, in the Senate that would take the tax off our farmers. Will he commit here and now to another carbon tax flip-flop and carve it out for our farmers, so our people can afford to eat?

Oral Questions

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is only one party in the House that is flip-flopping, and it is the Conservative Party with regard to its support for Ukraine. The Ukrainian Canadian Congress has expressed its disappointment with the Conservatives for voting against the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. In fact, it is calling on the Conservatives to change their position, to vote for the bill and to support Ukraine.

It is hard to trust what the Leader of the Opposition says, because he keeps changing his position. He says he supports Ukraine, but he did not in his actions. He could direct his caucus to support this legislation and to support Ukraine.

• (1435)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are against the carbon tax deal that the Liberals put before the House, and we are against quadrupling the carbon tax on Canadian farmers. The Prime Minister cannot defend his position, nor does he have the courage to just admit, as he did on home heating oil, that he was wrong. He plans to quadruple the tax on our farmers, who feed our people; this will send millions more people to the food bank.

Will the Prime Minister rise today and show the courage to admit he was wrong and back Conservative Bill C-234 to take the tax off our farmers, so our people can afford to eat? He should get up and answer.

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is ironic to hear from the leader of the official opposition about courage to admit he was wrong. In fact, on Thursday, when he was called out by the media for falsely alleging that there was a terrorist attack, instead of taking ownership as any Canadian would be expected to do, he blamed the media and doubled down.

The Leader of the Opposition has a real challenge with taking responsibility for his actions and his decisions. Quite frankly, Canadians deserve better, and they deserve to know the truth behind his decisions and his actions.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, farmers from across Canada are calling on Liberal-appointed senators to support a common-sense Conservative bill, Bill C-234, which would lower costs on farming and make food more affordable, but the Liberals' environment minister has threatened to resign if there are any carbon tax carve-outs. This is amazing when we have a record-shattering two million Canadians relying on food banks.

The environment minister's dedication to making life unaffordable is unwavering. Will the Prime Minister ask his environment minister to stop threatening so-called independent senators and allow the passage of Bill C-234, so Canadians can afford to feed themselves?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to read an extract from a news article titled "Canadian Senator Flees Home Amid Safety Concerns Following 'Wanted Poster' Incident". It reads:

In a disturbing turn of events, Canadian Senator Bernadette Clement was reportedly forced to leave her home due to fears for her safety. The incident came about

after a provocative post, akin to a 'wanted poster,' was shared online by [a member of the Conservative Party of Canada].

Who is bullying whom in this House and in the Senate? It is certainly not us. We are not telling senators how to vote; the Conservative Party is.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here are the facts that the environment minister refuses to recognize. An Alberta poultry farmer paid \$180,000 a year in carbon taxes just to heat and cool his barn. When the Prime Minister quadruples his carbon tax, he will be paying \$480,000 a year. That farmer said he cannot afford those tax hikes. His options are to pass on those costs to consumers or just call it quits. Does the environment minister want to bankrupt Canadian farmers and force Canadians to food banks just to save his job?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here is what an independent senator said about what the Conservative Party is doing in the House and in the Senate.

According to this article, Senator Saint-Germain said that "Plett 'violently' threw his earpiece" and 'stood before Senator Clement as we sat at our desks, yelling and berating us for proposing this routine motion'. She went on to say that the Conservative senator "'pointed fingers' at another ISG member" and "suggested he would block work...on the Senate's human resource subcommittee."

No matter how much the Conservative Party would like us to believe that this is about taxation, it is not; it is about bullying.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: I would like to once again remind all members not to speak unless it is their turn to do so. That way everyone can hear the question and answer.

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government is not worth the cost. It is costing all Canadians more and more. The Liberal carbon tax on farmers has a direct impact on food prices. I would like to remind members that people are struggling to put food on the table right now.

We, the Conservatives, have made a common-sense proposal to eliminate the Liberal carbon tax on food production. I am talking about Bill C-234, which is currently before the Senate. It does not happen every day, but the Bloc Québécois, the NDP and even the Green Party agree with us on this. Only the sore losers disagree.

Why is the government now giving unelected senators the power to overturn the will of the House of Commons?

Oral Questions

• (1440)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to see the double standard the Conservatives are applying to the Senate, because they are not shy about using the Senate to block bills that they do not like.

I would also like to remind the House that we saw in the news recently how independent senators are being intimidated by Conservative senators at the request of the Conservative Party of Canada in the House. That is not how things work. We do not tell anyone in the Senate how to vote or what to do. We have discussions, but we do not force anyone to do anything, unlike the Conservative Party of Canada.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality in my riding, and I am sure it is the same in Montreal, is that food banks are overflowing. They are not overflowing with food. They are overflowing with people who used to donate to food banks but now have to use them. Over two million Canadians cannot afford food, so they go to food banks.

What we are trying to do is bring down the cost of food by helping farmers, but the Liberal government and the Minister of Environment want senators to oppose the will of the House of Commons.

Does the minister think that is democratic?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, how odd that the Conservative Party never mentions the \$1.5 billion we give farmers across the country to help them shrink their carbon footprint. How odd that they never talk about the effects of climate change, which cost farmers hundreds of millions of dollars. Those costs are going up.

Speaking of the Senate, according to media reports, some Conservative senators, at the behest of the Conservative Party, engaged in violence against other senators. Some senators even had to leave their homes following the campaign of violence orchestrated by the Conservative Party of Canada.

The Speaker: Before I give the member for Beloeil—Chambly the floor, I would like to remind all members that it is very important to use parliamentary language even when they do not have the floor. Members must not accuse people of lying deliberately.

The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, over the past few days the Minister of Immigration has made disrespectful comments about members of the Bloc Québécois who are asking questions, which is our job, and has even impugned Quebec, which is highly questionable. Can we put all this behind us?

Can the minister show the high-mindedness he is known for, which his office demands, and acknowledge that based on his own government's commitments, he owes Quebec \$460 million for refugee intake?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I very clearly said that Canada is not an ATM. We are going to hold discussions with my colleagues from Quebec to sort out all the expenses incurred. We have demands of Quebec too, but we are not going to hash them out on the floor of the House of Commons with the Bloc Québécois. I am going to discuss them with a responsible government, like Quebec.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it seems I am not getting anywhere.

I do not know who he thinks he is, but he owes Quebec \$460 million.

If I do not pay my credit card bill, I would not say that I am not an ATM. That is a bit of a smart-alecky answer. It is unworthy of a parliamentarian. It shows a lack of respect for parliamentarians. It shows a lack of respect for Quebec. Why is he not sitting down with Quebec, reaching an agreement and paying his debts?

That would be the bare minimum we should expect from him, especially when the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs has recognized that Quebec is providing more than its share of the effort.

Minister, do your job.

The Speaker: I remind members that all questions and answers must be addressed through the Chair.

The hon. Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would simply say that the Bloc Québécois is not Quebec.

I am treating this feigned outrage for what it is. If the Bloc Québécois ever has concrete demands, we can discuss them. I have a duty to speak with my responsible counterparts in the Government of Quebec. That is what I want to do. We will engage in two-way communication. This relationship is not a one-way street.

• (1445)

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers should take note of the fact that, according to the Minister of Immigration and his friends who applauded him, an elected Liberal member is worth more than an elected Bloc Québécois member. I invite him to take note of the fact that the federal government has an agreement with Quebec. Quebec spends \$460 million and honours its part of the agreement, which is essentially to do the work of the minister. The minister says that he does not want to pay too much.

We speak through the Chair, but we also use our brain.

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that I am not the one hurling insults. The irony in all this is that the Bloc Québécois claims that this is solely a federal jurisdiction, which is totally false. I think that the Bloc has spent too much time in Ottawa to say that this is an exclusive jurisdiction. Just look at section 95 of the Constitution, which very clearly indicates that this is a shared responsibility. Our two governments are responsible for this issue. I am sitting down with the representatives of the provincial government in a week and we will talk about it like adults.

* * *

[English]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it does not matter what the government thinks about Bill C-234. It does not matter what the Senate thinks about the bill, because taxation and spending are the exclusive right of this House, not the Senate. In our system, there is no taxation without representation. Section 53 of the Constitution says that all financial legislation must originate in this House. Standing Order 80 says that this House “alone grants aids and supplies”.

When will the Prime Minister direct his representative in the Senate to respect this democratic institution, the only democratic institution in this country, and pass the tax bill?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the irony coming from the other side of the House is almost too thick to handle today, when we hear members opposite talking about respecting democracy or democratic institutions. There is a pattern of behaviour that I thought was maybe just with the Leader of the Opposition. I did not expect it from the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. However, as he would know, there are no Liberal senators on this side. There are only Conservative senators.

The Senate is independent. Unfortunately, they are bullying senators to force them to step back. That is totally unacceptable.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we used to live in a country where the governor regularly ignored bills passed by the elected legislative assembly. We used to live in a country where the appointed upper chamber used to regularly ignore bills passed by the elected lower chamber. That was a country long, long ago whose institutions were abolished after the rebellions of 1837. Now the unelected Senate thinks it is some sort of a chateau clique or Tory compact, ignoring a tax bill passed by this elected House.

Again, when will the Prime Minister direct his representatives in the Senate to respect the right and will of this House and pass the tax bill?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, speaking of respecting the will of this House, perhaps the leader of the Conservative Party would like to talk to the Conservative senators who sit in his caucus and ask them to pass the bail reform bill that was passed by the House of Commons. The Leader of the Opposition thought it was so important that he was going to recall

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Parliament last summer to pass it. Conservative premiers regularly talk to me about the importance of passing that legislation, so perhaps he would talk to the Conservative senators about that important bill for keeping Canadians safe.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal senators are the ones preventing this bill from passing. After eight years, it is clear that this Prime Minister is in panic mode. He is downright desperate. Bill C-234, which aims to exempt farmers from the carbon tax, is stalled in the Senate. The Prime Minister wants senators to overstep their role as unelected parliamentarians by literally asking them to kill this bill, which was properly passed by elected members of the House of Commons.

Why does he want to push unelected senators to disrespect both the Constitution and hungry Canadian families?

● (1450)

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us keep talking about respect for democracy in the House of Commons. Unelected Conservative senators are blocking the passage of an important gun control bill that passed the House. If our friends across the aisle want to do something for democracy, they should ask the Conservative senators in their caucus to pass Bill C-21, which was passed by the House of Commons, to protect Canadians from illegal firearms in Canada.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the House that the Constitution is clear. Section 53 of the Constitution Act, 1867 provides that any bill “for appropriating any Part of the Public Revenue, or for imposing any Tax or Impost, shall originate in the House of Commons”. House of Commons Standing Order 80 is clear: A financial measure is not alterable by the Senate. The Liberals' attempt to block Bill C-234 and bully senators is unconstitutional. It violates the Standing Orders of the House and is anti-democratic.

Will the Liberals stop their unconstitutional obstruction of Bill C-234 and end the inflationary carbon taxes imposed on farmers so that people can eat this Christmas?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, as they often do in the House, the Conservatives pretend to be interested in bills that protect Canadians from gun violence, for example, or ensure that bail is truly effective in keeping communities safe, like the Conservative premiers have asked. Premier Ford has asked me this a number of times.

If they want to send messages to their Conservative senator friends sitting in their caucus tomorrow morning, they can go right ahead.

Oral Questions

[English]

HOUSING

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, people with full-time jobs are sleeping in their cars, yet the Liberals are delaying funding for public housing until 2025. Experts are saying that investing in community housing is not only socially responsible but economically sound. Deloitte just released a report that says increasing the community housing stock could boost GDP by up to \$136 billion. While the corporate-controlled Conservative leader is off demonizing community housing, the Bank of Canada says it is anti-inflationary.

Will the Liberals stop delaying housing investments in the fall economic statement to get affordable housing built now?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for joining me this morning to discuss the need to build more affordable housing with community housing providers, who are in Ottawa today.

With respect, the crisis we are dealing with nationally is a result of 30 years of failure to invest in affordable housing. We changed that with the adoption of the national housing strategy in 2017 and continue to advance measures today. The fall economic statement included a recapitalization of our affordable housing programs to the tune of \$1 billion and an additional \$300 million that will flow early in the new year, just weeks from now.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a 12-year-old boy in British Columbia has died by suicide, linked to cyber-bullying and sextortion. This is a tragedy, with the most common targets of this criminal behaviour being children. Despite this, Conservatives do not even want to see big tech regulated responsibly.

The Liberals promised an online harms bill within 100 days of the last election. Over two years later, we are still waiting. Will the government finally make the Internet safer for our kids, or is this another Liberal broken promise?

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I say my heart goes out to this family, I say that on behalf of every member in this chamber. No family should have to experience what this family is currently going through.

We recently passed Bill S-12 in this House, which addresses some of these concerns about online safety. The protection of children in our society is of utmost importance. I have a commitment from this side of the House, and from all sides of the House, that we will do everything we can to make sure they are protected.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every day, people across the country lose loved ones to overdoses caused by the increasingly toxic illegal drug supply. Tackling this

national public health crisis requires us to leverage all the tools at our disposal.

I am the son of an addictions doctor working on the front lines of this crisis in Winnipeg every day. Like many of us in this chamber, members of my own family are suffering from the harms of substance abuse. For me, as for so many Canadians, this is deeply personal.

Could the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions please update this chamber on the renewed Canadian drugs and substances strategy?

• (1455)

Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all know that the member is a compassionate and tremendous advocate on these issues, championing them to help support our most vulnerable who struggle with substances.

Recently we announced a renewed Canadian drugs and substances strategy, a comprehensive framework guiding our efforts to address the toxic drug supply and overdose crisis. It is centred on promoting public health and protecting public safety. In his riding, we supported Sunshine House recently, which is doing tremendous work. Together, we will continue to work to address and end the toxic drug supply and overdose crisis.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the NDP-Liberal government is just not worth the cost.

Greenfield Global operates in Chatham, buying corn and converting it to a variety of alcohols, from pharmaceuticals to biofuels. It buys corn from Canadian farmers and from nearby American farmers, who do not pay the carbon tax on fertilizer, the delivery of seed, and the delivery and drying of their corn.

Could the Prime Minister explain what happens to Canadian farmers' bottom lines when they pay the carbon tax and have to compete with American farmers, who do not, in their own backyard? Why is he interfering with the so-called independent senators blocking Bill C-234?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is well aware that farmers and ranchers are on the front lines of climate change. They expect parties to have a plan to deal with climate change. We have a plan. My hon. colleague's party does not.

For example, two weeks ago, I was in Winnipeg and announced \$9.2 million for living labs. Living labs are to make sure that farmers, ranchers, scientists and the industry itself work together to make sure that farmers and ranchers stay on the cutting line.

We have and will continue to support our farmers.

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know why the Prime Minister is blocking the carbon tax carve-out for Canadian farmers. It is because his environment minister has threatened to quit if Bill C-234 passes.

The environment minister does not care about Canadian farmers. He is jetting off to Dubai for two weeks. It is the middle of the day in Ottawa, but it is the middle of the night in Dubai.

Will the Prime Minister at least allow senators to pass a carbon tax carve-out while his minister is asleep in Dubai?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yes, I will be proudly representing Canada at COP28 in Dubai, and I will be in good company. The Premier of Alberta will be there. Premier Smith is leaving tomorrow for COP28 with the largest provincial delegation we have ever seen in the history of COPs. The Premier of Saskatchewan, Scott Moe, will be there as well with the largest Saskatchewan delegation we have ever seen. Quebec will be there with more than 120 representatives from civil society, business and trade unions.

I will be proud to represent Canada at COP28.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am sure we all look forward to see what those high-carbon hypocrites come up with.

After eight years, it is clear that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. The Hunger Report has said that food bank usage has gone up for seven years in a row.

The NDP and Liberals' carbon tax has hiked food prices and forced Canadians to skip meals or cut the basics. Common-sense Conservatives will axe the tax for all, for good. However, a quick fix is Conservative Bill C-234, which would cut it from farm fuels.

Will the Prime Minister stop interfering with the senators and let them pass it so farmers can afford to feed Canadians and so Canadians can afford to eat?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member of Parliament for Lakeland has the privilege of representing the amazing town of Vegreville. That town is a source of pride for all Ukrainian Canadians, especially from the Prairies, for the amazing pysanka that the people there put up, pride in their heritage.

Is she ashamed that her party has voted against Ukraine? I hope she is because she should be.

• (1500)

The Speaker: I know the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot is a very passionate man, but his voice does carry and it is very unique. Therefore, I will ask all members to please keep their voices down when a member has the floor.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Ukraine needs weapons and Canada's energy, not the Liberals' carbon tax. I

am confident that the Ukrainian farmers, who are my neighbours, friends and relatives, support that position and I will never stop fighting for them.

That right there is the Liberals' distract-and-divide agenda. It is only those guys who do not get that when one taxes the farmers who grow the food, the truckers who ship the food, the stores that sell the food and the consumers who buy the food, Canadians cannot afford the food, yet the Prime Minister is going to quadruple his carbon tax, even though he already forces people to choose between heating and eating.

He can help bring down those costs right now. When will the Prime Minister get out of the way of his former Liberal donor, candidate and MP senators and get them to pass the common-sense Conservative bill?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am actually extremely confident that Ukrainian Canadians across our amazing country are in favour of our free trade deal. I am confident because the Ukrainian Canadian Congress said so. I am confident because President Zelenskyy wants that deal.

A great way to bring down prices of food and fuel for the whole world is by stopping Vladimir Putin. I just do not understand why those Conservatives are standing against Ukraine.

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[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SERVICE AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, Unifor and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, which represent tens of thousands of aerospace workers in Quebec, are on the Hill. We welcome them.

They are here to say that Ottawa has no business giving Boeing more than \$8 billion of our money, untendered, to replace the Aurora aircraft.

It is a farce. Those are not my words. It is Michael Hood, former commander of the Royal Canadian Air Force, who said that.

The workers are demanding that Quebec's expertise get a chance to compete. Will Ottawa finally do the right thing and run a competition?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank our colleague for acknowledging the expertise of aerospace workers not only in Quebec, but also in Canada. That is why the decision we will soon be making is an important one, both for securing the military and geopolitical needs of Canada and the Canadian Armed Forces, but also for continuing to support Canada's aerospace sector. We know that this represents roughly 220,000 jobs created every year, contributing somewhere around \$20 billion to our GDP.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the holidays may be approaching, but the government has no right to give Boeing a gift worth more than \$8 billion in an untendered contract.

Aerospace workers are demanding a call for tenders. The Quebec industry is demanding a call for tenders. The premiers of Quebec and Ontario are demanding a call for tenders. Members of all parties in the House and on the Standing Committee on National Defence are demanding a call for tenders. Everyone understands that a call for tenders is the best way to ensure that the best team wins when it comes to replacing the Aurora aircraft.

Everyone understands, that is, except the Liberal government. When will it finally reverse course and put this out for tender?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for giving me the opportunity to focus on talents and needs, the talents of all aerospace workers in Canada. There are so many of them. We rely on them every day to support the needs of the Canadian Armed Forces. They have done a lot over the past few decades, and we know that we can count on them in the years to come.

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these Liberals like to go on and on about Canada's AAA credit rating while jacking up taxes and driving more Canadians into poverty. Seventy-one per cent of food bank users say their circumstances—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1505)

The Speaker: Order.

I had difficulty hearing the hon. member for York—Simcoe's question. He can please start his question from the top.

Mr. Scot Davidson: Mr. Speaker, 71% of food bank users say their circumstances have become much worse after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government.

If the Prime Minister spoke to real Canadians lined up at food banks, he would know one cannot feed a family with AAA credit rating.

Will the Prime Minister stop blocking the common-sense Conservative bill, Bill C-234, so Canadian families can feed themselves?

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will continue to invest in so-

cial security programs like the old age security and Canada pension plan, and in families through the Canada child benefit and the \$10-a-day child care program. These are programs which the Conservatives continue to vote against. They totally lack empathy or understanding of the struggle of Canadians.

On this side of the House, we will continue to govern with the needs of Canadians at the heart of everything we do.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Prime Minister's soft-on-crime policies, crime, chaos and disorder have become the norm in Canada. Just in the last week, we have seen armed robberies, shootings of businesses, armed carjackings, extortion letters sent to business owners and international gangsters directing shootings at families here in Canada.

When will the Prime Minister finally take the safety of Canadians seriously?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government obviously has always taken the safety of Canadians seriously. The Conservatives seem to be laughing and find that funny, but the good news is that tomorrow morning they have a caucus meeting, where Conservative senators will be present. They should perhaps talk to their Conservative Senate parliamentary colleagues and ask them to please pass the legislation this House adopted to strengthen bail conditions for serious violent offenders. That is something our government worked on with premiers across the country, including Conservative premiers. Also, there is important gun control legislation stuck in the Senate because Conservatives will not pass it.

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is another bill blocked by more Liberal senators.

It was actually the Liberal government's soft-on-crime policies like Bill C-5 and Bill C-75 that let serious violent criminals back onto our streets, and incidents of violent crimes have skyrocketed since then. Violent crime is up by 39%. Murders are up 43%. Gang-related homicides and violent gun crimes are up over 100%.

Only Conservatives would end Liberal-NDP soft-on-crime policies that keep violent offenders on the streets. When will the Liberals get out of the way and allow common-sense Conservatives to bring home safer streets?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, my hon. friend is having some difficulty attaching himself to the facts. It is the Conservative senators who are blocking legislation requested by Conservative premiers and worked on by this government last spring and adopted by this House of Commons at all stages when we came back in September.

Why is that legislation to strengthen bail reform and to keep Canadians safer not adopted now? Senators from the Conservative Party are blocking it. That might be something the Conservatives would like to do before Christmas.

* * *

[Translation]

FINANCE

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government continues to support Canadians during this ongoing period of inflation, where some prices remain too high.

Yesterday, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change talked about some new measures that are set out in the fall economic statement that will help more Canadians put a roof over their heads, while helping them reduce their home energy costs.

Can the minister tell the House about these important measures?

• (1510)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

Our government is tackling affordability issues and environmental issues at the same time. We are scaling up affordable housing in Canada by making it easier to access mortgage relief. We are offering Canadian families incentives to help them save thousands every year on their energy bills, and we are helping them make the switch to electric heat pumps with an investment of \$500 million over four years.

On this side of the House, we are delivering results for Canadians on affordability and on the environment.

* * *

[English]

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, \$15 billion is \$1,000 per household, and there is no guarantee for Canadian jobs. Not only are 900 jobs going to taxpayer-funded foreign workers, but the union today said it would cost Canadian contractors \$300 million in lost wages. This is not *Deal or No Deal*. This is a terrible deal for workers who were promised jobs in Windsor.

When will the minister responsible for costing the union \$300 million and Canadian families \$1,000 per household release the contract that Canadians have paid for?

Oral Questions

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to protecting local jobs, we will not take any lessons from the Conservatives. When they were in power, we saw the rapid decline of our automotive industry and the loss of over 300,000 manufacturing jobs.

Let us review some of the most recent actions of Conservatives compromising local jobs. They are filibustering the sustainable jobs act at the natural resources committee, which is a bill that would give workers a seat at the table in the clean economy. They are opposing landmark legislation that our government tabled on the ban of replacement workers. They have opposed the Atlantic accord, which is supporting an offshore wind industry in Atlantic Canada. Those are just a few examples of the hypocrisy.

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only things the Liberals are protecting are taxpayer-funded foreign jobs.

Here is what could have happened. The Liberals could have ensured that we mine the material for batteries in Canadian mines with Canadian workers. We are not. We could have ensured that the parts for the cars were made by Canadian workers in Canadian factories. We are not. These could have been 100% Canadian jobs. They are not. Instead, Canadians are paying \$1,000 a household so Canadian contractors can lose \$300 million and get ripped off.

Why will the Liberals not release the contract? Is it because it should have been ripped up?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us just review what Lana Payne, the national president of Unifor, Canada's largest private sector union, has said, "In an ironic twist, we've learned the program...exists only because of the Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement, an agreement negotiated and signed by"—guess who—"the Conservatives themselves back in 2014." Ms. Payne also said, "Either way they are officially talking out of both sides of their mouths. It's embarrassing...."

That is the largest private sector union in the country.

While the Conservatives put their ignorance and recklessness on full display to Canadians, we will stay focused on building a powerhouse auto industry.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government is making things up as it goes. It is giving away \$7 billion of taxpayers' money to fund foreign workers in Montérégie. This Prime Minister has once again failed to protect Quebec's workers. He has failed to include the most basic requirement in the agreement, namely, making foreign companies hire Quebecers here at home.

This government is just not worth the cost. What does this Liberal government have to hide in these contracts? Why is it not disclosing them publicly?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the Conservatives are against a new economy that harnesses all the talents of Quebecers and Canadians at the frontier of a new economy. All the jobs for Quebecers and Canadians will be in Montérégie. The members opposite do not want us to sign a good deal with this company. It is not their fault; it is because they do not know what they want to do for the economy.

We are here for Quebecers and Canadians. We are going to do it in Montérégie and across Canada. That is our plan and we are going to follow through.

* * *

[English]

TOURISM INDUSTRY

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, indigenous tourism was among the hardest-hit sectors of the travel industry during the pandemic, but it was becoming one of the fastest-growing segments of the tourism industry before the pandemic and that opportunity still exists. The growth of indigenous tourism is an important element of reconciliation and a major opportunity for first nations, Métis and Inuit communities. It was among the key priorities of the new federal tourism growth strategy announced this summer.

Can the Minister of Tourism tell us what our government is doing to support indigenous tourism?

● (1515)

Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government wants to position the indigenous tourism industry for long-term sustainable growth. I recently announced the indigenous tourism fund that will support thousands of projects for micro and small businesses across the country, and in the member's riding of Northwest Territories.

The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, ITAC, will provide financial assistance to build capacity among indigenous businesses. Indigenous tourism has the power to transform the tourism sector, and more than that, it has the power to advance self-determination in an economy of reconciliation.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, once again, the ultrarich owner of the Ambassador Bridge is trying to end the ban of hazardous materials on the bridge between Detroit and Windsor.

Last year's bridge blockade proved we cannot put the country's most important trade link at risk so a billionaire can profit while endangering businesses, residents and the environment, including Great Lakes drinking water. These goods are already safely crossing the Blue Water Bridge now and, in 18 months, at the new Gordie Howe Bridge.

Will the government not cave to the billionaire's greed, and will the government keep people safe and keep the ban on?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is essential that we continue to make the investments and work with partners to keep our trade corridors open, including making the necessary investments to improve our country's national infrastructure that helps drive our local economy.

With respect to the hon. member's very specific local concerns about the bridge he raised in his question, I would be happy to speak with him after question period and set up a time to discuss the details in person as our schedules allow.

* * *

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, people living with disabilities are children, parents, grandparents, community members, our neighbours and our fellow Canadians, and they deserve to live in dignity.

The few in Alberta who get some provincial support know it is not enough and feel they are being trapped in continual poverty. New Democrats and disability advocates fought to secure a national Canada disability benefit, but the Liberals are delaying.

Edmontonians living with a disability do not have time to wait. When will the government implement a fully funded Canada disability benefit?

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am so happy that our House, together, passed an important disability benefit with Bill C-22. We are committed to making sure that this benefit is realized, and that this will get dollars into the pockets of those who need it for Canadians who are with disability and who are of working age. This will help alleviate poverty and help Canadians who are looking forward to this benefit. We will do so properly and without delay.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have in my hand an article from CTV entitled "Manifestation of weakness: Zelenskyy condemns Canada for return of Russia-Germany pipeline turbines".

*Business of Supply***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—PASSAGE OF BILL C-234 BY THE SENATE

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to the opposition motion of the Conservative Party.

I must admit that I was really surprised when the Conservatives put forward this particular motion. There are always a few opposition day motions put on the Notice Paper, and then the opposition will decide at the last minute which one they want to proceed with. When I reviewed the options, I have to be honest that this is the absolute last one I thought they would bring forward, given the context of what has been going with this particular bill. The motion calls on the Senate to immediately pass Bill C-234, but I thought they would not come anywhere near this issue because of what we have seen from Conservative members over the last couple of days and, indeed, week.

I really wish I could share a poster with members, but I respect the rules of the House. I realize that I am not allowed to use a prop, so I will not go so far as to show it, but I would like to describe it as I look at it. This is a poster made by the Conservative Party of Canada, which its members have been sharing in social media forums. It is meant to look like a wanted poster. The edges around the sides look at though they are burnt out. There are two pictures of two individuals on it with grainy pixelation. They have the individuals' names, in this case, the two senators, and then at the top it says "Call and ask these [Prime Minister's name] senators why they shut down debate on giving farmers a carbon tax carveout."

The reason I find this so disrespectful is that, notwithstanding the fact that more developed out of that poster, which I will talk about momentarily, out of one side of their mouths, Conservatives are trying to somehow justify attacking senators to get results. On the other hand, we do not have to think that far back in the institutional memory of this place to remember when one of their own colleagues, Rona Ambrose, brought forward a bill intended to make sure that judges received sexual harassment training in this country. One would think that it would have been an easy bill to support, but their Conservative senators held that bill up in the Senate to the point it ended up being removed as a result of Parliament being dissolved.

I find it incredibly rich that we have this motion here today demanding that we get answers and that the Senate do something that the Conservatives want. Where was their outrage when it came to that really important piece of legislation that one of their own members, Rona Ambrose, tabled? She was a former minister and a former leader of the Conservative Party of Canada. Their senators would not even let that bill pass through.

As well, I would like to inform the House that I will be sharing my time with the member for Whitby.

The Speaker: I will ask the hon. member if he is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to table the document.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I am seeking unanimous consent to table the document.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: I am hearing that there is no appetite for unanimous consent.

The hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I rise to seek unanimous consent to table a National Post article in which former premier Klein—

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: I am afraid the hon. member does not have unanimous consent. That has been clearly indicated.

The hon. Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Speaker, during question period today, on numerous occasions the Conservative Party of Canada referred to carbon pricing as a tax. Conservatives talked about the respect of our institution. They should—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. minister knows that this venturing into debate.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

• (1520)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, on several occasions, yelled from his seat for members to stop lying in the House. He used the word "lie" on several occasions. I would ask that the member withdraw his comments.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for raising this issue. The Chair had already pointed out to members during today's Oral Questions that it is important to not use unparliamentary language. I made that point, and the matter has been dealt with.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable on a point of order.

Mr. Luc Berthold: During question period, the Minister of Environment stated that one senator had engaged in violence against other senators. That is disrespectful, and I would ask the minister to apologize.

The Speaker: I thank the member for Mégantic—L'Érable, but, again, that is debate. The matter is closed.

Business of Supply

I will go back to this particular call-out from the Conservatives in the form of a wanted poster, which is trying to generate phone calls and emails to these particular senators. Well, their plan worked. Now one of these senators, at least, is expressing extreme concern over the fact that she has been harassed and intimidated along with her staff. She has had to leave her home. I will read what she said about the matter. She said:

There has been much online chatter about my adjourning Bill C-234 last Thursday. I'm the deputy facilitator of the Independent Senators Group. I adjourn debate on numerous items every time the Senate sits—it's my job and this adjournment is no different than any other.

She goes on to say:

I wasn't going to post about this because, as I said, there is no story here. However, in response to a...Twitter post that asked for calls to my office, a young female staff member received a phone call from a man threatening to show up at my house. This type of behaviour is unacceptable. It was fueled by social media posts, like that one, encouraging anger, and by the misinformation that has been circulating over the past week. I know the senators who posted this to [Twitter], and I recognize that it would not have been their intention to cause a stranger to show up at my house and put my safety at risk. More thought needs to be given to the dangerous effects of the angry public messaging targeted at others.

● (1525)

Conservative members and their senators targeted two female senators, which also affected one of their female staff members, as I indicated. I think it is also extremely perplexing that this is happening during the particular time period we are in right now, the 16 days of activism against violence against women. That is taking place this year between November 25 and December 10, yet we are getting this kind of action from Conservatives. It is absolutely despicable the way that they are engaging in activity that is certainly resulting in threatening and harassing forms of activity towards two senators. By the way, those two senators have never sat in a Liberal caucus. I have been here since 2015—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order.

There are members who have been here for quite some time and know better than to be yelling across the way. If any hon. member wishes to stand and ask questions or make comments, they should wait for the appropriate time.

The hon. deputy government House leader.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, for Conservatives to do this is absolutely appalling. We do not have senators sitting in our caucus. I have been here since 2015—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is a point of order from the official opposition House leader.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, the Liberals are desperately trying to make up a phony issue where there is none. I would like to seek unanimous consent to table this tweet that contains pictures—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is a prop. I want to remind the member that he is not to point to a document. He knows that full well, having been the Speaker of the House in the past.

I would just ask members to please get to their point.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, I am sorry. I was just looking it over, but it contains pictures of dozens—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member did it during his speech. The point of order is about tabling what document?

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, it is a printout of a Liberal tweet containing images—

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order.

Again, I want to remind members that in order for the House to function properly, members need to be respectful of the rules of order. Most of the members here, I know, have been here for quite some time and are very well aware of those rules. I would just ask members to please respect those who are speaking as they would like to be respected when they are speaking.

The hon. deputy government House leader.

● (1530)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I am actually more than willing to talk about what the House leader for the Conservatives just held up. That was a tweet that I put out, which had pictures of everybody who voted against Ukraine. That was the end of it; that is all I did. I did not then go on—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member is showing a document after I just told another hon. member that he could not use one.

The hon. deputy government House leader.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the difference between that and this is that they started to granulate the pictures to make them look like a “wanted” ad with imaging around it. They actually have a call-in action here. They put the names, telephone numbers and email addresses of each particular member. That is the difference, and it is a huge difference.

I know that Conservatives are really upset right now about the turmoil they have been experiencing over the last week and a half, but it is a reality of the decisions that they have been making. I will remind the House that earlier today, I asked the Leader of the Opposition, when he stood up to speak to this, whether he condoned or condemned the actions of his House leader, who had tweeted that picture. I did not call him out by name, but now that we appear to be doing that, I will; the House leader, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, is the one who tweeted out the “wanted” picture. I asked the leader if he was okay with that, and he did not condemn it for one second—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, now his members are clapping at that. It is good to know that his members not only encourage this activity but also actually clap and applaud.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I am holding the back of it—

Business of Supply

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would ask members not to point to documentation and not to show the documentation they are referring to.

I was actually just looking for the wording of the official opposition's motion to make sure, because I do want to remind the hon. member that he is to speak to the motion. There is some flexibility, but the debate should be on the motion itself.

The hon. deputy Government House leader.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I am speaking to the motion. The motion is calling on the House to do something and is calling on the Senate to do something, when Conservatives are actually also calling on the Senate to do something but by using intimidating tactics. That is what we have seen, and I think I have demonstrated it well. We have heard from the other side as to how much they are willing to embrace it.

At the end of the day, it is really important to reflect on the fact that while Conservatives will use issue after issue to try to pivot themselves out of the corner they have boxed themselves into over the last week and a half, the reality is that Canadians are starting to wake up to the politics of the Conservatives. Canadians are starting to realize exactly what the Conservatives are up to, what they are willing to do and the lengths they will go to, which include making “wanted” posters of senators and distributing them online, through social media forums in order to elicit and generate a reaction, which clearly has occurred. Perhaps it is not the reaction they were thinking of, but it is not a stretch in today's political environment to assume that it is extremely possible for that to occur, which is exactly what happened.

The motion is about a bill that is currently at the Senate. We are waiting for it to be voted on there. It is a bill that, once again, deals with an issue on carbon pricing that Conservatives have completely blown out of proportion. Ninety-seven per cent of farmers are already exempt from the carbon pricing system; we heard that earlier today. It continues to be the case, despite the fact that Conservatives want to create a false narrative for the Canadian population.

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask a question about the substance of the matter. I asked it during question period and did not get a satisfactory answer.

Greenfield Global operates in Chatham. It converts corn into alcohols, everything from the special ingredient in White Claw to biofuels and hospital-grade pharmaceutical alcohols. It buys Canadian corn and American corn. The American farmers do not pay the carbon tax, and they truck right into Chatham and compete with Canadian corn.

What does the member say to the Canadian farmers trying to compete against American corn in that market in our own backyard?

• (1535)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I am unaware of or unfamiliar with exactly what is going on in the member's riding. I understand and appreciate what he has just said. The reality is that 97% of farmers are exempt from the price on pollution. I am not sure whether what he is referring to falls into the 3% or not.

Conservatives need to stop overreacting to the issue and trying to generate more attention out of it. The reality is that they are blowing this up into something it is not.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Bloc Qu b cois voted for Bill C-234 because we are big believers in a just transition. We think it is important to support sectors that are disproportionately affected by climate change.

This morning, I met with representatives of the Canadian Labour Congress. They are appalled by all the money this government is investing in oil companies and the western Canadian oil industry.

When it comes to sending a meaningful message about the just transition, what are my colleague's thoughts on the importance of funding programs that will really contribute to that?

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, toward the end of her intervention, the member commented on fossil fuel subsidies and government investment. I would like to remind the member that, over the time of the current Liberal government, we have seen those go down significantly. They are on track to be completely removed, I believe it is by the end of this year or next year.

The problem is that there are still certain investments that have to occur in the oil and gas sector, such as cleaning up orphaned oil wells, for example. Unfortunately, the programs were not in place 30 or 40 years, or more, ago, when these wells were created, to ensure that there was a fund to deal with them afterwards. We cannot just totally turn our back on that now. I see, every once in a while, the conflation of government investment with doing the right thing, in my opinion, which is to deal with the orphaned wells, because we allowed people to get away with leaving them like that, but it is a reality of the situation. In terms of investing and providing fossil fuel subsidies that direct investments to those companies, that is certainly almost completely eliminated at this point, and it will be within the next year or so.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, here we are, debating a Conservative motion to send a message to the Senate for delaying a bill, or blocking a bill. In 2019, a handful of Conservative senators blocked 15 or 20 private members' bills that had been passed by the House of Commons. It was all to make sure they blocked the bill on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples put forward by Romeo Saganash. These five or six senators were able to block that bill and 15 or 20 others, including my private member's bill. I am just wondering whether the member could comment on that, and whether we should encourage the Senate to change its rules so its members could not do that?

Business of Supply

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I know that all too well, because I had a private member's bill that had passed the House of Commons and gone over to the Senate. It was just before the election, and those Conservative senators stalled it to the point where my bill as well ended up dying on the Order Paper as a result.

Conservatives will meet tomorrow morning at their caucus meeting with senators, and I do not even know what that is like. I have been here since 2015, and I have never sat in a caucus room with senators. The concept is foreign to me. When Conservatives start pointing the finger at us like we are somehow able to control what happens in the Senate because we control the senators is ludicrous. They literally sit in the same caucus room once a week with Conservative senators.

• (1540)

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am thankful to the member for Kingston and the Islands for sharing his time with me, which is very generous of him, and for the opportunity to talk about our commitment to strong, profitable and sustainable farm businesses across this great country.

With respect to carbon pollution pricing, we recognize the special role our farmers play in Canada. I would remind members opposite that much of the agriculture sector is already exempt from pollution pricing. In fact, 97% of emissions are already exempt. We also provide exemptions for gasoline and diesel fuels used by farmers for agricultural activities. There is a partial rebate for commercial greenhouse operations. We will also be returning a portion of the proceeds from the price on pollution directly to farmers in back-stop jurisdictions through a refundable tax credit. This would apply to farmers in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

We are standing by our farmers, who are on the front lines of climate change. No one can deny that their crops, businesses and properties are dramatically impacted by the extreme weather events we are seeing at unprecedented levels and more frequently than ever before. Extreme weather events are adding more stress and unpredictability to farm businesses. We have all seen how recent climate disasters across our country have taken a heavy toll on Canadian farmers over the past couple of years.

In the summer of 2021, the worst drought in 60 years on the Prairies slashed Canadian grain production by 30% and forced many livestock producers to sell off their cattle. In November 2021, mudslides caused by historic flooding in British Columbia took out key rail and road arteries used to transport food and other critical supplies. Hurricane Fiona destroyed crops, buildings and livestock across Atlantic Canada. Just this past year, Canadian farmers have had to cope with extreme weather, from droughts, wildfires and flooding to extreme cold. While helping these farmers get back on their feet again, we are also helping them to be more resilient to future extreme weather. The point is that our farmers are doing their part, but if they are going to increase their resilience in the years to come, they cannot do it alone.

Doing the right thing for the environment takes investment and time. That is why, over the coming decade, the government is mak-

ing historic investments of \$1.5 billion to help Canadian farmers boost their climate resiliency through sustainable practices and technologies. For example, the \$670-million on-farm climate action fund helps farmers adopt practices that will store more carbon and reduce greenhouse gases. The first phase of the program focuses on three priority areas: nitrogen management, cover cropping and rotational grazing practices for livestock. These practices also substantially improve soil health and strengthen the farmer's bottom line. The fund is designed to take down the barriers and support wider and faster adoption of these beneficial management practices.

From British Columbia to Atlantic Canada, 12 different agricultural organizations are distributing funding to help farmers take immediate action on their farms in the three target areas. Since it was launched last year, the OFCAF has made available almost \$100 million in direct support to help more than 4,300 farmers across Canada take real action on their farms to reduce their carbon footprint. Another 14,000 farmers have participated in knowledge transfer and peer-to-peer learning activities aimed to scale on-farm implementation of beneficial management practices.

My message is that farm families across our country can rest assured that we will stand shoulder to shoulder with them to support their growth, their resiliency and the sustainability of their agricultural businesses. The OFCAF is also helping producers with the agricultural clean technology program, which is backed by a federal investment of almost \$500 million.

• (1545)

The goal is to help farmers and agribusinesses continue to move toward a low-carbon economy by focusing on three priority areas: green energy and energy efficiency, precision agriculture and the bioeconomy. Hundreds of farmers across the country have already used the program for clean technologies, for example, more efficient grain dryers, solar panels and precision agricultural tools.

Business of Supply

Under the fall economic statement, we will extend the clean technology investment tax credit to include electricity and heat from waste biomass. That includes agricultural by-products, such as corn stubble and manure. Our investments in climate resilience also include research and innovation. Science is a powerful tool for building climate resilience, helping farmers make incredible strides in productivity over the past few decades. Scientists at our 20 agriculture and food research centres across Canada are working hard to help farmers strengthen their resilience to climate.

My message today is that Canadian farmers are and will continue to be part of the climate change solution. As responsible stewards of the land, Canadian producers can lead the way in our transition to a low-carbon economy while supporting food security and environmental sustainability. Just as important, they can also benefit from the economic impacts of adopting those practices on their farms. It is a win for farmers, and it is a win for the environment.

We will continue to support the sector to maximize and accelerate the efforts of our farmers, our scientists and the industry. Our programs will help farmers care for their land and strengthen their businesses. These efforts will bring enormous value to our Canadian brand, which is already renowned in global markets for quality and for respect for the environment.

Today, climate resilience is perhaps the biggest challenge of our sector for our government and for the world. Agriculture has a vital role to play, and we know that farmers are strong partners. After all, they have the greatest stake in the fight against climate change.

Once again, I thank the hon. members for this opportunity. I look forward to answering any questions that members have.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have appreciated the work that the hon. parliamentary secretary has done on sustainable finance. I know he is sincere about the need to act on climate change.

I wonder, around carbon pricing, if the parliamentary secretary can riddle me this: There are viable affordable alternatives to home heating oil, yet his government put in place a carve-out for the price on carbon. For grain drying, there are no affordable viable alternatives, yet there is no carve-out for carbon pricing. Could the member explain the contradiction between these two things?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member opposite's good-faith question, which I always appreciate in the House. I also appreciate the member's support and work, broadly speaking, for climate action. I have found him to be an hon. member with whom one can have constructive debates and conversations.

In terms of the member's question, a lot of the arguments around this debate centre around people claiming that there are no commercially viable alternatives for grain drying. I would contest that. We have examples in Canada that we heard about at the agriculture and agrifood standing committee. We also have examples in other countries of grain-drying technology that works. Most of them work on biomass, which is one of the reasons that, in my speech, I pointed to the new investment tax credit.

I believe that we should not mess with the price signal that the price on pollution establishes to change behaviour. What we should

do is support farmers in transitioning to the alternatives and scaling up those solutions. We have funds that are dedicated to that purpose, and our government is investing over \$1.5 billion to help farmers make those changes.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, a couple of the Liberal colleagues today have put out this statistic that 97% of farmers are exempt from the carbon tax. That is completely and utterly false. We know that the vast majority of farmers pay much more in carbon taxes than they would get in any rebate. In Bill C-8, which I am sure my colleague is referring to, the average farm gets about 15% to 20% back on its carbon tax. However, there is no exemption on natural gas and propane, which we are talking about today.

Can my colleague please table with the House the document that states that 97% of farmers are exempt from the carbon tax? I would love to see where the Liberals come up with that number.

● (1550)

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, I did not actually say what the member just claimed I said. I actually said that 97% of emissions on farms are already exempt from the price on pollution. It is not quite what the member opposite said.

The point is that farmers are at the forefront of fighting climate change. They are greatly impacted by the extreme weather that we all know is a primary concern for them. We want to support farmers in making the changes to more resilient and more sustainable practices. Farmers are on board with that. We have the tools to incentivize that and help finance that transition, and that is where I think we should be placing our time, our attention and our resources.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague talked a lot about the importance of transitioning to a green economy, but how can he agree with investing billions of dollars in corporate polluters like the oil and tar sands industry in western Canada?

[*English*]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, I assume the member opposite is referring to oil and gas subsidies. Our government has created a plan, ahead of schedule, for ending all oil and gas subsidies in Canada. That is progress, and I support our government's move to do that ahead of schedule.

Business of Supply

Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise in support of this important motion, but boy do I wish we did not have to. I wish we did not have to defend the work of the elected chamber in the face of the unelected senators who are trying to overrule us.

I will be splitting my time with the member for Tobique—Macataquac.

Personally, I have been following Bill C-234 since its inception, as well as its predecessor, Bill C-206, so I have the unique ability to provide a primer on what this bill would do, why it matters and how we came to the point of needing a motion in the House of Commons calling on the Senate to pass this bill.

At the farm level, a grain grower harvests his or her crop. They can choose to sell it immediately to an elevator or store it in a bin, the bins we see lined up around farmyards all across the country. Storing grain costs money, but one has the benefit of being able to market it at a later date at hopefully higher prices.

All types of commodities must be stored in a specific manner that protects the moisture level to avoid spoiling, rotting or sprouting inside the bin, which would reduce or eliminate the value of the commodity. If the moisture level is too high, a grain dryer must be used, powered by propane or natural gas, to produce the amount of heat and consistent flow to make sure the quality is maintained throughout winter months. These dryers are full of impressive technology to ensure maximum efficiency.

Despite the carbon tax being added on, the cost of the fuel is already quite expensive, on top of the cost of the dryer itself. I have had the chance to tour western grain dryers in my riding, in Elie, Manitoba, to see some of that technology first-hand. Farmers have been adopting these innovative technologies for years and years, and they should be applauded for it, not punished.

There are only two fuel options available to a grain farmer: propane or natural gas. Despite what is said by my colleagues across the way, who might live in some fantasy world with new ways to heat a grain dryer, they do not exist at any scalable commercial level whatsoever. All we are doing is punishing farmers for doing a practice they need to do to maintain the quality of their grain. Livestock producers are in the exact same boat. They need to maintain temperatures inside their barns to protect the health and welfare of their animals, and they rely on the same heat sources.

What Bill C-234 would do is exempt farmers from paying the carbon tax on propane and natural gas when used on farm. That is it. That is all it would do. It is a very narrow carve-out that would alleviate costs for farmers and help make Canadians' food cheaper.

The Liberals have decided, bizarrely, that this is the hill they are going to die on. This is the carbon tax sword they are willing to fall on. I can only assume it is because over the next seven years, this would mean \$1 billion being left in the pockets of hard-working farmers. They firmly believe that is their money, that the government should be taking \$1 billion out of farmers' pockets to do whatever it thinks is going to save the planet.

It is common sense to take the tax off these activities, and it is not just me saying this is a good idea. Five premiers have written

open letters to the Senate calling on it to pass this legislation. All major ag groups, including the Agriculture Carbon Alliance, which encompasses all major ag groups in Canada, are in strong support of this legislation. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business have offered their support to the Senate to pass this bill unamended because it makes sense for farmers and makes sense for Canadians.

The carbon tax most definitely should, and soon will, be taken off all products in this country, but in the meantime, this is a pretty good place to start to help alleviate the cost of food for Canadians. Right now, we are forcing farmers to pay tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxes to do what they absolutely need to do to produce our food, fuel and fibre.

Our farmers have an incredible sustainability track record and we should be proud of it. They regularly invest in new technologies, new equipment and new practices that make them more sustainable and improve their sustainability profile. The challenge is that when we take this much money out of their pockets, they are simply unable to reinvest capital into their own operations. Instead of buying new equipment that can more precisely apply crop protection products and fertilizer seed, they are forced to make a choice, saying they cannot do this, despite that action being the best way to reduce emissions on farm.

● (1555)

It is a prime example of when we talk about technology, not taxes. This is the difference. On the Conservative side, we believe the technology that farmers will readily and happily invest in if the government is not taking money out of their pockets will improve environmental outcomes at the individual farm level and therefore across the nation. The Liberals say, "No, we will tax them." Is the carbon tax working in this case? No. However, they do not care and want to keep the taxes on because they need this revenue to fund their other pet projects.

This bill has been around since 2020, previously as Bill C-206 and now as Bill C-234. It is essentially the same bill. It has maintained support from all opposition parties in the House except for the Liberals. They just refuse to give in. They refuse to be adaptive. They refuse to be reasonable and recognize that when something is not working, we should probably change it, because it is harming farmers and Canadian consumers.

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Instead, we have this stubborn, worn-out government grappling with the political fallout of its decision to climb down from the carbon tax on home heating for 3% of Canadians in certain parts of the country while leaving the rest of Canadians out in the cold. Now the Liberals are trying to figure out how to grapple with what would be another carve-out. It has been quietly making its way through the elected chamber and into the Senate, but all of a sudden, it is a big problem for the Liberals.

The Minister of Environment even admitted in the media that he had been calling senators. We have PMO staffers calling in favours with Liberal-appointed senators. I am fed up with hearing members across the way repeatedly state that the Senate is independent. Nobody in this chamber, nobody in the press gallery, no political nerd and no casual observer of politics believes for a second that somehow the Senate is independent of this party, when just a couple of weeks ago, it appointed a former Liberal MP. Just because they do not caucus together does not mean it is an independent Senate.

Our elected chamber has spoken. We have endorsed a common-sense carve-out on the carbon tax for our farmers. What has happened in the Senate? All of a sudden, at the agriculture and forestry committee, attention was far higher on this random PMB that has worked its way through. It was only enhanced after the Prime Minister decided to step back on the home heating carbon tax for certain Canadians.

Many amendments were proposed, one of which, due to a tie, was passed. It was brought forward at report stage to the larger chamber. The Senate rightly voted down that amendment, returning the legislation back to its original form, where it should stay and where it should pass as is.

Then somehow, out of the blue, at third reading in the Senate, the amendment that was already brought forward at the committee stage was tabled by a senator who seems to have no previous interaction with agriculture and no interaction with this committee. It just magically appeared, with no connection to politics whatsoever. This could not be about the Liberal government's climbdown on the carbon tax.

Nobody believes that the Liberals are not behind this. It does not add up, and the fact that they continue to hide behind this is just embarrassing. The fake outrage we see during question period and during this debate, as they try to keep a straight face when they say the Senate is independent, is just absurd.

That is where we are. In the Senate, Liberal-without-title senators are holding this bill hostage at the request of the Prime Minister. This elected chamber chose democratically to eliminate the carbon tax on our farmers, and the Senate is trying to overrule us. We should not be here debating this motion today. The Senate should be doing the right thing. We should never have had to spend a day in this chamber trying to tell the Senate to do the right thing. It is shameful that the Liberals are being so petty.

The tactics they are taking in the Senate are unheard of. Instead of being reasonable, the Liberals are digging their heels in because they are worried about their political fortunes if there is a second carbon tax carve-out. The Liberals need to realize that Canadians do not like the carbon tax. They do not see value in the carbon tax

because life has become so unaffordable across every aspect of their lives. It is hard to justify seeing the government getting richer and Canadians getting poorer.

In the upcoming carbon tax election, Canadians will have a choice between quadrupling the carbon tax or axing the carbon tax. In the meantime, I implore my colleagues to support this motion urging the Senate to do the right thing and pass Bill C-234 unamended to give our farmers a break and Canadian consumers a break on their food prices.

• (1600)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this has very little to do with the substance of the legislation. I would suggest to the member opposite that it has more to do with the intimidation tactics being used by the Conservative Party of Canada.

I see a disturbing pattern taking place that Canadians should be concerned about. I call it the Donald Trump syndrome. We are seeing that by the leader of the Conservative Party today. It is very disturbing and is a pattern we are seeing more and more.

Does the member believe it is appropriate to intimidate senators to push things through the Senate, intimidation that makes some senators so scared that they are scared to go home and are telling their staff to stop answering the phone? That is serious stuff. It is the Donald Trump syndrome, and the Conservatives are falling for it. Does the member disagree with the leader of the Conservative Party?

Mr. Brandon Leslie: Madam Speaker, the best way to know when one is losing a debate is when one starts flailing with ridiculous accusations. The fact of the matter is that nobody would ever support harassment or threats toward any elected or unelected member of Parliament.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Unless it's during your election. Then it's cool.

Mr. Brandon Leslie: The fact that senators are, for the first time, facing thousands of letters and—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I would remind the deputy government House leader that he does not have the floor and he should wait for questions and comments if he wishes to contribute to the conversation.

The hon. member for Portage—Lisgar.

Mr. Brandon Leslie: As I was saying, Madam Speaker, just because some people are not accountable to anybody does not mean they should not expect, in this public life, to receive phone calls and letters. If they are, maybe they should have a second thought about what they are doing and why nobody is calling them to say they are doing a good job and people support them. However, thousands of people are calling and saying to pass this bill, get out of the way and stop playing politics. That is what the Senate needs to do and that is why we need to pass this motion.

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[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my Conservative colleague for her comments today.

I admit that the members of the Bloc Québécois have mixed feelings. On the one hand, we are tempted to agree with what the Conservatives are saying about the Senate today, but on the other, we have a duty to defend the process that is under way.

I am fascinated to see that the Conservatives take a different view of the Senate's work depending on whether or not they agree with the bill it is studying. I remember when senators took the time they needed, and then some, before passing Bill C-11. We never heard anything from the Conservatives about how senators are unelected and had no business delaying a bill that way.

Today, I fail to understand the Conservatives' attempt to literally gag the Senate. We have mixed feelings about that.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts about this. What is the problem? Bill C-234 is at third reading in the Senate. That is how things are usually done. Now, the Conservatives are acting almost like Bloc members, denouncing these unelected members of the Senate who are making decisions that should be made by the House of Commons.

• (1605)

[English]

Mr. Branden Leslie: Madam Speaker, it is called the chamber of sober second thought, but right now that chamber seems to be drunk on power. When it finds problematic elements in bills like Bill C-11, that is one thing, but I would implore all of my colleagues to consider if this was their private member's bill. Let us say it passed through the democratically elected House of Commons, only to have, for the second time, a motion that senators decided was so important, despite having no involvement with the legislation, that they needed to amend the bill to make sure it cannot be renewed through an OIC and it has to go through a long bureaucratic process again. If that is what the senator felt so compelled to do, I feel sorry for her, because this House passed the bill and the Senate needs to pass it too.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Karma is tough, Madam Speaker. During the Harper regime, Conservatives appointed members to the Senate whose only qualifications were that they were defeated Conservative candidates. They did not delay bills; they killed them. They killed Jack Layton's climate accountability act. They killed bill after bill. Now the Conservatives are concerned about the Senate. It is too rich to even contemplate.

We spend \$100 million every year for the unelected, undemocratic and, under the Conservatives, under-investigation Senate. Would the member agree with me that it is time to abolish the Senate now and forever?

Mr. Branden Leslie: Mr. Speaker, we could abolish the current Liberal government in this chamber. That would be the best thing we could do.

I have not thought that much about the Senate in any serious way, but the actions of these senators at the behest of the Prime

Minister on the backs of Canadian farmers and Canadians who are paying higher prices for this political gamesmanship is what bothers me and bothers my constituents. I will happily fight against it every step of the way.

Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to be able to rise in the people's House and share concerns and many reflections that we hear from back home.

Today, I rise in the House to speak to our motion regarding Bill C-234 and its intention to remove the carbon tax from farm fuels, and to urge the government to take the pressure off its appointed senators to keep holding up this bill.

Canadians are frustrated. They want relief, and they need relief fast. This is one of the steps that could be taken that would get immediate relief to those who literally keep our land and grow our food. The farmers are asking for this. Those who represent farming associations and farmers across the country are asking and demanding that this be passed speedily. We have had no fewer than five premiers who are calling upon the government to get this passed quickly. A majority in this House passed the bill already, and now it is being held up in the Senate through stall-and-delay tactics. That is unacceptable. The people have spoken through their elected representatives, and they want this legislation to be enacted. It is time to act. That is what this motion is all about.

When preparing my remarks, I was drawn to a famous quote that I have been reflecting upon. Perhaps it would be something all in this House could reflect upon. It was once famously said, "It's not about you. It's about things that are far more important than you and whether someone is mad at you has nothing to do with it if you're right. You can be in the middle of a hurricane or it can be on a calm day. North is still north. You can be in a thunderstorm. North is still north. You can be on calm waters, but north is still north. People can yell at you. North is still north. It doesn't change fundamental things, and in this business, right is still right, even if you stand by yourself."

I have been reflecting on that. If there were ever a time that those who represent Canadians should do what is right and listen to the compass and recognize that north is still north, it is in times like these, when we are facing an affordability crisis. There are more people in line for food banks than ever in modern history. The cost of housing is through the roof. The cost of fuel is through the roof. Canadians from coast to coast are wondering how they are going to make it to their next paycheque and keep the bills paid. Some Canadians are choosing between whether they can heat their homes or get enough groceries to provide for their families for another week.

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These are challenging times. These times are demanding serious leadership and action by a government that is hearing the demands of those who sent us here. For far too long, their voices have been ignored and they feel like they are absolutely being dismissed.

Farmers literally keep the land that we live on and grow our food. When they have a serious concern and their input costs are soaring and they are having a hard time keeping up, they keep doing what they love to do, in some cases for generations within their family. When they are asking for relief and we just ignore them or we stall it or hold back that relief, that is shameful and it is time we respond.

● (1610)

I cannot help but think of the old story of a naval vessel that was out on the sea. A call came to the vessel from an individual who said to adjust course 15°. The very large vessel's captain responded with absolute disdain and said he was captain so-and-so of U.S. naval vessel Montana, and for the other vessel to adjust course 15°. The other gentleman responded, "No, sir. You adjust 15°." It goes back and forth. Then, in absolute exasperation, the captain of the vessel said, "I have the USS Montana under my command. We have six cruisers and we have destroyers. You adjust your course 15°." The humble gentleman responded, "This is the lighthouse. You adjust course 15°, or you are headed for a shipwreck." Finally, the arrogant captain of the vessel thanked him and adjusted his course.

The moral of the story is that there is a clarion call going out from the proverbial lighthouse of Canada's farms basically saying that it is time the captain of the vessel called the Government of Canada adjust course.

I think it would behoove everyone in this House to listen to those who are most affected by the policies that have been enacted by the government of late. When a motion has gone through the House and a bill has been passed by a majority of members in this House who represent the people, it should not be held up in the unelected Senate for various reasons. It is time it is passed and relief is given to Canadians.

We are hearing that cry. Over 70% of Canadians want this tax cancelled. I talked to a potato farmer today in my region and was going over some of this with him. He told me very clearly that since the enactment of the carbon tax, the freight charges on his potatoes per truckload have gone up from \$1,200 to \$1,800 Canadian. That is a 30% increase as a result of the carbon tax being implemented. It is directly affecting his freight charges. He said farmers need relief and they need it fast, because that 30% augmentation is going directly onto the consumers of groceries from coast to coast to coast.

The government needs to respond to what farmers are saying. They need relief and they need it now. This bill would provide some much-needed relief. It would help with the affordability challenges of Canadians and the food production challenges. It is time we listened to them.

I heard from a young man from a place called Hartfield. He said that farmers need relief and they need it fast. He cannot keep making ends meet. The cost of living has gone up so high, grocery costs

are up and the cost of operations is up. Young Ivan is right. He needs relief.

Other business owners from across New Brunswick and across Canada need relief and need it fast. They do not need more empty promises. They do not need delay tactics. They do not need a captain of the vessel who is ignoring what is coming clearly from the lighthouse on shore. We need to adjust course quickly or we are going to hit the rocks economically. Getting this bill implemented is part of that. I hope the government will listen to us, put into action what has already been passed in this House and get the Senate to do the same.

I find that our greatest, most sacred responsibility is to listen to those who sent us here. They have given us a clarion call. It is a sacred responsibility. They are asking us to hear what they are saying, to implement it, and to stop ignoring and dismissing them. They may not have fancy degrees or titles. They may not occupy the spaces of the upper echelons of the intelligentsia class, but every day they carry a bucket to work. Every day they go out to their fields. Every day they work in their shops to employ people.

I believe it is time to do what is right by them and implement the changes they are demanding. I hope this House will do that, support this motion and make sure the message is sent to the Senate to pass the bill and get it into law.

● (1615)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think we should try to clarify the arguments for those who are trying to follow this.

When it comes to the issue at hand, let there be no doubt that the Conservative Party of Canada opposes the price on pollution. Many would say it is because Conservatives are climate deniers. They will go out of their way on all aspects in order to amplify that. The best example I can actually provide members across the way is how the far right has taken over the leadership of the Conservative Party and their office. They actually, collectively, voted against the Canada-Ukraine trade agreement because of the price on pollution. They want the price on pollution to be the campaign issue.

I am not going to disappoint them. I am going to tell my constituents that they voted against the Canada-Ukraine trade agreement. The Conservatives constantly vote in a negative fashion on Canada's environmental issues. They are climate deniers. That is the bottom line. Today, they are using the excuse of farmers. I find it unacceptable—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have to allow for other questions.

The hon. member for Tobique—Mactaquac,

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Mr. Richard Bragdon: Madam Speaker, I will say to my hon. colleague that the real issue that is at stake is the fact that affordability across this country is a huge challenge for every Canadian. Farmers have been facing soaring input costs and competitive disadvantage for a long time here in Canada. That is not a small issue. Where I come from, they care about this. I hear about it. I receive far more calls on affordability and soaring input costs from our producers than anything else.

I think it is time the government listened to what the folks back home are saying about what they are concerned about. They are concerned about putting groceries on their table, gas in their tank and being able to work at what they love to do.

While the government tries to play firehouse politics, light up everything to distract and make all kinds of noise, people are seeing beyond the noise and they are listening to the signal. They are signalling—

• (1620)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I do have to allow for other questions.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, common sense has come to town. It has made it to Ottawa. The Conservatives have just realized, in 2023, that senators are not elected. They are complaining that senators are not democratically elected.

We have known this for a long time. We have known for a long time that the upper chamber is a waste of time.

Instead of wasting our time and complaining that things are not being decided democratically, my colleague may be interested in my solution. I would love to hear what he has to say about this. Why not abolish the Senate?

[*English*]

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Madam Speaker, I will remind my hon. colleague that it was the previous Conservative government that tried to pass meaningful Senate reform. The other side of the House fought that every step of the way. They tried to bring it about.

Here is the issue. Are we going to listen to what our farmers are saying and enact what they want us to enact, or are we just going to acquiesce to an unelected body? I would say we should do everything we can to send a direct message to the body on the other side to pass the bill.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, that was a very impassioned speech. I would just like to comment, first of all, that the punchline of that joke is, “This is the lighthouse and it is your call.” It ends right there.

We are debating a motion about giving direction to the Senate. As my Bloc colleague just mentioned, the Senate is unelected. We pass private members' bills here that go through quite a process to get passed. It is quite a feat. As I mentioned before, in 2019, one of

my bills was passed, along with 25 others. They were all blocked and killed in the Senate by a handful of five or six Conservative senators who were against one of those bills, a bill on UNDRIP that they thought should not have been passed here.

I want to ask this question again. Would the member be in favour of the Senate changing its rules so that private members' bills cannot be blocked in the Senate but have to come to a vote?

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Madam Speaker, if one talks to those who grow our food, produce our food, work in our fields and those who represent the farmers, the overwhelming majority of them want this bill passed. This bill is a priority for the Canadian people. This bill needs to be enacted sooner rather than later. Today, we are talking about something that matters to those who put food on Canadians' tables. The best way to do that is by making sure the Senate passes the bill expeditiously, because there is no justification for holding it up. It does not match with the reality of the situation on the ground. This is a priority for Canadians from coast to coast. Let us get the Senate to pass this bill.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, we continue to hear members speak out of turn. I know they want to react to what is being said, but the reactions are very loud and is disruptive. Therefore, I would again ask members to please hold their comments until the appropriate time.

There are members having side conversations as well. I would ask them to please take their conversations out of the chamber, because it does get a little loud.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Humber River—Black Creek.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to stand today for a few minutes and speak about this bill that is here as an opposition day motion. I found the conversation actually quite comical as I was observing it.

I will be sharing my time with the member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

Business of Supply

Rather than indulge the Conservative partisan attacks on the pollution price, let us talk about what matters most to all Canadians. That is our economic plan that will support the middle class and build more homes faster, which the minister introduced last week and that really tackles so many issues when we talk about affordability and what matters to Canadians right now. It is putting bread on the table and having a roof over people's heads. Those are things that our government has, since 2015, worked on extensively. I am very proud of what has been done to ensure that there is bread on the table for thousands of people. Without some of the programs we introduced, that would be a seriously problem for them today.

As everyone saw last week, our government continues to deliver an economic plan that supports a strong middle class. It is something we have been working on since 2015, to enforce that, so the middle class has access to good jobs and good housing. We are building more homes faster; taking concrete action to help stabilize prices, which is critically important; making life more affordable; and protecting Canadians with mortgages, which is something that many are very worried about.

Canadians did not expect the interest rate to go up to what it is today. I reflect back on the first house we bought. The interest rate was 6% and I remember thinking how bad that was. It was not much longer after that it ended up at 19%. We are very wary of what mortgage rates are and the impacts they have on Canadians. The minister has introduced a plan to work with the banks to help Canadians and protect them from that.

Simply put, we are taking action on the priorities that matter most to Canadians today, and we are doing so in a way that is fiscally responsible. Our government's economic plan is very responsible and I am very proud of what is in it. In the face of global inflation, our government has reduced the deficit faster than any other country in the G7. In fact, Canada maintains both the lowest deficit and net debt-to-GDP ratios in the G7. If someone were to listen to question period, they would think that doom and gloom was everywhere, that the world was caving in and that nothing was moving forward. Canada is in a very good fiscal position because of some of the investments we have made.

With inflation down from 8.1% last year to 3.1% last month, we are taking care not to feed inflation by carefully targeting new investments toward the priorities of Canadians today, and toward the future growth that makes our finances sustainable. This includes, through new reductions in government spending as part of last week's fall economic statement, building on the \$15 billion in public service spending reductions that we announced in the spring.

It was not only about how we were helping people in a monetary way, whether it was building homes or making other changes, but it was the spending reduction of \$15 billion, which was significant. Clearly, the opposition rarely mentions that \$15 billion. We were able to do that at the same time as focusing on the stuff that matters the most, which is increasing the number of homes that will get built.

We are ensuring that Canada's finances remain sustainable because that is how we will be able to continue investing in Canadians. Not only is our economic plan fiscally responsible, but it is

clearly working. Canada's unemployment rate for the last 21 months has been lower than at any time between 2006 to 2015.

• (1625)

Over a million more Canadians are employed today compared to before the pandemic. Wages have outpaced inflation for the past nine months. Private sector economists now expect Canada to avoid the recession that so many had predicted.

The International Monetary Fund projects Canada to see the strongest economic growth in the G7 next year. That is a very important statement and is very much contrary to much of what we hear from the opposition, which never wants to say anything good, only finding ways to say something that would bring the country down, making people worried and concerned about the future.

According to the OECD, in the first half of this year, Canada received the third-most foreign direct investment of any country in the world and the highest per capita in the G7, again.

Now, I know that perhaps that sounds overly positive. We know that for many Canadians, this remains a challenging time. We need to assure Canadians that their government is making the right investments and that Canada is the envy of many parts of the world.

Higher housing costs and still-elevated consumer prices are putting pressure on families every single month. To combat inflation around the world, the world's central banks have implemented the steepest series of interest rate increases in decades. These interest rate increases have led to a slowing of the Canadian economy and, frankly, the slowing of the global economy. It is not just about Canada. Canada does not live in isolation. We are part of the global economy.

That is why having an economic plan that is fiscally responsible is so very important. By continuing our commitment to responsible fiscal management, we are able to continue helping Canadians navigate these economic headwinds.

Our government's support for the middle class did not begin in response to the pandemic and Canada's quick recovery from the COVID recession. Since 2015, as I mentioned earlier, we have been investing in Canadians, ranging from the Canada child benefit, which my riding has benefited from by at least \$14 million, to enhanced benefits and pensions for seniors, to stronger public health care and a Canada-wide system of affordable early learning and child care.

The issue of early learning child care is that it clearly allows many of the women in our country who were not able to go to work to have affordable child care and be able to move on with their own careers, which just makes Canada stronger.

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These foundational investments have supported Canadians' incomes and higher numbers of Canadians participating in the labour force, including a record number of working-age women. Historic investments in infrastructure and Canada's growing clean economy will have both short- and long-term economic benefits, helping to create good careers and vibrant communities, and grow our economy for decades to come.

I have met many women, especially when campaigning, out knocking on doors. I talked to many women about how they wanted, so much, to be able to go to work and to have a career. However, having their children was a holdback, and now having affordable child care really opened the door for them, whether it is on a part-time or full-time basis. It allowed them to start pursuing a career.

Not only does a strong federal balance sheet allow our government to make the necessary investments to strengthen our social safety net and improve Canadians' quality of life, but it also gives the government the ability to respond to future challenges.

This was not an accident. This was part of a bigger plan from 2015. Since emerging from the pandemic, the government has maintained a commitment to its fiscal anchor, reducing federal debt as a share of the economy over the medium term. This metric is key not only for fiscal sustainability, but also to preserve Canada's AAA credit rating that helps maintain investors' confidence and keeps Canada's borrowing costs as low as possible.

Our economic plan, outlined in the recent fall economic statement, delivers on our fiscal anchor, enabling Canada's federal debt-to-GDP ratio to decline from 2024-25 onwards.

• (1630)

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Madam Speaker, we have to get back to the issue at hand. We know the Prime Minister is protecting the environment minister now because they cannot allow another carve-out.

However, if we read the fine print, there has been another carve-out. The Liberal government stopped some rural ridings from becoming urban to help, for example, the member for Avalon. If his riding were to be ruled as being urban, it would not get the rural top-up all of a sudden. We are again seeing the Liberal government picking winners and losers and who is going to suffer from the carbon tax.

My riding is now considered part of Toronto. The soup and salad bowl of Canada is now part of Toronto. Can members imagine that? I wonder if my colleague could comment on the rejigging of the CMAs through Statistics Canada.

• (1635)

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is asking me to comment on something that is not within a jurisdiction that we have a direct effect on.

Let us be honest. This past summer, we had wildfires, floods and hurricanes everywhere, and they were all a result of climate change. Whatever we can do to reduce exposure is an important move for us to be making. The fact is that farmers are going to be compensated in other ways. We have an important bill that needs to get passed to protect all of us, our families and our homes.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the underlying fact is that the Conservatives, who deny climate change, are against a price on pollution, and they continue to look for ways to amplify that they are against a price on pollution. We saw that just last week, less than seven days ago, when the Conservatives collectively voted against the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. We saw how extremely hurtful that vote was.

I am wondering if the member could provide her thoughts on how reckless the Conservatives are being on a price on pollution.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Madam Speaker, it boils down to the fact that Conservatives do not understand the impact that climate change is having on our country and around the world. The majority of members of the EU all have a plan with a carbon tax, yet the Conservatives clearly do not support it, do not want to support it and do not believe in it. Maybe they need to spend a little time focusing more on the impacts climate change will have next year and next summer.

If we look at exactly what is going on as a result of climate change, it is causing serious damage, threatening the lives, the homes and the future for all of us in this country and around the world, and we need to take much stronger action, frankly, than what we have been taking. Instead of worrying about the carbon tax, I would suggest Conservatives should be putting their energy in something more profitable.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, who is also chair of the Standing Committee on International Trade, of which I am a member.

Last spring, she and I saw Conservative members filibuster the committee over the supply management bill. This bill is still being studied by the Senate, and they seem to be taking their precious time. It is taking a long time, and does not appear to be a priority.

In her opinion, why do Conservative members not complain about the Canadian Conservative senators in that case?

*Business of Supply**[English]*

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Madam Speaker, from the comments made earlier, Conservatives do not seem to understand how the Senate works. Conservative senators are threatening other senators and so on, based on what I hear in the media.

I want to congratulate Bloc, NDP and Liberal members today for the work they did on the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. There was a variety of amendments moved that were out of the scope of the bill, all of which we had to deal with, but in two hours we managed to get the bill through. I want to acknowledge and thank the committee members. The Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement has now been passed, which I hope to introduce tomorrow in the House so we can finalize it and give the people in Ukraine what they really need with additional help from Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, here we are having another debate on carbon pricing. It feels like the only thing we talk about here in the House is carbon pricing. Some claim that it is a “carbon tax”.

I know all about taxes. Taxes generate revenues that the government pockets. In the case of the price on carbon, all revenues, all the funds generated are returned to individuals or, in some cases, to businesses to allow them to invest in the transition to a clean economy.

- (1640)

[English]

I have been sitting here, day after day, listening to what I consider to be a false narrative on the price on carbon. First of all, it has been given an incorrect name. It is not a carbon tax. A tax is something that generates revenues that go to the government coffers. When one talks about a price on carbon, and this is the beauty of it, as it is extremely effective, all of the monies received from the price of carbon are returned to Canadians or Canadian businesses. As a matter of fact, if the price on carbon were removed, the climate action incentive payment would disappear and a vast majority of Canadians would be worse off. We do not hear that truth from the Conservative Party.

What we hear is what my former colleague and Canadian hero and hockey great Ken Dryden used to call “truthiness”. Truthiness is something that sounds true, but it is just not true. Day after day, we are treated to a simplistic but false chain of causation that the Conservatives trot out. It sounds true and anyone listening would say, “Yes, that sounds very logical”, but the chain breaks all along the length of it if one spends any time thinking about what is being said.

Every day in question period, it sounds like the ankle bone is connected to the shin bone, which is connected to the knee bone, which is connected to the thigh bone, except they say, “If one has a price on carbon, it costs a trucker a little more to ship. That means the distributor has to pay a little bit more, and that means that the retailer pays a little bit more, and then Canadians pay a little bit more.”

That is not how it works at all. As a matter of fact, studies, and we know that the Conservative opposition is not keen on academic studies or rigorous studies of any kind, have shown that the price on carbon contributes very little, an minuscule or infinitesimal amount, to the food price inflation. Although we would not want to let academic studies get in the way of a good “truthy” argument coming from the other side.

I think the Conservative Party is using the price on carbon as a red herring. I get very frustrated when constituents write to me and say, “Please take the price on carbon off”, and I write back to say, “Sir, madam, the price on carbon does not apply in Quebec.” Quebec has been pricing carbon since 2007, and B.C. has been pricing carbon since 2008. It does not apply in Quebec.

I have had other people come to me, and I guess they listen to Conservative propaganda because they say, “Where is my climate action incentive payment?” I have to say to them, “Sir, madam, I am sorry. You do not get the climate action incentive payment because you do not pay the price on carbon.” They write back and thank me for explaining it to them. They did not realize. That is a bit of the job of a member of Parliament, which is to explain the facts about government policy and why government policy is the desired policy.

I have talked about this before in the House, but I will mention it again. The Leader of the Opposition fancies himself to be a great monetarist economist in the tradition of the Chicago school of economics, the school that was made famous by Milton Friedman. However, Milton Friedman thought that the price on carbon was a wonderfully simple and effective policy instrument for pricing pollution. It is what we call an externality, which is something that is not priced and is therefore not reflected in the market, so it leads to a greater use of something that is not necessarily a societal good, which is what the price on carbon is really all about.

We can keep talking about this, I am sure, until the cows come home, and I am prepared to stand up in the House over and over again to set the record straight about the price on carbon. However, let us face it, we are going through an affordability crisis in Canada and around the world, as a matter of fact. Fortunately, in Canada we have one of the developed world’s lowest inflation rates. As I said, the challenges remain, but I think we have to look at the international context and see where we fit within it.

Now, the government recognizes that we have an affordability crisis, and it is acting to help Canadians weather this crisis. Fortunately, we have seen the inflation rate come down recently, and this was predicted a couple of years ago. I wanted to wait and see because we want to see the reality, but many economists were telling us a year and a half to two years ago that, by this time, inflation would start to come down. In fact, it seems to be happening, but we will wait and see over the long term. In the meantime, the government is acting, and I will give members an example of one of the inflation relief measures that our government instituted to help Canadians weather the inflationary storm.

Business of Supply

Budget 2023 introduced a new, one-time, targeted grocery rebate to provide inflation relief for 11 million Canadians and families who needed it most, which is over a quarter of the Canadian population. That is not peanuts. The grocery rebate provided \$2.5 billion in targeted support, with eligible couples with two children receiving up to an extra \$467 and single Canadians without children receiving up to an extra \$234, which included single seniors. Now, the Conservatives may say that is not enough and does not really count, but they can tell that to somebody who is dealing with the high cost of food as a result of international developments, such as the war in Ukraine. I do not think it is something to sneeze at.

The government, of course, is doing other things. For example, it is addressing junk fees. Junk fees are taking a real bite out of Canadians' incomes, and they are having a disproportionate impact on lower-income Canadians. Through budget 2023, we announced our government's intention to work with regulatory agencies, provinces and territories to reduce junk fees for Canadians and continue to ensure that businesses are transparent with prices to help make life more affordable for Canadians.

At this point, I want to digress a little bit because we have noticed that the price of automobiles has been rising. It is not because of the price on carbon that the new car a person is leasing or buying has gone up a tremendous amount of money. I will explain why this has happened, and it is related to the pandemic. That is not a novel idea. On the other side of the House they seem to have forgotten the pandemic and the impacts of it, but there is a lot going on in the economy still today that is related to the pandemic. What happened in the pandemic with the sales of automobiles is that supply chains were interrupted for car dealers.

I was just getting going, but I am out of time, so I will stop there. Maybe some other day I will talk about why the price of cars has gone up, but it has nothing to do with the price on carbon.

• (1645)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, first of all, the member opposite talked about academic studies. I would challenge that member to actually table academic studies showing that there is no correlation. In fact, Sylvain Charlebois of *The Food Professor Podcast* has actually specifically said there has not been that. He says, "It is imperative that we conduct a rigorous evaluation of how carbon pricing affects food affordability for Canadians and the long-term competitiveness of our industries." So much for the member saying that he is on the side of academics and that the science is done and settled.

I would like him to actually name the researchers. While we are on the subject of junk fees, I have raised in the House how shippers are utilizing the carbon tax. There is a food processor in my riding who receives bills that shows carbon levies in addition, which are added on. I have raised it with this chamber. Does the member believe the government has a duty to try to keep these prices down by tackling junk fees such as the carbon tax? He should just get rid of the whole thing all together.

• (1650)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, the Bank of Canada has said that the price on carbon is not contributing in any significant way to food inflation. Now, I do not know, maybe the

hon. member does not accept studies and analyses by the Bank of Canada as legitimate academic studies. I know his leader does not think much of the Bank of Canada and puts the blame of everything on the shoulders of the Bank of Canada.

There is a price on carbon. It is being added to the cost of things. The point is that it is not responsible for the biggest chunk of the rise in food prices.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech. I would have liked to question the Conservative members about this in particular. We are in the midst of the 12 days of action to end violence against women. In the coming days, we will hear all sorts of fancy speeches by every political party on the importance of fighting violence against women.

All this while a certain political party is bullying female politicians. That is what some women senators have shown us. It is important to be consistent. Whenever we talk about violence against women, we should begin by looking at ourselves. We need to set an example by behaving much more respectfully.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, I find it unfortunate that some people appear to want to use tactics to draw partisan attention. These tactics can have consequences. That is what happened when two women senators were targeted. Unfortunately, some people react badly when they see things like that on social media. Fortunately, in this case, there were no serious consequences, but it could have encouraged angry people to do things that could hurt someone. We need to be careful. These types of tactics do not work in the long run.

[*English*]

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, part of the discussion today is around governance and partisanship and how the Senate has largely become a non-partisan body. We still have Conservative caucus members in the Senate. Could the hon. member talk about how, when one puts partisanship aside and focuses on the needs of Canadians, one can actually get more done?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, this is another thing we have been hearing ad nauseam, which is the idea that there are Liberal senators in the Senate. I have been here for quite a while, and I remember, and the hon. member from Winnipeg remembers as well, when we decoupled from the Senate. Now the senators are appointed there by the Prime Minister because they are independent spirits. They are independent thinkers who are highly qualified and, quite frankly, have minds of their own.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon, Automotive Industry; the hon. member for Kenora, Carbon Pricing; the hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge, Carbon Pricing.

• (1655)

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to begin by saying that I will be sharing my time with my colleague the hon. member for Oxford.

I am rising today on behalf of my constituents in Beauce, whom I have had the privilege of representing for over four years. Today's subject is fairly simple, as my colleagues before me so clearly explained. The Senate needs to pass Bill C-234 as quickly as possible.

I find it unfortunate that the Prime Minister and his cabinet are delaying the passage of this important bill in the Senate. This bill is supported by all parties in the House, except for one, the Liberal Party of Canada.

It is very simple. Food prices have never been so high in our country, and the government needs to find a way to lower them. The simplest way to do that is to start on the farm.

This legislative measure has the support of all the agricultural industry stakeholders across the country with whom I spoke. These farmers need a break from the crippling carbon tax that is decimating their businesses and making food prices skyrocket.

I also spoke to a number of producers in my region, and their support for the bill is unanimous. Above all, it needs to be adopted as soon as possible. Winter is at our door, and they are very worried about how they are going to be able to heat their poultry and hog barns.

As Conservative critic for agriculture, and a member of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, I personally attended every meeting about this bill, and I heard the various testimonies attesting to its importance.

I also went out to speak with citizens in my region who are not even farmers and who want the bill to be adopted as soon as possible.

Last Friday, I worked with volunteers at Moisson Beauce, a food bank in my region. We prepared Christmas baskets for families that do not have enough food for the holidays. Moisson Beauce reports record demand at the food bank and, right now, it is not receiving enough donations to meet that demand.

This is not the Canada I remember. We are at a point where it is cheaper to import food than to produce our own food locally.

Something I hear far too often from the Liberals, Bloc Québécois and New Democrats is that the carbon tax does not apply to Quebec. That is absolutely false. I repeat that the carbon tax applies to Quebec, both directly and indirectly. I can show my colleagues piles of farmers' bills indicating the amount of propane used to heat their buildings, for example, that include the federal price on pollution.

The carbon tax is also paid indirectly when we import goods from other provinces. As far as I know, Quebec is not self-sufficient. We import many products from provinces that pay the full carbon tax, and that tax is passed on to us, either in higher prices or high transportation costs.

When the government taxes the farmers that produce food, the truckers that transport it and, especially, the grocers that sell it, food becomes unaffordable.

The Liberal government has lost control. It has exempted a minority of Canadians from the carbon tax on heating oil, which helps the Liberals in a part of the country where their poll numbers are dropping. However, they do not exempt farmers from the carbon tax, which would help all Canadians feed their families.

• (1700)

Who can forget what the Minister of Rural Economic Development said? She said that, if Canadians want a break, they should elect more Liberal members. It is outrageous.

Another comment that makes me laugh is when the government says that senators are "independent". Most senators who voted against this legislation were appointed by the current Prime Minister. That is shameful.

Canadian farmers protect our land. They are concerned about their animals and the environment. They work very hard to feed Canadian families and grow our economy. The Liberals' lack of support for this bill is dumbfounding.

I have to say something about the rural members of the Liberal caucus. I cannot believe that only three Liberals voted in favour of the bill. I suppose that only three of them want to get re-elected next time around. Just look at the polls. If the rural members think that farmers will ever vote for them again, they are sadly mistaken.

The Conservatives will always defend farmers and, more importantly, common sense. Canadians are suffering. Many of them are on the brink of insolvency. How can the government turn its back on them when all they want is to be able to afford to feed their families?

That is what this bill will do. It will reduce the price of food for Canadian families. It will also help farmers be more competitive and be the economic driver they have always been for our country.

If the government does nothing, our farming families, villages and small communities will continue to disappear. Our country will become even more dependent on food imports.

Business of Supply

If the government has not yet noticed, everything it is doing right now is endangering the environment. Here is a very simple example: In grocery stores, vegetables grown in Mexico are now less expensive than vegetables grown here at home in Canada. It feels like the Liberal ministers are living under a rock somewhere. Can they not see how much we could reduce pollution if we supported our Canadian farmers instead of importing airplanes, ships and trucks full of food that could be grown locally at home?

Farmers can no longer bear the brunt of the government's poor economic management. Its lack of budgetary discipline has led Canada to this point. It is simply not worth the cost. The Prime Minister should step back and allow the Senate to pass Bill C-234 as soon as possible.

Before I conclude, I would like to take a moment to thank my colleagues from Huron-Bruce and Foothills for their hard work in getting this bill to the Senate.

It is time this bill was passed so that farmers can do what they do best, and that is feed our Canadian families. Canadians can count on the Conservatives to keep on fighting for farmers, for more affordable prices and, above all, for common sense.

In closing, I hope that all my colleagues will support the Conservative motion today. We really want to pass Bill C-234 as quickly as possible, as a first step in the right direction to help our farmers produce high-quality products, which they do, but also at a more affordable price.

• (1705)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there are two components to what is being proposed today. The first is in regard to the fixation that the Conservatives have with the price on pollution, which ultimately led them to vote against the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. The second part is also very disturbing. It is a form of intimidation that we have seen that comes from the former leader of the Conservative Party, reinforced by the current leader of the Conservative Party, intimidation that saw a senator being uncomfortable returning to her home, messaging her staff not to answer the phones and so forth. It is in fact an intimidation factor.

Many look at the general direction in which the leader of the Conservative Party is going, in terms of his actions. Does the member support the type of actions being taken by the former leader of the Conservative Party and the current leader of the Conservative Party with respect to intimidation and bullying? It seems to be a pattern of behaviour.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Madam Speaker, I would like to remind my hon. colleague opposite that we really are talking about the possibility of passing Bill C-234 as quickly as possible. People have been talking about pressure that was put on certain senators, even if they are supposedly independent. My understanding is that some cabinet members, and maybe even the Prime Minister himself, exerted considerable pressure. It is important to be clear about the context.

I would like us to talk frankly about the passage of Bill C-234 and why it is being blocked in the Senate. Perhaps the first stone should not be thrown at the Conservative Party.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is true that the holdups in the Senate are frustrating. That is why I think the simplest solution would be to abolish it. We know the Conservatives promised Senate reform when they had a majority government, but that did not happen.

Anyway, our colleague says that his party stands up for farmers. I remember the obstructionism our bill to protect supply management faced. I know the member for Beauce always voted with us on that in both this and the previous Parliament, and I thank him for that. I imagine he was pretty embarrassed by his colleagues when they were being obstructionist, and I am guessing things got pretty lively in the Quebec members' caucus.

Now, can he share his thoughts on the Conservative senators' behaviour in connection with this bill, which was democratically passed in the House of Commons?

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Madam Speaker, today's motion is on Bill C-234. I agree with my colleague on Bill C-282 and I hope that it will get through every stage of the legislative process in the House. Bill C-234 is much further along in the entire process in the Senate. I hope that we will be able to adopt Bill C-234 as soon as possible. Bill C-282 will take its course and we will see what happens.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, we have certainly indicated that the NDP would support this motion, which recognizes that farmers in Canada need support these days, and indirectly recognizes that Canadians also need help.

Can my colleague speak to how this motion might help farmers in western Canada?

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Madam Speaker, adopting this motion would encourage the government a bit more to stop pressuring the Senate to delay passage of Bill C-234. The best thing to do is to vote in favour of this motion tomorrow.

• (1710)

[*English*]

Mr. Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to speak today to such an important motion. I represent the great riding of Oxford, a farming community with a long, proud farming legacy. It is home to nearly 1,900 farms that feed our families from coast to coast to coast. Our farmers are doing extremely hard work. They are doing God's work. Generations are helping out on the farms, making sure our food goes from the farm to our dinner table.

However, the Prime Minister's carbon tax coalition with the NDP is making that task nearly impossible. To feed families, we need energy. Farmers need to dry their grain, run their operations and heat and cool their barns for their livestock, but the carbon tax makes everything more expensive for farmers to produce the food that we eat.

The Prime Minister's appointed senators are delaying the passage of Bill C-234. This costly, unnecessary delay is hurting our farmers this harvest season. Corn moisture in Oxford was up to 30% this year. A lot of farmers are still harvesting, which means the corn has to be dried. Farmers are firing up their dryers to bring down moisture levels, and that is driving up the input costs. Winter is also on its way. There was snow today in southwestern Ontario, and farmers across Canada are turning on the heat in their barns for their livestock. They are again being punished by the carbon tax that is driving up their input costs.

The numbers do not lie. The Parliamentary Budget Officer was very clear that Bill C-234 would save farmers \$1 billion by 2030. That is not small change. Throughout today's debate, I heard stories from my colleagues that I have heard in my riding, stories of farmers getting bills in the hundreds of thousands of dollars thanks to the carbon tax. Before I stood to speak today, I spoke with a farmer in my riding, who is still out harvesting, by the way, and who said that the carbon tax is more than just a kick to the shin; it is a drop kick to the face.

Let me share the story of another farmer in my riding, just south of Highway 401 in Salford He is an asparagus farmer, a great farmer whom I visit regularly at the local farmers' market on Saturday mornings. Thanks to the carbon tax, he has seen the cost of his asparagus become triple that of what Mexicans sell in grocery stores. Let me get this straight: It is now cheaper to buy Mexican asparagus shipped 3,800 kilometres than it is to buy locally grown asparagus here in Canada, driven to a local market a few kilometres away. How do we expect our farmers to compete? How do we expect them to survive? Because of the carbon tax, we continue to see more food produced by foreign farmers in countries with horrendous environmental standards. The message the government wants to send is to go ahead and buy foreign-grown food from a country with lower environmental standards and that burns fossil fuels to ship it across a continent. That is complete nonsense.

We also have to look at the compounding effect of the carbon tax, which affects the supply chain and the cost of our groceries. When we tax the farmer who grows the food, the trucker who ships the food, the processor who manufactures the food and the retailer who sells the food, guess who pays for that? It is the Canadians who buy the food. That is why one in five Canadians is now skipping meals. There are a record number of Canadians at food banks, two million in a single month. Just yesterday, Feed Ontario released its report, stating that over 800,000 people in Ontario accessed a food bank in Ontario just last year. These are not just numbers and statistics; these are our friends, neighbours and family members. They are veterans, seniors, students, working-class Canadians and now, more commonly, professionals who never had to do so in the past but are now being forced by the government's reckless policies to go to a food bank. This past week—

Points of Order

• (1715)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 5:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forth with every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

[*Translation*]

The question is on the 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.

The hon. member for Foothills.

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, we would like a recorded vote.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, November 29, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

* * *

[*English*]

POINTS OF ORDER

WAYS AND MEANS MOTION NO. 19

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am rising on a point of order challenging the admissibility of Ways and Means Motion No. 19 concerning the fall economic statement implementation bill, which was tabled earlier today by the Deputy Prime Minister. It is my submission that the motion offends the rule against anticipation, sometimes also known as the "same question rule". That rule is described on page 568 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, which reads as follows:

The rule is dependent on the principle which forbids the same question from being decided twice within the same session. It does not apply, however, to similar or identical motions or bills which appear on the Notice Paper prior to debate. The rule of anticipation becomes operative only when one of two similar motions on the Order Paper is actually proceeded with. For example, two bills similar in substance will be allowed to stand on the Order Paper but only one may be moved and disposed of. If a decision is taken on the first bill (for example, to defeat the bill or advance it through a stage in the legislative process), then the other may not be proceeded with...If the first bill is withdrawn (by unanimous consent, often after debate has started), then the second may be proceeded with.

Points of Order

The rule against anticipation has been building a significant number of precedents in the past few years in light of the NDP-Liberal government's growing pattern of stealing common-sense Conservative private members' bills to add to their own legislative agenda. While our authorities suggest that such points of order should be raised only when the second question is actually proposed from the Chair, I recognize that in light of Ways and Means Motion No. 19 being an omnibus proposal, exceeding 500 pages in length, you, Madam Speaker, might appreciate having the evening to reflect on the issues I am about to discuss before the government intends to call it for consideration tomorrow.

In the present case, Ways and Means Motion No. 19 includes provisions that the House has already adopted in principle at second reading through two private members' bills.

On September 20, the House passed second reading Bill C-318, an act to amend the Employment Insurance Act and the Canada Labour Code, sponsored by the Conservative hon. member for Battlefords—Lloydminster. The summary printed on the inside cover of the bill reads:

This enactment amends the Employment Insurance Act to introduce a new type of special benefits: an attachment benefit of 15 weeks for adoptive parents and parents of children conceived through surrogacy. It also amends the Canada Labour Code to extend parental leave accordingly.

Last week's fall economic statement on pages 43 and 42 states that:

The 2023 Fall Economic Statement proposes to introduce a new 15-week shareable EI adoption...Surrogate parents will also be eligible for this benefit.

The 2023 Fall Economic Statement also proposes to make amendments to the Employment Insurance Act, as well as corresponding changes to the Canada Labour Code, to ensure that workers in federally regulated industries have the job protection they need while receiving the EI adoption benefit.

Those provisions appear as clauses 342 to 365 of Ways and Means Motion No. 19. While the legislative language used varies, the ultimate policy objective and therefore the principle of the matter remains the same as a close examination of the two passages I quoted reveals.

The second private member's bill stolen by the government this week is Bill C-323, an act to amend the Excise Tax Act, mental health services, sponsored by the Conservative member for Cumberland—Colchester, which the House passed at second reading on September 27. My colleague's bill would amend sections 1 and 7 of part II of schedule V of the Excise Tax Act to exempt psychotherapy and mental health counselling from GST. Clause 137 of Ways and Means Motion No. 19 would do the exact same thing, except that the government refers to "counselling therapy" instead of Bill C-323's "mental health counselling". That is, I would submit, a distinction without a difference.

Indeed, I would draw the Chair's attention to clause 144 of Ways and Means Motion No. 19 that makes coordinating provisions if each is enacted, which demonstrates the government also sees these as identical measures, but what is especially galling is subclause 144(5), "For greater certainty, if this Act receives royal assent then the other Act [Bill C-323] is deemed never to have produced its effects." The government would prefer to toss my colleague's important bill down the memory hole. That is just shameful.

• (1720)

Your predecessor, on February 18, 2021, at page 4256 of the Debates, ruled that government Bill C-13 could not be proceeded with further following the House's adoption of Bill C-218, citing the rule against anticipation. In so ruling, the Chair said:

The House is now placed in an unusual situation where a decision was made on one of two very similar bills standing on the Order Paper.

The Chair recognizes that both bills are not identical; they are, however, substantially similar as they both amend the exact same provision of the Criminal Code for similar purposes....

Consequently, as long as Bill C-218 follows its course through the legislative process during this session, Bill C-13 may not be proceeded with.

As for the technical differences between those two bills, the Speaker offered a common-sense solution to reconcile them: "the Chair notes that other avenues would be open to the House to achieve those same ends, such as through amendments proposed to Bill C-218 during the committee's study."

I would respectfully submit that if the government has any concerns about the drafting of Bill C-318 or Bill C-323, the solution is to bring amendments to committee, not to bigfoot them by throwing them into an omnibus budget bill, but that is exactly what happened here. It is what happened last year when Bill C-250, sponsored by the hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood, was scooped up by the government and placed in Bill C-19, a budget implementation bill.

In a May 11, 2022, ruling at page 5123 of the Debates, the Deputy Speaker held:

Bill C-19 was adopted at second reading and referred to the Standing Committee on Finance yesterday. The House is now placed in a situation where a decision was made on one of the two bills that contain very similar provisions....

The Chair recognizes that these bills are not identical, as Bill C-19 is much broader in scope and contains other provisions related to the implementation of the budget.

However, in adopting Bill C-19 at second reading, the House has also agreed to the principle of that bill, and consequently, has agreed, among other things, to amend section 319 of the Criminal Code dealing with hate propaganda. As I explained a few moments ago, these are provisions substantially similar to the ones contained in Bill C-250.

Therefore, the question for the Chair is, should Bill C-250 be allowed to proceed further in the legislative process at this time? In the Chair's opinion, it should not be allowed. The House should not face a situation where the same question can be cited twice within the same session, unless the House's intention is to rescind or revoke the decision.

In the case of Bill C-250, the Deputy Speaker directed that it be held as pending business until the final fate of Bill C-19 could be determined. On September 20, 2022, your predecessor ordered Bill C-250 to be discharged and dropped from the Order Paper, given that Bill C-19 had by then received royal assent. A similar pair of rulings occurred on June 6, 2022, and May 11, 2023, in respect of Bill C-243 in light of its overlap with Senate Bill S-211.

While these rulings are all quite recent, they were not novel. Speaker Michener, on March 13, 1959, at page 238 of the Journals, reached the same conclusion for managing this sort of legislative traffic jam:

Thus I have come to the conclusion that this bill must stand, as well as the other bill in the same terms, or at least in terms for exactly the same purpose, until the bill which was first moved has been disposed of either by being withdrawn, which would open the door for one of these other bills to proceed, or by way of being approved, which would automatically dispose of these bills because the House would not vote twice on the same subject matter any more than it would debate the same subject matter twice.

Standing Order 94(1) empowers and directs the Speaker to, “make all arrangements necessary to ensure the orderly conduct of Private Members’ Business”. That standing order, I would submit, behooves you to safeguard the process of Private Members’ Business as much as possible by drawing a firm and bright line for the government to stop poaching common-sense Conservative bills and claiming them as their own.

One final consideration I want to place before the Chair is one that did not arise in the context of the pairs of bills and the precedents I have cited. We are dealing here with a ways and means motion, not a bill. Bosc and Gagnon, at page 568, explain the relevance of this distinction in the role against anticipation:

According to this rule, which applied to other proceedings as well as to motions, a motion could not anticipate a matter which was standing on the Order Paper for further discussion, whether as a bill or a motion, and which was contained in a more effective form of proceeding.

• (1725)

The associated footnote points readers to other authorities for a fuller explanation, such as the U.K.’s Erskine May. That book’s 25th edition, at paragraph 20.13, explains:

...a matter must not be anticipated if contained in a more effective form of proceeding than the proceeding by which it was sought to be anticipated, but it might be anticipated if contained in an equally or less effective form. A bill or other order of the day is more effective than a motion....

This principle was explained matter-of-factly by Speaker Casgrain on February 24, 1936, at page 68 of the Journals: “A Bill has the right-of-way and cannot be sidetracked by a Motion.”

In the circumstances, if the precedents and procedural authorities of this House are to be applied consistently, Ways and Means Motion No. 19 must be put into abeyance pending the outcome of Bill C-318 and Bill C-323. I would urge you, Madam Speaker, to so rule.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I appreciate the hon. member’s bringing forth that information. We will certainly use that information as we continue to deliberate on the decision the Speaker will be bringing before the House.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Given the lengthy intervention

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by the Conservative House leader, if you would give us the opportunity to reflect on it and provide some contributing comments, it would be greatly appreciated.

I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 5:30 p.m. so we can start Private Members’ Business.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I go to that, on a point of order, I recognize the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, the NDP would like to reserve the right to intervene as well. We will be looking very carefully at the blues.

I would repeat my colleague’s request that we see the clock at 5:30 p.m.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is duly noted on both sides.

Do members see the clock at 5:30 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L’Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC) moved that Bill C-351, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (maximum security offenders), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Madam Speaker, I am very happy to rise in the House to speak to the private member’s bill I introduced on September 18.

Bill C-351 amends the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to require that inmates who have been found to be dangerous offenders or convicted of more than one first degree murder be assigned a security classification of maximum and confined in a maximum security penitentiary or area in a penitentiary.

I would like to begin by thanking my colleague from Niagara Falls, who introduced a similar bill last June. He is a strong advocate for victims’ rights who worked long and hard to deliver the first version of this bill.

This bill differs from the previous one in one respect. It states that the act will come into force in the third month after the month in which it receives royal assent. This change was made to ensure that the bill is brought into force as soon as possible once passed.

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No victim's family should ever again have to endure the trauma of seeing the murderer of a child, a parent, a brother or a sister. However, that is what happened to two families this year, which is what gave rise to this bill.

Everyone has heard of Paul Bernardo, the infamous rapist and serial killer. I will spare my colleagues the details of his absolutely horrific crimes, but he kidnapped, tortured and killed 15-year-old Kristen French and 14-year-old Leslie Mahaffy in the early 1990s near St. Catharines, Ontario. He also committed roughly 40 rapes and sexual assaults. He is a real monster.

On September 1, 1995, he was sentenced to life in prison and declared a dangerous offender. In our justice system, this means that he must serve a minimum of 25 years before he can apply for parole. He has applied twice since 2018. Fortunately, both applications were rejected by the Parole Board of Canada.

Donna French, Kristen's mother, addressed her daughter's killer. She quite rightly described their pain as a life sentence. She said that that is what they got and that a dark cloud always haunts them. She said a psychopath like him should never get out of prison.

This dangerous murderer deserves every day he spends behind bars, and that is where he needs to stay forever. Bernardo had been serving his sentence in a maximum security prison in Kingston since 1995, and that is where he should have stayed until the end of his days.

However, in June 2023, we were shocked to learn that Bernardo had been transferred from the maximum security prison in Kingston to La Macaza, a medium-security prison near Labelle in the Laurentians in Quebec. The day his transfer was announced, a huge shock wave rippled across the entire country, as people relived the horrific events that occurred 30 years before. The prison transfer was done on the sly. We found out about it through an announcement made by the lawyer of the victims' families. What is more, the families were informed of the transfer only the day of. Imagine the trauma that this caused for the families who had to relive this unspeakable tragedy.

According to the Correctional Service of Canada, that situation was in line with protocol. Okay, but the transfer in and of itself should never have happened. The families of the two victims were right to condemn this situation. The families' lawyer said that the victims' families had asked that Bernardo's transfer be cancelled. The lawyer also expressed concerns about how the federal correctional service had informed the victims' families of the controversial decision. However, months later, the transfer has not been cancelled. Worse still, the public safety minister at the time, the member for Eglinton—Lawrence, feigned surprise and indignation. He claimed to have been informed only the next day. Later, it was revealed that he had been informed months earlier. Email exchanges were obtained by the Canadian Press under the Access to Information Act.

• (1730)

They showed that the Correctional Service of Canada had notified the minister's office on March 2, 2023, of the possibility of the serial killer being transferred. Cabinet was informed in May, after a transfer date had been set. We are used to cover-ups with this gov-

ernment, but trying to hide the truth about something so troubling is beyond the pale.

It was discovered that the associate deputy minister of public safety had been notified about the transfer by the commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada three days before it happened. The commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada told them that the federal Public Safety Department, the minister's office, the Privy Council Office and the Prime Minister's Office "have been advised" and that "we have media lines ready".

In a tweet posted the day after the transfer, however, the minister described CSC's decision as "shocking and incomprehensible". After being confronted with these facts, which were embarrassing to say the least, the minister blamed his staff for keeping him in the dark. It is pure incompetence at every level. For all his tangled explanations, the problem remained. Bernardo was moved to a medium-security prison, enjoying privileges that such a sadistic murderer should never be entitled to.

We on the Conservative side questioned the minister and asked him to cancel the transfer, as requested by the victims' families. The minister simply replied that there was nothing he could do, that the Correctional Service of Canada is independent. That is another independent entity. He seemed to forget that, as a minister, he had powers. He had the power to issue instructions to Canadian prison officials and make regulations concerning the incarceration of prisoners.

As usual, he and the Prime Minister refused to accept any responsibility. This is yet another example of incompetence. It is not surprising that the MP for Eglinton—Lawrence is no longer a minister. That is a very good thing. Not only do the Prime Minister and his cabinet say there was nothing they could do, but they have taken steps to make it easier to transfer dangerous criminals.

In 2019, this government passed Bill C-83, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and another act. Once it was passed, the bill ensured that prisons would be chosen based on the least restrictive environment possible for the inmate. Victims are not part of the equation. Bill C-83 reversed a policy introduced by the previous Conservative government that imposed stricter standards for dangerous offenders. The Correctional Service of Canada used this policy to try to justify transfers.

The lax system introduced by the Liberals allows nonsensical transfers like this. I read a chilling statistic. In Canada, as we speak, 58 inmates who have been declared dangerous offenders are currently in minimum-security, not even medium-security, prisons. It beggars belief. That is the legacy of eight years of this Liberal government: a lax justice and correctional system that allows this kind of aberration. The government is doing everything it can to accommodate criminals, but nothing for victims. It should be the other way around. This situation is deplorable, and it has to change.

We, the Conservatives, stepped up our efforts to try to have the decision reversed. I have to commend my colleague from Niagara Falls for all of the work that he did on this file. The murders and many assaults were committed in cities near his community. On June 14, he sought the unanimous consent of the House to move the following motion:

...that the House call for the immediate return of vile serial killer and rapist Paul Bernardo to a maximum security prison, that all court-ordered dangerous offenders and mass murderers be permanently assigned a maximum security classification, that the least-restrictive-environment standard be repealed and that the language of necessary restrictions that the previous Conservative government put in place be restored.

● (1735)

Unfortunately, the motion was rejected.

My colleague supported the cities of Thorold and St. Catharines when they wrote to the government expressing their grave concerns about Bernardo's transfer and demanding that he be sent back to a maximum-security prison. These letters were sent to the Prime Minister, his public safety minister at the time, and local Liberal MPs, but they fell on deaf ears. The government continued to refuse to use its power to require that mass murderers serve their entire sentence in maximum-security prisons.

He refused to take measures to resolve the problem created by his government. Worse yet, the member for St. Catharines accused those who were offering solutions and those who were trying to convey the families' concerns and suffering of playing politics. As usual, the Liberal government divides and blames instead of taking responsibility and making changes to fix the problems it created.

Another initiative that my colleague took was to propose a study at the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security on October 5 to fully investigate Bernardo's transfer. The Bloc Québécois and the NDP supported the government and shut down the whole thing. Apparently, the trauma caused by the transfer did not matter all that much to them. How typical of this government to systematically side with criminals.

Before I conclude, I have two recent examples that show how lax this government is and how it is ignoring victims. These are two examples of cases where the Conservative Party intervened to cancel out this government's reckless decisions. In March, my colleague, the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles and political lieutenant for Quebec, introduced Bill C-325, which sought to significantly reform the Criminal Code and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, in order to make our streets safe again.

This bill would repeal certain elements of Bill C-5, which was passed by the Liberals last fall, and would put an end to the alarming number of convicted violent criminals and sex offenders serving their sentences at home. It is unthinkable that sex offenders and other violent criminals would be released to serve their sentences in the comfort of their living rooms, while their victims and peace-loving neighbours live in fear. This is a common-sense solution from my colleague, whom I would like to commend for his hard work on behalf of victims.

Despite all our efforts, this government remained unmoved by the suffering and trauma that the families of victims went through a

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second time as a result of this unacceptable transfer. On this side of the House, we stand with victims, not criminals. That is why I introduced the bill we are debating today. The Liberals made a mistake, but we, the Conservatives, will correct course. We will put common sense back into our justice and correctional system.

I hope that my colleagues in the other parties will listen to reason and support victims by voting with us in favour of this bill.

● (1740)

[*English*]

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member mentioned that it would have been possible for the minister to simply order an inmate to any given correctional facility. However, yesterday at committee, we heard from the commissioner of Correctional Service Canada that it would absolutely not be legally possible in this country based on the laws. Is the member opposite suggesting that the commissioner lied, or is the member unaware that it is not legal for a minister to direct where an inmate is held in this country?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, the reality of a government in power is to make decisions, provide leadership and do everything in its power to fix any mistakes made.

In this case, a mistake was clearly made. This transfer should never have taken place. I think that the Minister of Public Safety had every right to reverse the decision made by the Correctional Service of Canada.

● (1745)

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, in his speech, my colleague mentioned bringing back common sense. I want to tell him what I think common sense is.

In this country, it would appear that there are fundamental rights. He must not forget that. Even criminals have fundamental rights. However, that no longer seems to be the case when the Conservative Party talks about common sense.

My colleague's bill puts two labels on criminals, meaning they no longer have access to rehabilitation. Punishing them for two crimes violates their fundamental rights. My colleague needs to be reminded of that.

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I was at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security yesterday. I questioned the commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada. I asked for her opinion on the bill my colleague tabled. I asked her whether this bill would strengthen the rights of victims of crime. I would like to repeat what she said. She mentioned that the bill would have an impact on institutions, and that there would no longer be any reason for inmates to maintain good behaviour towards officers. Rehabilitation is not an option.

I would like my colleague to comment on the reactions of the commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, if I understand my colleague's question correctly, he is telling us that the reason why the commissioner allowed Mr. Bernardo's transfer is that he demonstrated good behaviour over the past 30 years. If that is the case, then I do not see how staying in a maximum security prison would change his behaviour for the rest of his life.

The reality is that the Bloc Québécois is siding with criminals instead of victims. I think that we need to put ourselves in the shoes of the families who experienced that trauma. The reality is that neither my colleague nor I experienced that trauma, so we likely cannot understand how these families feel. Let us put ourselves in those people's shoes for five minutes and think about what they went through. My colleague from Niagara Falls can tell us about it, because he supported those families.

I can guarantee one thing. I would not want to have to go through all of that, and I would especially not want to have to relive the whole thing 25 or 30 years later.

[*English*]

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my friend and colleague for the work he has done on this bill and its introduction. The transfer, in particular of Paul Bernardo, that he spoke about in his speech was indeed a slap in the face to the victims' families.

The Liberals are always soft on crime and also on criminals. Why is it Conservatives are the only ones who have the victims and the victims' families in mind while ensuring victims' rights?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, I just want to quote something that my colleague Senator Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu said. Since he became a senator, he has been defending the rights of victims, particularly the rights of women. Right now, we know that women in Canada are being murdered on a regular basis. Crimes are being committed against individuals, especially women. We cannot allow that to happen.

For eight years, the crime rate in Canada has been rising based on the new standards—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry, but the member has gone well beyond the allotted time.

[*English*]

Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am happy to rise to speak to this bill, because it is crucially important that, in this country, we have a conversation about public safety and how inmates are treated, in the sense of maximum, medium and minimum security. I think it is something that most Canadians have not thought too much about, thankfully, in the sense that they have not had to experience the impacts of crime. What I find very challenging with this bill is the fact that Conservatives continually talk tough when it comes to public safety, but this is yet another example of how their tough talk actually relates to a more and more dangerous situation for Canadians.

The sponsor of this bill just ended by talking about women and women's rights, yet nothing in this legislation talks about them. I come from Pickering, right next to Scarborough. Memories of Paul Bernardo and his heinous crimes are something that women across this country are traumatized by. I will be very curious to see how many women on the other side speak to this legislation in the first place. When it comes to women's issues, one thing I remember from the crimes committed by Paul Bernardo was the complete lack of policing support for women who spoke out, who were victims of rape and assault. There is not a single mention of policing or of how to better serve women who have been victims of crime in this private member's bill.

I asked a question earlier in the House, as the members opposite were talking about their opposition day motion, about sending a note to the Senate to hurry up with legislation. However, not a single Conservative member spoke up in the House when there was legislation by their former leader, Rona Ambrose, on having training for judges for sexual assault cases. That legislation sat in the Senate, and not a single Conservative member wrote or spoke to the Conservative senators to have that bill passed. They came here today to say they speak on behalf of women and women's rights, but their actions say a completely different thing. Therefore, I want to talk about this private member's bill and why it actually makes women more vulnerable.

This bill is not just about one individual and their transfer. It actually impacts 921 current inmates, with 32% of those inmates being indigenous. The issues around the overrepresentation of Black and indigenous persons in incarceration would only be worsened by this legislation. I am going to get to that later in my speech; however, for those watching, it is important to remember that this bill impacts many more offenders than the one that the Conservatives want to speak about because the crimes he committed were so heinous, the country was traumatized.

The Conservatives want to use the most heinous criminal in our country as a way to implement reckless policies in the criminal justice system that actually will not keep communities safe. In fact, I submit to the House and Canadians watching that it will actually leave our communities less safe. Why is this? It is because of what the Conservatives fail to talk about, which is that there are different types of sentencing for the 921 inmates who would fall into the categorization that this bill speaks about. Among them, there are inmates who have a determinate sentence. That means the courts have heard their case, and the inmates have been sentenced to a certain amount of time to be incarcerated. Eventually, once they serve that time, they are back in the community.

● (1750)

This is certainly not the situation with Paul Bernardo, and I do not want anyone to misconstrue that. The Conservatives would love to use that to put fear in the hearts and minds of Canadians and Canadian women for their own policy agenda.

I want to stick to the facts. Individuals who serve their determinate sentence would one day, depending on the length of their sentence, be back in the community. However, based on this legislation, they would serve their sentence completely in maximum security, would have no programming for rehabilitation, would have no responsibilities, would have no assessments of whether or not they might reoffend and would have no programs in place to ensure that, once back in the community, there are conditions placed on them.

When the Conservatives talk tough on crime, they are weak on action. What this does for those who serve a determinate sentence is it releases them back into the community without any programs that would reduce their reoffending. It would, in fact, make their situation one where we could probably guarantee they would reoffend. This is why countries around the world have determined that in criminal justice systems and corrections, rehabilitation programming is crucial to ensure public safety when inmates are released into the community. Then they have had significant programming and treatment to ensure they do not harm others again.

It is so irresponsible to bring up a heinous offender who, as the commissioner of the Correctional Service Canada said yesterday, has the highest, strictest sentence essentially in Canadian law, meaning Paul Bernardo will spend the rest of his life in prison. This bill does not speak to just that one individual. Imagine living in a community with a potentially violent offender who served their time but is just released into the public once the sentence is over. Time and time again, as we know, that does not keep our communities safe.

I could go on and on about how reckless Conservatives are, but with the remaining time I have, I want to read a quote related to the Conservative government about Mr. Sapers, who was the former corrections investigator during the Harper years. The Globe and Mail notes:

...the Conservatives [were] “tone deaf” on indigenous issues and “dismissive” of many of his recommendations....

The Conservatives passed dozens of bills, which imposed mandatory minimum sentences, changed parole eligibility, created new barriers to pardons and cut rehabilitative programming, among other measures.

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He said the Conservatives did so without ever analyzing the impact. It goes to show the Conservatives have not learned anything.

The Conservatives also like to say the transfer of Paul Bernardo is in some way connected to Bill C-83 and the “least restrictive” clause. However, what Conservatives ought to know is that the “least restrictive” term was introduced by Conservatives in the 1990s by Brian Mulroney. As to the former Conservative language, Public Safety has issued quite publicly that the language around “necessary restrictions” would have also led to a transfer, which was decided by the independent Correctional Services. It said yesterday that the security and safety of the public can be maintained with this decision.

I know my time is over. I think what is most important is that the bill does nothing to keep Canadians safe. In fact, it would put more people at risk, because the Conservatives are reckless, just want to talk tough and do not do the work to make our communities safer.

● (1755)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Madam Speaker, I was listening to my colleague who is introducing this bill and he said that he sides with the victims. That is good. I can assure him that the Bloc Québécois does as well. It always has and always will side with victims. The Bloc also sides with society. We must never lose sight of the fact that our justice system is not just about avenging a victim or punishing a criminal. The purpose of our justice system is to build a safer society where life is good and everyone feels comfortable.

Respecting victims' rights is important. I truly believe that. However, we must also respect the rights of people who have committed crimes. What I just said may seem contradictory, but it is not. We often lose sight of the fact that most people who are sent to prison today will get out at some point. What type of individual do we want to see leave our prisons in five, 10, 20 or 30 years? Do we want these people who committed crimes at the time of their conviction to be comfortable in their role as criminal and to consider resuming the same type of life and behaviour upon their release? Would we not rather want these people to be rehabilitated over the years? That is what I would want.

We have all lost people or been harmed in some way. We have been victims of various crimes in different ways. We must never lose sight of the importance of rehabilitation. We must never lose faith in human beings and in society, even though there may be times when we want to do just that. The Bloc Québécois sincerely believes that we must stay the course on rehabilitation.

Private Members' Business

Obviously, the Bernardo affair is haunting this debate. My colleague spoke about this earlier. Had it not been for the events of last spring when Mr. Bernardo was transferred from a maximum-security facility to a medium-security facility, we probably would not be talking about it today. This bill might not have been introduced. Members will recall that Paul Bernardo committed crimes in the early 1990s that we will never be able to understand as a society. Can he ever be rehabilitated? I do not know. One thing is certain. The crimes he committed will never be considered acceptable in our society.

In September 1995, he was sentenced to life in prison for his crimes. That amounts to a minimum of 25 years of incarceration before he can apply for parole. It has been about 30 years since he was sentenced. He can apply for parole, but is he likely to get it? It is not up to me to decide, but I have not seen anything in all that I have read or heard about him that would lead me to believe he has been rehabilitated and is ready to reintegrate into society.

As I was saying earlier, last May, he was transferred from a maximum-security to a medium-security penitentiary. I have not seen or heard anything to convince me that Paul Bernardo has been rehabilitated. That being said, is it possible that he has been rehabilitated? Who am I to decide? Thank heavens the decision is not mine to make. We have established authorities, specialized courts and a process to assess these things, and I have faith in the people who handle it all.

The Parole Board of Canada does important work. It decides whether a prisoner can or cannot reintegrate into society, and it grants escorted or unescorted temporary absences, depending on the stage of the sentence. The decision is up to the Parole Board of Canada.

• (1800)

It has the exclusive power to grant, deny, cancel, terminate or revoke day parole and full parole. It also has the power to authorize or approve temporary absences. It is not I, nor is it the Speaker, nor is it my Conservative colleague who makes those decisions. The Parole Board is an independent administrative tribunal, a so-called quasi-judicial tribunal that, as part of the Canadian criminal justice system, makes quality conditional release and record suspension decisions. It makes clemency recommendations and manages the whole process.

The board contributes to the protection of society by facilitating the timely reintegration of offenders as law-abiding citizens. Public safety is the primary consideration in all parole board decisions. I want to emphasize the “timely reintegration” part because, regardless of what people want or would like to see in a perfect world, here in Quebec and Canada, we no longer hang people who commit crimes like the ones Paul Bernardo committed. We do not electrocute them either. We put them in jail. We try to rehabilitate them. Sooner or later, 90% or 95% of them are released. As I said earlier, that is important, essential even. If we care about keeping our families, our children, our neighbours and society in general safe, it is important—indeed, crucial—to ensure that they are rehabilitated by the time they are released.

The purpose of Bill C-351 is to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act in order to take away the discretion that Cor-

rectional Service of Canada officers currently have to change the security classification of individuals deemed to be dangerous offenders, as well as those convicted of more than one first-degree murder. The security classification is what will be used to determine the setting in which the individual is detained. What services can be provided to try to rehabilitate them? What conditions must be met in order for the individual to be eligible for visits, either under escort or alone, or for parole? I do not think it is wise to think that they are always going to have a maximum-security classification. This individual will be detained under maximum-security conditions, but one day, they may be released without a rigorous, step-by-step rehabilitation process. That goes against my belief, my faith in the human race. I think that even if we do not want to do it, we have to do everything we can to rehabilitate these people.

In closing, I would like to mention that Anne Kelly, the commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada, appeared before the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security yesterday. She told us that Bill C-351 could make things more difficult for the people who manage our penitentiaries. If inmates know ahead of time that they will never be downgraded from a maximum-security classification to a lower one and get into a lower-security penitentiary, they may lose all motivation and interest in rehabilitation. If we want these people to rehabilitate themselves, they need to see a light at the end of the tunnel. They need to believe that by working hard and by being good citizens, they will one day be able to see their families, friends and loved ones again and reintegrate into the community, ideally to become active members of society again.

• (1805)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to say from the outset that our thoughts are with Paul Bernardo's victims and their families.

What we saw a few months ago was sad. I think that everyone here in the House is trying to ensure that someone like Paul Bernardo, who has a long record of assault and murder, who had no conscience and who committed horrific crimes, should never be able to leave prison and walk among ordinary folks.

We know full well that this will never happen, either. I think that is quite clear. The correctional service was also very clear on that. The crimes he committed are heinous.

Our thoughts are with the victims.

• (1810)

[English]

That being said, it is also important to note that the NDP brought forward a motion at the public safety committee that all members of Parliament around the committee table agreed to for the study we are currently working on. I think it is fair to say that all parties are working together to get to the bottom of the transfer of offenders like Mr. Bernardo to ensure that it never happens again. Tomorrow, we will be having other hearings. The recommendations will go to the government. I am confident that we have learned a lesson from this situation and will not encounter it again. It is extremely important for the victims, for the community and for us all.

The question is whether this bill offers some type of solution. I am very concerned by its use of a flawed process within our correctional services that is really the foundation of this particular bill. I do not know if it was because it was rushed to be produced. However, the fact is that it hangs on the designation of a dangerous offender, when we know that, in our correctional system, the definition of “dangerous offender” is deeply flawed. It needs to be fully investigated, judges need to be trained and there needs to be a shift in how we designate dangerous offenders.

A number of my colleagues, including the parliamentary secretary who spoke, have raised the broader concerns that are before the public. We have a correctional system that is, according to the correctional investigator of Canada, Dr. Ivan Zinger, “nothing short of a national travesty.”

According to an article on his report, “More than 30% of inmates in Canadian prisons are Indigenous — even though aboriginal people make up just 5% of the country’s population”. That is why Dr. Zinger described the situation in our correctional facilities as a travesty.

Moreover, the “figure is highest in the prairie provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, where Indigenous people make up 54% of the prison population.” Furthermore, “Numerous factors — including poverty rates and racism in policing — contribute to the imbalance in convictions.”

The article continues:

And once in detention, Indigenous people face another set of systemic inequities: Indigenous offenders are more likely to be sent of maximum-security facilities and are disproportionately the recipients of harm, both self-induced and in incidents involving “use of force”. They are also much more likely to be placed in solitary confinement.

What makes the findings even more troubling, said [Dr.] Zinger, is that the proportion of Indigenous prisoners has steadily increased. Since...2010, the Indigenous population in prisons has grown by nearly 44%....

Let us come to the definition of “dangerous offender”, because that is the cornerstone of the bill before us. Here we see that the travesty that was raised so eloquently by the correctional investigator is even more manifest.

A CBC News article notes:

Advocates say...Indigenous people are disproportionately harmed by dangerous offender designations and are not given adequate support.

“All they want to do is put a dangerous offender designation on and then, just put him away where you’ll never hear from [them],” said Congress of Aboriginal Peoples national vice-chief Kim Beaudin.

Private Members' Business

There were 860 offenders designated as dangerous offenders under the responsibility of Correctional Service Canada...[and] 36.3 per cent were Indigenous, according to CSC....

The number of Indigenous dangerous offender designations has increased 58 per cent....

We have a deeply flawed designation of dangerous offender such that an indigenous offender is 12 times more likely, even committing the same crimes as someone who is non-indigenous, to be designated as a dangerous offender. That is the travesty the correctional investigator was referring to. That is a fundamental problem that needs to be addressed.

As PressProgress reported just a little while ago, the prairie provinces are failing to address systemic racism in the criminal justice system. When we have a situation where 4% of the population makes up almost half, or 36.3%, of the dangerous offender designations, there is a problem with the kind of designation taking place. The concerns around systemic racism in the criminal justice system, including with sentencing and judges, are things that as a society we need to take on. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was very clear that this is a fundamental problem.

The travesty that was referred to by the correctional investigator needs to be tackled. However, instead of informing the bill by that in any way, it uses a term that has become fraught with peril given the horrible overrepresentation of indigenous people among those with a dangerous offender designation. This is a huge problem and is something I believe the mover should have thought through and consulted on.

At the public safety committee, we are working through ways to ensure the transfer that occurred a few months ago never happens again. To have a bill that would create many more problems by effectively doubling down on a system fraught with systemic racism, to the point where an indigenous offender has a 12 times greater likelihood of being designated a dangerous offender than somebody who is not indigenous, should be of concern to all of us.

My colleague, whom I respect very much, made a number of partisan comments. I want to reply by talking about the justice system in a more adult fashion.

First off, one of the ways we maintain public safety is to ensure those who are sentenced in our correctional institutions stay there. I note that the six worst years for the number of escapees in Canada from our correctional services, from maximum-security and medium-security prisons, all occurred under the Harper regime. Every single one of them did, which is three times more than what we are seeing today. When the Conservative Harper government, the Harper regime, was running our nation’s prisons, the threat to public safety was horribly greater than what we are seeing now and what we saw prior to the Harper government. The worst years on record were all from the Conservatives.

Private Members' Business

Second, I note that other countries, such as Norway, had high recidivism rates that were lowered by taking the approach Canada has taken. Norway's recidivism rate, based on the United States, was over 70% and is now down to 20%, which is the lowest in the world. Canada is at 23%. Those approaches work.

The Conservative intent of always importing Republican-style American approaches to the justice system has been a massive failure. The U.S. has the highest rate of recidivism in the world, with 76.6% of prisoners rearrested within five years. If what we are really talking about is public safety, this failed approach from the Conservatives, failed in terms of prison escapees and recidivism rates, is not something that should be replicated.

We will continue our work at the public safety committee to ensure that something like the Bernardo transfer never happens again. However, the approach we need to take is one that puts public safety at the top level. This bill would not do that.

• (1815)

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise in my place today to participate in the debate with respect to Bill C-351, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, maximum security offenders. My Conservative colleague, the member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, has done an incredible job in bringing forward this important bill, which builds on the private member's bill I introduced last June.

On June 14, I introduced Bill C-342 at first reading in the House of Commons. I felt motivated and compelled to introduce this private member's bill after learning that Canada's most notorious criminal had been transferred by Correctional Service Canada from a maximum-security institution to a medium-security prison. In my community, the name Paul Bernardo is synonymous with evil, given the heinous crimes he committed not only in the Toronto area but also in St. Catharines. His actions are so vile that I will not speak of them here. What I can say is that he and his ex-wife took the lives of three young women in Niagara, and the families and friends of those victims have been left to deal with the insurmountable loss, pain and grief he caused for over 31 years now.

Bernardo is a monster who belongs locked up in maximum security for the rest of his life. This prison transfer, which was a downgrade of Bernardo's prison security classification, is completely abhorrent, unimaginable and unacceptable. This decision, which was made last spring by CSC officials, sparked outrage from residents of Niagara, whom I help represent, and from Canadians far and wide across the country. Local municipalities in Niagara, including the cities of St. Catharines and Thorold, passed municipal resolutions to notify the federal government of their alarm and their grave concern regarding Bernardo's prison transfer to medium security. Thorold officials also demanded that Bernardo be sent back to maximum security where he belongs.

In response to this shocking news about Bernardo's downgrade, I tabled Bill C-342, which is common-sense legislation that proposes to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to require that all court-ordered dangerous offenders and mass murderers be permanently assigned a maximum-security classification. It also proposes to repeal the language of the least-restrictive environment

standard for assigning inmates to prisons and replace it with the language of "necessary restrictions", which is used in the public safety legislation passed by the previous Conservative government to support safe streets and communities.

While Bill C-351 is similar to my bill, its key difference is that it adds a coming-into-force clause, which would see it come into force three months after royal assent. This clause is necessary to make sure that prison transfers such as Bernardo's would not happen again and that this act could take force as soon as possible after it is passed in Parliament.

After eight years of the Liberal government, events like Bernardo's prison downgrade reveal just how out of balance and broken our public safety, corrections and justice systems are and just how far off track the federal government is from its public safety obligations. It is also telling that we cannot even get unanimous consent from all parties in the House to send Bernardo back to maximum security where he belongs. Last spring, I tried twice to get unanimous consent from the House to achieve this outcome, and both times my motion was rejected.

Disappointingly, members of the Liberal government decided to not support our common-sense solution. In fact, one member was quoted in our local Niagara Falls Review as saying that we need to have an adult conversation about this and not be playing politics. They asked for an honest conversation.

Well, this is the time to have that honest conversation. We are in a parliamentary debate about a bill that, if passed, would send dangerous offenders and mass murderers such as Bernardo back to maximum-security prison, just as the people in Niagara and their municipal elected representatives have requested, and just as law-abiding Canadians want to see happen. The fact that this prison downgrade took place is evidence enough that something is broken with our core institutions. They need to be fixed to not only correct the mistake of transferring a monster such as Paul Bernardo but also ensure it never happens again in relation to that vile monster and the other dangerous offenders and mass murderers now serving time in maximum-security prisons.

While Bernardo is the primary subject of this debate with respect to Bill C-351, many other dangerous offenders and mass murderers have also been transferred from maximum- to medium-security prisons.

• (1820)

Canadians remember the names of Laura Babcock and Tim Bosma. They are innocent victims who were abducted and killed by Dellen Millard and Mark Smich in July 2012 and May 2013 respectively. The national outrage about Bernardo's prison transfer helped prompt Laura's mother, Linda Babcock, to speak out on behalf of her family and the Bosma family last June. In May 2021, just five years after his conviction, Smich was transferred to Beaver Creek Institution, a medium-security prison in Gravenhurst, Ontario. It is absurd to believe that someone who commits two first-degree murders can be transferred out of maximum-security prison at all, never mind so quickly, yet here we are again.

This perplexing pattern of dangerous offenders and serial killers being downgraded in our prison system is deeply disturbing. It ultimately erodes faith, trust and confidence that law-abiding Canadians place in their public safety, corrections and justice system to protect them. There is only one political party proposing practical policy solutions to fix these issues and restore confidence in our institutions. The other parties, including the Liberals, can choose to support us or they can be silent by their complacency and ignorance of the deeply troubling problem at hand.

Just because the current policies are weak does not mean these policies cannot be strengthened like they were before. Just because this Liberal government let the Bernardo transfer happen does not mean it has to double down to keep Bernardo in medium-security prison.

This is not a Conservative versus Liberal issue. This is an issue we should all be able to agree upon as elected parliamentarians who work to achieve the common and public good for the country. This government has an obligation to law-abiding Canadians and it must start prioritizing the interests of victims of crime over criminals and protect public safety and our communities. Conservatives are calling on members of all parties to support this legislation so that it can pass as quickly as possible. We must do the right thing. It is about standing up for the victims' honour, their dignity, their memory and their loved ones. It is about doing what is right for law-abiding Canadians who want to keep their loved ones, families and communities safe. Bill C-351 gives us a chance to do what is right and to do what Canadians expect of their elected officials.

Marcia Penner was one of Kristen French's best friends growing up. Today, she is a prominent business owner in Niagara-on-the-Lake in my riding, and she is a steadfast victims advocate.

On June 8, Marcia wrote to the CSC commissioner, Anne Kelly. In her email, she wrote, "Paul Bernardo is a monster, and one that is beyond rehabilitation. He is a serial pedophile rapist, abductor, and murderer. He has been deemed a dangerous offender. The worst of the worst. If he doesn't fit the mandatory requirements for maximum security for his entire prison stay, then please tell me who does."

Marcia is right. If monsters like Paul Bernardo and Mark Smich are not eligible to stay in maximum-security prison for the rest of their living days, then which dangerous offenders and mass murderers are?

Adjournment Proceedings

Politics aside, let us support doing what is right. Bill C-351 presents us with this opportunity. I hope members from all parties can come together to support this bill, which is common-sense legislation that will help restore Canadians' trust and confidence in our public safety, corrections and justice system.

• (1825)

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

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise and address a very important issue facing people in northwestern Ontario and right across the country, and that is, of course, the cost of living and how that couples in with the carbon tax that this NDP-Liberal government is planning to quadruple.

We know that inflation continues to rise as a result of inflationary spending from this NDP-Liberal government. It has made the cost of many things, especially many essential things like gas, groceries and home heating, rise to the point where Canadian households are in crisis. However, the higher taxes being brought forward by this government are making the situation even worse. People across the north are wondering how they are going to be able to afford to put food on their table. We have seen record numbers of people visiting food banks right across the country. People in northern Ontario are wondering how they are going to be able to afford to heat their home.

Now, the government has put out a carve-out for some Canadians in certain regions of the country based on how they voted, but those in northern Ontario are continuing to have to pay a lot more for home heating. As winter is approaching and temperatures are getting cooler, many people are worried about what they are going to do in terms of paying for their home heating.

To make matters worse, the GST is slapped on top of all of it. It is adding to these costs even more. It is a tax on a tax. We see that at the gas pumps when people go to fill up. In northern Ontario, of course, we must travel great distances to get to medical appointments and for essential shopping trips. It really is not an option. People need to pay for gas and need to be paying the higher carbon tax as a result of this government's plans.

Adjournment Proceedings

The government has made life more unaffordable for us in northern Ontario, and to make matters worse, its carbon tax plan has not done the job to protect the environment. Canada now ranks 58th out of 63 countries and “remains among the very low performers” on the climate change performance index. We continue to miss target after target. We have missed virtually every target, I believe, outside of the pandemic, which completely shut down our economy. The only way that this NDP-Liberal government was able to successfully meet a climate target was to shut down the entire economy during the pandemic. We have also seen recent reports from the environment commissioner that have shown that Canada will once again miss its targets this year and that we are not on track to meet our 2030 emissions targets.

The government is making life more unaffordable and driving up the cost of living to the point where people and families are in crisis, and we are not seeing any of the benefits that the government purports should be coming as a result of this carbon tax scheme. It is simply all economic pain with no environmental gain, and Canadians want to know when this government will finally scrap its failed carbon tax.

• (1830)

[Translation]

Mr. Adam van Koevreden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on this very important issue.

[English]

I first have to, unfortunately, correct the record on a couple of things. Back in 2015, Canada was trending to exceed 2005 emission levels by 10%, but by 2030, we will have effectively bent the emissions curve. We had a lot of work to do, since the previous Conservative government under Stephen Harper completely ignored climate change and denied that the existential threat of climate change even existed.

I again have to correct the record. Our plan is working, and experts have indicated that up to one-third of current reductions are a result of carbon pricing. I would remind the member that, in the last election, in 2021, when the Conservative leader was Erin O'Toole, all Conservatives ran on a plan to price carbon. It was this sort of Zellers green catalogue where one could choose some green products, perhaps. It was also affectionately titled “The more you burn, the more you earn” by experts. It was not likely to achieve very good results, but our plan has achieved results. We have an 8% or 9% reduction already since 2005. That curve has required some time and effort to bend since 2015, but we are on track to reduce our emissions by 34% by 2035.

I agree that we need to do more to reach Canada's ambitious 40% reduction target, but not by just repeating slogans in the House of Commons. It might be fun to say “axe the tax”, because it rhymes and fits well on a T-shirt or a bumper sticker, but it is not an environmental plan. It will not do anything to reduce emissions in this country. I would urge the member and all Conservatives, if they have really good ideas for how to fight climate change and lower emissions, to bring them to the House, because that is what these

longer debates are all about. Unfortunately, we are still debating whether we should fight climate change rather than how to fight it.

As I said, we have more work to do. We have to be more ambitious. The environment commissioner said that we are moving in the right direction, perhaps just not fast enough. A 34% reduction by 2035 is not enough. We need to reduce our emissions by 40%, and our reduction target is still in sight. A price on carbon pollution is an integral part of that plan. As has been said over and over again, up to a third of our carbon pricing to date is responsible for our reductions. Let us also not forget that our plan, unlike the Conservatives' Zellers green catalogue, sends more money back to 80% of households that are under the backstop program with the federal government.

It is also always worth noting that provinces and territories under the federal backstop plan do not have a plan to fight climate change and lower emissions. British Columbia, Quebec and others have their own plans, which work well too. However, it is incumbent upon all provincial premiers to have a plan to fight climate change and reduce our emissions. Canadians in northern Ontario and across Canada understand the cost of inaction. It is extremely stark. If we ignore climate change entirely, by 2025, we could see a \$25-billion annual slowdown in our economic growth. That is why our climate plan is not just a plan for the environment but also a plan for the economic stability of Canada's future.

A climate plan today is one of the many ways to make life more affordable for Canadians. I would again encourage my Conservative colleagues to come up with some good ideas. Canadians used to look to members such as the member of Parliament for Wellington—Halton Hills for a little climate leadership; unfortunately, it seems all that climate leadership and ambition has dried up with the Conservatives.

• (1835)

Mr. Eric Melillo: Madam Speaker, there is a lot in that answer that I would like to respond to, but I do not have the time.

The member spoke of the cost of inaction, and Canadians are seeing that cost right now under the government. Canada is 58th out of 63 on the climate index for performance under the government's plan. It continues to miss climate target after climate target. All the while, the government is driving up the cost of living, making life more unaffordable for Canadians.

It is clear that the Liberals' plan has not worked, but their only answer is to say to continue following their plan. It is not working. When is the government finally going to recognize that?

Adjournment Proceedings

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Madam Speaker, Canadians are starting to recognize what the Conservative Party is all about. It was really highlighted last week when, en masse, they voted against the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement, using carbon pricing as a wedge against it, suggesting that it was because the agreement mentions carbon pricing. It is worth noting that the agreement does not insist that either country have a carbon pricing plan. It is also worth noting that Ukraine has been pricing carbon since 2011. This is nothing new for it.

Despite the fact that President Zelenskyy himself, the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and the Canada-United Kingdom Chamber of Commerce begged Canadian members of Parliament to vote for that agreement, Conservatives used carbon pricing as a wedge and decided to vote against it. Apparently, this “axe the tax” strategy that they have put forth over the last couple of months is more important than the rebuilding of Ukraine. Ukrainian Canadians see that and are extremely disappointed in the Conservative Party, as am I.

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, three weeks ago, I asked the government if there would be a free vote for its backbench for the upcoming Conservative motion on removing the carbon tax from all forms of home heating for all Canadians. I had singled out the member for Calgary Skyview.

The response I got from the parliamentary secretary was a justification rooted in concern about the cost and efficiency of oil furnaces and the tired pretense that the carbon tax carve-out was somehow not only for Atlantic Canadians. The parliamentary secretary apparently thought that Canadians would somehow believe that, since there are a few Canadians in remote areas of northern Ontario, and a few other places here and there that have oil furnaces, somehow Canadians would think that the carbon tax carve-out was not just for Atlantic Canadians, which is the only part of Canada where oil furnaces are commonly used.

There are two problems with the parliamentary secretary's spin. The first is that the Minister of Rural Economic Development confirmed on national television that it was, in fact, a political position aimed at Atlantic Canadian voters in response to an Atlantic Canadian backbench revolt. She told Canadians that, if people in the Prairies wanted a carbon tax carve-out for their heating bills, their solution would be to vote for more Liberals. There it is. The policy is a regional exception, rooted in political desperation, and has nothing to do with the relative efficiency of various heating sources. How could it? The rest of their standard answer has always been that the carbon tax does not make life unaffordable. In one fell swoop, the government admitted that the carbon tax is crushing Canadians by inflating their heating bills and that the solution to fixing this is to remove the tax from home heating, but it is only willing to do it in one region of the country.

The second problem with the response is what I want the government to address tonight. I asked whether the member for Calgary Skyview would be allowed to vote freely on the Conservative motion to remove the tax for all Canadians. I know the riding of Calgary Skyview pretty well. It is in my city, and I know that virtually everyone of his constituents has either a natural gas forced air furnace or a gas-fuelled central boiler. We know for a fact that Calgary

is cold enough that everybody in the city needs a reliable source of heat to keep their homes at a safe temperature in the winter, so we are left to wonder.

Atlantic MPs obviously fought for their constituents to get a break on the carbon tax, but what about the member for Calgary Skyview? Is he totally indifferent to the people in Calgary? Does he care if they cannot afford to heat their homes? Does he think that, since they have a natural gas furnace, they should have to pay the carbon tax? Does he think that all the people in his riding should be glad that the carbon tax is there and that the government's other anti-Alberta policies, which have killed investments and jobs, are a good thing? Does he think that they sent him to Ottawa to impose the carbon tax on them and to run interference for the government at the natural resources committee?

If the member for Calgary Skyview had a free vote to keep the tax, then shame on him. If the member for Calgary Skyview said nothing, but was whipped into line, then shame on him and on the Liberal government. If the member for Calgary Skyview actually did demand the carbon tax carve-out for people in Calgary and he was ignored, then shame on the Prime Minister and the government for cynically playing region against region and forcing Canadians, who cannot afford rent, food and fuel, into paying a carbon tax when all they want is to not freeze during a cold Canadian winter.

I will ask this again: Did the government allow the member for Calgary Skyview a free vote when he voted to punish his own community by voting against the Conservative motion for a carbon tax carve-out?

● (1840)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what an absolutely out-of-touch question this is from an urban member of Parliament who clearly has no idea what it is like living in a rural part of the country.

There are lots of members in our society who live too far away from a natural gas pipeline, who still use home heating oil to heat their homes. It is not a regional thing. There are lot of people in Atlantic Canada who still use home heating oil, but there are over 150,000 Ontarians, and hundreds of people in my riding of Milton, who still use home heating oil. It continues to be the dirtiest and the most emissions-intensive way to heat homes. It is also the most expensive by far.

Adjournment Proceedings

The market-based instrument that is used to nudge people away from certain products, like home heating oil and other emissions-intensive products, work best when there is a clear alternative. That is what we are doing, we are creating that alternative for Canadians. We are providing free heat pumps. We are working with provinces to get people off the dirtiest form of home heating in favour of an electric option.

It is really disappointing to continue to hear this from members. The Conservatives have become a one-issue party. They are really focused on carbon pricing, when they all ran on a promise to price carbon. The member talked about accountability, why we were sent here and under what pretense we were sent here. I hate to tell the member again, for the third or fourth time, but he ran on a promise to price carbon. It was in the Zellers sort of catalogue of green options, “the more you burn, the more you earn” was the byline that a lot of people gave it.

The continued insistence that this is a regional program and that carbon pricing does not work is categorically false. Our emissions are dropping in Canada. We are making great progress. We had a lot of work to do from 2015 when we got elected, because the previous Conservative government was completely oblivious to climate change. It did not believe it existed, and it did not want to lead around the world.

With this fall economic statement, released just last week, our government is taking further action to support the middle class and to lower our emissions. Our economic plan is all about building a strong economy that works for everyone, with more homes built faster and great jobs that Canadians can count on.

As we have seen the rapid rise in interest rates, they have started to really have an impact on Canadians' wallets. That has been a significant financial challenge, but tying it all to climate action and carbon pricing is not just misleading Canadians, it is also completely false.

I am glad that, last week, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance announced some new targeted measures to help stabilize some prices and make life more affordable, and protect people who have mortgages to pay. We are meeting the moment. There is an affordability challenge out there, so we are finding solutions to actually help Canadians while the Conservatives just wear their t-shirts, slap their bumper stickers on the back of their trucks, and say “Axe the tax.” That is not a climate solution. That is not an economic solution. That is not a solution for affordability.

It will not help Canadians. It certainly will not help lower- and middle-income Canadians who get more money back than the price on pollution actually costs them. It is a very well-known thing. It is not surprising to see the Conservatives always standing up for people who earn the most money. That is what they did with their universal Canada child tax benefit. They sent cheques to millionaires. It was a completely ineffective way to lower poverty.

The Conservatives have never really been that focused on lowering poverty. They are focused on supporting oil and gas companies, sending cheques out to millionaires, and taking us years back on climate action and fighting climate change.

In his rebuttal, I would just beg the member that if he is so insistent that we stop pricing carbon and he does not want to go back on the solutions that he provided in his—

● (1845)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Madam Speaker, talk about who is out of touch here.

Are people who cannot afford food and rent so angry that they put bumper stickers on their trucks? He is going to dismiss that as not being a reflection of deep problems that exist in Canada.

On the point about the regional carve-out of this, a member of his government admitted that this was a regional carve-out. She told a national television audience that the reason for the carve-out was because Atlantic Liberal MPs asked for it, and that if Prairie Liberal MPs asked for it, maybe they would get a carve-out for their constituents who do not use oil furnaces.

The Liberals admitted that it is a regional carve-out.

Mr. Adam van Koevorden: Madam Speaker, allow me to say it again: The affordability challenges being faced by Canadians right now are a top concern of the government. We are putting forward real solutions to help meet the moment and make sure that they can afford things such as home heating, groceries and rent. Finding real solutions means meeting the moment and finding ways we can actually help Canadians. However, if the lowest-income Canadians are getting more back than they put in on carbon pricing, then taking it away is not a solution.

Our government's pollution pricing program is working. It is responsible for up to a third of our current emissions. Climate change is causing wildfires and natural disasters across this country. For the Conservatives to continually come back into the House, repeat their cheesy slogans, insist that is their only affordability measure and offer no solutions to fight climate change, shows they have taken quite a few steps back from when Erin O'Toole was the leader of the party and they had a plan to fight climate change. It is disappointing.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon not being present to raise during Adjournment Proceedings the matter for which notice has been given, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

*Adjournment Proceedings**[Translation]*

(The House adjourned at 6:50 p.m.)

The motion to adjourn the House is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

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