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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, April 25, 2022

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1100)

[*English*]

IMPROVEMENTS TO LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.) moved:

That:

(a) the House recognize that (i) COVID-19 has tragically exposed long-standing issues affecting long-term care facilities across the country and the frontline workers who care for residents, (ii) we need to make sure the conditions of work reflect the care standards our seniors deserve, (iii) while the management of long-term care facilities is under provincial and territorial jurisdiction, we share the goal of ensuring safer, better care for seniors; and

(b) in the opinion of the House, the government should work with the provinces and territories to (i) improve the quality and availability of long-term care homes and beds, (ii) implement strict infection prevention and control measures, including through more provincial and territorial facility inspections for long-term care homes, (iii) develop a safe long-term care act collaboratively to ensure that seniors are guaranteed the care they deserve, no matter where they live.

He said: Mr. Speaker, before I begin, as this is my first speech in this chamber in the 44th Parliament, I would like to take the opportunity to thank my constituents in Avalon for trusting me to be their voice once again here in this chamber. Without their support, I would not be able to stand here today and present this very important motion. It is my greatest honour and pleasure to serve them.

I am thrilled and honoured to stand in the House today to introduce my first private member's motion since I was elected in 2015, Motion No. 47, which strives to help the government move forward on improving the state of long-term care in Canada. Long-term care is a topic that is near and dear to me as an MP from Newfoundland and Labrador. My province has one of the fastest-aging populations in the country. Our death rate is outnumbering our birth rate, and with every passing day, the demand for long-term care spaces grows at an alarming pace.

Our seniors are the backbone of this country. They raised us, taught us and inspired all of us to be the people we are today. They worked hard and put in their service to their communities, and I believe it is on us, all of us, to ensure there is a dignified, respectful and safe space for them to live out their golden years.

As parliamentarians, we have learned many important lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic. I would argue that one of the most alarming things we learned was the tragic state of some long-term care facilities in this country. The pandemic has underscored issues that far predate this pandemic, including staffing challenges, aging infrastructure and lack of adequate infection, prevention and control measures.

Of course, our provincial and territorial partners have primary jurisdiction over long-term care in Canada. We respect them and the role they play in legislating rules and regulations for long-term care homes and nursing homes in Canada. However, the federal government still has a vital role to play. We just have to look at what our government did to support long-term care throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to see that at work.

Our government deployed the Canadian Armed Forces and the Canadian Red Cross to long-term care facilities that faced severe COVID-19 outbreaks in the early days of the pandemic. About \$740 million of the safe restart agreement funding was allocated to protect vulnerable populations and address the immediate needs in long-term care. We created the safe long-term care fund, a \$1-billion fund that helps the provinces and territories protect people living and working in long-term care from COVID-19 and improve infection prevention and control. Of course, we did much more.

We believe that we must work hand in hand with our provincial and territorial partners to ensure there is a minimum standard of care across the country in long-term care. We want to support the provinces and territories by identifying gaps in legislation, enforcing standards of care and ensuring there is a clear minimum standard of care that should be upheld across the country.

Private Members' Business

In budget 2021, we announced a \$3-billion investment in support of the provinces and territories to ensure that standards within long-term care facilities are applied and permanent changes are made to uphold those standards. The provinces and territories can use this funding to improve workplace conditions and training, strengthen enforcement and compliance, and much more. This is the type of collaboration that needs to continue, and I believe that by supporting Motion No. 47 and creating a federal long-term care act, we can work across jurisdictions to identify a standard of care and conditions that all facilities across our country should be expected to uphold. The commitment to a safe long-term care act came from my party's 2021 election platform and was reiterated through the recently announced agreement between the Liberal Party of Canada and the New Democratic Party: Delivering for Canadians Now.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the good work of the Standards Council of Canada, the Health Standards Organization and the Canadian Standards Association, which have conducted extensive consultations to develop two sets of national standards related to long-term care. They are the national long-term care services standard of Canada to focus on resident and family-centred care practices and the national standard of Canada for operation and infection prevention and control of long-term care homes. It is my understanding that the draft of these standards of care documents have been released for public review. I hope this important research and consultation will act as the framework for a federal long-term care act and will guide us in making systemic changes that will benefit residents in long-term care facilities and those who work there.

• (1105)

I speak to seniors and their families almost every day, and they express serious concern about the future of our aging population. They are worried that long-term care spaces will not be available when they or their loved ones need one. They are concerned that with increased pressure and requirements, staff will start to burn out and homes will not be able to retain employees. They are concerned that long-term care facilities will not be properly equipped in the future to handle infectious diseases and keep their residents safe.

I share these concerns, and I know that my colleagues in this chamber share these concerns as well. The future of long-term care in this country lies in the hands of legislators like us. If we are proactive and innovative, we can change the course and address the problems facing long-term care across the country. I believe this starts with Motion No. 47. I believe that by supporting my motion and agreeing as a House that we support the creation of a long-term care act, we are taking the first step in bettering the lives of seniors and workers in long-term care in Canada.

I would like to thank all my colleagues for their support on this very important matter.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Avalon for bringing this motion forward. He talked about standards of care. There are provincial standards of care across Canada. The trouble is that none of those standards are being met in any province, and the problem is both funding and the model of deliver-

ing long-term care in Canada, which to a large extent is a for-profit model.

I am wondering how his motion would help this. If we do not get the profit out of long-term care in Canada, how can we put strings on any funding we might provide to make sure these long-term care homes provide a dignified place to live for seniors?

• (1110)

Mr. Ken McDonald: Madam Speaker, it will help because it will show we are interested in making sure we look after seniors in these facilities. However, as I said in my speech, we have to work with the provinces and territories to make that a reality. They control health care in their individual provinces. We have to sit down with them and make sure funding is available. Let us make sure the standards are up to a certain level that will guarantee seniors will have the good care and safety required in these facilities so that we will not see the same things happen again that happened through COVID-19 in recent years.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, for a lot of people, aging at home and a lot of other things could go along nicely with a motion like this. I am wondering what the member thinks about making sure the provinces can still utilize things such as aging in place and other means that people would want to use to meet their own specific needs. They may have a disability, and there are different things.

Mr. Ken McDonald: Madam Speaker, I agree with aging in place. I think that would be part of the standards that would come out of this. We would recognize what is missing in our communities to keep people in their own homes longer and keep them safe. There will come a point where, if we all live long enough, we will end up in long-term care, so we should be concerned with what the path to get there is going to be like and what it is going to be like afterward once we end up in one of those facilities.

Both of my parents passed away in a long-term care facility, but they were well looked after in both instances by the two homes they ended up being in later in life. The way they were looked after was top-notch, but I know there were a lot of things missing. At that particular time, of course we did not have a pandemic to deal with, and I think it has highlighted so much wrong with the way things are done in Canada today. It is time now that we really take a serious look at this and get it right so we do not have the same things happen again in the future.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am just as concerned as my colleague by what has been happening to seniors in long-term care facilities, but we do not have the same approach to finding solutions.

In Quebec, we realized what was going on, and our ombudsperson produced a report in 2021 with a number of recommendations to prevent this kind of thing from happening again if ever another pandemic strikes. Quebec realized what was going on, figured out what to do about it and is completely overhauling its health care system.

I have a question for my colleague.

If Quebec were to reject Canadian standards for long-term care in Quebec, does my colleague agree with his government that Quebec might not get any of that funding?

[*English*]

Mr. Ken McDonald: Madam Speaker, I believe, as I said in my speech, that we have to sit down with the provinces. We have to deal with the provinces when it comes to health care.

Let us sit down and see what Quebec is doing as a province, what B.C. is doing as a province and what Newfoundland and Labrador is doing as a province, and let us try to make sure that we come up with a proper act that has proper regulations and a set of standards that everybody can be happy with. This is not just Quebec doing it alone. I believe that help, even financial help for doing that, has to come hand in hand from the federal government.

Provinces should not be footing the entire bill themselves, so if these standards are going to bring an additional expense, that would be part of a negotiation with the provinces and coming to an agreement on a set of standards and the cost of those standards.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Avalon for bringing this incredibly important issue to the floor of the House of Commons. It goes without saying that the issue of long-term care is perhaps, along with the cost of living, one of the issues heard most from concerned constituents by all members in this place.

The population in my riding of Hastings—Lennox and Addington has one of the highest percentages of seniors in this country. If we couple that statistic with the rural nature of a large majority of the riding, suitable housing for seniors is a real issue.

Not only do we need to make sure there are enough beds in facilities, but we need to ensure that those facilities are spread throughout the riding to accommodate the decentralized population centres

Private Members' Business

across thousands of kilometres of Hastings—Lennox and Addington.

Many of my rural counterparts do not benefit from having the centralized smaller footprints of our urban colleagues, which means much more costly overhead in terms of capital and staff in getting our facilities set up.

While this is certainly daunting, recently Hastings—Lennox and Addington served as a good example of how the provinces can start the process on their own. Recently, the Ontario government announced \$1.8 million of additional funding for long-term care facilities in Hastings—Lennox and Addington, and Kingston and the Islands.

This affects over 500 beds across these two ridings, and I am sure my colleague for Kingston and the Islands would be happy to join me in thanking the Conservative government of Doug Ford for this very important investment in long-term care across our riding. While this is certainly a positive step in the right direction, far more work needs to be done in Hastings—Lennox and Addington and across our country.

The reality of the situation is that the COVID-19 pandemic shed a jarring light on a problem that has been festering in Canada for decades. It was the dirty little secret that millions of Canadians did not want to acknowledge: Many of their parents were living in dismal conditions in our long-term care facilities.

In my opinion, the most eye-opening example of this was when the Ontario and Quebec governments called in the military to provide logistical support for their overworked caregivers in Operation Laser. Following this deployment, the Canadian Armed Forces released a document that contained five annexes titled observation reports. These chronicled concerning shortcomings that were further exacerbated by COVID-19 at five long-term care facilities.

I want to apologize to my colleagues for the graphic nature of much of these reports, but as someone responsible for the seniors' portfolio, I believe that it is incumbent on me to remind the House of the contents of the reports and read them into the record.

I want to reiterate that while the following excerpts are, for lack of a better term, horrific, they are not indicative of all facilities. However, the fact is that these situations occurred. Even if they were isolated instances, it is one time too many.

In the first facility, the report noted the following, among many other issues:

Reusing hypodermoclysis supplies even after sterility has been obviously compromised (e.g. a catheter pulled out and on the floor for an undetermined amount of time);

Poor palliative care standards—inadequate dosing intervals for some medications...

Generally very poor peri-catheterization care reported. Example: retracting penis foreskin to clean isn't happening on a widespread level. CAF have found nearly a dozen incidents of bleeding fungal infections....

Private Members' Business

Extra soaker pad: residents who routinely soil their bed despite incontinence products are not permitted to have an extra soaker pad or towel...to help protect sheets and blankets from soiling.... [The] rationalization used is that an extra pad is undignified....

New staff that have been brought to LTCF haven't been trained or oriented.

[LTCF] is "severely understaffed during day due to resident comorbidities and needs....

[Medical doctors] not present and have to be accessed by phone....

CAF [members] have witnessed aggressive behaviour, which ACC staff assessed as abusive or inappropriate.

● (1115)

In a second facility, the following were noted:

Little to no disinfection had been conducted at the facility prior to CAF operations. Significant gross fecal contamination was noted in numerous patient rooms;

Insect infestation was noted within [the long-term care facility]—ants and cockroaches plus unknown observed;

Delayed changing soiled residents, leading to skin breakdown....

Forceful feeding observed by staff causing audible choking/aspiration, forceful hydration observed by staff causing audible choking/aspiration;

Patients observed crying for help with staff not responding for 30 minutes to over two hours....

SNO reported incident of patients' enteral feed bottle not being changed for so long the contents had become foul and coagulated; date and expiration of the contents not noted on the bottle;

SNO reported incident of permanent catheter being in situ three weeks beyond scheduled change date....

and,

[Personal support workers] often rushed and leave food on table, but patients often cannot reach or cannot feed themselves, therefore missing meals or not receiving meals for hours.

This is just a small section of the report covering two specific facilities. It is disturbing, yet these same scenes are being played out across our nation and have been going on for decades. We in this nation seem to be content with treating our senior citizens, the people who literally built this country and raised our entire nation, no better than we would treat an animal. It is a national tragedy and a national shame that thousands of Canadian seniors consider the previously mentioned incidents to be part of regular life.

As I have previously mentioned in the House, in 2018, the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities released a report entitled, "Advancing Inclusion and Quality of Life for Seniors". That report identified a number of issues surrounding long-term care and suggested a number of actionable recommendations to address those issues. It is extremely unfortunate that, over four years later, we are still moving motions to crassly declare our great outrage over an issue this Parliament was directly made aware of at the time, but did not move fast enough to address.

Unfortunately, it seems to be the *modus operandi* of the current government to move a non-instructive motion, develop a framework, strike a working group, create a road map and do anything except actually address the issue at hand.

This year's budget is another perfect example of this mentality. Despite all of the grandstanding from the government about it having the backs of our seniors, it provided \$20 million in its support for seniors budget line. That is \$20 million out of \$56.6 billion in

proposed new spending. To put that into perspective, for every dollar the government has proposed to spend, Canadian seniors get less than half of a tenth of a cent.

To finish off, I would like to reiterate that I am not assigning blame to my hon. friend across the way who moved this very important motion, but more so to his colleagues on the front bench, who dither away while our Canadian seniors are suffering. I really want to thank him for bringing this motion to the floor. I hope that he will continue to advocate for Canadian seniors and press his caucus colleagues into meaningful action on this file.

● (1120)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, it should come as no surprise that the Bloc Québécois will oppose the motion. Let us look at the reasons why.

First of all, not everything in motion is bad.

For example, to the first point, everyone in Quebec agrees that the COVID-19 pandemic tragically exposed long-standing issues affecting long-term care facilities and the frontline workers who care for residents themselves—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have to interrupt the member because we seem to be having interpretation issues.

Now that the interpretation is working, the hon. member for Montcalm can pick up where he left off.

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, the second point reads that "we need to make sure the conditions of work reflect the care standards our seniors deserve".

Everyone agrees that we have a collective responsibility to care for our seniors as individuals. However, the conditions of work in long-term care facilities and seniors' residences do not fall under federal jurisdiction. That is the first problem, and I will come back to it.

The third point states that "the management of long-term care facilities is under provincial and territorial jurisdiction". Here, they are basically admitting that it is none of their business. At least they are acknowledging it.

The motion continues by saying, "we share the goal of ensuring safer, better care for seniors". Well done. I am very happy to see that the federal government has the same goal as Quebec and the provinces, that is, to ensure better quality care for seniors. That is effectively what Quebec wants.

However, health care is not under federal jurisdiction. If the federal government truly wishes to help the provinces and Quebec, it should convene a summit to discuss a sustainable increase in health care funding and health transfers, as requested unanimously by Quebec and the provinces, which are united on this. I will come back to this point.

The beginning of the second part of the motion states that, “in the opinion of the House, the government should work with the provinces and territories to (i) improve the quality and availability of long-term care homes and beds”. Quebec already has a plan for revamping its health care system. Parliamentary debates will be held to improve the plan, to determine whether it is sound and to look at the pros and cons, but that is the responsibility of the elected members of the Quebec National Assembly, not the House of Commons.

What our health care systems are missing is financial resources, meaningful recurrent investments, and a substantial increase in the federal government's contribution. That means increasing federal health transfers from 22% of system costs to 35% and increasing the escalator from 3% to 6% per year. That is what is being called for by Quebec and the provinces, as well as by many other stakeholders. I will come back to that later.

The second point in the second paragraph of the motion states, “implement strict infection prevention and control measures, including through more provincial and territorial facility inspections for long-term care homes”. Quebec has assessed, and continues to assess, its actions during the pandemic. It is not up to the federal government to tell Quebec what to do or how to do it. Besides, the feds do not even have the required expertise. The best solution the federal government can come up with is to take best practices found from coast to coast and impose them, as if that were within its jurisdiction.

The third point in that second paragraph states, “develop a safe long-term care act collaboratively to ensure that seniors are guaranteed the care they deserve, no matter where they live”. The Quebec National Assembly unanimously opposed such federal standards, and let us not forget that the House of Commons voted against imposing standards when the NDP moved a motion in March 2021, in the 43rd Parliament. The Liberals voted against that at the time.

The Liberal Party must be suffering from amnesia, because during this 44th Parliament, it is at it again with this motion. I have to say, since the advent of the NDP-Liberal government, positions have become muddled. One thing remains clear: their appetite for interfering in things that do not concern them.

Has a federal government ever been defeated in an election over issues related to health? The answer is no, because the provision of health care is not a federal responsibility. In Quebec, we have often seen governments get the boot over health-related matters.

Health has been an exclusive jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces since 1867. Quebec has exclusive authority over health, except when it comes to the health of indigenous peoples, military hospitals, drug approval and quarantines. It is therefore up to Quebecers to have this debate and make the decision. In a democracy, it is up to voters to sanction their government.

Private Members' Business

A debate has been raging for months in Quebec over the issue of long-term care and the decisions that were made during the COVID-19 crisis. That debate is still going on, and it is the Quebec government that will take steps to correct the situation and the public that will decide, this October, if it is satisfied with the actions of its government.

• (1125)

Quebec already has solutions. It does not need the federal government to provide them.

In his November 23, 2021, report, the ombudsman pointed out flaws, but he mostly identified measures that the Quebec government must implement so that this never happens again.

In response to that report, the Quebec government presented its plan for reforming the health care system. The plan includes an array of measures, such as large-scale recruitment, better access to data, the construction of new hospitals, and increased accountability for executives. Additionally, the coroner is still investigating. People are calling for a public inquiry into the situation at long-term care facilities.

In any case, it is up to Quebecers to take stock of the situation and to fix their system. I have said it before, and I will say it again: Quebec already has standards. Quebec's Act respecting health services and social services includes regulations for long-term care homes. I remind members that 86% of long-term care homes in Quebec are public facilities.

The report prepared by the Canadian Armed Forces at the end of its deployment to Quebec's long-term care homes is clear. There are already plenty of standards and rules for things like contamination prevention and control and PPE. However, that was not enough to stop the virus.

Why was Canada's federal stockpile empty? Why did we send PPE to mainland China when we were about to be hit hard by the virus? The government should answer these questions before lecturing others.

The main reason these rules were more difficult to follow is also very clear: There was a labour shortage. I will quote the Canadian Armed Forces report: “According to our observations, the critical need for CHSLDs is an improved level of staff with medical training”.

If the federal government truly wants to help the provinces and Quebec get through the pandemic and improve care for our seniors, it needs to stop patronizing us. It needs to drop this idea of mandatory national standards that are ill suited to the different social and institutional contexts, and it needs to increase health transfers, which will allow the provinces and Quebec to attract and retain more health care workers.

That is the federal government's job. It needs to increase health transfers. It knows that, but it thinks it can keep making one-time investments instead of recurring investments, even though we need to get through this pandemic.

Private Members' Business

The Bloc Québécois is steadfast in its demand for the federal government to immediately increase health transfers to 35% of costs and to index them going forward. The Parliament of Canada itself made this demand when it adopted a Bloc Québécois motion calling on the government to significantly and sustainably increase Canada health transfers to support the efforts of the governments of Quebec and the provinces, health care workers and the public. All of the premiers have made this demand. The Quebec National Assembly has made this demand. All of the unions, the FTQ, the CSN, the CSQ and the CSD, have made this demand, pointing out that the systemic funding problems facing the provinces and Quebec are hampering Canadians and Quebeckers from accessing the services they need.

On April 4, 2022, the Quebec medical community, including the Fédération des médecins omnipraticiens du Québec, the Fédération des médecins spécialistes du Québec and the Association des médecins hématologues et oncologues du Québec, along with several unions, joined the Bloc in calling on the federal government to hold a public summit on health care funding. All voters across Quebec and Canada want our health care systems to be improved. According to a Leger poll, 85% of voters support the recommendation made by the premiers and their united stance.

This motion is as pointless as the last election. It is not standards that will ensure better care, but rather the funding needed to deliver that care.

• (1130)

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very happy to rise here this morning to speak to Motion No. 47 on improvements to long-term care, put forward by the member for Avalon. This motion points out that the COVID pandemic has exposed long-standing issues affecting long-term care, and it asks the federal government to:

...work with the provinces and territories to (i) improve the quality and availability of long-term care homes and beds, (ii) implement strict infection prevention and control measures...(iii) develop a safe long-term care act...to ensure that seniors are guaranteed the care they deserve....

I am also happy to say that I will be supporting this motion. As a New Democrat, I am very proud to say that we have used our power in the current minority government to secure a commitment from the federal government in our confidence and supply agreement to bring in a safe long-term care act to ensure that seniors are guaranteed the care they deserve, no matter where they live. This long-overdue legislation must be implemented without delay, and I thank the member for Avalon for introducing this motion, which adds further impetus to this necessary action.

I would first like to thank all the workers in long-term care across Canada. They have been at the front lines of the pandemic for the past two years and more. This is hard work. It is stressful work, and it is done by people who truly care for the people whom they care for. I want to make it completely clear that these workers are not the problem in the long-term care crisis.

As the motion points out, COVID-19 has exposed a fragmented and under-resourced long-term care system across Canada, and this has been a problem for many years. I remember speaking here just

over a year ago to an NDP motion that called for significant changes to make sure our seniors are cared for properly and with dignity. In that speech, I mentioned a couple of stories that illustrated how long-standing this problem is. I would like to briefly reiterate those points today.

In 2013, nine years ago, I met with a family who had lost both their mother and their father to substandard care at a privately owned care home in Summerland, British Columbia. The province investigated the family's concerns and found that the staffing levels of the facility were far too low. Months later, the company that owned the facility, Retirement Concepts, reported that it was trying to hire more staff but was having trouble filling the new positions. As Mike Old of the Hospital Employees' Union said, Retirement Concepts is well known for paying low wages, and that has resulted in chronic understaffing at many of its facilities.

Retirement Concepts operates 20 facilities in Canada, most of them in British Columbia. In 2016, Retirement Concepts was sold to Anbang Insurance Group of China for more than \$1 billion. Since then, problems at Retirement Concepts homes seem only to have gotten worse. As of last year, the operation of its properties in Summerland, Courtenay, Nanaimo and Victoria had been taken over by the provincial health authority, all because care levels were inadequate due to understaffing.

Retirement Concepts is not alone in its understaffing problems. I remember visiting another facility in Penticton in 2015, seven years ago, and talking to the staff about working conditions there. I was shocked to find out that some of the staff who had worked there for 20 years were making less money in 2015 than when they had started in 1995. No wonder they were tempted to leave whenever they could. A friend whose mother was in that facility recently told me that the staff was hard-working and attentive but completely overwhelmed. There was always a "now hiring" sign out front. Apparently, the home could not afford to pay workers as much as the local hospital, so it was constantly losing the most experienced staff whenever a job opened up at the hospital.

Experts have been issuing dire warnings for years about this crisis, but successive federal governments, both Liberal and Conservative, have failed to act. Then the pandemic hit. Hundreds died needlessly in care homes during the pandemic, sometimes in horrific conditions. The armed forces had to be called in because staff was overwhelmed in many places. According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, more than 840 outbreaks were reported in long-term care facilities and retirement homes during the initial wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. This accounted for 80% of all COVID deaths in Canada during that wave, representing the worst record among comparable countries and double the OECD average.

Private Members' Business

• (1135)

We must never allow this to happen again. Federal leadership is urgently needed to protect vulnerable Canadians living in long-term care, both throughout the pandemic and in the years to come.

In these debates, we have heard a lot of calls for national standards of care. Yes, we need those national standards, but the fact is that no provincial standards are being met now. The benchmark for quality long-term care is 4.1 hours of hands-on care per resident per day; no province or territory currently meets this standard of care.

There is a lack of accountability for long-term care facility operators due to lax enforcement of standards and regulations. For example, a recent CBC investigation revealed that 85% of long-term care homes in Ontario have routinely violated health care standards for decades, with near total impunity.

The problem is funding. Lack of funding results in short-staffed institutions and underpaid workers. Underpaid workers are forced to work two or three care homes at once, and we saw how that spread the virus during the early stages of the COVID pandemic.

At the heart of the funding problem are the for-profit long-term care homes. Among care home residents, 80% have underlying medical issues that have meant they have had to move into those care homes. Long-term care is medical care, but it is not covered under our universal, not-for-profit health care system in Canada, and because long-term care lies outside the health care covered by the Canada Health Act, many care homes are run first and foremost for profit.

This means Canadians often pay substantial out-of-pocket costs for long-term care, which can vary significantly depending on the region and whether it is a private or public facility. Service quality varies widely depending on ability to pay, and service quality can have a significant impact on the health of care home residents, especially during a pandemic. Residents and workers in for-profit centres have faced a higher risk of COVID-19 infection and death than those in non-profit and publicly operated homes.

Decades of research have demonstrated that long-term care homes run on a for-profit basis tend to have lower staffing levels, more verified complaints and more transfers to hospitals, as well as higher rates of both ulcers and morbidity. On top of that, during the pandemic, many for-profit operators have been paying out millions in CEO bonuses and dividends while accepting public subsidies and neglecting the residents under their care.

The NDP is proud to have used its power to secure a promise from the government to advance a safe long-term care act through the confidence and supply agreement, and I will add that this agreement also includes dental care and pharmacare, so that we can have a truly universal health care system in Canada.

We must continue to work collaboratively with patients, caregivers and provincial and territorial governments to develop national standards for long-term care and other continuing care, which would include accountability mechanisms and data collection and be tied to sustainable, long-term funding. The standards are not enough by themselves.

Successive Liberal and Conservative governments have failed to improve standards of long-term care, because they have embraced a profit-driven model for the sector. The NDP will work relentlessly to change that. Profit has no place in the care of our seniors, just as it has no place elsewhere in our primary health care system.

Our seniors deserve to live in dignity and comfort, so in conclusion, I will be supporting this motion. I urge the government to live up to its promises and act quickly and boldly to fix the long-term care crisis in Canada.

• (1140)

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak about a subject that is having a significant impact on many Canadian families. The COVID pandemic laid bare systemic inadequacies in Canada's long-term care system. It has taken the lives of some of Canada's most vulnerable citizens and forever changed the lives of families and caregivers.

In my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt, we have seen the tragic outcomes. We have one of the highest death rates in long-term care homes, with 81 residents having passed away due to COVID. It exposed a woeful lack of infection prevention and control measures, staffing challenges and inadequate quality of overall care. As the disease ran rampant through many of these long-term care facilities, the deployment of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Canadian Red Cross was needed to help control its dire consequences.

Hon. members already know all of this. We also know that we cannot let it happen again, and we will not let it happen again. We need permanent and long-term solutions for long-term care facilities, where Canadians living and working in them are safe and treated with respect and dignity.

Private Members' Business

Budget 2021 included a \$3-billion investment over five years, starting in 2022-23, to support provinces and territories in their efforts to ensure standards for long-term care are applied and permanent changes are made. Budget 2022 included \$20 million over five years, starting in 2022-23, for the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, to support additional research on the long-term effects of COVID-19 infections on Canadians as well as the wider impacts of COVID-19 on health and health care systems. We are doing this while respecting provincial and territorial jurisdiction over the long-term care sector.

Federal funding is being used to hire additional staff responsible for the development, implementation, evaluation and maintenance of a comprehensive infection control program in residential care homes and to make infrastructure upgrades to support enhanced infection prevention and control in long-term care. These staffing and upgrade investments are improving the quality of life for residents and staff in long-term care.

Just last week in Scarborough—Agincourt, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Seniors announced the signing of the safe long-term care fund agreement with Ontario, and other provinces and territories have also signed on to receive their share of the \$1-billion funding.

In addition to the safe long-term care fund, the Government of Canada has also invested funds to address the deficiencies exposed by the pandemic. We have done this in several ways. We are investing \$740 million in the safe restart agreement to support provinces and territories in addressing the immediate needs of vulnerable populations, including those in long-term care facilities. We are investing up to \$3 billion in federal funding to support provinces and territories to increase the wages of low-income essential workers, which could include frontline workers in hospitals and long-term care facilities. We are investing \$9.6 million in Healthcare Excellence Canada to support facilities across the country through the LTC+ initiative. More than 1,500 facilities are participating in the program, which will help them share information with the goal of strengthening pandemic preparedness.

That is not all. Our government is funding a \$38.5-million pilot project to address acute labour shortages in long-term and home care. This funding is being used to recruit and train up to 2,600 new supportive care assistants through accelerated online training and a hands-on work placement. It is anticipated that the pilot will also support up to 1,300 of these supportive care assistants to pursue full personal support worker certification.

In budget 2021, we included \$41.3 million over six years and \$7.7 million ongoing for Statistics Canada to improve data infrastructure and data collection on supportive care, primary care and pharmaceuticals. That work begins this year.

Our government is acutely aware that many seniors can live happily in their own homes but often need support to do so. This is why we have invested \$90 million, starting in 2021-22, in Employment and Social Development Canada to launch the age well at home initiative. This initiative will assist community-based organizations in providing practical support that helps low-income and otherwise vulnerable seniors to age in place.

• (1145)

I should also remind colleagues that beginning in July 2022, the old age security pension will be increased for seniors aged 75 and over. Employment and Social Development Canada is also leading the new sectoral workforce solutions program, which the government is funding with \$960 million over the next three years. The purpose of this program is to help key sectors of the economy, including the health sector, design and deliver relevant training and connect Canadians with the training they need to access good jobs. This includes the need for more skilled personal support workers. Our government is also investing \$27.6 million over three years for a group tax-free savings account to boost retirement savings for personal support workers.

Our government has built a strong social safety net and pension systems that all Canadians can be proud of. We have enhanced the CPP, and Quebec followed with the QPP. We raised the GIS for 900,000 single seniors, and this summer we are increasing the OAS for the most vulnerable seniors. We are also helping Canadians stay in their communities and homes longer by investing \$70 million annually through the New Horizons for Seniors program, \$6 billion in home care and \$90 million over three years for the new “age well at home” initiative.

Canadians living and working in long-term care deserve to be treated with respect and dignity in a safe environment. As I said, our government is committed to working collaboratively with provinces and territories in a way that respects their jurisdiction for the delivery of health care services, including in long-term care. It is also committed to more provincial and territorial facility inspections. A crucial goal as we work together is the development of a set of national standards to replace the patchwork that currently exists across Canada.

Private Members' Business

Working closely together, the Health Standards Organization and the Canadian Standards Association Group are developing two complementary national standards for long-term care. These standards will address both the delivery of safe, reliable and high-quality care and the health infrastructure and environmental design of long-term care facilities. The Health Standards Organization released its draft standard for public consultation in January after consulting with 18,000 Canadians and stakeholders. The Canadian Standards Association Group released its draft standard in February. Both sets of standards have a consultation period of 60 days, with final standards to be released in late 2022.

The adoption of a set of national standards would be part of a permanent solution we are seeking to bring safety and peace of mind to staff, residents and their families. We must do all we can to permanently correct what needs correcting in the long-term care system, not only to better protect against a future pandemic, but to make every day a day of safety and good living.

● (1150)

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very happy to rise and join the debate on Motion No. 47.

First off, I want to thank someone. She is a lady who was very instrumental, not only in my decision to go into politics, but also in being a mentor for me. When getting into this position or other jobs, we often talk about our past lives in previous jobs. In a past life, I was honoured to be the president of the Greater Victoria Eldercare Foundation, which is Vancouver Island's largest senior health care foundation. It cares for many hospitals in part of the Vancouver Island and Victoria area, including Aberdeen Hospital, Glengarry Hospital, the Priory and Heritage Woods, the Summit, and also, at one time, the Oakbay Lodge as well.

I got into helping out with this foundation due to one lady: Lori McLeod. Lori continues to be the executive director there after about 15 years. In all my life of dealing with seniors, both before and since being in politics, I have not seen anyone more committed, and also more progressive and more imaginative, in helping in care for seniors than Lori. I am very much thankful to Lori.

If members of the government really want to do stronger work for seniors, they should pick up the phone and contact the Greater Victoria Eldercare Foundation and see all the incredible work it is doing to help Canadians age with dignity, as well as help with senior parents and the disabled as well.

I ask the government to do that because I know that this is just a motion. It is not a private member's bill like a regular act. It is just a motion. A motion, unfortunately, is much like good intentions. It is wonderful to talk about, and we may feel warm about it, but it does not actually accomplish much. It does not actually force or really push the government to make the changes needed.

The motion talks about the need to improve the quality and availability of long-term care homes, which is wonderful, but again there is nothing substantive behind the motion. There is no metric to say we need x amount or what we need to do. It talks about workers. We know that a lot of the workers caring for our family in these senior homes are new Canadians, especially from the Philippines. There is nothing the government has done that would actual-

ly speed up the process for PR status for temporary foreign workers working in this industry, which is so desperately needed. There is nothing being done by the government to recognize the foreign certifications to allow these new Canadians to work as perhaps LPNs or registered nurses in these facilities. While I applaud the very good intentions of this motion, we know where the path of very good intentions leads.

I do have great concern when government members talk so much about what they are doing for seniors. Everything seems to be based on their having spent money without actual outcomes being attached to it. We heard during COVID, "Oh, we sent everyone \$500, whether they needed it or not". I would have been very happy to support that if they had put all that money solely into the GIS, the guaranteed income support, for those who truly are low income and needed it, those who perhaps do not have CPP. Instead, they sent a cheque to everyone, which was pretty much like vote buying. We had so many calls from seniors who are very well off, who said they did not need the money. They asked why they were sent it. One would say it was vote buying, if one were cynical. Yes, I probably am cynical in that matter. Again, it just shows the government is not really serious about doing what needs to be done.

In 2017, during the 42nd Parliament, I introduced a private member's bill to eliminate the RRIF, or registered retirement income fund. Seniors, when they hit 72, have to start, by law, withdrawing a certain portion of their RRSPs to be taxed. What that does is to push them into a higher tax bracket. Perhaps they lose some of their GIS. If they are living in a care home run by a province where their rent is based on a percentage of their income, they end up having to pay a higher percentage of income. When I brought that bill forward, the government stated that it was money the government needed and that it would cost it too much, not realizing, of course, that the government will live on forever, while seniors do not.

● (1155)

The fact of the matter is that, as the Parliamentary Budget Officer noted, the government would get its hands on its filthy lucre eventually because, if a husband dies, his pension will be passed over to his wife tax-free. When she passes, it becomes fully taxable. These days, the average age for men to pass away is 81.4, and for women it is 85, so the government will always get its hands on the money, yet the Liberal government stated that it is more important that it gets that money now.

The Budget

The Parliamentary Budget Officer stated that the government is clawing back about \$1 billion a year from seniors because it needs that money now. It is quite funny. It gave \$91 million to Elon Musk, the richest man in the world, and said that it did not need that money right now, so Elon Musk can have it, but it needs the money from seniors now. This is even though reality shows, because we do not live forever, but the government does, the government would get its hands on their taxes. It is taking \$1 billion a year away from seniors, which pushes them into higher tax brackets, claws back the GIS and other programs.

If the government were actually serious about helping seniors, it would not put through a motion of good intentions that it would like to increase the availability of long-term care homes. Of course, we would like that, but we need to have more than good intentions. We need to actually have action such as the elimination of the RRIFs. The Canadian Association of Retired Persons calls for it. Seniors groups call for it. C.D. Howe Institute calls for it and states very clearly the government would get more money in the end than it does by taxing seniors early.

Another issue the Liberals could look at is GIS reform. GIS currently has a very high clawback rate, and the previous speaker spoke about the need to keep seniors in their houses longer and past that. To do that, they need a bit more money. We are reaching a labour crisis in our country. We could help the country and seniors by keeping them in the workforce longer. Allowing them to earn a bit more without a massively high clawback rate for the GIS would be a first step. We could have seniors working and collecting more money without punishing them. Again, that is actual action we can do and not just a motion of good intentions. We could do the same with CPP reform.

• (1200)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member will be able to continue the next time this matter is before the House.

[*Translation*]

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

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed from April 8 consideration of the motion that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Ms. Lianne Rood: Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 43(2)(a), I would like to inform the House that the remaining Conservative caucus speaking times are hereby divided in two.

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

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise this morning. Much to the chagrin of the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, I am pleased to hear that the member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex is ensuring as many Conservatives as possible will be able to speak to the hardships Canadians are going to experience because of the Liberal-NDP budget tabled just two weeks ago.

Canadians need a break, and they need relief from the growing affordability crisis, a crisis the government has presided over and has contributed to with its failed policies.

What were Canadians looking for when the finance minister and the Prime Minister delivered the budget? They wanted controlled spending. They have had to rein spending in at home, and they expected the government to do the same. Of course, they needed tax breaks. We are seeing the price of everything go up, such as gas to fill up our cars to get to medical appointments, go to work or take our kids to a recreational activity.

We are seeing the price of home heating go up. We live in one of the world's coldest climates, but the price to heat our homes continues to go up and up. Canadians want meaningful action on housing inflation. We have seen the price of a home in Canada more than double during the government's mandate.

Over the last six years, in spite of promises made by the government when it first was seeking government in 2015, Canadians are worse off than they were at that time. Whether they are seniors, young people, new Canadians or families, they would be crushed by the avalanche of uncontrolled spending that has been promised in the shadow of a deal between the Liberals and the New Democrats. This is all while the government had a unique opportunity. The conditions they contributed to allowed for the government to be the beneficiary of a windfall on the backs of the very Canadians who are suffering.

We saw government revenues climb by \$24 billion over what the finance minister had projected in her fall economic update. There was an opportunity. The government did not take that opportunity to give Canadians a break with the carbon tax on April 1, a tax that does nothing to reduce emissions but does everything to hurt families, seniors and young people. It did not take that opportunity.

The Budget

We also know Canadians are having a really tough time dealing with the conditions that persisted and existed before COVID-19, which were exacerbated by COVID-19, in our health care system. The government had an opportunity to use this budget to increase capacity and address backlogs in our health care system, but the government would add to the burdens on our health care system by launching new programs amid what is well known to be a human resource crisis in our health care system.

These commitments the government has made, which were not done in consultation with the provinces, and which have expressly been called by the provinces as unwelcome, would have a negative impact on people's quality of care, their quality of life and, in fact, on the outcomes they would have for otherwise treatable and curable illnesses.

It is also going to have great harm on an area we have seen across the country and in all of our communities. All members in the House can attest to the impacts COVID-19 has had on the mental health of Canadians. It is irresponsible for the government to prioritize its deal to cement its power and to further consolidate power in the Prime Minister's Office. Its deal with the NDP is now going to allow the government to do that, but it is done at the expense of addressing the health care needs of the provinces and territories.

It is critical the government work with the provinces and territories on improving health care, which would require the Prime Minister to show the leadership of having those conversations with the premiers. We have a budget coming out of COVID-19, and the Prime Minister said that he would not talk about health care with the provinces until he effectively decided that COVID was over.

• (1205)

It is unbelievable, with all of the challenges. We can talk about the effects of missed and delayed care appointments, and the treatment and surgical backlogs that have been exacerbated. We saw a health care hallway across our country well before COVID-19, and at a time when it is being most acutely felt, we have a Prime Minister saying that we will talk about it after the health care crisis that we are currently experiencing. That is not the collaboration or the leadership that Canadians need. That is certainly not what the provinces have been calling for, which is leadership.

The health care system is cash-strapped and resource-strapped, but now we have these programs that were decided by the fourth party in the election. It has dictated to the minority government how it is going to address the health care system. It is not with solutions; it is with further burdens.

The Liberal government, the Prime Minister and their partner with the leader of the NDP should talk to the provinces about predictable and stable health care transfers so they can plan what that looks like. Any increases they are seeing right now were planned by and decided by the Conservative government before they came to office. They have not made any improvements on that. In fact, they decided that formula, but it is the one they are sticking to.

It makes me wonder what the Liberals really put on offer when they go to an election. They run down what the Conservatives had executed, which is a health care funding formula that was executed

before 2015, and they continue it through a pandemic six years later. Then they pick up the ball from the NDP and jam those promises down the provinces' throats when they were just looking to talk about what has changed in the system over the five years they had been in office. It is really confusing. They said they would not stick with what the Conservatives offered, but instead they kept that and added what the NDP wanted.

I guess the Liberals are setting the stage for the next election or this budget vote to be one of deciding if Canadians want to vote for the NDP or the Conservatives. Well, I have to tell members that we will work with the provinces. We will give Canadians a break. We are not going to further burden Canadians, at a time when they can afford it the least, in all of the areas that I mentioned previously, which are about basic affordability.

When I talk about this, the government members will stand up and say that supply chain issues are a global phenomenon. They will stand up and tell us to compare our debt-to-GDP ratio with that of other countries around the world. However, whether we are in Eureka, Nunavut, Victoria-by-the-Sea, Prince Edward Island, Victoria, British Columbia, or any point in between, that is just word salad. It does not mean anything to Canadians who cannot afford the basic necessities of life.

We have people in communities across the country and in my community who have to make the choice between heating their home and feeding their family, heating or eating, at a time when we are having a conversation about bringing more people to our great country to enjoy the beauty and bounty that this country has to offer. We better make sure there are no claims of false advertising brought by the folks we are trying to attract here. It is going to be tough sledding. It is going to be tough sledding when they get here and find things out. Welcome to Canada, and if they want to own a home, they just need \$850,000 to get started. Yikes. Once they do, good luck heating the place. If they can afford to heat it, the price of groceries this year is going to go up by a minimum of \$1,000 per family. Also, the price at the pump will only increase under failed policies that the government continues to double down on.

Canadians needed a break from the government. They needed leadership on health care. They have neither, so the Conservatives, the official opposition, have tremendous concern and will continue to fight for Canadians.

• (1210)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member has selective memory when it comes to health care. He is really off base. When we think about it, Stephen Harper did absolutely nothing. He did not negotiate with the provinces and, in fact, let the Canada health care accord retire. There were no negotiations at all.

The Budget

One of the first things we did when we came into government was negotiate individual health care accords with the provinces. Today we have record amounts in health care transfers going to the provinces, but that is not enough. We have recognized the importance of mental health, long-term care and the cost of drugs for Canadians. We are prepared and willing to do more, and our consecutive budgets have demonstrated that.

How could the member, after reflecting on the last number of years, possibly give the speech he has just given when in fact things are quite the opposite? This is a government that cares for Canadians and the health of Canadians, and it is demonstrated in every budget, including this budget.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, I am glad to see that we have woken government members and have excited them early on a Monday, but my goodness, I sincerely hope, genuinely, that the member, his constituents and all members and their constituents do not have to experience the hardships that exist in our health care system because of the government's inactions. Unfortunately, those who are dealing with the health care system today are dealing with the realities that my hon. friend is trying to spin. Our health care system is in crisis. We have a health care human resource crisis, and the government failed to address it in this budget.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as members know, the whole issue of health transfers was discussed earlier in the debate on a motion.

As we know, in the 1960s and 1970s, the federal government funded 50% of health care spending. That funding was cut repeatedly, and now the feds fund only about 22% through health transfers.

The Quebec government and all Canadian provinces are calling for an increase in these health transfers. Unfortunately, this budget does not include any such measures. What are my colleague's thoughts on that?

[English]

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, the premier of the member's province expressed great concern, to put it mildly, with the federal government's approach to dealing with the provinces. I am paraphrasing, but I believe it was characterized as a war on the provinces. That is incredibly concerning.

This goes back to the Prime Minister saying that he will not work with the provinces on health care funding until after the pandemic. We are going to have live with COVID-19 for a long time and will have to adapt to that, and the Prime Minister will need to adapt his approach for dealing with this. He needs to collaborate with the provinces, as health care is their jurisdiction. I know that is sometimes complicated for the government to understand, but health care is a provincial jurisdiction and the federal government needs to work with them to ensure that it is properly funded, not dictate to them on how it is executed.

• (1215)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I always find the member eloquent and enjoy working with him, but I have some questions.

First, during the dismal decade that was the Harper government, there was an average, under the PBO, of \$25 billion in money that went to overseas tax havens. He has expressed concern about the deficit, but over that dismal decade, a quarter of a trillion dollars, or \$250 billion, went to overseas tax havens, and the Conservatives had put in place initiatives to continue that practice. As we know, health care was cut back in that dismal decade.

How could the member defend the record of his former government?

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, it is really important in 2022 that we look to the results of the government, which the member's party has just decided to keep in power regardless of its failures for Canadians, who are struggling with an affordability crisis.

The member has identified issues that are of great importance to the people who elected him to this place. Some people in my constituency explained that they were concerned about some of those issues. The government has abandoned that ground, and I would encourage the member opposite to prod the government to give some meaningful help to Canadians, instead of having this avalanche of spending.

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Madam Speaker, before I start today, I would like to wish our Orthodox community a happy Easter.

Today, I will be addressing the Liberal government's recently proposed federal budget for 2022. The budget presented an opportunity for real action on serious issues facing Canadians when our country is in desperate need of prudent financial planning. The cost of living is sky rocketing, the housing market remains out of reach for families, and vulnerable Canadians are in serious need of support.

In the community of King, home prices from February 2020 to February 2022 have increased by 142%. In Vaughan, prices increased by 57%. My community of King—Vaughan has become unattainable. The Liberal tax-free savings plan is not going to benefit first-time homebuyers with the rising cost of homes, and the Liberal finance minister has proposed a strategy described by Scotia-bank's economic director as "spend, tax and pray".

The Budget

With the new NDP-Liberal coalition, Canada expects a \$52.8-billion deficit for the coming fiscal year, and the finance minister apparently has no plans to balance the books until 2027. This comes as no surprise. With the Liberals in power, we have grown to count on excessive debt and the instability that comes with it. Having to appease the NDP, fiscal responsibility has gone out the window, further fuelling the affordability crisis. Only a few short years ago, the Prime Minister was praising the value of balanced budgets. Who would have thought the Prime Minister would return to his old ways of thinking and would favour budgets that do not balance themselves?

The central bank has started lifting its benchmark interest rate to combat record inflation exacerbated by the Liberals' financial incompetence. Although the increase in rates will help slow inflation, it has already hiked the cost of paying off the enormous debt we have accumulated. We are presently paying over \$2 billion each month to service the national debt, and this burden will continue to expand with each hike.

Higher liability payments will make it more difficult for the federal government to weather new storms, follow through on promises and invest in Canadians. If the bank continues increasing rates above 2.5% as some predict, families that recently secured a variable-rate mortgage could see their payments increase by over 30%. The Liberals have been promising since 2015 to make housing prices more affordable, but the average house price has doubled since they took office. More expensive mortgages will not help anybody afford a new home, and the Liberals' plan of a new tax-free first home savings account will not assist Canadians with achieving their dream.

This NDP-Liberal budget also failed to address the needs of our seniors. Seniors 75 and older recently received a one-time \$500 payment as part of the Liberals' election strategy campaign. A question remains, though: Why were seniors aged 65 to 74 excluded from this benefit? Seniors who planned on retiring now may be forced to continue working as the cost of living makes the prospect of retirement unattainable. Our seniors have contributed to our economy their entire lives and are now faced with the tough choices of their next employment opportunities in an effort to combat the cost of living.

As the primary health care providers, the provinces have asked the federal government for an additional \$28 billion in health transfer payments, but this was not included in the budget. Instead of more money for hospitals and nurses to help care for our elderly parents and our children with disabilities, there is no option available to them once their parents are no longer able to care for them. The Liberals are caving in to the NDP's outrageous multi-billion dollar dental proposal. Dental care is under provincial jurisdiction, but not one province has asked for the federal dental care program, including the NDP in British Columbia.

• (1220)

In addition to physical health, the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a massive toll on the mental health and well-being of millions of Canadians. I have personally spoken with parents of children with disabilities who say they are in dire need of support. On top of letting down adults with disabilities by failing on their promises to

reintroduce a disability benefit, the Liberals are failing to address the needs of children with special needs. Although funding for mental health support is being expanded in general, the Liberals are seriously missing the mark when it comes to caring for the physical needs of our country's most vulnerable.

Finally, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development predicts that Canada will be the worst-performing G7 country over the next 40 years. Based on this estimate, young Canadians entering the workforce today should expect to spend the majority of their working life in the slowest-growing economy. Is this the expectation we now have of our federal government?

Conservatives understand this is shocking, depressing and utterly unacceptable for the resource-rich nation we call home. The Liberals and their NDP colleagues are squandering our hard work and our children's future, as there is no serious plan for long-term growth in this budget. Conservatives will stand up for Canadians who want a better future, as the government's budget is not the best road ahead for our country.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I disagree with the member. I believe budget 2022-23 provides a great deal of hope for Canadians. I say that because, even when we take a look at what the member was talking about, a good portion of her time was spent on housing. I think we need to recognize that the federal government has put into place a number of initiatives to assist Canadians in being able to afford a home, but it is not just the federal government alone, and that is my question for the member.

Would she not agree that the only way we can deal with the issue of housing is to incorporate municipalities, for example the zoning requirements and the bureaucracy that is involved in that? Provincial governments provide literally tens of thousands of units in my own home province of Manitoba. It is going to require governments of all levels to start working more closely together to ensure that Canadians will be able to have affordability. As a national government, we are demonstrating our leadership on that file.

• (1225)

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, before we broke I was able to take a look at the tax-free savings home plan. It does not work. If we take it in today's dollars, using the same example as in the budget, a young couple earning \$90,000 will be able to afford a house at \$355,000. I do not know where they are going to find a house in my riding for that money, let alone in Ontario.

The Budget

If we take that same example for 2027, they will be able to afford a house worth \$500,000, hoping that interest rates stay the same. One cannot buy a house for \$500,000, so how is this plan going to help first-time homebuyers? I do not see it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, there is a lot of talk about housing in the budget. I think that is to be commended, because there are some significant investments in there. The government is talking about doubling the number of housing units built in Canada from 100,000 to 200,000. However, it is not clear where they got this 100,000 figure from, since the National Housing Council said in a study two months ago that only 35,000 units had been built since 2017, the year the national housing strategy was launched.

In this budget, the government is revamping two housing construction programs: the rental construction financing initiative and the national housing co-investment fund. These are not bad programs, but they are known for producing housing that is not particularly affordable. The government may say that it is going to build housing, but unfortunately, what is in the budget will not make it any more affordable. What does my colleague think?

[*English*]

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, I did some digging and found that in the GTA, out of seven areas, including Peel, Toronto, York, Halton, Durham, Simcoe and Dufferin County, which are considered part of the GTA, every single area has gone up. Some areas have gone up as high as 130%, such as Brock; some areas have gone up 142%, such as King.

The plan the Liberals have in place will not assist the cost of housing. When we talk to developers, it is the red tape. We need to make a plan that will help the developers ensure that the housing costs are reduced for everyone.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, the World Economic Forum is the favourite conspiracy hub of the Conservative backbench. Do members remember when Stephen Harper used to go every year to the World Economic Forum? He would bring Bev Oda, Tony Clement, James Moore and Joe Oliver. They would all go over to Davos, and that is where Stephen Harper made the announcement that they were raising the age for pensions. They were getting rid of the age for pensions and cutting off seniors in Canada. They did not do it in Canada for seniors; they went over to talk to the elite in Davos at the World Economic Forum.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague this. Why is it that the last time the Conservatives were in government they were hanging out at the World Economic Forum, cutting seniors off at age 65 from their rights, and telling that to the billionaire class at Davos?

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, I would like to reiterate the fact that the Liberals gave a one-time payment of \$500 to seniors, some of whom did not require it, instead of investigating who were the most vulnerable. That should have been the reason for giving the \$500, to ensure that the most vulnerable have the money to survive.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind members that once they pose their questions, they need to allow the other parliamentarian to answer. I know we have been away for two weeks in our constituencies and we may forget the rules. I have noticed that a few times today, and I want to remind members that everyone who is elected to the House is able to answer questions, because they would not have been elected if they were not able to, and when someone has the floor the other individuals have to give them the respect of the House.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Nepean.

• (1230)

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Fleetwood—Port Kells.

I would like to focus my talk on the following important items in the budget.

The first is Canada's critical minerals and clean industrial strategies. In my view, this is, at the same time, the biggest opportunity and the most critical need for Canada today. Daniel Yergin is an economic historian and writer about whom Time magazine said, "If there's one man whose opinion matters more than any other on global energy markets, it's Daniel Yergin." Mr. Yergin said in his latest book, "You're creating whole new supply chains that don't exist, and you're trying to do it in a very fast time. That means transitioning from Big Oil to Big Shovel."

The second is launching a world-leading Canada growth fund with \$15 billion, which will help attract \$45 billion in private capital. We need to transform our economy at speed and at scale.

The third is creating a Canadian innovation and investment agency, a market-oriented agency, one with private sector leadership and expertise similar to those that have helped countries like Finland and Israel transform themselves into global innovation leaders.

The fourth is the review of tax support to R and D. The decades-old scientific research and experimental development program has been a cornerstone of Canada's innovation strategy, which provides tax incentives to encourage Canadian businesses of all sizes in all sectors to conduct R and D.

The fifth is cutting taxes for Canada's growing small businesses, enabling more small businesses to avail themselves of the reduced federal tax rate of 9% compared to the general federal corporate tax of 15%.

The Budget

The sixth is supporting Canada's innovation clusters for innovation ecosystems for plant-based protein alternatives, ocean-based industries, advanced manufacturing, digital technologies and artificial intelligence.

Before I speak on these six items, I would like to recognize this budget as prudent and fiscally responsible. My personal political ideology is at the centre of the political spectrum, and for me being fiscally responsible is very important. I notice that our fiscal anchor, the debt-to-GDP ratio, is expected to fall to 45.1% this year, and go down to 41.5% by 2026-27, closer to the prepandemic levels. We need to go in this direction so that we have the same fiscal strength if we get hit by another disaster like the current pandemic.

Related to this is the composition of our borrowing. We had very low interest rates for a long period of time, and now they have started to trend upward. When the rates were low, our government locked in these interest rates with increasing the size of our long-term borrowing. In the decade prior to the pandemic, on average, about 20% of the bonds issued by the government were issued at maturities of 10 years or greater. Over the course of the last year, the federal government allocation of long-term bonds was about 45%, which is a good thing.

The third general observation about this budget is what I have been asking for a couple of years. I have been asking that we launch a comprehensive review of government programs. Some of the programs have been around for many years, and some were introduced in recent times as part of our urgent need to fight the pandemic. We need to evaluate if the programs are delivering what they were intended for. We need to know whether the objectives or the end results are still relevant and/or effective use of taxpayers' dollars. I have said that we need to repurpose or reallocate resources to programs that contribute to quality economic development. I am glad the budget announced the launch of a comprehensive strategic policy review to assess program effectiveness and to identify opportunities to save and reallocate resources to adapt government programs and operations to a new postpandemic reality.

• (1235)

Last, the budget dealt with housing, immigration, skills and child care. Yes, these are social policies, but what is just as important is that they are economic policies, too. I entered politics with three objectives. My first objective was affordable housing for all who need it. I am happy to note that the budget builds on the national housing strategy and addresses both affordable housing and housing affordability.

Now, I move on to development of critical minerals. As I said earlier, a big opportunity for Canada, and at the same time a critical necessity for Canada today, is developing and implementing critical minerals and clean industrial strategies. The global energy market is worth \$10 trillion, and it is undergoing tremendous change. Many significant geopolitical events during the past 100 years were due to energy market considerations, so much so that some have said many countries' foreign policies are totally based on their energy policies.

Now, another dimension has been added. What was behind the scenes is now in the front. Energy is a national security issue for all countries. It is both an opportunity and a necessity for Canada to

focus on the energy industry. The nature of the energy industry is changing. The transportation sector is going from gasoline-powered vehicles to battery-operated vehicles. Renewable energy sources, such as wind energy and solar energy, are not only becoming financially feasible on their own, but can enhance their standing with battery energy storage systems.

Right now, the battery industry is dominated by China. To secure continued availability of batteries in a future battery-dominated world, we need to have our own supply of batteries manufactured in Canada. We have one strong advantage that many countries do not have: We have the critical minerals required to manufacture batteries. Critical minerals are also central to major global industries such as green technology, health care, aerospace and computing. They are used in our phones, our computers and even our cars.

Critical minerals are already essential to the global economy and will be in even greater demand in the years to come. We are talking about nickel, lithium, cobalt, graphite, copper, rare earth elements, vanadium, tellurium, gallium, scandium, titanium, magnesium, zinc, the platinum group of metals and uranium. Canada has an abundance of these valuable critical minerals, but we need to make significant investments to make the most of these resources.

A thousand-pound electric battery requires about 500,000 pounds of earth to be moved. As Daniel Yergin said, "You're creating whole new supply chains that don't exist, and you're trying to do it in a very fast time. That means transitioning from Big Oil to Big Shovel."

In Canada, we have knowledge, expertise and a long track record of financing and developing mineral projects. We are indeed the world leaders, but we need to move fast now. We need to support the industry with incentives, which this budget proposes. More importantly, we should make the critical minerals regulation process simpler so companies seeking to invest look for a balanced and predictable regulatory environment and a collaborative approach among different orders of government. I am glad that the budget would make important investments in improving our regulatory processes.

I will touch on just one other aspect: the Canadian innovation and investment agency. Let us face the bitter truth about innovation in Canada. Our main innovation challenges are the low rate of private business investment in research and development, and the uptake of new technologies. These are key requirements for our knowledge-based quality economic growth and for creating very good-quality jobs. This agency is being modelled similar to those that have helped Finland and Israel transform themselves into global innovation leaders.

The Budget

I look forward to hearing the questions.

• (1240)

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for Nepean for raising a very important point on critical minerals.

In January, I believe, the Toronto Star and the National Post reported on Zijin Mining Group, a state-owned enterprise in China, purchasing Neo Lithium Corp. in Canada. There was no national security review of that purchase.

Moving forward, does this member believe that the Government of Canada has a responsibility to stop Chinese state-owned enterprises from purchasing Canadian companies so that Canadians can secure access to critical minerals, such as lithium, to produce batteries and cars moving forward?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, we need not only to support Canadian companies in Canada to explore and develop mineral projects, but also to support Canadian companies to go around the world to find wherever the resources are and to use Canadian expertise, Canadian knowledge and Canadian finance-raising capacity. We need to make Canadian companies go global and become world leaders.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, my Liberal colleagues never cease to amaze me.

The government is talking about making massive investments in the green transition, producing batteries and increasing investments so that Canada becomes an important player in that area. At the same time, it has just announced a project to produce one billion barrels of oil over the next 30 years, the Bay du Nord development project. On one hand, the government is setting targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% to 45% by 2030 and on the other, it has approved a one-billion barrel project.

How can my colleague reconcile those two things?

[*English*]

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, the energy industry is critical to every single country, and we have an advantage here in Canada to produce ethical energy.

As I said, energy security is becoming important to every country in the world. We need to make sure that our investments in all aspects of the energy industry, whether in natural gas or in minerals for batteries, etc., are encouraged and promoting investments to come.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, during my hon. colleague's statement, I heard of investments by this government related to housing, but I really want to outline some of the housing problems we are currently facing.

Since the Chrétien Liberal government cut CMHC's mandate to build social housing, we have been on track to have a social housing shortage. We are feeling it right now. People in my community in Edmonton Griesbach cannot get the housing they need. People are working more than one job. They are working three or four jobs just to pay rent right now.

The promise by this government to build just 6,000 new co-operatives falls well short of the necessary 300,000 units. Will this government do what is right and make sure that families have roofs over their heads?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, I am so glad that our government is putting the money where its mouth is when it comes to affordable housing. We have committed a historically large amount of funding for affordable housing.

As members know, this amount is passed on to projects in provinces and cities. In my riding of Nepean, I am so glad that we had one new affordable housing project five years back and later on, during the course of the last six years. We have two projects coming up right now under the affordable housing scheme.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, this government has set an ambitious goal of seeing all vehicles that are currently being sold in Canada be net-zero-emitting by 2035 as a commitment toward environmental sustainability and moving toward the electrification of vehicle fleets throughout Canada.

I am wondering this. Could the member comment on the importance of that in order to reach our sustainability goals?

• (1245)

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, I completely agree with my hon. colleague that it is key and critical that we move from gasoline-operated vehicles, which account, if I recall, for 40% of gas emissions, toward battery-operated vehicles. We are making investments, right from developing mines to processing minerals, manufacturing batteries and manufacturing vehicles so that there is a complete transition from gasoline-powered cars to battery-operated cars.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the occasion to comment on the 2022 federal budget includes an opportunity not only to highlight certain aspects of the government's plan that people in Fleetwood—Port Kells and indeed right across Canada will find of great value, but also an opportunity to illustrate the budget as yet another sign of a choice Canadians have in their relationship with the federal government.

Prior to 2016, we had 50 years of social and economic ideology that counted a great deal on the free market lifting us to prosperity. The results, though, have been economic and social inequities and gaps that have become more deeply rooted.

The legislation our government has shepherded through Parliament, including our budgets, has sought to address the gaps that the free market cannot or will not address. These are economic gaps between those few who have the leverage to grow their wealth much faster and the rest of us, social gaps that threaten the well-being of too many marginalized people, and gaps in the security of achieving and maintaining a quality of life that those who work hard should reasonably expect in a nation as wealthy as ours.

The Budget

The highlights of budget 2022 I will cover today are the ones chosen by independent third parties. It is all right for us, as government, to say that this or that is important, but it is really interesting to see what people at street level, and the commentators and observers, have to say. My own thoughts will focus on areas where perhaps the budget itself has been silent.

In the time available, I am going to concentrate only on the number one issue at home in Fleetwood—Port Kells: The budget's measures concerning housing.

Budget 2022 takes steps to return some semblance of equity for first-time homebuyers. Here is an area where the underregulated laissez-faire free market has left the dream of home ownership entirely out of reach for too many and has left some Canadians literally out in the cold.

The Edmonton accounting firm Hahn Lukey Houle highlighted the tax-free first home savings account, which would help first-time homebuyers save up to \$40,000 to help with their down payment. Money going into the account would be tax-free and money taken out of the account to buy the home would be tax-free.

The market could not offer something like this. Only the government could do it, and this one is. The market has been unwilling or unable to deal with practices that disadvantage homebuyers and distort prices along the way.

The Vancouver legal firm Clark Wilson, the most named firm in rankings by the publication *Business in Vancouver*, highlighted the concept of a homebuyers' bill of rights in budget 2022. Over the next year, this bill of rights would put an end to blind bidding, where buyers have no idea what has been bid by others for a property. That is a key driver of higher housing prices.

Prospective buyers would have the right to get the property inspected. Too often, it is a corner now being cut by people forced to rush some kind of a home purchase. There would be more transparency on the sale price history of properties and a new disclosure agreement for real estate agents if they happened to be working both sides of a transaction.

The bill of rights could also include a requirement for lenders to offer a six-month deferral of mortgage payments when families experience a job loss or other major life event, such as a pandemic.

Most media outlets have identified the provision in budget 2022 of a two-year prohibition in Canada on the sale of non-recreational residential property to foreign commercial enterprises and people who are not Canadian citizens or permanent residents. Exemptions to this ban are expected to include refugees, individuals in Canada on work permits and international students who could be on the path to permanent residency. That last group has been identified by people I have spoken with as one that needs to be carefully monitored, because many believe the treatment of international students creates loopholes for foreign capital to buy up real estate.

Most commentators expected something on property flipping, and the budget delivered. Any individual selling a property that has been held for less than 12 months would be subject to full taxation on any profits as business income. The measure would apply to residential properties sold on or after January 1, 2023. There would be

some exceptions to this for Canadians who sell their homes due to certain life events or hardship circumstances.

Another version of speculative trading in the Canadian housing market has to do with assignment sales. Those occur when someone reaches a deal to buy a housing unit that has not even been built yet and then flips the right to buy the unit for a profit. This can happen multiple times as a townhouse, condo or home is under construction, and each time, the ultimate cost goes up for the family who will eventually actually move in. GST will apply to all assignment sales of newly constructed or substantially renovated housing. That is going to happen very soon. It will be a week from Saturday, in fact, on May 7.

● (1250)

Storeys, a real estate news and industry publication, noted that the housing accelerator fund will apply \$4 billion in 2022 to help municipalities speed up their development permit and approval process. I know this is a huge issue in Surrey, one of Canada's fastest-growing municipalities and soon British Columbia's biggest city, but the long lag to get construction approved by city hall is driving up the prices of finished homes because labour and material costs increase over time, especially during the long lag that it takes to get something built. Add the flipping and assignment sales and the development cost charges, and the cumulative impact on prices is significant.

I have heard stories too about another area that we really have to pay attention to. During the two weeks we had away from Parliament, I had a chance to touch base with a lot of people. I heard stories of people who leveraged the lift in their own home's value to qualify for another mortgage to buy a revenue property. Then, using the rise in that property's value, they got another mortgage for another property and so on. Is this actually going on? It would be worth finding out, because it sounds like the whole thing is a gigantic bubble, and if it pops due to mortgage rate increases, the banks could end up owning a lot of property.

The Budget

Then there are trusts. The Globe and Mail, in an article focused on money laundering, noted the still unresolved issue of large, suspicious transfers between lawyers' trust accounts. These transfers are shielded from reporting requirements that are in place for banks, accountants, real estate companies and securities dealers. Even casinos have to report, but lawyers do not. In 2000, the federal government passed a law that allowed FINTRAC to carry out warrantless searches of law firms and seize materials. The Federation of Law Societies lawyered up, and by 2015 it was ultimately deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, which told us to go back and improve the language. One would hope an improved version of that legislation is somewhere on someone's to-do list.

More broadly, trusts are perceived as offering perfectly legal loopholes to avoid taxes and obscure the real ownership of property. Watchers at street level say there is a fairness problem here. While budget 2022 aims to tackle the long-standing need to identify the beneficial ownership of real estate through a public registry, right now it is only going to apply to federally chartered companies. This is a good start, but for the provinces it is voluntary, a gap that knowledgeable people say needs to be closed.

Our government is attacking affordability issues that have been allowed to grow and mutate for decades. Fixing them is going to take time plus the talent and commitment to adjust and refine measures as we move forward. That said, all of us here should not underestimate the talent and commitment out there in the community to find ways around any step we take. This is more than a high finance or sound legal game of whack-a-mole. To the people faced with no prospect of qualifying for a mortgage, much less actually owning a home, this is not a game. It is in their interest that we get to the heart of a question our citizens ask at every election: What should government's role be when things are tilted against people?

Just over a year ago, former Bank of Canada and Bank of England governor Mark Carney spoke about what the role of government should be if Canadians believe in free enterprise but with a social conscience. Mr. Carney called our free markets “the most powerful instruments we’ve ever created. Their energy and dynamism can be...directed to serve great purposes, but the market is also indifferent to human suffering, and it can be blind to our greatest needs.” That’s why politicians who worship the market tend to deliver policies that hurt people, and those who default to *laissez-faire*, or who leave the free market to its own devices, leave us unprepared for the future. Put simply, as he goes on, “Markets don’t have values, people do. And it’s our responsibility to close the gap between what we value and what the market prices. That’s the work of politics.” Or, in a view well represented in budget 2022, it should be and it will be.

• (1255)

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Speaker, I enjoy sitting with my hon. colleague on the fisheries committee, and I have a fisheries-related question for him.

I am looking at the minister's mandate letter, and it says, “and develop a conservation strategy to restore and rebuild wild Atlantic salmon populations and their habitats.” However, I studied the budget, and I did not see any reference to Atlantic salmon whatsoever.

I just came back from two weeks in my riding, and I had a quite a few questions asked of me on this. People are wondering why Atlantic salmon were left out of the budget. We want more conservation and we want salmon enhancement.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Madam Speaker, that is no small question, and indeed it is an important one. We cannot forget that the budget is a snapshot in time. It is like a movie going by at 64 frames a second. There are things that were put in place beforehand and things that will follow as the dollars stacked up in any given ministry are allocated according to the needs. As we know, those needs will shift and change.

The member, another one over here from the fisheries committee and I are all going to get together to talk about the science. I think we share the view that the science either is not what we need or is not being used the right way. One way or another, we are going to get to the bottom of this and cast a way forward that would make the difference the member is looking for.

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. However, there is one thing that he did not mention, and that is the “Agri-vert”, or agri-green, program. We are very disappointed.

Agriculture is very important in my riding of Laurentides—Labelle and during the pandemic we realized just how valuable our farmers really are.

People on the ground wanted to see a better agri-green program.

I would like the member to explain why the government planned for other types of investments in its budget rather than giving farmers what they wanted.

[English]

Mr. Ken Hardie: Madam Speaker, the budget can be faulted for not including a lot of different things. There are only so many lines and there is only so much room, but that does not mean to say that things are not going to happen.

Our government has laid the foundation for a very strong agricultural sector, with the assistance that it has needed in various areas, including the whole business of sustainability in the environment. We are committed, by the way, to supply management, which I know is a huge force not just in the economics of farming, but also in the strength of communities where farmers live.

While I cannot speak directly to the point that our hon. colleague raises, I would say that it is worth a look and is worth following, and where we can make improvements on what is planned, we will do that.

The Budget

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member mentioned that things are tilted against the people. One big thing that is tilted against the people is the distribution of wealth in Canada: 1% of our population controls 25% of the wealth in this country. Past tax measures, both Liberal and Conservative, have failed to do anything to this total inequity.

I am wondering why the Liberal government refuses to bring in a wealth tax in this country to really turn this ship around and get the wealth of Canada properly distributed so that everybody can share in this economy and its wealth.

• (1300)

Mr. Ken Hardie: Madam Speaker, therein lies one of the key shortcomings of the NDP's approach to things: There is no simple solution here. If we bring in a wealth tax, the next sound we will hear is the sound of wealth fleeing Canada to friendlier places. Whatever has to happen may be along the lines of some of the things that French economist Thomas Piketty has been reporting on, and there are others. There is a lot of thought going into this. Our work to create an international base tax rate of 15%, for instance, is a start. It is not the complete story, but a good start.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to discuss what disappoints us the most, as Conservatives, in the wake of the tabling of what could be described as a very bad budget on the Thursday before Easter break. I remember a time when the Conservatives were accused of acting in bad faith for tabling bills or budgets just before a long break. The transparency of this Liberal government leaves something to be desired.

We are disappointed because this is a document that shows once again that the government sees Canada's finances through rose coloured glasses. Instead of focusing on returning to a balanced budget, it is offering a host a new spending to fund new programs in order to buy—indeed, buy—the NDP's support.

We knew long before the pandemic that a budget does not balance itself. The Liberal government was running a deficit long before the pandemic. It had to add to the deficit during the pandemic, a necessary move that we agree with. However, the economy is now firing on all cylinders and government revenues have drastically increased, in large part because of inflation and the increased cost of energy products such as oil and gas.

The Liberals have posted another deficit and plan to keep us in a deficit for five years, which is absolutely ridiculous. The government will claim that the deficit will help stimulate the economy and that the additional revenue generated by inflation will cancel out the deficit and reduce the debt. It will once again trot out the infamous debt-to-GDP ratio it loves to talk about every chance it gets.

However, there are big differences between the current deficit and past deficits in response to economic crises, such as the Great Depression, the Second World War or even the 2008-09 financial crisis, which was comparable to the crisis in the 1930s.

A lot of money went towards building sustainable infrastructure during and after the war. The governments at the time had the fore-

sight to spend when unemployment was high and construction costs were much lower. This money was recovered over time, and much of the infrastructure built then is still used today, such as the many bridges that cross rivers all across the country.

The previous Conservative government made similar expenditures through its recovery plan, which helped build some now-essential infrastructure in our communities, in particular in rural areas. I was there from 2009 to 2011. People today are benefiting from the Harper governments' investment in our communities' infrastructure, as will future generations.

Fundamentally though, all the new spending in the current Minister of Finance's budget will go to new government programs, programs the NDP clearly demanded.

As if the Liberals did not already have enough on their plate, now they are getting involved in areas under provincial jurisdiction, such as childcare, dental care and so on. These are things under provincial jurisdiction, but the government will be investing billions more and imposing conditions, and the Canadian provinces are really not happy about it.

Here is the difference: Infrastructure is built once and its cost is amortized over a long period, with the relative weight of the expense diminishing over time. In contrast, a new program means annual funding that will vary and not shrink over time, as we have seen lately.

These costs can only go up, and there is no doubt they will rise with inflation. Plus, does anyone truly believe that early childhood educators and dentists will not eventually demand wage and fee increases, with inflation at 6.7%? Of course they will.

This budget has not even been approved yet, and spending estimates are already out of date. Interest rates are going up too; the Bank of Canada now has no choice but to raise them to fight inflation. Well over a year ago, we asked the government to make sure interest rates were appropriate. Who would have believed that, in the space of just a few months, the key interest rate would rise from 0.25% to 1%? Hold on tight, because it is expected to hit 2% in the coming months.

• (1305)

New programs are being created that are not funded by current taxes, but by deficits. It is borrowed money that will have to be paid back later. Inevitably, there are costs associated with this. The interest costs are projected to be staggering for the federal government now and in the future. Furthermore, the interest costs are equivalent to the increase that the provinces are asking for in health transfers every year. Imagine that.

Of course, surveys are being done. The media conducts surveys, all the political parties conduct surveys and the government conducts surveys. What comes up most often? The cost of living, the cost of living, and the cost of living.

The Budget

That is what we are experiencing right now. A visit to the dentist is expensive. That costs a few hundred dollars, but there is nothing as expensive as the cost of housing for the young and the not-so-young who do not already have a house in their name.

The government may well claim that the staggering price increases experienced in recent years are a global and inevitable phenomenon. The Minister of Finance's defeatist attitude was evident in her budget speech in the House on the Thursday before Easter, as well as in the media interviews in the hours that followed.

Because the federal Liberals have been mismanaging the economy since 2015, real estate has become the only attractive economic sector for investors. It has come to the point where between 30% and 40% of homes in Canada are not owned by people who actually want to live in them themselves, but rather by individuals who already have a home and want them as investment properties.

I just got back from a trip to western Canada, to Jasper and Banff, an area where there are a lot of construction workers, especially for the Trans Mountain pipeline. These workers are given extra money for housing, because it costs \$3,500 a month just to rent a room in someone's basement. It is completely ridiculous. It is crazy. This is out of control.

Budgets do not seem to acknowledge how absurd this situation has become. The average price of a house in Canada is now over \$850,000. That is the average price. It is not uncommon to see houses in some places, even quite modest houses, priced at between \$1.5 million and \$2 million. I am not talking about posh neighbourhoods in London, New York or Singapore. I am talking about the suburbs of Toronto.

Many young people from generation Y and generation Z have no hope of owning a home. Time is of the essence if they even hope to have place to call their own, to pay off a mortgage and then diversify their savings so that they can retire at age 65. Contrary to popular belief, a home is not a retirement plan. The walls are not edible. Selling a home does not guarantee that there is something cheaper out there to live in. Using a reverse mortgage essentially means the home you worked for your entire life goes directly to the banks instead of to your children when you die.

There seems to be no sense of urgency on the Liberal side, and even less so on the part of the NDP who support them, to address this problem. In some cases, they even try to normalize the situation. That is clear when we look at the ceiling for the new FHSA to help individuals access home ownership. By saving \$8,000 a year for five years, they can reach \$40,000. Imagine what saving \$40,000 means for young people who earn on average \$50,000 a year. We can agree that it is very hard to save \$8,000 with the current cost of living. That represents a 5% down payment on an \$800,000 home.

Does the government think it is normal and acceptable that a young person or a couple today is starting out \$760,000 in the red because homes cost \$800,000 on average? The government estimates that it takes five years to save up a 5% down payment. How can it expect these people to repay the remaining 95% within 25 years?

All financial planners agree that an acceptable price for a house is about three times the buyer's salary. According to Statistics Canada, the average salary in Canada in 2019 was \$51,740. Multiply that by three and we get roughly \$155,000. Try to find a \$155,000 house in Canada. There are not many left. There are some in my riding, but I will say that they are not very big houses.

I have not finished my speech, but unfortunately my time is up. I hope I will be able to answer my colleagues' questions. The government has totally mortgaged the future of today's young people. It is appalling. All the debt that the government has racked up over the past seven years is going to have an impact on young people's lives and future.

• (1310)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, when the member makes reference to the issue of deficits, one of the things that has to be factored in is the fact that, over the last number of years, yes, the government has spent a great deal of money. We spent a great deal of money to support Canadians and small businesses, whether it was millions of people who found themselves without a paycheque or literally hundreds of thousands of businesses and others that needed supports such as wage subsidies and rent subsidies.

By doing that, Canada was in a much better position to be able to recover from the pandemic. We are seeing that in terms of the job growth, as our economy continues to do better than any of the other G7 economies when it comes to job recovery.

I am wondering if the member opposite has any remorse or regret, given that the Conservative party actually supported the many expenditures that we made, the billions and billions of dollars.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, as I said in my speech, like the government, we had no choice but to support the pandemic spending. Obviously, we are not disputing that. We think that the government did far too much, but that is another issue.

Then there is the matter of young people. I am a businessman, and I have some young employees. They are not getting paid \$80,000, \$100,000 or \$200,000 a year, but these young workers want to earn a living and buy a home.

Here is the problem with the deficits. Other members will tell me that the government is not a business, and I agree. However, the fact remains that, if I applied the current government's way of thinking and logic to my business, I would have gone bankrupt a long time ago. It makes no sense.

The country was in a period of economic growth when the current government took office. There was no deficit when this government came to power. In 2015, the budget was balanced. Mr. Trudeau promised to run three small deficits of \$10 billion, and now I do not even know how big the deficit is.

The Budget

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I remind the hon. member not to use the name of the Prime Minister or other members in the House.

The hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle.

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Madam Speaker, the government started out by saying that now is not the time to talk about health transfers, yet the budget it presented seems more like a postpandemic budget.

Considering that Quebec and the provinces are demanding an unconditional transfer and considering that my colleague is quite familiar with the situation in Quebec, what does he think about the proposal to hold a health summit, given that we are clearly in the postpandemic period.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Laurentides—Labelle. She is right to point out that the government can hold as many summits as it wants, but the provincial governments, through the Council of the Federation, have demanded an increase in health transfers.

The Conservative Party promised to unconditionally increase health transfers during the last election campaign.

Based on this budget and on the federal government's attitude towards the provinces, especially with respect to health, it seems clear that the Liberals want to increase services through their agreements with the NDP, but that they also want to dictate how that money will be spent.

That is not how open federalism works. That is not how a government works with the provinces.

• (1315)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech.

One of the most popular NDP proposals during the last election campaign was that people should have access to dental care, meaning that the government should foot the bill.

What does my colleague say to people in his riding who do not have the means or are too poor to afford a dentist? What does he tell them about the fact that his party is opposed to the poorest and the middle class having access to government-paid dental care?

I do not want to hear him simply say that it is too expensive, when two weeks ago, he was in favour of tripling spending for the Canadian military.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup has just enough time for a brief reply.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, my answer will be very brief.

Considering the NDP's showing in my riding, I would hazard a guess that it was not such a great idea.

[*English*]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am really pleased to get up this afternoon, on the first day back

after a couple of weeks back in our ridings, to speak about the budget. It reminds me of that old adage that people of integrity expect to be believed, and when they are not, time will prove them right.

Time is certainly proving us right on predictions that were made a year and a half to two years ago, when the money-printing machines were going at full force to provide the types of supports that were needed for COVID. There were predictions on this side at that time, and right across the spectrum economists were predicting that inflationary pressures would begin to increase. We are now seeing those inflationary pressures affecting Canadian families in a way that they have not for a generation.

I have been in my riding for the last couple of weeks, as all members have, and received emails, phone calls and text messages from the people of Barrie—Innisfil, who are quite concerned about the inflationary pressures that are happening within my community and in communities across Canada. This morning I happened to be watching the finance committee, and the Governor of the Bank of Canada, Tiff Macklem, was on there. He was asked a point-blank question by our shadow minister of finance: “Can we still consider inflation as transitory?” His answer was no.

We are entering into a period of permanent inflation, it seems, and we know, based on Statistics Canada, that last month it was at 6.7%. We can think of the impact that has on Canadian families and the families I represent in Barrie—Innisfil. The price of everything is skyrocketing. The prices of gas, home heating, consumables, groceries, commodities and the necessities of life are increasing dramatically right across this country, and the expectation, according to the Governor of the Bank of Canada, is that this inflationary period we are in is going to be lasting for a long time. This is going to further impact affordability for families, further erode their retirement savings and really dramatically impact their ability to pay for things, especially at a time when they can least afford them.

We heard, even in the last couple of weeks, in some of the surveys that came out, about how Canadians are desperately clinging to affordability. In many circumstances, over half of Canadians do not have enough money at the end of the month to pay for the things they need, the necessities of life.

This budget actually increases government spending. There are certain things that are sure in life, and the one thing we can count on is that this budget is going to pass. Because of the coalition between the NDP and the Liberals, the New Democrats have signalled that not only are they going to support this budget, but they are also going to support subsequent budgets.

We can sit here and criticize, and I have some things that I want to bring up specifically with respect to the budget as it relates to local issues in my riding of Barrie—Innisfil, but when we want to get an assessment of what people think about this budget, we can go to the experts.

The Budget

People do not have to listen to us; they do not have to listen to the government or the other opposition parties. They can listen to what respected economists are saying about this budget and the impact it is going to have on Canadians. Don Drummond, who is a former senior Department of Finance official, former TD Bank chief economist and current Queen's professor, said this:

If I were in the business world I'd be extremely depressed, because we are at some point going to have to turn to how we fund all this spending, and it would seem the go-to funding source is corporate income tax.

It was the first seven words, "If I were in the business world", that caught the eye of another expert, who said:

The problem is, we are all "in the business world," whether we like it or not—as workers, consumers, and taxpayers. Tax business, and you tax almost everything we consume and most of the services we depend on.

Those services will be hardest hit as a result of this. We have spoken about this many times. The impact of this type of continued spending is that taxes go up and services get cut. It is that simple, especially entering into a period in which we have higher interest rates. Even the—

• (1320)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want a little order in the House. I would ask members who are having conversations other than listening to the member to take their conversations outside and allow the member the respect of having the floor without being disturbed.

The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleagues' passionate discourse on this and the fact that they were more or less agreeing with what I was saying. When the Liberals were out selling the budget and travelling around Canada contributing to greenhouse gas emissions, the Parliamentary Budget Officer issued a report on Friday that was quite troubling with respect to the budget. He flags several downside risks in the recent federal budget, the biggest being big-ticket campaign promises that have yet to make an appearance in the government's fiscal forecast.

What they've forecasted is in the budget, but there are things that are not forecasted that are going to cause some significant costs later on. The PBO's largest concern is expenditures looming outside of the budget, including some of the Liberal campaign pledges and lobbying by provinces for big increases to health care transfers.

On the spending side, he said there could be a significant delta. This is the Parliamentary Budget Officer, Yves Giroux. He went on to say some of those election promises were slated to start up in the current fiscal year, most notably the commitment to increase annual payments to seniors receiving the guaranteed income supplement. He said many of these costs, including a promised increase to Canadian mental health transfers, do not appear in the budget. Universal pharmacare, which is of course a large part of the NDP-Liberal alliance, could cost billions of dollars a year. The Liberals pulled up short of a commitment to a full-blown program during the campaign, but the agreement struck with the NDP last month says that the government will make continuing progress toward such a program. However, there is no forecasted cost to that. Those costs will come up later on.

When the Parliamentary Budget Officer is warning about this particular budget, then I think all Canadians should heed those warnings. As I said earlier, I spent the last couple of weeks in the riding, and I heard from a lot of people. I know the Liberals' argument, because I have heard it a couple of times this morning, has to do with some of the geopolitical problems happening around the world being a cause of current inflation, whether it is supply chain issues or others. However, as I said at the onset, this was predicted to happen when the money printing presses were going at full steam a year and a half to two years ago. Even then, people were concerned about the cost of living. Some emails I received August 25, 2021, almost eight months ago, begged me to do something about this, if not for them, then for their future children. They say the government needs to fix this broken situation as it relates to housing.

One from August 25 reads, "I'm not sure who I would send this letter to, but I wish to express my concern with current rental and housing shortages in Barrie and surrounding areas." This is a serious issue and many people are struggling as a result. I know there are billions allocated toward housing, but there have been billions allocated in the past, and we have not seen any measurable increases.

There are affordability projects right now that are waiting for approval from the government. I wrote a letter to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion three or four months ago. Still, no decision has been made for an already existing project that is waiting to go through the rapid housing initiative. It is to be a joint partnership between Simcoe County and what we hope would be the province and the federal government, but we have not heard anything at this point. There are a lot of announcements, but the list is long.

The emails and texts about the anxiety and the affordability crisis people are facing right now are long. Adding on billions and billions of dollars for more long-term, unsustainable programs, from the affordability standpoint, is awfully difficult for Canadians.

The last thing I will speak to is my profound disappointment about Lake Simcoe. In 2019, Conservatives were promised \$30 million for the re-establishment of the Lake Simcoe cleanup fund. Just two or three days before the election in the advance polls, the then deputy prime minister, the now finance minister, came to the shores of Lake Simcoe promising \$40 million for the reinstatement of the Lake Simcoe fund. Just a couple of days after the election, my colleagues and I wrote a letter to the Prime Minister about it.

The Budget

In this budget, only \$19.7 million was allocated, and it is not for direct funding for Lake Simcoe. It is to be spread across the country. There was \$60 million spent to clean up Lake Simcoe. We saw measurable improvements. I am extremely disappointed that the commitment made in 2019 was not lived up to in this budget. We are going to continue to fight for Lake Simcoe.

• (1325)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member opposite made reference to the issue of taxation. Within the budget, it is being proposed that there would be a tax, for example, for our banks, and there is an expectation of over \$1 billion in 2021. I believe it is somewhere around 15%.

Could he provide his thoughts regarding that? Does he believe there are exceptions where government should be applying some sort of a tax increase?

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, it is an absolutely absurd assertion. Banks pay their fair share. Businesses pay their fair share. Individuals pay their fair share. I just did my taxes, and believe me, I am paying my fair share.

The problem is the banks are simply going to pass that cost on to consumers. Let us be realistic about this. If the hon. member actually thinks the banks are going to pay any additional taxes charged by the government and not pass that on to consumers, adding to the existing burden consumers, taxpayers and people in my riding are already facing, then he is sadly naive. He is sadly mistaken if he does not think that is going to happen.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his intervention. I would like to know what he thinks of the agricultural component of this budget. In his speech, he stated that people need to know where they are going and they need a certain predictability. That is what the farming community needs, but unfortunately the government continues to disappoint with respect to the NAFTA compensation. The government keeps announcing that the compensation is coming within the year. People have been waiting a long time. This issue must be resolved.

This type of unwarranted insecurity is affecting the next generation of farmers. It was announced that Bill C-208 would be reviewed. This bill was democratically passed in the House. This creates insecurity in the sector and, as a result, tax experts are recommending—and this is important—that our farmers delay transfers, because they are concerned about what the Liberals will do. I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about that.

[English]

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, this is the problem with passing that on to the farms and the legislation that started years ago under the Liberal government. There are many challenges within the agriculture sector that farmers are facing. I happen to come from a large agricultural area. The carbon tax is causing problems, especially for grain heaters.

On fertilizer costs, I just spoke with one of our local farmers, Larry Kell, last week. There is an increase in fertilizer costs, the

35% surcharge, and they have already prepaid for a lot of this fertilizer, but there is a shortage of fertilizer right now. It is going to cause a major problem for the agricultural sector. There is a lot to be concerned about.

There are three things that we need in this country: energy security, food security and biopharma security. Those are the things that we need to focus on, especially at this time, given the geopolitical crises happening around the world.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I enjoy working with the hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil, and I particularly agreed with his comments on Lake Simcoe.

He cited the Parliamentary Budget Officer. The PBO's most important report over the last few years cited that \$25 billion goes to overseas tax havens each year. That means over the course of the dismal decade of the Harper government, we lost a quarter of a trillion dollars. That is \$250 billion. It could have been applied to support people, seniors, families, students and a whole range of Canadians.

Why were the Conservatives so dismal in their treatment of the public finances that they left \$250 billion to go to overseas tax havens?

• (1330)

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, in the latest report of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, which I know my colleague would have read, it calls into question the ability, and it is a fair question and I say this respectfully, of the CRA to actually go after these tax dodgers, as the NDP calls them. There is still a problem that exists there that needs to be addressed.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise today to speak on yet another budget from this administration. Since 2015, we have seen budgets and legislation that, in many ways, have been there to invest in real people, economic growth, and a clean future. From day one, this government has ultimately been there to support Canada's middle class. At the start of and during the pandemic, there were budgets to support Canadians through that very difficult time and ultimately to now.

Before I go any further, I will be sharing my time with the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

I want to pick up on a few points that were raised already today in the debate. I am very sensitive to the issue of the cost of housing. It is of great concern for me and, I believe, for all members of this House. As we serve our constituents, we want to provide them the assurance that all politicians, at all different levels, are in fact listening.

The Budget

I put this in the form of a question earlier today to a member from the Conservative Party. When we talk about the issue of housing, I believe the national government has been playing a very strong national leadership role. Never before have we seen a national government invest as much as this government has into housing. There are a number of programs. I often see the Minister of Housing in the province of Manitoba announcing yet another program, whether it is a specific program where a project is being announced, or a more general announcement that everyone could benefit from, such as the benefit for first-time homebuyers, where there was a doubling of the tax credit.

The multi-generational home renovation tax credit is one that I really would encourage people to get a better understanding of. I believe it is around \$7,500. That program is there to encourage people to construct live-in suites for family members. I can see how, in many ways, that would be of great value and benefit for many of the residents of Winnipeg North. We have seen legislation and budgetary actions to deal with issues such as people abroad purchasing homes but not living in them. There will be a special tax in one situation and, in another, an outright ban.

The point is this: As we have made these investments, we have also worked with municipalities and provinces to encourage a holistic approach when dealing with the issue of housing, because as much as the national government can provide that strong federal leadership, we need to recognize that the way to overcome these types of prices is with the different levels of government working together. All of us have a role to play.

A local city or municipality, for example, can zone properties to make more lots available for individuals to acquire. Today, in the city of Winnipeg, if one tries to purchase a lot, it is virtually impossible because it has to be done through the developers. Allocating 150 acres, 300 acres or 400 acres in a municipality like Winnipeg would go a long way to making lots available. In order to increase the supply of housing we need to recognize that it is not just Ottawa that has to play a role, and that is a good example.

• (1335)

I say that because I believe that what we have seen over the years is a national government that has recognized the importance of working with other jurisdictions. We have seen excellent examples of that. The CPP comes to mind and the increase for the first time in many, many years. It was one of the first actions we took a number of years ago.

With respect to the health care accords, today we have record amounts of transfers going over to the provinces. Provinces are always going to want more money when it comes to health care, but let us recognize that no government in the history of Canada has given as much money to our provinces and territories toward health care. We did get health care accords with the individual provinces.

Let us look at the most recent huge development and financial commitment in terms of a national child care program. There are even, from what I understand, some Conservative leadership candidates who actually support this initiative. It is not all of them, so we do not know where the Conservative Party will land on this issue yet, but the bottom line is that it took the different levels of government to work with Ottawa in order to make it happen. The minister

responsible did a fantastic job in terms of pulling it together and making it happen.

I say that because, when we went into the pandemic, we saw provinces, municipalities and Canadians as a whole take a team Canada approach to taking on the coronavirus, and we worked together. As a result of working together, what we see is that Canada is probably, I would ultimately argue, one of the best countries getting out of the pandemic. One just needs to look at the job numbers. Job creation and economic growth are important. When we look at how Canada is faring, we see the unemployment rate is around 5.5%. We would have to go back generations to get that kind of unemployment rate, and that is where we are today. We were able to do that because there was a high sense of co-operation taking place.

The government, in particular the Prime Minister, has been very much focused on Canada and how we can make our country a better place for all. We have seen much attention given to the issue of inequities in taxation policies. We have seen a deficit of social programming, and we now have a Prime Minister who is committed to addressing some of that.

We have seen expenditures in things such as infrastructure. We have seen areas of our society, such as seniors, where there have been historic amounts of investment to ensure that, for example, our seniors have a better standard of living. These are the types of programs that have made a difference in a very real and tangible way. It is about investing in people, in economic growth and in a clean future.

When I think of our environment, I think of recent announcements by the government, in co-operation with the private sector and other levels of government, in regard to zero-emission vehicles being manufactured here in Canada. We are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars combined between different levels of government and the private sector in order to ensure that we are on the right road in terms of investing in zero-emission vehicles. We see that in terms of public policy, whether from our Minister of Environment or our Minister of Natural Resources, who are saying the same thing in all the different regions of our country.

• (1340)

This is a government that recognizes the true value of having a budget that provides hope, and budget 2022 does just that. It is a budget we can all be proud of. It deals with all the different sectors, whether it is business or individuals, to ensure that we will be able to continue to grow our economy and support the many different social programs that are there and that Canadians value.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I guess where I am coming from is that to acknowledge that everybody is happy with the budget, that it is a great budget and that things are going great is pretty insulting to the thousands of emails that I have from constituents.

I am curious to know, with housing, if the member opposite thinks the housing program is so great, why has the Prime Minister acknowledged that young homebuyers should just give up on home ownership?

The Budget

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the member gets that, because that is just not true. In fact, if we were to compare Stephen Harper's approach to national housing, we would find that it is lacking. Let us compare what we have done with regard to housing over the last seven years to what Stephen Harper had done. That might open the member's eyes to the reality that we finally have strong national leadership and a government that is prepared to do whatever it can to support Canadians' desire to become homeowners, and to demonstrate leadership. We have done that. We now need to see more of the provincial governments and municipal governments coming to the table to come up with ways in which we can expand the housing supply.

I think this is one of the challenges we will have to deal with. It means governments of different political stripes and different levels of government coming together and seeing how we can make it even more affordable.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for my colleague opposite. However, at some point, we must speak frankly. In his speech, he stated, and I am tempted to say he had the nerve to state, that the Liberals made historic investments in the well-being of seniors. Did I understand correctly?

They stubbornly refuse to increase old age pensions starting at the age of 65. I would like my colleague to correct his statement, and I am giving him the opportunity to do so. Seniors are waiting for the Liberals to take action on their behalf and to help them weather this pandemic.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, whether it is lowering the age for OAS from 67 to 65, or whether it is the dramatic increases that we saw for people collecting GIS in the first couple of years, to the last couple of years, when we have seen a 10% increase to OAS, not to mention the one-time payments that were provided during the pandemic and the hundreds of millions of dollars that were given to non-profit organizations in order to support seniors activities, programs such as New Horizons, I would challenge the member opposite to show me any government that has done more in recent generations to support our seniors in Canada.

We have a caucus that is committed to listening to seniors and being there in a very tangible way, and I look forward to continuing to be very progressive on the needs of our seniors going forward, including long-term care standardization and what we can do there, issues of mental health and so much more.

● (1345)

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government is increasing reliance on temporary foreign workers, without any of the protections that come along with that, including those that are currently protecting permanent resident status workers. This makes them extremely vulnerable, and exploitation is critically high. The Auditor General recently found that federal inspections for the health and safety of temporary foreign workers have actually gotten worse, especially since the Auditor General had asked the department to do better since 2020.

Will the government replace its overreliance on temporary foreign workers with permanent residence programs so that migrant workers, temporary residents, permanent residents and Canadians alike can negotiate better wages and working conditions to ensure that they actually get to the place they need to be to have prosperity in this country?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I suspect that if we were to take a look at the 10 years in which Stephen Harper was the prime minister and the number of temporary workers who were converted into permanent residents, we would find that in the last few years we have more than exceeded what he did in 10 years.

More and more, we are looking at ways in which temporary foreign workers could ultimately land. With the idea of being able to study in Canada, if one is good enough to study in Canada or good enough to work in Canada, one should be able to land in Canada. That is an approach that many of my caucus colleagues believe in, and we are working toward that in a very diligent way.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say good afternoon to all my hon. colleagues as we return from our two-week constituency period.

It is always a pleasure to rise in the House to speak on the issues that are important to the residents of my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge and all Canadians, the budget or our government's fiscal plan being the most important. I am an MP who represents one of the most economically dynamic areas in the country. The city of Vaughan is home to over 13,000 businesses.

As someone who worked in the global financial markets in New York City and Toronto and spent time overseas in Europe for over 20 years before entering public service, and, more importantly, as an individual who has ingrained in him the values of hard work, sacrifice and planning prudently for the future, there is nothing more important or even indicative for me on how we lay out a plan to grow the economy, create jobs and ensure a brighter future for the benefit of all Canadians.

The Budget

Several weeks prior to budget 2022 being presented and prior to the invasion of Ukraine occurring, I authored an editorial entitled “The Path Forward for the Canadian Economy?” In that piece, and in the introduction, I wrote the following: “Canadian policy-makers have a generational opportunity to move forward with policies that have a clear goal, to raise the standard of living of all Canadians through robust and sustained economic growth. Our singular focus should be on long-term investments that increase the productive capacity of our economy by providing the tools that Canadian workers and businesses require in a post-pandemic world. In my view, a post-pandemic world will be characterized by a rise in economic nationalism, increased global competition, an acceleration of the adoption of digital technologies underlying the importance of connectivity, a sustained withdrawal of global fiscal and monetary stimulus, and a renewed focus on energy security.” Yes, that is a renewed focus on global energy security. “Policy-makers must also consider a reshaped geopolitical world, including the United States responding to the competitive challenges of China, a renewed and interwoven EU, and a post-Brexit U.K.”

As a long-time student of economics, economic history and the global financial markets, this economist was again proven correct in his views. On energy security, my comments were on a renewed focus on global energy security. Frankly, the world needs more of Canada's energy resources, both renewable and non-renewable, and Canada's know-how or innovation. We are blessed as a country with both the natural resources and the innovative know-how to play a critical role in the global energy industry. Frankly, the world will need both renewable and non-renewable energy for years to come.

After a thorough examination of budget 2022, I characterized it as fiscally responsible, grounded, measured, and a demonstration of what I would state is responsible leadership for the uncertain times we are dealing with by addressing the challenges and opportunities we are facing as a country. Budget 2022 continues to address major issues around affordability, which we know to date have been driven by COVID and the impact from the war in Ukraine, and we know that affordability is a paramount concern for Canadians.

We should all applaud the signed and delivered national day care and early learning accords that the Deputy Prime Minister reached with all provinces and territories. We know that, in less than a year, this agreement will save my family and tens of thousands of families across Ontario, and hundreds of thousands of families across the country, literally thousands of dollars and in the longer term be a positive for our economic growth by increasing participation rates for women in the labour force.

As chair of the Liberal housing affordability caucus in my first term as an MP, it is great to see this budget introduce a three-pillar approach to tackle housing affordability: increasing the supply of housing, namely through the \$4-billion housing accelerator fund; providing an opportunity for first-time homebuyers to accumulate savings to purchase a home through the tax-free new home savings account; stemming speculation in the housing market, and introducing a number of measures, including a homebuyers' bill of rights, a ban on foreign investment in housing activity, an anti-flipping tax and taxing assignment sales.

My riding and the city of Vaughan are home to Canada's largest housing builders in the country, the ones who employ tens of thousands directly and indirectly support hundreds of thousands of jobs. I speak with them often, and I visit them often. They are ready to do their part to accelerate new home construction across the country and build the homes that Canadians could raise their families in. We as a government will work with all pertinent levels of government and the private sector to ensure that it happens in the years to come.

● (1350)

Budget 2022, under the guise of reasonable leadership, also continues to take large steps forward to embrace the opportunity of the largest economic transformation the world has gone through since the industrial revolution: going green and moving to a low-carbon economy. We must remain laser-focused on this transformation, which will be led by innovation and driven by private capital. It will not only be an industrial transformation, but, I would argue, will be combined with the digital transformation that also is occurring. As chair of the Liberal auto caucus, over \$515 billion of private capital is currently being put to use in this electric vehicle transformation. The opportunity is there. We will work with industry, and we are doing so with the number of great announcements that have been made, to ensure these jobs are created right here in Canada.

Budget 2022 also deals with Canada's productivity issue. It is only through raising our country's productivity levels that will we increase each individual Canadian's well-being or standard of living. On this front, the budget puts forth three pillars, which together will drive a stronger economic future for Canadians. They are investing in people, investing in the green transition and investing in innovation and productivity. Along with that was the government's announcement to launch a world-leading Canada growth fund, with an initial capitalization of \$15 billion, and the creation of Canada's innovation and investment agency to strengthen Canada's R and D story, which continues to lag its G7 partners. In addition, there is the announced review of the SR and ED program, which I have thought about and called for for a long time. It is long overdue and it needs to undergo an extensive cost-benefit analysis.

In my editorial, I put forward four themes for policy-makers to ensure that we raise the standard of living for all Canadians or, more simply, that we continue to strengthen the middle class and help those wanting to join the middle class.

The Budget

First, we must strengthen our framework to incentivize Canadian business investment and innovation to raise productivity levels, which continue to lag our principal trading partner, the United States.

Second, we must provide Canadians with the ongoing opportunity to upgrade their skills, particularly in a highly changing technological world. In budget 2022, as I and many others on this side of the aisle have advocated for, the labour mobility tax deduction of \$4,000 for tradespeople will be implemented. We will also double the union training and innovation program to \$84.2 million over four years, which will help create over 3,500 apprenticeship spots in the skilled trades.

My riding is home to the training centres of LiUNA Local 183 and the Carpenters Union. They train the next generation of tradespeople to build our communities and critical infrastructure. We, as a government, have been and will be with them every step of the way. I look forward to addressing the CBTU this evening as it opens its conference here in Ottawa and meeting with many of its members, as I do frequently.

Third, digitization of government services must be the focus of all levels of government. The pandemic accelerated many trends in the digitization space.

Fourth, Canadians expect their government to be a solid financial or fiscal manager. With that, I asked the government to undertake a full program expenditure review in my editorial and redirect savings to higher-impact programs. It is positive to see the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance introduce a fiscal framework where we continue to see the debt-to-GDP ratio declining. The government will also begin a program expenditure review or, as noted, a strategic policy review, which is very prudent and I argue absolutely necessary. The strategic policy review will target \$6 billion in savings over five years and \$3 billion annually by 2026-27.

I finished my editorial with the following statement. Canada's economic future is bright. However, we cannot take it for granted. Our competitors are not standing still, but we know that with the right set of policies, Canadian businesses and workers, we will win. Budget 2022 is, frankly, a budget that I am very proud of and very happy to support. It has a number of measures that will move our economy forward not only today, but longer term. As much as we plan at home for our own financial well-being, this government is putting the interests of Canadians first.

• (1355)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was fascinated when my hon. colleague talked about the Liberals' economic vision. One part was exporting fossil fuels internationally, which is very much in line with the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers aim to vastly expand exports. My concern is that I do not know if my hon. colleague has actually read the IPCC report that says we have less than five years before we face catastrophe. The fact that the government wants to increase oil exports is very concerning. I would also ask if he has looked at the Canada Energy Regulator, which has looked at the Liberal plan. It said that in 2050, the amount of oil being produced, according to

the plans from the Liberals, is going to be the same as it was in 2019. They are burning the future of the planet.

The member can talk about economic development all he wants, but until he gets serious about serious reductions, we are selling out the future of our children.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, in our emissions reduction plan, budget 2022 and Bill C-12, the net-zero bill, we put forth a number of measures that will continue to reduce our greenhouse gas footprint across this country. We will continue to do the hard work that Canadians expect for a healthy environment and strong economy.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, while I would agree with the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge that there are some wise investments in this budget for EV charging infrastructure, for example, I want to point out the question that was just asked. The question was referring to export emissions, which he did not mention.

I want to ask about the ERP. The largest investment was \$7.1 billion in carbon capture and storage, a new subsidy for the fossil fuel sector at a time when the IPCC is saying we need to be doing the exact opposite. I am curious about his thoughts on this.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, approximately 800,000 Canadians on a daily basis earn their living from the energy sector across Canada, and I will continue to support them and will always support them.

We will have an energy transition here in Canada that reduces our greenhouse gas footprint over the coming years. We have put in place a number of measures. The \$1.7 billion for electric vehicles over the coming years and the charging infrastructure are tangible measures that I am proud to support in this budget. At the same time, we know this transition to renewable energy will take time. It is happening, and we will be there. We will make sure the jobs that are created in the green transition are captured by Canadian workers.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS***[English]***OVARIAN CANCER**

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to commend the resilience of my constituent Dena Edwards. Dena was diagnosed with a rare form of ovarian cancer just days after her daughter's second birthday in the fall of 2021. This type of cancer is called mucinous ovarian cancer and is also known as a silent killer.

While battling the cancer in her own body, Dena picked up the fight for other women. With the goal of raising \$5,000 to contribute to a \$50,000 annual ovarian cancer research grant, Dena created a Facebook fundraising page and shared her story. This page raised over \$38,000 in just a few weeks, but Dena is not stopping there. Dena is now planning a walk and run this May 8, which happens to be both Mother's Day and World Ovarian Cancer Day. This will be done to raise funds for ovarian cancer in our local community.

On behalf of all of us in the House, I commend Dena for her strength, her leadership and her commitment to bettering the lives of women in my community.

* * *

• (1400)

HOCKEY MARATHON FOR THE KIDS

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on April 11, the Hockey Marathon for the Kids took place in Chestermere, Alberta, breaking the Guinness world record for the longest ice hockey game played, reaching 261 hours over 10 and a half days. Each player took four-hour shifts on the ice, persevering through injuries and fatigue, all to support kids fighting cancer.

The hockey marathon started back in 2012, when 40 people took to the ice to raise funds for the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation for kids' cancer research, all while breaking the world record by playing for 246 hours. Since 2012, the hockey marathon has raised over \$3 million, including the \$1 million raised just this year. They continue to raise funds at hockeymarathon.com.

Congratulations to all the players and the organizers for breaking yet another world record and for raising funds for this amazing cause. Special thanks to Lesley Plumley and my good friends Alex Halat and Satvir Singh Sahota, the son of an amazing community leader whom I personally respect, Rashpal Singh Sahota.

* * *

SIKH HERITAGE MONTH

Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, April marks Sikh Heritage Month and Vaisakhi. This month I had the honour of joining Sikhs in my riding to celebrate Vaisakhi. My faith is very important to me, so I feel honoured that the Sikh community taught me about their faith and allowed me to take part in their celebration on this important day.

I was surrounded by members of our community, who were dressed in beautiful attire, while we enjoyed delicious food. Cele-

brations like these are important for the entire community and country, as they allow everyone to learn about different religions and celebrate religious festivities. Sikhs have made a tremendous contribution to Canada in law, health care, business, sports, politics, including many MPs here in our House of Commons, and many other fields.

I want to thank the Meet and Greet Senior Club Mississauga, the Mississauga Seniors Cultural Association and Sahara Senior Services for inviting me to be part of the Vaisakhi celebrations.

Happy Sikh Heritage Month. *Vaisakhi diyan lakh lakh Vad-haiyan.*

* * *

*[Translation]***MIKE BOSSY**

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the hockey world is mourning the loss of two of the most spectacular players to ever come out of Quebec.

Mike Bossy passed away far too soon on April 15. He was no doubt the best goal-scorer Quebec has ever seen. He scored more than 60 goals a season in five seasons and over 50 goals a season for nine consecutive seasons. That is a record that may never be beaten. He was an absolutely incredible player and a very engaging fellow.

This hockey player left his mark on the history of the New York Islanders and the National Hockey League overall. He then worked as an analyst for TVA Sports. His good-humoured and clever commentary was always relevant and interesting. Charming, funny and always on point, Mike Bossy knew how to make us love his sport. His opponents all feared him, his fans all admired him, and everyone loved him.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I extend my heartfelt condolences to his family and friends.

I thank Mike Bossy for everything.

* * *

ACADIAN AND FRANCOPHONE EDUCATION

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on April 12, I was delighted to see an important bill introduced in the Nova Scotia legislature. The provincial MLA for Clare, Ronnie LeBlanc, introduced a bill on Acadian and francophone education, which will enact a separate and independent schools act consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

As an MP and former minister of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie, I proudly support this bill. It was a privilege for me to contribute to the process and to the work that led to this historic moment.

I want to congratulate the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial and all those who advocated for separate legislation for first-language French education.

It is now time to take action, to protect and promote the French language, and to establish the Acadian and francophone community and its history as an integral part of the province.

There is no excuse. Let us do this.

* * *

• (1405)

[English]

TERRY RAYMOND

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on April 7, our province mourned the loss of a wonderful, community-minded man: Mr. Terry Raymond, who had a larger-than-life personality. My sincere condolences to his family, friends and constituents.

Terry was the Electoral Area A director for the Boston Bar, North Bend and Canyon Alpine communities of the Fraser Valley Regional District. He was a true champion of rural British Columbia. From the time he was elected in 1996 until his untimely passing, Terry shared his interest in and passion for the region's history. For decades, he gave his time contributing to many community organizations, such as the Yale Historical Society and the New Pathways to Gold Society. Terry had a deep appreciation of first nations knowledge. He was CAO of the Siska Traditions Society and the lands and resource manager in the Boston Bar First Nation.

Last week, I had the pleasure of joining New Pathways to Gold Society directors in honour of Terry, and they shared that wherever he would go, he would share traditional Siska medicine.

He will be truly missed in our community. May he rest in peace.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past Friday was Earth Day, and I am proud to recognize how Guelph residents are stepping up to protect nature and to fight climate change. Organizations such as Trees For Guelph, the Guelph Coalition for Active Transportation, the Guelph Hiking Trail Club, the arboretum, the Rotary Club of Guelph and Grand River Conservation have all helped to plant trees and, more broadly, to work to ensure that we are better stewards of our land.

These efforts have created refuges for wildlife and provided learning opportunities for our community's youth. They are also contributing to fighting biodiversity losses. This work is critical if future generations are going to enjoy our environment: the environment that Canada is known for around the world.

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind members to keep the noise down so that members can get their statements out as easily as possible.

The hon. member for Hamilton Mountain.

Statements by Members

HOUSING

Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister recently kicked off the post-budget tour in my riding of Hamilton Mountain by addressing an important issue that is top of mind for many of my constituents: The ability to afford a safe place to live.

We met with Felicia, Peter, Ala and Ahmed, and they told the Prime Minister first-hand about the struggles they faced as they tried to find safe, affordable housing for their families. The Prime Minister even referred to the Hamilton housing market as “stunningly out of reach” for first-time homebuyers.

In budget 2022, our government has a solid plan to make it easier for young Canadians to save for their first homes, to provide financial support for multi-generational home renovations and to double housing construction. We are taking significant steps to make life more affordable for people in Hamilton Mountain, like Felicia, Peter, Ala and Ahmed, and for all Canadians.

* * *

HOCKEY

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, March 27, the Blackville Golden Eagles claimed the provincial boys' high school title. The boys made the entire community proud in a way that is difficult to even put into words. To the players, coaches, school, parents, volunteers and fans, I say congratulations for the stand-alone, inspiring and unparalleled achievement in the history of the community and school.

The 2022 BHS Golden Eagles are now enshrined in the record books as the only BHS team to ever win gold at provincials. The bond these players will share is forever, and nobody can ever take it from them. I believe Thomas Dunn watched over this team. They are simply the best team in the history of Blackville School.

Please join me in congratulating the 2022 Blackville High School Golden Eagles hockey team on its historic accomplishment.

* * *

ARMENIA

Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on April 24, Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day, we joined Armenian communities in Canada and around the world to remember those who were killed and those who suffered immeasurably from the senseless violence during the genocide. We honour the current generation of Armenians who continue to live with the pain, trauma and loss from this tragedy, and continue to work tirelessly to bring awareness and seek recognition from all countries.

Statements by Members

In these uncertain times, we must reaffirm our commitment to protecting the fundamental human rights and dignity of everyone in Canada and around the world. We must stand against hate, violence and bigotry. We owe this to the victims and survivors of these unconscionable acts.

I encourage all members in the House, and all Canadians, to stand together as we proclaim, “Never again”.

• (1410)

The Deputy Speaker: I again want to remind folks that, during statements by members, it is respectful to listen to them and allow these great statements from our members.

The hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley.

* * *

CHARITIES

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my private member's bill, Bill C-240, the supporting Canadian charities act. The pandemic has inflicted tremendous losses on charities and their ability to provide much-needed services to Canadians. The situation is bleak. Canada's 85,000 registered charities have lost billions of dollars during the pandemic, at a time when services are needed more than ever. Charities are now facing demands for their programs and services that currently exceed their capacity to deliver.

Bill C-240 could help to solve this problem by amending the Income Tax Act to waive the capital gains tax on the proceeds from the arm's-length sale of privately owned shares or real estate when those proceeds are donated directly to a charity. This simple change to the Income Tax Act would raise over a billion dollars for charities over the next five years.

When charities are hurting, people are hurting. Let us do something about it. I ask every member to support this bill. Working together, we can get the charitable sector back on its feet and Canadians back on theirs.

* * *

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION HOTLINE

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 500 days ago, I stood in the House and asked for the support of all colleagues to bring 988, a simple, easy-to-remember three-digit national suicide prevention hotline, to Canada. That date was December 11, 2020.

On that day, parliamentarians of all stripes stood together and supported bringing 988 to Canada. Collectively, we gave Canadians struggling with mental health issues hope. Five hundred days later, Canadians still do not have access to a three-digit national suicide prevention hotline. Mental health organizations, telecom providers and over 400 municipalities from across the country support bringing 988 to Canada. They understand the importance of this initiative. They know it will save lives.

The government could have, and should have, acted immediately after this motion passed 500 days ago, yet it failed to do so.

Hope is not enough. When minutes count, 500 days of delay is totally unacceptable. Let us get this done. Let us bring 988 to Canada once and for all.

* * *

[*Translation*]

GUY LAFLEUR

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to a great man who recently left us, our national hero, Guy Lafleur.

Guy Lafleur was born in Thurso, in my riding of Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation. The blond demon was always eager to get involved in the community. On the ice, his style was like none other. His speed, his skill, his explosiveness, his lightning-fast shots and his goal-scoring prowess were incredible and the stuff of dreams throughout my youth.

I have only good memories of playing at the Thurso arena, where Guy played in his youth. Legend has it that, as a child, he loved hockey so much that he slept in his gear so that he could hit the ice the minute he woke up. He would sneak into the arena to go play his favourite sport before everyone else.

On behalf of all Canadians and on behalf of everyone who, like me, was influenced by this childhood hero, we extend our deepest condolences to Guy Lafleur's family, friends and many fans. My thoughts are with all those who are mourning this great loss in Quebec, across Canada and around the world.

Guy Lafleur, our very own number 10, will be missed.

* * *

[*English*]

MIKE BOSSY AND GUY LAFLEUR

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to two great Canadian athletes: Mike Bossy and Guy Lafleur. Every time they hit the ice, it made us feel that we were not watching a game, and that there was something magical and mystical about hockey. I remember, when I was a kid on the schoolyard, we would conjure the names of the great ones to try to gather their spirits. We would shout out their names, like Cournoyer, Savard, Keon or Mahovlich, but anyone who got to be Bossy or Lafleur was someone special.

In my 20s, I fell in love with the young Edmonton Oilers and, God, I hated the Islanders. They were like this impenetrable wall. I hated them, but I could not help but admire Mike Bossy. Regarding Guy Lafleur, I have to say as a lifelong Leafs fan, every time Montreal beat Toronto, it was okay as long as Guy Lafleur was on the ice.

In some ways, hockey and sports have become the domain of the super rich and sometimes seem megalomaniacal, but these two showed us that at the heart of the game was something very special: something that any kid could aspire to. They are with the angels today. I thank Guy Lafleur and Mike Bossy.

* * *

• (1415)

[Translation]

GUY LAFLEUR

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I once had the opportunity to play with Guy Lafleur during one of his many legends tours.

Guy Lafleur, the blond demon; Guy Lafleur, number 10; our Guy Lafleur, the last of the Mohicans, as I used to say to him. He was the most extraordinary yet down-to-earth guy. He was the kind of person who did not think he was anything special. He thought he was just like the rest of us, when he had every reason to have a huge ego.

Pierre Foglia described Guy Lafleur as the greatest guy and the least screwed up by fame. That is what defines our heroes in Quebec. People like Maurice Richard, Jean Béliveau and Guy Lafleur are all humble guys that everyone can identify with. I must say that everyone could identify with Guy Lafleur. All the kids of my generation would scream “Lafleur scores!” after scoring a goal in the backyard or at the rink. Revered, adored, admired and, above all, loved by Quebecers, Guy Lafleur was our idol, our last hero and the last of the Mohicans.

I offer my deepest condolences to his family and to all Quebecers. Let us all cheer together, one last time, “Guy! Guy! Guy!”.

* * *

GUY LAFLEUR

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, Quebecers and Canadians across the country mourned the loss of Guy Lafleur.

His performance on the ice was simply spectacular: more than 50 goals in six consecutive seasons, five Stanley Cups, including four consecutive championships, and every record the “blond demon” racked up over the years. He fired up the crowds and created excitement. He pleased his fans like no one else. His extraordinary feats followed him throughout his life off the ice. His community, his fans, and his audience were his top priority. There are no words to adequately describe the impact he had on Quebec society. Guy was an exceptional man.

I offer my deepest condolences to the Lafleur family, his mother, Pierrette, his sisters, Lise, Lucie, Suzanne and Gisèle, his wife, Lise, and his sons, Martin and Mark. Guy Lafleur has left us, but our memories of him have never been more vibrant.

May Guy rest in peace.

Oral Questions

[English]

BJARNI TRYGGVASON

Hon. Marc Garneau (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian astronaut Bjarni Tryggvason died on April 5. He was a dear friend of mine for 38 years. He was the smartest engineer I ever met. He actually understood fluid dynamics and everything there was to know about how a plane flies. He was an accomplished pilot who taught me to fly and took me into the sky to do acrobatics until I was so disoriented that I begged him to stop.

Bjarni was very proud of his Icelandic roots. He was one of the original six Canadian astronauts chosen in 1983. He flew aboard the space shuttle on mission STS-85 and successfully tested a device he and his team had designed. It was a vibration isolation mount that allowed the closest thing to pure weightlessness, and it is still used today.

[Translation]

Canadian astronauts met for lunch last month and Bjarni was there. He told us about all his new projects. Two weeks later, his unexpected passing left us in mourning.

Bjarni Tryggvason made a significant contribution to the Canadian space program.

I invite all my colleagues to join me in celebrating his life and his contribution to our country.

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1420)

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have travelled around the country over the past 15 days to hear what Canadians have to say.

Inflation, at 6.7%, is driving up gas prices. Housing prices and rental costs are skyrocketing. Canadians are finding gas prices less and less affordable. Conversely, Liberal ministers spent a fortune over the past 15 days to promote the NDP-Liberal budget, which will just sink Canadians further into debt.

My question is a simple one. Why is the Prime Minister so out of touch with the reality of Canadians that he is doing nothing to help Canadian workers face this difficult crisis?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians understand that inflation is a global phenomenon, and I have some figures to back that up.

Canada's most recent inflation rate is 6.7%. Inflation is 8.5% in the United States and 7.7% in the OECD. In the eurozone inflation is 7.3%. These rates are caused by COVID-19 and Vladimir Putin. Canadians understand that.

*Oral Questions***ETHICS**

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what Canadians understand is that this government is out of touch. It blames others instead of taking responsibility for doing what is right to help Canadians. That is the reality.

An article in the *Globe and Mail* reports that the RCMP considered charging the Liberal Prime Minister with fraud over the infamous free trip that he and his family had accepted.

My question is simple. Does the Prime Minister accept the fact that there are two justice systems in this country: one that applies to everyone and one that does not apply to the Prime Minister?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the Conservative Party is playing politics.

It is important to understand that this matter was resolved years ago, in December 2017, when the Ethics Commissioner released her report. The Conservative Party is well aware that the Prime Minister responded appropriately to these questions.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in this case, what the reports of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner showed was the Prime Minister's lack of judgment on more than one occasion.

The RCMP considered laying fraud charges, but laws prevented it from doing so. The only person who can authorize the Prime Minister to receive a gift is the Prime Minister himself.

The Prime Minister cannot be above the law though. How many times did the Prime Minister meet with RCMP officers, and when did the most recent meeting take place?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is well aware that this matter was resolved five years ago. The Ethics Commissioner produced a report, and the Prime Minister's response to the matter was very clear.

The global situation right now is very serious. Many important things are happening here in Canada and around the world, and I think it would be a good idea to ask questions about those things.

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about the RCMP here, not the Ethics Commissioner. Newly released documents from the RCMP reveal there may be reasonable grounds to believe that the Prime Minister committed the offence of fraud on the government, contrary to section 121(1)(c) of the Criminal Code. This was after the Prime Minister was found guilty of accepting luxurious Bahamian vacations worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. The Mounties did not proceed with charging the Prime Minister because the Prime Minister may have granted himself a get out of jail free card.

Did the Prime Minister give himself the power to break the law?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, five years ago, a report was done by the Ethics Commissioner. That report made all of the matters clear. The Prime Minister responded appropriately.

Again, I will say I understand the party opposite wants to drag in partisan politics and play games, but I would say there are a lot of pressing issues facing this country. We just had a budget tabled that takes critical action on housing, indigenous reconciliation and the environment, and I would think those are important things to be asking about.

• (1425)

The Deputy Speaker: I know we have been away for a couple of weeks and we want to talk to each other, but let us try to keep it down and respect the questions and the answers here at the same time.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Where is Justin? Come out with your hands up.

The Deputy Speaker: I am going to put people on notice at this point. Let us keep it down so we can get the great questions and great answers.

The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would love to hear from the Prime Minister on this. His silence is deafening.

The Prime Minister was found guilty under four sections of the Conflict of Interest Act. The only reason the RCMP did not charge him was that he is the Prime Minister, so there is one law for the Prime Minister and another law for all the rest of us. The RCMP said the Prime Minister was off the hook because he could have granted himself permission to accept the luxurious vacation gift worth \$215,000. On what exact date did the Prime Minister act with impunity and grant himself the power to break the law? What is the date—

The Deputy Speaker: Are we ready for the answer?

The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at a time when we are seeing in Canada incredible economic progress, in fact 110% beyond where we were at prepandemic levels; when we see our GDP exceeding where we were at prepandemic levels; and when we see the challenges that are faced by Canadians here in Canada and around the world, I would expect that in question period we would—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. We are on question number five. Do we want to continue? I would really like to get on with the next few questions.

[*Translation*]

I am sure the Bloc Québécois will also want to ask some questions in a few minutes.

The hon. government House leader may finish his answer.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, as I say, there are pressing and important matters that face this country and the world. If the members opposite wish to play partisan politics and relitigate something from five years ago, when the Prime Minister has acted appropriately and there was an Ethics Commissioner report, that is a choice they can make, but I would suggest that there are things more worthy of the time in this House.

* * *

*[Translation]***OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been chastised by the courts for appointing a unilingual anglophone lieutenant governor in New Brunswick. Not only is that unconstitutional, but it also shows a serious lack of judgment. There is only one bilingual province in Canada, and the PM finds a way to appoint a unilingual anglophone.

We are reminded that he also appointed a governor general who did not speak French in an officially bilingual Canada.

When will the Prime Minister stop treating proficiency in French as a second-rate skill and francophones as second-class citizens?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question.

Protecting and promoting French is a top priority for this government. It is important that our leaders set an example, which is why Ms. Murphy is taking French classes. She recognizes the importance of being able to communicate and converse with New Brunswickers.

Once again, with our bill to modernize the Official Languages Act, we will do our part to ensure that this work continues.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is quite funny. That is the pot calling the kettle black.

Last week, the Prime Minister was up in arms about CN appointing a unilingual anglophone board of directors.

He said he was flabbergasted and frustrated, but he himself personally appointed a unilingual anglophone lieutenant governor in New Brunswick and a Governor General of Canada who does not speak French.

How can the Prime Minister of Canada be surprised that CN is thumbing its nose at French when he personally is sending the message that French is not important?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we must protect our official languages. This situation is unacceptable.

● (1430)

[English]

CN Rail is well aware that we find the situation unacceptable and has assured us that the matter will be resolved in the coming months, during the next round of board appointments.

[Translation]

We are working on strengthening the Official Languages Act.

[English]

We expect CN's leaders, including its board of directors, to lead by example.

* * *

SENIORS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government admitted its mistake with the GIS claw-back and paid seniors back, but the one-time payment had a date restriction. Now, hundreds of seniors across this country are left out in the cold.

I wrote to the minister last week about this urgent concern. The Liberals must fix this. It is leaving seniors poor in our country. When will the current government stand up for seniors and start treating them all with dignity and respect?

Hon. Kamal Khara (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know just how challenging this pandemic has been for seniors. That is why, from the very beginning, we have been there to support them. On April 19, we delivered a one-time payment for those affected seniors.

We also passed Bill C-12, which ensures that seniors, particularly working and low-income seniors, are never again impacted by any pandemic benefits they take.

We will continue to ensure that we support and deliver for seniors every step of the way.

* * *

PHARMACARE

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we just learned the Liberals are backing down on drug price reforms that would make life-saving medications more affordable and save us billions. This means Canadians will keep paying excessive costs for prescription drugs, which are among the highest in the world. Meanwhile, the Liberals choose to protect the profits of large pharmaceutical companies.

The Liberals say no one should go without the medicine they need, but this policy choice makes that happen. Will the government get moving on public universal pharmacare so every Canadian can get the medicine they need and deserve?

Oral Questions

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to improving access to quality medicines for all Canadians. Canada has among some of the highest patent medicine prices in the world, and these prices have negatively affected the ability of patients to access new medicines.

On April 14, we announced new amendments to the patented medicines regulations that will give the PMPRB new tools to improve access to quality medicines while generating significant savings over the coming years for Canadians. These changes will also ensure the sustainability of our health care while supporting innovation and investment in the pharmaceutical sector.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Emergencies Act is one of the most powerful laws in the land, with an extremely high threshold needed to invoke it. That is a good thing, otherwise charter rights could be easily abused by governments.

That threshold is whether there is a national threat to public safety so serious that it cannot be addressed by any other law, yet we well know that there are many existing laws that can address illegal blockades of critical infrastructure, obviously. Maybe that is why the Liberals are hiding behind cabinet confidence and refusing to release documents justifying their decision to use these powers. It is because they know the threshold has not been met.

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when this country was faced with very real threats to critical infrastructure, our vital supply lines and the incredible disruption that was taking place right out here in the streets of Ottawa, our government did what was necessary and required to deal with that situation through the invocation of the act.

I want to advise this House that today the government is fulfilling its statutory requirements in appointing Justice Paul Rouleau as the commissioner of the public inquiry into the circumstances of using this act. We will do what is required, and we will do it in the right way.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that inquiry will be useless unless the Liberals waive cabinet confidence and allow Canadians to know the whole story. Really, the stakes could not be higher for Canadians, given that their charter rights are at risk with this unprecedented invocation of the Emergencies Act.

To be clear for Canadians at home, the emergency powers allow the government to freeze their bank accounts, seize their assets and suspend their charter rights, all without due process. That is why there is an extraordinarily high threshold needed to invoke it.

The Minister of Public Safety said today that he will be up front and transparent with Canadians. If that is the case, why would the Liberals not waive cabinet confidence? Are they hiding something?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr.

Speaker, I am very pleased to respond to the member's question because I can assure her that, under the Public Inquiries Act, the commissioner of this inquiry will have very broad authorities, like the ability to compel witnesses and the production of documents, subject, as always, to the lawful privileges of evidence that may exist. He will have the ability to call the evidence required, and we have great confidence in Justice Rouleau and this inquiry to get the information and the facts that this House and Canadians require.

● (1435)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the Emergencies Act, the government is still falling short on its duty to be transparent. Let us not forget that, in 2015, the government campaigned on being a global example of transparency. It is quite the opposite.

As required by the legislation, the government called an inquiry today, but it waited until the last minute to do so. What Canadians and especially we as parliamentarians want is to have access to the documents containing objective and factual information.

What is the government trying to hide by not presenting the inquiry documents to the House?

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member would probably be aware, section 63 of the Emergencies Act actually requires the government to call a public inquiry within 60 days. We have fulfilled that requirement of the act. We have also moved to fulfill the requirement by directing the public inquiry to conclude with a report back to the House by February 20, 2023.

Under the Inquiries Act, we have provided the commissioner with all the authorities he requires to compel witnesses and compel the delivery of documents to enable him to do his work. He will have access to the documents he requires, even classified documents, subject to appropriate limits on privilege that may exist.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that, at the very least, the minister has read the act and is enforcing it.

The problem with this affair is that it reminds us of the unfortunate events at Winnipeg's National Microbiology Laboratory. Members will recall that this government did everything it could to prevent parliamentarians and the House of Commons from having access to the documents. Members will also recall that this government dragged the Speaker himself to court when he defended parliamentarians' rights.

The question is very simple: Why is the government refusing to release certain documents that state the facts and are not political or partisan?

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am afraid that my friend opposite just presumes what Justice Rouleau will determine he requires in order to fulfill his requirements under the commission he now holds to conduct a public inquiry. I can assure the House we will provide all the support necessary to Justice Rouleau in the contents of his inquiry and provide him with the resources and tools he requires in order to fulfill his mandate.

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2015, the Prime Minister promised to run the most open and accountable government ever. We all remember his sunny ways. With scandal after scandal, and crisis after crisis, he has proven it is just a broken promise.

In the latest saga of the Prime Minister's dizzying mismanagement and misuse of the act, the government is now refusing to hand over to the Federal Court, under the guise of cabinet confidentiality, basic information about what information led to the use of the act. This is not how a real democracy works. What is the Prime Minister hiding this time from Canadians?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me assure the member opposite that we are complying with all of the court's direction with respect to the provision of evidence. However, the member is also probably aware that there is certain information, such as lawyer-client privilege, which is respected and well established in the law in this country. We will follow the law as it pertains to the conduct of that case and the public inquiry.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, recent court filings indicate the Liberals are refusing to reveal what information led the government to invoke the Emergencies Act in response to the "freedom convoy". The government has yet to make a compelling argument that the invocation of the act actually met the incredibly high national security threshold. With this unprecedented use of the act, will the government finally be transparent and accountable to Canadians by sharing the information and documents it relied upon for invoking the Emergencies Act?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would simply remind the member opposite that we complied very precisely with the requirements of the Emergencies Act. We stood up, at the first opportunity, a committee of parliamentarians to examine, as is required by the act, the circumstances giving rise to the invocation of the act, the measures that were invoked and the steps that were taken as a result.

We have also now complied with the act and established a commission of inquiry under the public Inquiries Act. We made the decision to establish that under the public Inquiries Act to ensure that the commissioner would have all the authorities he required to

compel witnesses and to compel documents to do his job. That is the essence of being open and transparent.

* * *

• (1440)

[*Translation*]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last week, CN appointed a unilingual English-speaking board of directors. This reminds us of Air Canada, whose CEO boasted that he was a unilingual anglophone and had managed to live in Quebec his whole life without speaking French. It also reminds us that CN and Air Canada have something else in common besides having garnered the contempt of francophones: Both of these companies are federally regulated.

Has the minister noticed that there is a climate of hostility towards French at these federally regulated businesses?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

Both official languages are central to our identity and our culture. All Canadians deserve to be served in the official language of their choice by federally regulated businesses.

The lack of a francophone director at CN is completely unacceptable. We expect that this company will rectify the situation as soon as possible.

That is why we are moving forward with Bill C-13, a bill that has more teeth and that will give the Commissioner of Official Languages more tools to do his job.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in 1962, CN claimed that there were no francophones qualified to serve as vice-president. Sixty years later, CN still cannot find francophones qualified to sit on its board of directors.

That is how federally regulated companies operate, which is why Quebec wants to make these companies subject to the Charter of the French Language. The Liberal government's bill prevents Quebec from doing so, however. Instead, it would expand the bilingualism rules at Air Canada and CN to all federally regulated companies. Why not just let Quebec defend French?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, I thank my colleague for his question.

The protection and promotion of French are top priorities for this government and for me, as Minister of Official Languages. That is why we are moving forward with an ambitious bill that has more teeth to ensure that all Canadians get the services they need.

Oral Questions

I hope that my colleague will support our modernization by passing Bill C-13 as soon as possible, because this bill will make a real difference in the lives of all Canadians.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let us recap.

CN appoints a unilingual anglophone board of directors. The CEO of Air Canada is a unilingual anglophone. The Prime Minister appoints a unilingual anglophone lieutenant governor in New Brunswick. The Prime Minister appoints a governor general who does not speak French. The Prime Minister even considered taking British Colombian francophones to court last month for demanding services in French.

It is clear that the federal government is incapable of protecting the French language. Why will it not let Quebec take action with its Charter of the French Language?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is trying to make this a partisan issue. I will use a word that I do not like to use: “troublemaking”.

What CN has done is completely unacceptable. No one in the House thinks that what CN has done is a good thing. The Bloc Québécois knows it, we are saying it publicly, and the Prime Minister has said it: CN must address this issue.

The Bloc Québécois is trying to play politics with this, and that is unacceptable. This government stands up for francophones across Canada.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this morning, the governor of the Bank of Canada was very clear that inflation is no longer transitory. In fact, Mr. Macklem said, “Team Transitory has disbanded.” For months, the government has claimed that inflation was a passing global phenomenon, nothing to see. It continued to borrow and spend all the way to a skyrocketing inflation of 6.7%.

Why has the minister allowed her spending to fuel an affordability crisis, which has left millions of Canadians behind?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives continue to talk down the Canadian economy, but the truth is that Canada is very well placed to weather the storms caused by COVID and by Vladimir Putin. According to the IMF, we will have the fastest growing economy in the G7 this year and next year. We have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7, and we have recovered 115% of the jobs lost to COVID, compared to just 93% in the U.S.

• (1445)

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the governor also announced that, because of inflation, every single Canadian pays \$2,000 more a year. He said Canadians should expect more interest rate increases, leaving millions of Canadians paying more on their mortgages and on their loans. When the governor was asked

what this government should do to preserve Canada's fiscal position, he said not to spend too much. Is the minister listening?

Will she finally control her spending, and why has she failed to address Canada's affordability crisis?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me remind the members opposite that S&P and Moody's have reaffirmed Canada's AAA credit rating and that we have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7.

When it comes to making life more affordable for Canadians, our budget has done so much. We are doubling the support provided through the first-time homebuyer's tax credit. We are introducing a multi-generational home renovation tax credit. We are providing \$500 payment to those facing housing affordability challenges.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have had six years to fix the housing market. Instead, under their policies, house prices have doubled under their watch.

Let us go back and take a look at some of their programs. The first-time homebuyers program failed; the shared equity mortgage program failed; the housing co-investment fund failed. With new programs announced in the budget, Canadians are asking how the government will fail this time.

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, budget 2022 actually does four things. We are seeking to double the supply of new housing in the next decade by introducing programs such as the housing accelerator fund. We are helping first-time homebuyers with a tax-free savings account of up to \$40,000, by doubling the first-time homebuyer tax credit and by extending the first-time homebuyer incentive.

In addition to that, we are tackling speculation by banning foreign ownership of Canadian residential real estate. We are building more affordable housing by investing in co-op housing, extending the first-time homebuyer incentive and extending the tax-free homebuyer savings account.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: I am hearing the member for South Shore—St. Margarets all the way over here. I ask members to try to keep it down.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the climate crisis is accelerating. Our ecosystems are in jeopardy. Our waterways, our green spaces and biodiversity are in jeopardy. A global movement for the rights of nature has arisen in response to the massive extinction of living species. It is time to change the paradigm.

That is why the NDP is proposing legal status for the St. Lawrence River and its tributaries. Will the Liberals support our proposal to give legal status to the St. Lawrence River and its watersheds so that we can better protect them?

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

Just last week, we made a joint announcement with the Nature Conservancy of Canada about the largest private land conservation project in this country's history, which will protect an area twice the size of the island of Montreal.

We are working with our international partners to make our goal of protecting 30% of our lands and oceans by 2030 an international goal in addition to working on reducing and reversing biodiversity loss.

We will keep working on this with all interested members, parties and Canadians.

* * *

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister said he would not implement visa-free travel for people fleeing Putin's war because it would take 14 to 16 weeks, even though Ireland managed to do it within a few days.

To no one's surprise, there is now a backlog of over 100,000 Ukrainians waiting for visa approval. They are mostly women, children and seniors. When they arrive, they will need supports immediately. That means getting landed status. The government needs to stop hiding behind layers of bureaucracy.

When will the minister implement visa-free travel and provide Ukrainians with status within 90 days of arrival?

● (1450)

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our mission at the outset of this effort was to create the fastest possible pathway for Ukrainians to get to Canada where they could benefit from the safe haven our country could offer.

I am pleased to share that, as of last week, more than 56,000 Ukrainians have already been approved to come to Canada in the first few weeks we were making approvals. This is something Canadians can be proud of. We are going to continue to do whatever we can, not only to get Ukrainians here, but also to support them once they arrive. It is the right thing to do, and I am so pleased to

have the support of Canadians in every community right across this country.

Mr. Shafqat Ali (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the last two years, our government has consistently heard from employers regarding their challenges with the skills and labour shortages that have affected not just their businesses but also Canada's economic growth and recovery.

In my riding of Brampton Centre, I also have a thriving population of international graduates whose temporary statuses are expiring due to processing challenges caused by the pandemic. They are eager to find a pathway to remain and work in Canada. What is the government doing to allow more of these talented workers to remain in Canada so they could contribute to Canada's economy?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I point out that the member who posed the question is an absolute champion for international students, and I thank him for his advocacy on this important file.

I am pleased to share that last week I had the opportunity to make an announcement in Saint John, New Brunswick, that the federal government would be extending open work permits to those who are facing soon-to-be-expired or recently expired post-graduate work permits. In addition, because of the investments we have made to increase processing at IRCC, we have now cut the inventory of cases in the high skilled express entry categories by more than half, and we are going to be able to resume the express entry draws this July to make sure more people can come and make a difference to our economy in Canada.

* * *

HOUSING

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadian housing prices have surged over the last two years. The average cost of a home in the GTA rose more than 50%. The government blames the lack of supply for the price hike and pledged to double the pace of home building over the next decade, but that plan seems to be missing from the budget. We will not see a single additional house built this year, not one.

Canadians are not giving up on their dream of home ownership, so why is the minister giving up on them?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I invite the hon. member to read the entire budget, because the budget actually doubles down on so much more housing supply in Canada: 6,000 more co-op housing units, new housing—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

I will let the minister restart his answer.

The hon. Minister of Housing.

Oral Questions

Hon. Ahmed Hussen: Mr. Speaker, the reason they cannot handle my answer is that we called them out on their plan—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Housing.

Hon. Ahmed Hussen: Mr. Speaker, our budget contains a lot of measures to build more housing supply: 100,000 new homes through the housing accelerator fund, 6,000 more homes through new co-op buildings, 6,000 more homes through the rapid housing initiative and 20,000 more homes through the national housing co-investment fund. That is the supply we are taking about.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the housing minister is failing. The Conservatives warned that the Liberals' strategy for housing would do nothing to help housing prices, and prices doubled. We warned 30-year high inflation would trigger interest rate hikes, and we see the biggest rate increase in 20 years. We are now warning him that families are struggling to keep their homes.

Will the minister admit his failure and tell us how many Canadians will lose their homes?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in budget 2022, housing measures and investments deal with precisely what the hon. member is talking about: making sure that we double the housing supply in this country.

Canada has the fastest-growing population in the G7, but our housing supply has not kept up with that. We are implementing the housing accelerator fund to build 100,000 new homes. We are helping first-time homebuyers by establishing programs like the tax-free savings account so they can put \$40,000 in a tax-free savings account. We are building more affordable housing and we are tackling speculation. The party opposite failed Canadians in government and it is failing them on housing now.

• (1455)

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has tried to deny that it is planning to impose a tax on home equity, but the Canadian Taxpayers Federation has obtained documents proving that the government recently provided an additional \$200,000 in research funding to Generation Squeeze, the aptly named group trying to squeeze Canadians out of their hard-earned home equity.

Will the minister stop hiding, come clean and admit that they are trying to make a tax grab out of Canadians' hard-earned home equity?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again I will take this opportunity to unequivocally state that our government is not considering charging capital gains tax on primary residences. Any suggestion otherwise is false. The party opposite has repeated this misinformation and disinformation in the House and in the media. Instead of engaging in disinformation, we engaged in building more affordable homes and making more first-time homebuyers achieve their dream of home ownership.

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the past six weeks, we have learned that the Canadian Transportation Agency determined that Flair Airlines does not meet Canadian ownership requirements. Despite that, the government has doled out not one but two grants to Flair, totalling \$11.3 million. If Flair is not Canadian, the airline's operating licence would be suspended and consumers would be left with the tab.

Does the government usually provide grants to airlines that do not meet operating requirements, or will we see the minister get those tax dollars back?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the situation that my hon. colleague is talking about. I know Flair has made an application to Transport Canada and that application is being reviewed. However, I have a question for my colleague. Why is she against providing support to Canadian workers? Why is she against providing support to Canadian passengers—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

The hon. Minister of Transport.

Hon. Omar Alghabra: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague needs to be honest with Canadians. Is she against subsidies for Canadian workers? Was she against providing support during the height of COVID to Canadian workers? She needs to tell Canadians where she stands on this issue.

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[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, after two months, the government has a fantastic solution to help Ukrainian refugees: Aeroplan points.

The government is not talking about an airlift or about about chartering flights to go and get people. No, instead, we can donate our Aeroplan points.

This means that a mother with three kids will pay \$3,700 instead of \$4,000 for flights, because some guy named Dave from Regina decided to donate his points. Make no mistake though; it only works with Aeroplan points, not Air Miles.

Will the minister also take Canadian Tire money? Seriously now, when is he going to charter flights to go and get these families?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the sense of humour my colleague always brings to the floor of the House of Commons, and I thank him for his advocacy for chartered flights, which we have announced, by the way. It is no laughing matter that we were able to reach a partnership with Air Canada, The Shapiro Foundation and Canadians who would like to donate not just Aeroplan points, but other different kinds of loyalty points or cash.

The measures we are putting in place are going to make sure that at least 10,000 Ukrainians make it safely to Canada. That is something we can be proud of. It is something that I hope the Bloc would support.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I also have some coupons for two-for-one subway sandwiches, if that helps.

Seriously, the minister is taking us for fools. As of two weeks ago, we had already received 140,000 applications from Ukrainian refugees. It is going to take more than Aeroplan points to get them out of there. It is going to take chartered flights in an operation befitting a G7 country that is home to the second largest Ukrainian diaspora in the world.

Enough is enough. How many more weeks will the refugees have to wait before the minister arranges an actual airlift?

- (1500)

[English]

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the hon. member is busy collecting Subway coupons and writing jokes at the table, we are busy bringing Ukrainians to Canada. There are 16,000 Ukrainians who made it to Canada already this year. In the first few weeks, since we introduced a new program, almost 60,000 more have been approved. We are starting to see flights come. We have set up reception at the airports in Toronto, Edmonton, Vancouver, Quebec and Montreal. We are working with settlement agencies, more than 550 organizations right across Canada.

Every step of the way, we advance new measures to get people here. This latest measure, which the member is poking fun at, will see at least 10,000 people get here cost-free. That is the right thing to do and he should be proud of it.

* * *

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadian farmers are drowning as costs on feed, fuel and fertilizer skyrocket, but instead of resolving the problems that its own bad policies actually caused, the Liberal government is doubling down. It has increased the carbon tax, it is telling farmers that it will not process their income tax returns and it has hiked fertilizer prices. For weeks we have been asking the Liberals if they will exempt the 35% tariff on fertilizer purchased from Russia before March 2. There is no answer.

In a time of a global food crisis, helping Canadian farmers seems like the right decision. Why will the Liberals not make it?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my colleague that we are working closely with the industry. We want to make sure that farmers can access all the inputs they need to have a good season because we know we have a responsibility to contribute to food security not only in Canada, but around the world, and we will do so. We are here to support our farmers and we have improved the advance payment program to do so.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, farmers need the certainty of knowing what the government is doing, especially since they have started their spring seeding. First, the Liberals hinted at restricting fertilizer use. Now they are implementing a 35% retroactive tariff on fertilizer imports from Russia. We are living in a disrupted world for food supply and trade, and there is no plan offering Canadian farmers stability.

We are close to a global food crisis and the minister is forcing farmers to grow less and taxing them out of existence. Will the minister remove the tariff on fertilizer purchased before March 2?

[Translation]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I would like to assure my colleague that we are working very closely with all sectors of the agriculture industry and that we are here to support them. We just enhanced the advance payment program to ensure that farmers have the cash they need to have a good season.

If my colleague wants to help us ensure that our farmers get their pollution credits, he should vote in favour of Bill C-8 as soon as possible.

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago, in response to my question about the 35% tariffs on fertilizer from Russia, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food assured me that she and her government would continue to allow foreign ships to arrive in Canada.

She also noted that she had made changes to the advance payments program, which only adds to farmers' debt levels because of these tariffs. My real question remains: Will the minister suspend the 35% tariffs on orders placed before March 2?

Oral Questions

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, I want to assure my colleague that we are working very closely with the industry and the various agricultural sectors to ensure that they have the resources they need to have a good season here in Canada, but also to contribute to global food security.

We have improved the advance payments program. I hope that my colleagues across the way will vote to pass Bill C-8 very quickly so that our farmers can get their tax refunds.

Mrs. Sophie Chatel (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I also have questions about farmers.

Planting season starts soon, but unfortunately, this is a financially stressful time for many farmers, because they have to pay for most of their inputs, such as seed, fertilizer and fuel, before the year begins. We know that high inflation has had an impact on the cost of inputs this year.

Can the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food tell the House what initiatives are being taken to assure—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. minister.

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Pontiac for her commitment to farmers. As she said so well, planting season is an important time for farmers, and they are facing a lot of financial pressures right now.

That is why we have made improvements to the advance payments program. Farmers will have access to additional cash flow to purchase their inputs, ensuring a successful growing season and contributing to global food security.

* * *

• (1505)

[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been 500 days since our Conservative motion to bring 988 to Canada unanimously passed in the House. In those 500 days, an estimated 5,500 Canadians have died by suicide. A further 137,000 have attempted suicide. The Minister of Mental Health and Addictions does not know the existing national suicide prevention hotline number, but she knows 988. She knows that 988 will save lives.

For 500 days, the minister has had the will of the House, the support of municipalities and the support of telecoms and mental health organizations. She has had the power to bring 988 to Canada, yet she has failed to do so. Why?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his ongoing advocacy. Our hearts are with the families of all those people we have lost to suicide.

As members know, we have asked the CRTC to be expeditious in getting this work done, including for persons with disabilities. It means we are working to leverage the work that the United States has been doing on this since 2018. This is a complicated issue and

we want to make sure that when people call, they are connected to the most appropriate care in the most appropriate manner.

We will get this done together. This morning, we announced \$3.7 million for distress centres across this country so that we will have a coordinated way to make sure we prevent the loss of lives.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last year the Liberals gave Medicago \$173 million in taxpayers' dollars to build a Canadian vaccine manufacturing plant. Now we have learned that tobacco company Philip Morris owns a major stake in Medicago and that the World Health Organization has denied approval for the emergency use of the Covifenz vaccine outside of Canada.

Can the minister please explain this failure of due diligence, and why he wasted \$173 million on a vaccine we cannot even donate?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to recast history a bit. It seems the member has lost the passage of time. When the World Health Organization declared a pandemic in March 2020, we made sure, as a government, that we would invest in all the families of vaccines to protect the health and safety of Canadians. Plant protein vaccines work and have been recommended by our experts. The investment we made was to protect the health and safety of Canadians. We will find a solution, and we will continue to work for Canadians across this nation.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is lost in time is any answer from the government.

Recent decisions by the government, which take away fishery licence holders' quotas on the east and west coasts without compensation, are counter to the long-standing policy of "willing buyer, willing seller". DFO sources tell me the minister was about to expropriate 15% of lobster traps from licence holders, without compensation, to give to first nations. This would be devastating for these fishermen.

Will the minister state in the House, categorically, that the government will not expropriate from lobster fishermen?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we all understand, and fairly so, first nations have a Supreme Court-affirmed treaty right to fish for a moderate livelihood, and our government has never stopped working to implement that right. We are doing so in consultation with any other fish harvesters who may be impacted. We are working very hard to have a “willing buyer, willing seller” process, so that those transactions can be appropriate for everyone. This decision has not been made, and I will continue working on a fair outcome for all.

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RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Wilson Miao (Richmond Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, high-speed Internet is essential to today's economy and our society. It is a necessity in any household for work, school and entertainment.

Can the minister update the House on the work being done to connect more British Columbian rural households?

• (1510)

Hon. Gudie Hutchings (Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 2015 our government has invested and committed \$7.2 billion to connect every Canadian from coast to coast with affordable, reliable high-speed Internet. Just recently, we announced \$5 million to connect over 3,300 homes in British Columbia, so that is doing great work for folks in rural B.C., but it is also making us reach our goals of 98% of Canada connected by 2026 and the rest by 2030. We have a plan to connect Canadians, and it is working.

* * *

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have left people with disabilities behind again. They chose to leave out the long-promised income supports in their budget 2022, and they have yet to act on their commitments from budget 2021. For too long, people with disabilities have felt abandoned. They deserve to live with dignity and to get the help they need. On the disability tax credit, the government must remove all barriers, including the 14 hours per week requirement that prevents people who need it from qualifying.

When will the Liberals modernize the disability tax credit and stop leaving behind people with disabilities?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my colleague that I am working very hard to reduce poverty levels of working-age Canadians with disabilities. I am very confident we will move forward with the Canada disability legislation, and a key pillar of our disability inclusion action plan is to reform, modernize and dignify the eligibility processes for Government of Canada disability benefits and supports, including the disability tax credit.

We are working on it.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks, over 100 MPs from all parties have shared their support for the immediate reintroduction of the Canada disability benefit.

Oral Questions

With the backing of MPs from the governing party, this bill would enjoy the support of the House, while 43 senators in the other place have already publicly declared their support as well. Consultations can and should continue after the bill is introduced, so this should not be used as a reason for further delay.

Can the minister share when this much-needed legislation will be reintroduced?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged by my hon. colleague's enthusiasm for tabling the Canada disability legislation. Its implementation remains a top priority for me. With budget 2021, we actually invested \$11.9 million to consult the disability community on eligibility, and that work will directly inform this benefit. We are also working with provinces and territories to ensure the CDB will increase the monthly income of Canadians with disabilities, will not impact access to other services and programs, and will ensure that everyone will be better off. Our government will reintroduce this legislation and ensure that persons with disabilities have the financial security they deserve.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we move on, I just want to bring attention to the exchange between the Minister of Transport and the member for Thornhill. The minister sort of questioned the honesty of the member, which was unparliamentary. I really hope that we do not use that kind of phrasing in the future.

* * *

[Translation]

GUY LAFLEUR

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among the parties and I believe you would find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That the House:

(a) recognize that Guy Lafleur, Officer of the Order of Canada, Knight of the National Order of Quebec, member of the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame and member of the Hockey Hall of Fame was a legendary player for the Montreal Canadiens and the National Hockey League;

(b) recognize that the Quebec Nation and Canadians from across the country are deeply touched by the loss of this gentleman who will have marked his time and touched several generations, through his abilities and as an ambassador of the Montreal Canadiens, of our national sport and of his hometown of Thurso or by his accessible and welcoming personality;

Routine Proceedings

(c) celebrate his brilliant career, including 17 seasons with the Montreal Canadiens, the New York Rangers and the Quebec Nordiques, five Stanley Cups, 560 goals, including six consecutive seasons of more than 50 goals and several National Hockey League trophies; and

(d) offer its condolences to his family and loved ones, as well as to the entire family of the Montreal Canadiens.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay.

Okay.

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

(Motion agreed to)

• (1515)

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: Following discussions among representatives of all parties of the House, I understand that there is an agreement to observe a moment of silence in honour of Guy Lafleur.

I now invite hon. members to please rise.

[A moment of silence observed]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to 19 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Hon. Jim Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, entitled "A Path Forward: Reducing Gun and Gang Violence in Canada".

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

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to say that the Conservative members of the public safety and national security committee are providing a supplementary report to the official report from the national security committee. The supplementary report just outlines that we feel that the billions of dollars to be spent on the federal so-called buyback program and proposed provincial handgun ban should be directed to more police, more border agents and youth diversion and prevention programs. That is our position.

Other than that, we were very happy to work with all members of the committee to create a fulsome study and report. We hope that

members of the public appreciate the Conservative perspective in our supplementary report.

[Translation]

INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs entitled "Barriers to Economic Development in Indigenous Communities".

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

* * *

[English]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-269, An Act to amend the Telecommunications Act (suicide prevention).

He said: Mr. Speaker, suicide impacts us all. There is probably not a member in this House who has not been touched by suicide. I know that suicide and mental health have negatively impacted my life. Just three weeks ago, I received a call saying that I had lost yet another friend to suicide. When somebody is struggling, we must do everything in our power to remove the barriers so that they can seek and get the help that they need.

Over 500 days ago, I asked for the support of the House to bring 988, a simple three-digit suicide prevention hotline, to Canada. Five hundred days later, it still has not been done. Today I rise in this esteemed chamber to table my bill, an act to amend the Telecommunications Act, suicide prevention. With the addition of one simple line to the Telecommunications Act, Canada could have an easy-to-remember three-digit suicide prevention hotline.

Let us bring 988 to Canada. We can save lives.

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

* * *

• (1520)

PETITIONS

VACCINE MANDATES

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling a petition on behalf of over 18,500 Canadians who are calling on the government to abolish the domestic vaccine passport requirement for Canadian citizens and permanent residents taking domestic flights in a safe and orderly manner.

They are asking for this and citing the fact that there are multiple studies showing there is very limited transmission on aircraft. This would be a way for Canadians to be able to meet with their families once again across our great country.

SALMON FISHERY

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I will be tabling two petitions in the House. The first one is to acknowledge the need small hatcheries in communities have and the fact that there has not been any increase to their funding since 1982.

The work these volunteers do to really help support wild salmon is amazing and we need to see it supported. These folks from my riding, specifically from Powell River, want respect and acknowledgement that their organization, the Powell River organization, does such tremendous work and work in educating the community. They want to see an increase to the annual contribution to the Powell River Salmon Society and, of course, they also want to ensure that there is actually DFO within their region. That is something I hear across the riding. We need to see more staff.

PENSIONS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I am tabling today is one in support of my bill, Bill C-221, which talks about removing the gold digger clause. Many people across Canada do not understand that the spouses of veterans, including common-law partners, who married after the age of 60 are not entitled to the automatic survivor pension under the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act. It also means that veterans, RCMP veterans and, in fact, all federal public servants, if they marry after 60, do not receive any pension for their loved one when they pass on.

Bill C-221 lays out the ways to eliminate this clause and move forward, and at any point the government could implement this fully. When one has talked to the people who I have talked to, one knows that this needs to be done, especially when there are those with over 25 years of marriage.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saainich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this place to present a petition that has been sent to me by constituents in the riding of Huron—Bruce in Ontario. They are very concerned about the climate crisis. They address it, as it should be addressed, as a climate emergency.

They call for the targets that the international scientific community understands to be necessary, reducing emissions by at least 60% below 2005 levels by 2030, and they go through a number of points, which I will summarize, of the important ways transitioning to a green economy will build new economic opportunities, new institutions and new green jobs, as well as protect and strengthen human rights and worker rights, especially respecting indigenous rights, sovereignty and knowledge, and will include indigenous peoples and nations in all aspects of the move to end our dependence on fossil fuels for our own survival.

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND SEARCH AND RESCUE PERSONNEL

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a huge honour today to table a petition on behalf of petitioners from Bowser, Parksville, Qualicum, Port Alberni, Cherry Creek, Beaver Creek, Tofino, Ucluelet, and Cumberland.

They are citing that volunteer firefighters account for 83% of Canada's total firefighting essential needs and that, in addition, ap-

Routine Proceedings

proximately 8,000 essential search and rescue volunteers respond to thousands of incidents each year. We know that many of them are dealing with the toxic drug supply and overdose crisis.

They cite that the tax code of Canada currently allows volunteer firefighters and search and rescue volunteers to claim a \$3,000 tax credit if 200 hours of volunteer services were completed in a calendar year. That works out to a mere \$450 per year that we allow these first responders to keep.

Many of the first responders do over 200 hours, as we know, so petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to increase the tax exemption from \$3,000 to \$10,000 to help support our essential volunteer firefighters and volunteer search and rescue people across the country, who were there for us through COVID and are there for us every day. I hope the government will consider it.

• (1525)

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise to present a petition signed by people from all across this great country.

The petitioners note that conscience protections for medical professionals are necessary for patients to access their right to a second opinion, and that during testimony to the Special Joint Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying, witnesses stated that protection of conscience should be included in the government's legislated response to *Carter v. Canada*. The petitioners also noted that the Canadian Medical Association confirms that the conscience protections for physicians and health care workers would not affect access to assisted suicide or euthanasia because over 24,000 physicians would be willing to perform the procedure.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling one petition today in support of Bill S-223, which is aimed at combatting forced organ harvesting and trafficking. I surely hope that we will be able to get this bill passed as soon as possible.

VACCINE MANDATES

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition on behalf of Canadians from across the country who want an end to all the COVID-19 mandates.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners say that the Prime Minister has politicized the vaccines and insulted Canadians who disagree with him. Moreover, they are commenting about the fact that it is the sacred duty of the government to guard against discrimination and guarantee the freedoms of all Canadians. As such, the petitioners are calling for the right to be able to continue to use air travel, whether they are vaccinated or not.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 357, 361 to 365, 367, 370, 371, 374, 375, 378, 381, 382, 385 and 393.

[Text]

Question No. 357—**Ms. Louise Chabot:**

With regard to the Cannabis Act: (a) what are the details of the consultations that Health Canada conducted on the production of cannabis for medical purposes, including the (i) guidelines, (ii) results and analyses, (iii) briefing notes; and (b) what are the details of the review of the Cannabis Act, including the (i) findings of the statutory review by the minister responsible that was to be conducted no later than October 17, 2021, (ii) briefing notes?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), from March 8 to May 7, 2021, Health Canada consulted Canadians on a draft guidance document on factors the department may consider when using the authorities provided by the cannabis regulations to refuse, renew, amend or revoke a registration for personal and designated production of cannabis for medical purposes.

The consultation has since concluded. Health Canada received 677 responses to the consultation through an online questionnaire or email. The department is analyzing the feedback and is currently preparing a report that summarizes the consultation comments and a final version of the guidance document, both of which will be published on the Health Canada website.

Section 151.1 of the Cannabis Act requires that the minister of health cause a review of the act and its administration and operation three years after coming into force (i.e., after October 17, 2021), and that a report, including any findings or recommendations resulting from the review, be tabled in both Houses of Parliament within 18 months.

In response to (b)(i), as set out in the legislation, the legislative review must study the impact of the act on public health. In particular, it must look at the impact on the health and consumption habits of young persons with respect to cannabis use, the impact of cannabis on indigenous persons and communities, and the impact of the cultivation of cannabis plants in a dwelling-house.

The government is committed to putting into place a credible, evidence-driven process for the legislative review, which will assess the progress made towards achieving the objectives of the act. Preparations are under way for the launch of the review.

In response to (b)(ii), briefing note 21-111407-100 M2M, “Preparations for the Cannabis Act Legislative Review”, can be consulted for further detail.

Question No. 361—**Mr. Damien C. Kurek:**

With regard to the freezing of bank accounts in relation to the Emergency Economic Measures Order SOR/2022-22: (a) what specific criteria were used to determine whose bank accounts were frozen; (b) were any measures in place to ensure that family members and relatives of individuals involved in the protest did not have their accounts frozen just because of who their spouse or family members are, and, if so, what are the details of these measures; and (c) what specific measures are in place to ensure that individuals who financially supported the protests before the government declared the protests to be illegal do not have their bank accounts frozen for supporting a legal protest?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), financial service providers were responsible for implementing the measures contained in the emergency economic measures order, including ceasing to provide financial services to persons who were directly or indirectly engaged in activities that were prohibited by the emergency measures regulations.

Neither the order nor the regulations required financial service providers to inform the Department of Finance or any other federal department or agency of the specific criteria they used to determine whose bank accounts were frozen.

The RCMP issued a statement indicating that while it remained the responsibility of the financial institutions to make the decision to freeze accounts, the RCMP was diligently working with law enforcement and federal partners to disclose relevant information of individuals and companies suspected of involvement in illegal acts. The list that was provided to financial institutions included identities of individuals who were influencers in the illegal protest in Ottawa, and owners and/or drivers of vehicles who did not want to leave the area impacted by the protest.

In response to (b), the emergency economic measures order required financial service providers to cease providing financial services to persons who were directly or indirectly engaged in activities that were prohibited by the emergency measures regulations.

This requirement did not extend to the family members and relatives of such persons, provided that those family members and relatives were not themselves directly or indirectly engaging in prohibited activities.

In response to (c), the emergency measures regulations and the emergency economic measures order were not retroactive. They were effective only between February 15 and February 23.

The RCMP issued a statement indicating that the list it had provided to financial institutions focused on individuals who were influencers in the illegal protest in Ottawa and owners and/or drivers of vehicles who did not want to leave the area impacted by the protest; and that it did not provide a list of donors to financial institutions.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 362—Mr. Dane Lloyd:**

With regard to information provided to the Minister of Public Safety, including through his staff, about the police action taken related to the protests in Ottawa on February 18 and 19, 2022: (a) what are the details of all information which was provided to the minister related to the rules of engagement for the police forces in Ottawa on those days, including (i) who provided the information, (ii) the date and approximate time, if known, that the information was provided, (iii) an overview of the information, including any rules of engagement contained in the information; and (b) what are the details of all the information which was provided to the minister related to the authorization of force, both lethal and non-lethal, for the police forces in Ottawa on those days, including (i) who provided the information, (ii) the date and approximate time, if known, that the information was provided, (iii) an overview of the information, including what was known or decided related to the authorization of force?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the operations of all police are fully independent, whether they be municipal, provincial, or federal.

This police independence is critical. The government may not attempt to influence an investigation in any way, or direct the conduct of specific police operations. Police independence, as qualified in a 1999 Supreme Court decision, Campbell and Shirose, was described as follows:

“While for certain purposes the commissioner of the RCMP reports to the solicitor general (now known as the public safety minister), the commissioner is not to be considered a servant or agent of the government while engaged in a criminal investigation. The commissioner is not subject to political direction. Like every other police officer similarly engaged, he is answerable to the law and, no doubt, to his conscience.”

Our government remains committed to ensuring that law enforcement officers have the resources they need to do their jobs and effectively address threats to public safety after years of cuts from the previous Conservative government.

From the outset, our government was focused on finding solutions that protected Canadians and affected communities and ensured the minimum risk of harm. This included consulting with officials and thoroughly assessing all federal tools and resources, including the possibility of invoking the Emergencies Act. The temporary authorities provided through the act remained in place only for the short time required to address this urgent risk to Canadians’ safety.

With regard to information provided to the Minister of Public Safety, including through his staff, about the police action taken related to the protests in Ottawa on February 18 and 19, 2022, in response to (a), no information was provided to the minister by either Public Safety Canada or the RCMP related to the rules of engagement for the police forces in Ottawa on those days.

In response to (b), no information was provided to the minister by either Public Safety Canada or the RCMP related to the authorization of force, either lethal or non-lethal, for the police forces in Ottawa on those days.

Question No. 363—Mr. Dane Lloyd:

With regard to information provided to the Minister of Emergency Preparedness, including through his staff, about the police action taken related to the protests in Ottawa on February 18 and 19, 2022: (a) what are the details of all the information which was provided to the minister related to the rules of engagement for the police

forces in Ottawa on those days, including (i) who provided the information, (ii) the date and approximate time, if known, that the information was provided, (iii) an overview of the information, including any rules of engagement contained in the information; and (b) what are the details of all the information which was provided to the minister related to the authorization of force, both lethal and non-lethal, for the police forces in Ottawa on those days, including (i) who provided the information, (ii) the date and approximate time, if known, that the information was provided, (iii) an overview of the information, including what was known or decided related to the authorization of force?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen’s Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the operations of all police are fully independent, whether they be municipal, provincial, or federal.

This police independence is critical. The government may not attempt to influence in any way an investigation, or direct the conduct of specific police operations. Police independence, as qualified in a 1999 Supreme Court decision, Campbell and Shirose, was described as follows:

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Routine Proceedings

In response to (b), no information was provided to the minister by either Public Safety Canada or the RCMP related to the authorization of force, either lethal or non-lethal, for the police forces in Ottawa on those days.

Question No. 364—**Mr. Dane Lloyd:**

With regard to the information provided to the Prime Minister, including through his staff, about the police action taken related to the protests in Ottawa on February 18 and 19, 2022: (a) what are the details of all the information which was provided to the Prime Minister related to the rules of engagement for the police forces in Ottawa on those days, including (i) who provided the information, (ii) the date and approximate time, if known, that the information was provided, (iii) an overview of the information, including any rules of engagement contained in the information; and (b) what are the details of all the information which was provided to the Prime Minister related to the authorization of force, both lethal and non-lethal, for the police forces in Ottawa on those days, including (i) who provided the information, (ii) the date and approximate time, if known, that the information was provided, (iii) an overview of the information, including what was known or decided related to the authorization of force?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the operations of all police are fully independent, whether they be municipal, provincial, or federal.

This police independence is critical. The government may not attempt to influence an investigation in any way, or direct the conduct of specific police operations. Police independence, as qualified in a 1999 Supreme Court decision, *Campbell and Shirose*, was described as follows:

“While for certain purposes the commissioner of the RCMP reports to the solicitor general (now known as the public safety minister), the commissioner is not to be considered a servant or agent of the government while engaged in a criminal investigation. The commissioner is not subject to political direction. Like every other police officer similarly engaged, he is answerable to the law and, no doubt, to his conscience.”

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From the outset, our government was focused on finding solutions that protected Canadians and affected communities and ensured the minimum risk of harm. This included consulting with officials and thoroughly assessing all federal tools and resources, including the possibility of invoking the Emergencies Act. The temporary authorities provided through the act remained in place only for the short time required to address this urgent risk to Canadians’ safety.

In response to (a), with regard to information provided to the Prime Minister, including through his staff, about the police action taken related to the protests in Ottawa on February 18 and 19, 2022, no information was provided to the Prime Minister by either Public Safety Canada or the RCMP related to the rules of engagement for the police forces in Ottawa on those days.

In response to (b), with regard to information provided to the Prime Minister, including through his staff, about the police action taken related to the protests in Ottawa on February 18 and 19, 2022, no information was provided to the Prime Minister by either Public Safety Canada or the RCMP related to the authorization of force,

either lethal or non-lethal, for the police forces in Ottawa on those days.

Question No. 365—**Mr. Jeremy Patzer:**

With regard to the Emergency Economic Measures Order: (a) which entities made a disclosure to the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, under section 5, and, with respect to each entity, how many disclosures were made, broken down by (i) existence of property, under paragraph 5(a), (ii) transactions or proposed transactions, under paragraph 5(b); (b) which entities made a disclosure to the Director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, under section 5, and, with respect to each entity, how many disclosures were made, broken down by (i) existence of property, under paragraph 5(a), (ii) transactions or proposed transactions, under paragraph 5(b); (c) which institutions of the Government of Canada made a disclosure, under section 6, broken down by (i) institution making the disclosure, (ii) entity to which the disclosure was made, (iii) the nature of the information disclosed; and (d) were any charges laid in relation to breaches of the order and, if so, who was charged and for what offences?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), as per section 5 of the order, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, RCMP, received disclosures from the following: banks established under Canada's Bank Act and regulated by the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions, OSFI; co-operative credit societies, savings and credit unions and caisses populaires regulated by a provincial act and associations regulated by the Cooperative Credit Associations Act; entities authorized under provincial legislation to engage in the business of dealing in securities or to provide portfolio management or investment counselling services; and entities that perform any of the following payment functions: the provision or maintenance of an account that, in relation to an electronic funds transfer, is held on behalf of one or more end users; the holding of funds on behalf of an end user until they are withdrawn by the end user or transferred to another individual or entity; the initiation of an electronic funds transfer at the request of an end user; the authorization of an electronic funds transfer or the transmission, reception or facilitation of an instruction in relation to an electronic funds transfer, or the provision of clearing or settlement services.

In response to (a)(i) and (ii), the RCMP received information from a number of entities described in section 5 (a) and (b) of the order disclosed to the RCMP. This information was developed by those entities in a dynamic environment and, given the short period of time the Emergencies Act was in place, the information was received in an ad hoc manner, with no formal reporting mechanism established. As such, the information in the RCMP holdings may differ from information in other Government of Canada records, or numbers publicly disclosed by entities listed in part (a). The RCMP is currently evaluating information related to the invocation of the order and the mandated reporting. It would be premature to share preliminary data or additional information at this time, while analysis is ongoing to ensure accurate and fulsome reporting from the RCMP. The RCMP is committed to participating in the review of the Emergencies Act required by statute, and to ensuring that an authoritative common understanding of how the act was utilized is available.

In response to (b), given its mandate and specific operational requirements, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, CSIS, does not generally disclose details related to operational activity.

In response to (c)(i), the RCMP made disclosures under section 6. The RCMP cannot provide information on other Government of Canada institutions' disclosures.

In response to (c)(ii), the RCMP made disclosures to banks, the Canadian Bankers Association, the Investment Industry Regulatory Organization of Canada, the Canadian Securities Administrators, the Mutual Funds Dealers Association and credit unions.

In response to (c)(iii), the RCMP disclosed information on 57 entities, broken down into 18 individuals and 39 vehicles. As well, the RCMP identified and disseminated 170 Bitcoin wallet addresses as receiving funds linked to the HonkHonk Hodl crowdfunding campaign.

In response to (d), as there was no criminal enforcement mechanism under the emergency economic measures order, the RCMP did not lay any charges under the order.

Question No. 367—Mr. Todd Doherty:

With regard to the events on February 17, 2022, near Houston, British Columbia, described by the Royal Canada Mounted Police as "a violent confrontation with employees of Coastal Gaslink", which also included a road blockade: (a) does the Marten Forest Service Road and the Coastal GasLink location near it meet the meaning of "infrastructure for the supply of utilities such as ... gas", for the purposes of paragraph (a) of the definition of "critical infrastructure" in section 1 of the Emergency Measures Regulations; (b) what are the details of the actions taken under the Emergency Measures Regulations to prevent, mitigate or respond to these acts or, if none, why were none taken; and (c) what are the details of the actions taken under the Emergency Economic Measures Order to prevent, mitigate or respond to these acts or, if none, why were none taken?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, the RCMP considers that the Coastal GasLink drill site would have met the definition of critical infrastructure set out in section 1 of the emergency measures regulations while they were in force, as a place or land on which infrastructure for the supply of utilities such as gas are located.

In response to part (b), no actions were taken under the emergency measures regulations to prevent, mitigate or respond to these

Routine Proceedings

acts. Existing authorities were sufficient. Given that an investigation is ongoing into the events, the RCMP will not comment further on this matter at this time.

In response to part (c), no actions were taken under the emergency economic measures order to prevent, mitigate or respond to these acts. Existing authorities were sufficient. Given that an investigation is ongoing into the events, the RCMP will not comment further on this matter at this time.

Question No. 370—Mr. Ryan Williams:

With regard to the Canada Pension Plan's (CPP) investments in Russian state owned enterprises, or enterprises with significant ties to Vladimir Putin or the Russian oligarchy: (a) what enterprises are currently owned by the CPP, and what is the value of each investment; (b) has the government directed or advised the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) to divest such holdings, and, if so, what are the details including the date of the direction or advice; and (c) does the CPPIB have plans to eliminate all such holdings from their investment portfolio, and, if so, when will these holdings be eliminated?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the CPPIB was set up by the federal, provincial and territorial governments to prudently invest surplus Canada pension plan funds. The CPPIB operates at arm's length from Canadian governments.

Under current legislation and regulations, the government is not able to require the CPPIB to disclose its holdings in addition to the disclosure requirements to which CPPIB is subject under the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board Act. Federal and provincial governments also do not have the authority to cause the CPPIB to divest any holdings.

Question No. 371—Mr. Ryan Williams:

With regard to the long term impact of using the Emergencies Act to freeze bank accounts of Canadian citizens: has the Canada Deposit Insurance Company, the Bank of Canada, or the Department of Finance conducted any analysis on the potential impact of this measure on the long-term stability of Canadian banks, and, if so, what are the details, including the findings of the analysis?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the emergency economic measures order was in effect for only a short period of time, and it only targeted designated persons participating in the illegal blockades and occupations. As at February 21, 2022, we are aware of enforcement action taken by the RCMP under the emergency economic measures order that resulted in the freezing of approximately 280 financial products, e.g., savings and chequing accounts, credit cards and lines of credit, for a total of approximately \$7,900,000, including \$3,800,000 from a payment processor.

Moreover, there is a statutory obligation pursuant to the access to basic banking regulations for banks to open retail deposit accounts for consumers. Therefore, banks must continue to open retail deposit accounts for any consumer subject to the exceptions in the regulations.

With regard to the Bank of Canada, a search of the records of the Bank of Canada did not produce any results.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation, CDIC, a search of the records of the CDIC did not produce any results.

Question No. 374—Mr. Eric Melillo:

With regard to the COVID-19 vaccination requirement for federal public servants: (a) how many employees of the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario (FedNor) have been placed on administrative leave without pay as a result of not meeting the requirement; and (b) how many FedNor employees have had their employment terminated as a result of not meeting the requirement?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the COVID-19 vaccination requirement for federal public servants, information from the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario is as follows: In response to (a), the answer is one; in response to (b), the answer is zero.

Question No. 375—Mr. Dave MacKenzie:

With regard to the United Nations (UN) and the February 25, 2022, statement on Twitter from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement that "fundamental reforms at the UN are required": (a) what specific fundamental reforms is the government seeking at the UN; (b) what action, if any, has the government taken to start making the fundamental reforms; and (c) what is the timeline under which the government would like to see each reform in (a) enacted?

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

In response to (a), UN reform and redesign are and will continue to be priorities for Canada, as a strong, well-functioning UN system helps protect Canada's national interests and values. We are committed to a more effective, efficient, relevant and accountable UN. This commitment is reflected in the Minister of Foreign Affairs' and Minister of International Development's mandate letters.

Canada supports efforts at the UN to promote better use of resources and find new and innovative ways of working and delivering its mandate more effectively, all with transparency and accountability to member states. Canada also supports effective and inclusive peace operations, conflict prevention, and peacebuilding.

In response to (b), key areas of focus have included governance reform at the executive boards and governing bodies of UN funds, programs and agencies; COVID-19 recovery efforts; financing for development; climate change; promoting national and local ownership for inclusive conflict prevention and peacebuilding; and humanitarian action. Advancing gender equality and protecting and promoting human rights are cross-cutting priorities.

With the UN development system, UNDS, entities, for instance, Canada continues to advocate for more joined-up and coordinated UN responses; greater coherence and integration across UN efforts in development, humanitarian and peacebuilding, the "triple nexus"; sharper results-based approaches and member state accountability, efficiency gains and reducing UNDS overlap and duplication; and innovative financing with links to sustainable development goals, SDG, financing.

Regarding internal management reform, Canada engages in discussions on ways to improve governance and management across

the UN system. Sustained efforts include those undertaken through the Geneva Group, a group consisting of contributors to the UN, where Canada continues to advocate and press for efficiencies and cost-effectiveness while aligning resources to priorities. This includes, for example, improving hiring practices to recruit and retain a diverse, gender-balanced and rejuvenated workforce, as well as ensuring proper resourcing.

Canada supports UN Security Council, UNSC, reform and participates in initiatives that seek meaningful reform, including the annual intergovernmental negotiations on UNSC reform, which take place at the UN General Assembly. Canada is also a member of the Uniting for Consensus, UfC, group, a cross-regional group of UN member states that advocates for enhanced regional representation through expanding the council in the non-permanent category only, with the addition of longer-term seats, as well as new two-year seats. UfC does not support the expansion of permanent membership with veto privileges in the UNSC, nor changing the current permanent member configuration.

Canada also supports various initiatives that aim to increase the UNSC's effectiveness and limit the use of the veto by permanent members, including as a signatory to the political declaration on suspension of veto powers in cases of mass atrocity, as well as the accountability, coherence and transparency group code of conduct. Additionally, Canada recently co-sponsored a new initiative that aims to convene a General Assembly debate immediately after a UNSC permanent member uses its veto on a draft resolution that is vital to the maintenance of international peace and security.

In response to (c), UN system reform is a continued, evolving, incremental process. The timeline for implementation of reforms as well as the pace of progress depend in most cases on intergovernmental processes, configuration of bodies or offices and concerted action of member states.

Question No. 378—Mr. Pierre Poilievre:

With regard to the Output Based Pricing System (OBPS): (a) how much has the federal government collected from industry; and (b) how much has the federal government paid out under the OBPS in direct rebates to businesses (excluding project-based funding and corporate welfare grants) since it first came into effect?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), pricing carbon pollution is widely recognized as the most efficient way to reduce greenhouse gas, GHG, emissions while driving innovation to provide consumers and businesses with low-carbon options. Canada's approach to pricing carbon pollution provides flexibility for provinces and territories to implement a carbon pricing system that makes sense for their circumstances, provided that the system meets minimum stringency criteria to ensure that it is stringent, fair and efficient as defined in the federal benchmark.

The federal carbon pollution pricing system, the backstop, has two elements: a regulatory charge on fossil fuels and an output-based pricing system, OBPS, for industrial facilities. The federal OBPS is designed to minimize competitiveness and carbon leakage risks in emissions-intensive and trade-exposed industries.

The federal backstop applies in jurisdictions that request it or that do not have a carbon pricing system that aligns with the federal benchmark.

The fuel charge currently applies in Ontario, Manitoba, Yukon, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Nunavut. The OBPS currently applies in Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, Yukon, Nunavut, and partially in Saskatchewan.

Under the federal approach, the OBPS is designed to put a price on the carbon pollution of large industrial facilities, while limiting the impacts of carbon pricing on their ability to compete in the Canadian market and abroad. Carbon costs can affect businesses that conduct activities that are emissions-intensive and highly internationally traded if they compete with similar businesses in countries that do not have carbon pricing in place. This approach minimizes the risk that businesses will move from Canada to jurisdictions that do not price carbon.

Instead of paying the fuel charge, an industrial facility in the OBPS faces a compliance obligation on the portion of emissions that exceed an annual limit. Covered facilities are required to provide compensation for GHG emissions that exceed an emissions limit and are issued surplus credits if their emissions are lower than the applicable emissions limit. Facilities can sell surplus credits or bank them for use in future years. The methods for providing compensation are one of the following or a combination of both: a) making an excess emissions charge payment electronically to the receiver general for Canada; and b) remitting compliance units, namely surplus credits, federal offset credits, or recognized units.

As of February 22, 2022, the Government of Canada had collected \$396.2 million in excess emissions charge payments under the OBPS.

In response to (b), the Government of Canada has committed to return proceeds collected from the OBPS to jurisdictions of origin. Jurisdictions that have voluntarily adopted the OBPS, currently Prince Edward Island, Yukon and Nunavut, can opt for a direct transfer of proceeds collected. Proceeds collected in other backstop jurisdictions, current or past, including Ontario, New Brunswick, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, will be returned through the two program streams of the OBPS proceeds fund.

The decarbonization incentive program, DIP, is a merit-based program that incentivizes the long-term decarbonization of Canada's industrial sectors by supporting clean technology projects to reduce GHG emissions. Proceeds collected from most OBPS facilities will be returned via DIP to backstop jurisdictions.

The future electricity fund, FEF, stream is designed to support clean electricity projects and/or programs. Proceeds collected from OBPS-covered electricity-generating facilities, i.e., utilities, are expected to be returned through funding agreements with governments of backstop jurisdictions. An open call for project proposals is not anticipated under FEF.

Environment and Climate Change Canada, ECCC, launched the OBPS proceeds fund on February 14, 2022, to return proceeds collected for the 2019 compliance period, approximately \$161 million, and those collected in future years, amounts to be confirmed. The DIP stream of the OBPS proceeds fund is currently accepting project proposals that would reduce emissions across Canada's industrial sectors. ECCC has also engaged with the governments of backstop jurisdictions to initiate negotiations of the bilateral funding agreements under FEF. Given the recent launch of the OBPS proceeds fund, ECCC has not yet returned any proceeds collected from the OBPS.

Question No. 381—**Mr. Bob Zimmer:**

With regard to the estimated \$1,235.4 millions in overpayments of income benefit payments by the government listed on page 147 of the 2021 Public Accounts of Canada, Volume I: (a) what is the breakdown of the estimated overpayments by income support program, including, for each program, the (i) dollar value of overpayments, (ii) number of Canadians who received overpayments; and (b) what are the comparative statistics for each item in (a), broken down by fiscal year since 2016-17?

Routine Proceedings

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to payment accuracy figures included in note 10 of the employment insurance operating account financial statements, the payment accuracy information shared in the 2021 public accounts of Canada and included in note 10 of the financial statement represents an estimate of “potential” over/under payments, not actual established overpayments that are being collected. This note is included in the financial statements to provide users with an overview of the operations of the programs and a measure of accuracy of the benefit payments. Specifically, it should be noted that using a monetary unit sampling, MUS, methodology, the EI payment accuracy review program, PAAR, estimates the accuracy of EI benefit payments. The quality services division reviews several hundred files each year to identify undetected errors that could result in possible mispayments, which are either underpayment or overpayment. Based on the sampling method, MUS, and the observance and distribution of the mispayments across the sample, various statistics are generated for the primary goal of testing whether mispayments are below the 5% tolerance limit, with 95% accuracy set as the service standard.

In response to (a), the EI PAAR sample, or the number of files to be reviewed, is established in a manner to estimate mispayments at the overall program level. It does not include sufficient number of items for each subtype, i.e., income support program. As such, these figures are not available.

In response to (i), the actual recorded amounts are disclosed in note 3 of the audited employment insurance operating account financial statements.

The supplementary statement is in section 4, “Consolidated accounts as at March 31”, volume I, “Public Accounts of Canada 2021”, receiver general for Canada, PSPC, Canada.ca: <https://www.tpsgc-pwpsc.gc.ca/recgen/cpc-pac/2021/vol1/s4/es-ss-eng.html>.

In response to (ii), the amount recorded as overpayments in the financial statements is \$754 million and is based on actuals and estimated accruals. This represents potentially 388,000 claimants.

In response to (b), as indicated in the response to question (a), the EI PAAR sample is not large enough to provide this data.

Question No. 382—Ms. Leslyn Lewis:

With regard to the government's action following the Russian invasion of Ukraine: (a) what specific action, if any, is the government planning to take, in response to the invasion, to increase the output capacity of Canadian oil and gas so that Canada doesn't have to rely on foreign oil and gas; (b) what specific action, if any, is the Minister of Natural Resources taking to expedite the approval and construction of pipelines so that Canada doesn't have to rely on foreign oil and gas; and (c) if no specific action is being taken related to (a) or (b), why is the government favouring foreign oil and gas over Canadian oil and gas?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on February 28, 2022, in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Government of Canada acted decisively to ban the import of crude oil and petroleum products from Russia. Canada produces more oil than required to meet its domestic refining needs. Although Canada does still import oil for certain regional needs, since 2019 there have been no imports of crude oil from Russia. This new ban will ensure that Canada will continue not to

import any crude oil from Russia going forward. During the IEA ministerial on March 24, 2022, Canada announced the incremental increase in its oil and gas production of up to 300,000 barrels per day, including 200,000 barrels per day of oil and up to 100,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day of natural gas, by the end of 2022. Most of this additional production is the result of producers bringing forward planned production from 2023. This comes in the context of a release of 30.225 million barrels by the U.S. from its strategic petroleum reserve earlier this month, which was followed by a March 31, 2022, announcement by the President of the United States of another 180 million barrels over the next six months.

In August 2019, the Government of Canada announced the coming into force of the new Impact Assessment Act and the Canada Energy Regulator Act: <https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessment-agency/news/2019/08/better-rules-for-impact-assessments-come-into-effect-this-month.html>. The better rules and regulations outlined in these acts have been implemented to give companies and investors more clarity and certainty, and to ensure good projects can move forward in a timely way. These acts will continue to build public confidence by ensuring that federal decisions made about pipelines, mines, and hydro dams are guided by science, indigenous knowledge, and other evidence.

The Government of Canada remains committed to completing projects currently under way in the proper manner, including the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, TMX. Once complete, pipeline capacity will increase from the current 300,000 barrels per day to 890,000 barrels per day. The project is 50% complete and is expected to be in service by late 2023. In addition, to enhance market access for Canadian natural gas, the Government of Canada approved three significant expansion projects on the Nova Gas Transmission Limited, NGTL, system since 2020, known as the NGTL 2021, north corridor, and Edson mainline expansions. Last, Enbridge's Line 3 replacement project has now been completed and is in service on both sides of the border. This is another vital energy infrastructure that will strengthen continental energy security, while improving safety performance, increasing indigenous involvement, and enhancing economic benefits on both sides of the border.

The Government of Canada remains engaged with key international partners, such as Germany and the U.S., on a bilateral basis and in multilateral forums, including the IEA, on providing support in the medium to long term on stabilizing energy markets and the transition to clean energy.

In 2021, the Canada-Germany energy partnership was concluded. The purpose of the energy partnership is to advance engagement on the energy transformation through exchanges on policy, best practices and technologies, as well as through co-operative activities and projects focused on five key areas: energy policy, planning and regulations; resilient electricity systems that can integrate high levels of renewables; energy efficiency; sector coupling and low-carbon fuels; and innovation and applied research.

Under the partnership, Canada and Germany are working together to leverage Germany's appetite for hydrogen and its efforts to abate sectors. Canada and Germany look to deepen and focus their collaborative work through our energy partnership, particularly in light of the Ukraine invasion and the desire for Canada to contribute to German energy security.

Bilateral work with Germany will draw from, and align with, the work being done under the Canada-EU energy security/green transition and LNG working group. The energy partnership is building a foundation for medium-term exports of responsibly produced LNG and hydrogen. Critical minerals will be added to the energy partnership action plan, in keeping with the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of Germany's announcement on March 9, 2022, of a new bilateral dialogue on mineral security.

Question No. 385—Ms. Laurel Collins:

With regard to the Create the Path Table, formerly known as the Market Crisis Joint Working Group, led by Natural Resources Canada, since its inception: (a) what is the membership of this working group as of January 31, 2022; (b) how many meetings have been held; (c) what were the dates of the meetings in (b); (d) who was in attendance at each meeting in (b); (e) what were the topics discussed at each meeting in (b); and (f) what were the agreed-upon action items from each meeting in (b)?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, NRCan has never established or led a working group related to Question No. 385.

Question No. 393—Mr. Rob Moore:

With regard to the government's response to the 2020-2021 Annual Report from the Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada, and broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity that is subject to the act: (a) what specific action has been taken to abide by the statement from the commissioner who, on page 16 of the report, in reference to the 30-day time limit required by law, states that "The downplaying or tolerance of invalid extensions and delays must end"; (b) on what date was each action in (a) taken; (c) what specific action has been taken to address each of the other concerns raised by the commissioner in the report, broken down by each concern; and (d) on what date was each action in (c) taken?

Mr. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that the access to information process supports the transparency and accountability of Canadian federal institutions.

The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, TBS, welcomes the Information Commissioner's observations and recommendations on how the government can continue to ensure that the right of access to information for Canadians is upheld. TBS continues to work with institutions to support and share guidance, best practices, and operational solutions to help them overcome operational challenges.

The length of extensions that are taken by institutions is assessed on a case-by-case basis wherein the volume and complexity of the

Routine Proceedings

information for the specific request are taken into consideration. This includes time extension requirements to consult with other government institutions and/or with third parties. In addition, institutions are required to inform the Office of the Information Commissioner, OIC, when extending the initial request reply period beyond an additional 30 days. There also exists a recourse mechanism whereby a requester who feels that the extension is unreasonable may file a complaint with the OIC.

The government has made significant improvements to access to information over the years. Recent amendments to the Access to Information Act have increased government openness and transparency by requiring the online publication of more government information. In addition, summaries of completed access to information requests are currently published every 30 days on the Open Government portal and removed after a period of two years. TBS is working on extending the retention of these summaries beyond two years.

The Government of Canada remains focused on improving the systems that support access to information and privacy requests, helping institutions to address outstanding requests and continually improving ATI program performance. In budget 2021, the government invested \$12.8 million to support further improvements to the online access to information and personal information request service, to accelerate the proactive release of information to Canadians, and to support completion of the Access to Information Act review.

This review is an opportunity to explore how new tools and approaches could improve efficiency and make information more open and accessible to Canadians. The review will further examine the legislative framework, identify improvements to proactive disclosure to make information openly available, and assess processes and systems to improve service and reduce delays.

A list of key actions, implemented, planned or under way, to improve access to information and transparency is available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/access-information-privacy/reviewing-access-information/the-review-process/key-actions-access-information.html>.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government's response to Questions Nos. 358 to 360, 366, 368, 369, 372, 373, 376, 377, 379, 380, 383, 384, 386 and 392 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

Routine Proceedings

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 358—Ms. Louise Chabot:

With regard to the latest reclassification of the Living Cost Differential for Cap-aux-Meules for federal public servants, which is part of the Isolated Posts and Government Housing Directive: what are the details of the latest review process conducted by Statistics Canada, including the (i) raw statistical data used in the calculation, (ii) results used in the calculation, (iii) emails exchanged by the Statistics Canada officials responsible for these calculations, (iv) data analysis papers with the results?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 359—Ms. Louise Chabot:

With regard to the consultations that Employment and Social Development Canada held on the Disability Inclusion Action Plan from June 4, 2021, to September 30, 2021: (a) what are the details of the consultation process, including the (i) number of participants, (ii) selection process for participants, (iii) complete schedule of the consultations, (iv) department's briefing notes for each of these meetings; and (b) what are the details of the findings and analyses on the themes of (i) financial security, (ii) employment, (iii) disability-inclusive spaces, (iv) a modern approach to disability?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 360—Ms. Louise Chabot:

With regard to the special COVID-19 benefits for self-employed workers, as of January 31, 2021: (a) for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), the Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB), the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB) and the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB), what is, for each benefit, the (i) total amount granted in dollars, (ii) number of workers that used the benefit, (iii) average length of the benefit, in weeks, broken down by gender and by province; and (b) what is the (i) number of workers who used CERB and/or CRB, CRB and/or CRSB, CRSB and/or CRCB, (ii) average length of the combined benefits, in weeks, (iii) number of workers who used combined benefits, broken down by gender and by province?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 366—Mr. Jeremy Patzer:

With regard to the Emergency Measures Regulations: (a) what public assemblies were considered to be breaches of the peace, under section 2, and what was the extent of the areas, under section 4, where travel was prohibited; (b) were any foreign nationals exempted by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration or the Minister of Public Safety and the Minister of Emergency Preparedness, under paragraph 3(2) (f), from the prohibition on entering Canada with an intent to participate in or facilitate an unlawful assembly and, if so, who and what assembly were they participating in or facilitating; (c) were any persons granted permission by the Minister of Public Safety and the Minister of Emergency Preparedness, under paragraph 4(3) (a), to (i) travel to or within an area where an unlawful assembly was taking place, (ii) cause a minor to travel to or within 500 metres of an area where an unlawful assembly was taking place, and, if so, who, broken down by (i) and (ii); (d) were any places designated by the Minister of Public Safety and the Minister of Emergency Preparedness as protected places, under paragraph 6(f), and, if so, (i) what or where were they, (ii) what were the dates the designation was effective, (iii) how were they secured; (e) were any goods and services requested by the Minister of Public Safety and the Minister of Emergency Preparedness or the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, under section 7, and, if so, to whom were the requests directed and, with respect to each request, what goods or services were requested; (f) what are the details of all compensation paid under subsection 9(1); (g) what are the details of all claims for compensation made under subsection (2) and Part V of the Emergencies Act; and (h) were any charges laid in relation to breaches of the regulations and, if so, who was charged and for what offences?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 368—Mr. Colin Carrie:

With regard to the government's requirements as a signatory to the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the government's Emergency Economic Measures Order SOR/2022-20: (a) did the government adhere to the section of the ICCPR which states that "Any State Party to the

present Covenant availing itself of the right of derogation shall immediately inform the other States Parties to the present Covenant, through the intermediary of the Secretary-General of the United Nations"; (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, what are the details including (i) the date, (ii) who was notified, (iii) who provided the notification, (iv) how was the notification provided; and (c) if the answer to (a) is negative, why was notification not provided?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 369—Mr. Dan Muys:

With regard to the official position of the government of Canada, stated in budget 2021 "A Recovery Plan For Jobs, Growth and Resilience", that since 2015, the federal government and federal agencies have made \$6.1 billion available for universal broadband: how much of the \$6.1 billion has been allocated to projects that improved broadband for Canadians living in the areas with postal codes beginning and ending in (i) LOR 1A0, (ii) LOR 1C0, (iii) LOR 1H0, (iv) LOR 1J0, (v) LOR 1K0, (vi) LOR 1P0, (vii) LOR 1R0, (viii) LOR 1T0, (ix) LOR 1V0, (x) LOR 1W0, (xi) LOR 1X0, (xii) LOR 1Z0, (xiii) LOR 2B0, (xiv) L8J, (xv) L9G, (xvi) L9H, (xvii) N0B 1L0, (xviii) N0B 2J0, (xix) N1R 8B2?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 372—Mr. Ben Lobb:

With regard to the government's response to the Log4J software vulnerability made public in December of 2021, and broken down by department, agency and Crown corporation: (a) which departments, agencies, and Crown corporations took their web services off-line in response to the vulnerability and which specific web services were taken off-line; (b) for how many days were each of the web services off-line; (c) which web services still remain off-line and what is the expected date when each service will be restored online; (d) what specific measures have been taken to date to neutralize the threat of Log4J; and (e) for each service that was off-line, where were users redirected to in order to access the services?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 373—Mr. John Brassard:

With regard to the confirmation of the declaration of emergency pursuant to the Emergencies Act: did the Prime Minister consider the recorded division in the House of Commons on February 21, 2022, to confirm the declaration of a public order emergency proclaimed on February 14, 2022, to be a matter of confidence?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 376—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to the distribution of rapid tests for COVID-19 to the provinces and territories: (a) how many rapid tests were distributed to each province or territory, broken down by month since March 2020; (b) what is the total number of rapid tests distributed; (c) what is the breakdown of the number of rapid tests distributed that were (i) manufactured in Canada, (ii) imported from outside of Canada; and (d) of the imported rapid tests, what is the breakdown of the number of tests by country of origin?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 377—Mr. Pierre Poilievre:

With regard to the carbon tax fuel charge: (a) how much has the federal government collected in revenues from the carbon tax fuel charge; and (b) how much has it paid out to households in rebates for that same carbon tax fuel charge since it first came into effect?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 379—Mr. Chris Warkentin:**

With regard to the designation of protected places in downtown Ottawa in February 2022, provisioned under the Emergency Measures Regulations: broken down by start and end date, which paragraph of section 6 of the Emergency Measures Regulations was used to designate as a protected place the (i) block bounded by Wellington, Bay, Sparks, Albert and Commissioner streets and Bronson Avenue (including the Garden of the Provinces and Territories and Bronson Park), (ii) block bounded by Wellington, Sparks and Bay streets and Lyon Street North, (iii) block bounded by Wellington, Kent and Sparks streets and Lyon Street North, (iv) block bounded by Wellington, Bank, Sparks and Kent streets, (v) block bounded by Wellington, O'Connor, Sparks and Bank streets, (vi) block bounded by Wellington, Metcalfe, Sparks and O'Connor streets, (vii) block bounded by Wellington, Sparks and Metcalfe streets and the southbound lanes of Elgin Street, (viii) block bounded by Wellington Street, the northbound lanes of Elgin Street and the southbound lanes of Elgin Street (including the National War Memorial), (ix) block bounded by Elgin and Albert streets, the Rideau Canal and Mackenzie King Bridge (including the National Arts Centre), (x) block bounded by Sparks, Bay and Queen streets and Bronson Avenue, (xi) block bounded by Sparks, Queen and Bay streets and Lyon Street North, (xii) block bounded by Sparks, Kent and Queen streets and Lyon Street North, (xiii) block bounded by Sparks, Bank, Queen and Kent streets, (xiv) block bounded by Sparks, O'Connor, Queen and Bank streets, (xv) block bounded by Sparks, Metcalfe, Queen and O'Connor streets, (xvi) block bounded by Sparks, Elgin, Queen and Metcalfe streets, (xvii) block bounded by Queen, Bay and Albert streets and Bronson Avenue, (xviii) block bounded by Queen, Albert and Bay streets and Lyon Street North, (xix) block bounded by Queen, Kent and Albert streets and Lyon Street North, (xx) block bounded by Queen, Bank, Albert and Kent streets, (xxi) block bounded by Queen, O'Connor, Albert and Bank streets, (xxii) block bounded by Queen, Metcalfe, Albert and O'Connor streets, (xxiii) block bounded by Queen, Elgin, Albert and Metcalfe streets, (xxiv) block bounded by Albert, Bay and Slater streets and Bronson Avenue, (xxv) block bounded by Albert, Slater and Bay streets and Lyon Street North, (xxvi) block bounded by Albert, Kent and Slater streets and Lyon Street North, (xxvii) block bounded by Albert, Bank, Slater and Kent streets, (xxviii) block bounded by Albert, O'Connor, Slater and Bank streets, (xxix) block bounded by Albert, Metcalfe, Slater and O'Connor streets, (xxx) block bounded by Albert, Elgin, Slater and Metcalfe streets, (xxxi) block bounded by Albert and Slater streets and the northbound lanes of Elgin Street, (xxxii) block bounded by Slater and Bay streets, Laurier Avenue West and Bronson Avenue, (xxxiii) block bounded by Slater and Bay streets, Lyon Street North and Laurier Avenue West, (xxxiv) block bounded by Slater and Kent streets, Laurier Avenue West and Lyon Street North, (xxxv) block bounded by Slater, Bank and Kent streets and Laurier Avenue West, (xxxvi) block bounded by Slater, O'Connor and Bank streets and Laurier Avenue West, (xxxvii) block bounded by Slater, Metcalfe and O'Connor streets and Laurier Avenue West, (xxxviii) block bounded by Slater, Elgin and Metcalfe streets and Laurier Avenue West, (xxxix) block bounded by Slater and Elgin streets, Mackenzie King Bridge, the Rideau Canal and Laurier Avenue West (including Confederation Park), (xl) block bounded by Laurier Avenue West, Percy and Gloucester streets and Bronson Avenue, (xli) block bounded by Laurier Avenue West and Bay, Gloucester and Percy streets, (xlii) block bounded by Laurier Avenue West, Lyon Street North and Bay and Gloucester streets, (xliii) block bounded by Laurier Avenue West, Kent and Gloucester streets and Lyon Street North, (xliv) block bounded by Laurier Avenue West and Bank, Gloucester and Kent streets, (xlv) block bounded by Laurier Avenue West and O'Connor, Gloucester and Bank streets, (xlvi) block bounded by Laurier Avenue West and Metcalfe, Gloucester and O'Connor streets, (xlvii) block bounded by Laurier Avenue West and Elgin, Gloucester and Metcalfe streets, (xlviii) block bounded by Laurier Avenue West, Queen Elizabeth Driveway and Lisgar and Elgin streets (including Ottawa City Hall), (xlix) block bounded by Gloucester, Percy and Nepean streets and Bronson Avenue, (l) block bounded by Gloucester, Bay, Lisgar and Percy streets (including the projection of Nepean Street lying east of Percy Street), (li) block bounded by Gloucester, Nepean and Bay streets and Lyon Street North, (lii) block bounded by Gloucester, Kent and Nepean streets and Lyon Street North, (liii) block bounded by Gloucester, Bank, Nepean and Kent streets, (liv) block bounded by Gloucester, O'Connor, Nepean and Bank streets, (lv) block bounded by Gloucester, Metcalfe, Nepean and O'Connor streets, (lvi) block bounded by Gloucester, Elgin, Nepean and Metcalfe streets, (lvii) block bounded by Nepean, Percy and Lisgar streets and Bronson Avenue, (lviii) block bounded by Nepean, Lisgar and Bay streets and Lyon Street North, (lix) block bounded by Nepean, Kent and Lisgar streets and Lyon Street North, (lx) block bounded by Nepean, Bank, Lisgar and Kent streets, (lxi) block bounded by Nepean, O'Connor, Lisgar and Bank streets, (lxii) block bounded by Nepean, Metcalfe, Lisgar and O'Connor streets, (lxiii) block bounded by Nepean, Elgin, Lisgar and Metcalfe streets, (lxiv) block bounded by Lisgar, Percy and Cooper streets and Bronson Avenue, (lxv) block bounded by Lisgar, Bay, Cooper and Percy streets, (lxvi) block bounded by Lisgar, Cooper and

Bay streets and Lyon Street North, (lxvii) block bounded by Lisgar, Kent and Cooper streets and Lyon Street North, (lxviii) block bounded by Lisgar, Bank, Cooper and Kent streets, (lxix) block bounded by Lisgar, O'Connor, Cooper and Bank streets, (lxx) block bounded by Lisgar, Metcalfe, Cooper and O'Connor streets, (lxxi) block bounded by Lisgar, Elgin, Cooper and Metcalfe streets, (lxxii) block bounded by Lisgar, Cartier, Cooper and Elgin streets, (lxxiii) block bounded by Lisgar, Cooper and Cartier streets and Queen Elizabeth Driveway, (lxxiv) block bounded by Cooper and Percy streets, Somerset Street West and Bronson Avenue, (lxxv) block bounded by Cooper, Bay and Percy streets and Somerset Street West, (lxxvi) block bounded by Cooper and Bay streets, Lyon Street North and Somerset Street West, (lxxvii) block bounded by Cooper and Kent streets, Somerset Street West and Lyon Street North, (lxxviii) block bounded by Cooper, Bank and Kent streets and Somerset Street West, (lxxix) block bounded by Cooper, O'Connor and Bank streets and Somerset Street West, (lxxx) block bounded by Cooper, Metcalfe and O'Connor streets and Somerset Street West, (lxxxi) block bounded by Cooper, Elgin and Metcalfe streets and Somerset Street West, (lxxxii) block bounded by Cooper, Cartier and Elgin streets and Somerset Street West, (lxxxiii) block bounded by Cooper and Cartier streets, The Driveway and Somerset Street West, (lxxxiv) block bounded by Cooper Street, Queen Elizabeth Driveway, Somerset Street West and The Driveway, (lxxxv) block bounded by Somerset Street West, Percy and MacLaren streets and Bronson Avenue, (lxxxvi) block bounded by Somerset Street West and Bay, MacLaren and Percy streets, (lxxxvii) block bounded by Somerset Street West, Lyon Street North and MacLaren and Bay streets (including Dundonald Park), (lxxxviii) block bounded by Somerset Street West, Kent and MacLaren streets and Lyon Street North, (lxxxix) block bounded by Somerset Street West and Bank, MacLaren and Kent streets, (xc) block bounded by Somerset Street West and O'Connor, MacLaren and Bank streets, (xci) block bounded by Somerset Street West and Metcalfe, MacLaren and O'Connor streets, (xcii) block bounded by Somerset Street West and Elgin, MacLaren and Metcalfe streets, (xciii) block bounded by Somerset Street West and Cartier, MacLaren and Elgin streets, (xciv) block bounded by Somerset Street West and MacDonald, MacLaren and Cartier streets, (xcv) block bounded by Somerset Street West, The Driveway and MacLaren and MacDonald streets, (xcvi) the block bounded by Somerset Street West, The Driveway, Queen Elizabeth Driveway and Waverley, Robert and Lewis streets, (xcvii) block bounded by The Driveway, Central Avenue and MacLaren Street, (xcviii) block bounded by Central Avenue, the westbound lanes of MacLaren Street and the eastbound lanes of MacLaren Street (including Golden Triangle Park), (xcix) block bounded by MacLaren, Percy and Gilmour streets and Bronson Avenue, (c) block bounded by MacLaren, Bay, Gilmour and Percy streets, (ci) block bounded by MacLaren, Gilmour and Bay streets and Lyon Street North, (cii) block bounded by MacLaren, Kent and Gilmour streets and Lyon Street North, (ciii) block bounded by MacLaren, Bank, Gilmour and Kent streets, (civ) block bounded by MacLaren, O'Connor, Gilmour and Bank streets, (cv) block bounded by MacLaren, Metcalfe, Gilmour and O'Connor streets, (cvi) block bounded by MacLaren, Elgin, Gilmour and Metcalfe streets, (cvii) block bounded by MacLaren, Cartier, Gilmour and Elgin streets, (cviii) block bounded by MacLaren, MacDonald, Gilmour and Cartier streets, (cix) block bounded by MacLaren, Gilmour and MacDonald streets and Central Avenue, (cx) block bounded by Gilmour, Percy and James streets and Bronson Avenue, (cxii) block bounded by Gilmour, Bay, James and Percy streets, (cxiii) block bounded by Gilmour, James and Bay streets and Lyon Street North, (cxiiii) block bounded by Gilmour, Kent and James streets and Lyon Street North, (cxv) block bounded by Gilmour, Lewis and Bank streets and Derby Place, (cxvi) block bounded by Gilmour, O'Connor and Lewis streets and Derby Place, (cxvii) block bounded by Gilmour, Metcalfe, Lewis and O'Connor streets, (cxviii) block bounded by Gilmour, Elgin, Lewis, Frank and Metcalfe streets and Jack Purcell Lane (including the projections of Lewis Street and Waverley Street West lying east of Metcalfe Street, and Jack Purcell Park), (cxix) block bounded by Gilmour, Cartier, Lewis and Elgin streets (including Minto Park), (cxx) block bounded by Gilmour, Lewis and Cartier streets and Hartington Place, (cxxi) block bounded by Gilmour, MacDonald and Lewis streets and Hartington Place, (cxxii) block bounded by Gilmour, Lewis and MacDonald streets and Salisbury Place, (cxxiii) block bounded by Gilmour and Lewis streets, The Driveway and Salisbury Place,

Routine Proceedings

(cxxxiv) block bounded by James and Percy streets and Gladstone and Bronson avenues (including McNabb Park), (cxxxv) block bounded by James, Bay, Florence and Percy streets, (cxxxvi) block bounded by James, Florence and Bay streets and Lyon Street North, (cxxxvii) block bounded by James, Kent and Florence streets and Lyon Street North, (cxxxviii) block bounded by James, Bank, Florence and Kent streets, (cxxxix) block bounded by Lewis, O'Connor and Bank streets and Waverley Street West, (cxxx) block bounded by Lewis, Metcalfe and O'Connor streets and Waverley Street West, (cxxxii) block bounded by Lewis, Elgin and Waverley streets and Jack Purcell Lane, (cxxxiii) block bounded by Lewis, Cartier, Waverley and Elgin streets, (cxxxiiii) block bounded by Lewis, MacDonald, Waverley and Cartier streets, (cxxxv) block bounded by Lewis, Roberts, Waverley and MacDonald streets, (cxxxvi) block bounded by Florence, Bay and Percy streets and Gladstone Avenue, (cxxxvii) block bounded by Florence and Bay streets, Lyon Street North and Gladstone Avenue, (cxxxviii) block bounded by Florence, Bank and Kent streets and Gladstone Avenue, (cxxxix) block bounded by Waverley Street West and O'Connor, Frank and Bank streets, (cxl) block bounded by Waverley Street West and Metcalfe, Frank and O'Connor streets, (cxli) block bounded by Waverley, Elgin and Frank streets and Jack Purcell Lane, (cxlii) block bounded by Waverley, Cartier, Frank and Elgin streets, (cxliiii) block bounded by Waverley, MacDonald, Frank and Cartier streets, (cxliiv) block bounded by Waverley, Robert, Frank and MacDonald streets, (cxlv) block bounded by Waverley, Frank and Robert streets and Queen Elizabeth Driveway, (cxlvi) block bounded by Frank, O'Connor and Bank streets and Gladstone Avenue, (cxlvii) block bounded by Frank, Metcalfe and O'Connor streets and Gladstone Avenue, (cxlviii) block bounded by Frank, Elgin and Metcalfe streets and Gladstone Avenue, (cxlix) block bounded by Frank, Cartier and Elgin streets and Gladstone Avenue (including St. Luke's Park), (cl) block bounded by Frank, Robert and Cartier streets and Delaware Avenue, (cli) block bounded by Frank and Robert streets and Queen Elizabeth Driveway, (clii) block bounded by Gladstone and Bronson avenues and Percy and McLeod streets, (cliii) block bounded by Gladstone Avenue and Bay, McLeod and Percy streets, (cliv) block bounded by Gladstone Avenue, Lyon Street North and McLeod and Bay streets, (clv) block bounded by Gladstone Avenue, Kent and McLeod streets and Lyon Street North, (clvi) block bounded by Gladstone Avenue and Bank, McLeod and Kent streets, (clvii) block bounded by Gladstone Avenue and O'Connor, McLeod and Bank streets, (clviii) block bounded by Gladstone Avenue and Metcalfe, McLeod and O'Connor streets, (clix) block bounded by Gladstone Avenue and Elgin, McLeod and Metcalfe streets, (clx) block bounded by Gladstone Avenue and Cartier, McLeod and Elgin streets, (clxi) block bounded by Delaware Avenue, Queen Elizabeth Driveway and McLeod and Cartier streets, (clxii) block bounded by McLeod, Percy and Flora streets and Bronson Avenue, (clxiii) block bounded by McLeod, Bay, Flora and Percy streets, (clxiv) block bounded by McLeod, Flora and Bay streets and Lyon Street North, (clxv) block bounded by McLeod, Kent and Flora streets and Lyon Street North, (clxvi) block bounded by McLeod, Bank, Flora and Kent streets, (clxvii) block bounded by McLeod, O'Connor and Bank streets and Argyle Avenue, (clxviii) block bounded by McLeod, Metcalfe and O'Connor streets and Argyle Avenue (including the Canadian Museum of Nature), (clxix) block bounded by McLeod, Elgin and Metcalfe streets and Argyle Avenue (including the First National Tree Day Memorial Park), (clxx) block bounded by McLeod, Cartier and Elgin streets and Park Avenue, (clxxi) block bounded by McLeod and Cartier streets, Queen Elizabeth Driveway and Argyle Avenue (including the projection of Park Avenue lying east of Cartier Street), (clxxii) block bounded by Park and Argyle avenues and Cartier and Elgin streets, (clxxiii) block bounded by Flora and Percy streets and Arlington and Bronson avenues, (clxxiv) block bounded by Flora, Bay and Percy streets and Arlington Avenue, (clxxv) block bounded by Flora and Bay streets, Lyon Street North and Arlington Avenue, (clxxvi) block bounded by Flora and Kent streets, Arlington Avenue and Lyon Street North, (clxxvii) block bounded by Flora, Bank and Kent streets and Arlington Avenue, (clxxviii) block bounded by Arlington and Bronson avenues and Percy and Catherine streets, (clxxix) block bounded by Arlington Avenue and Bay, Catherine and Percy streets, (clxxx) block bounded by Arlington Avenue, Lyon Street North and Catherine and Bay streets, (clxxxii) block bounded by Arlington Avenue, Kent and Catherine streets and Lyon Street North, (clxxxiii) block bounded by Arlington Avenue and Bank, Catherine and Kent streets, (clxxxiv) block bounded by Argyle Avenue and O'Connor, Catherine and Bank streets, (clxxxv) block bounded by Argyle Avenue and Metcalfe, Catherine and O'Connor streets, (clxxxvi) block bounded by Argyle Avenue and Elgin, Catherine and Metcalfe streets, (clxxxvii) block bounded by Argyle Avenue, Queen Elizabeth Driveway and Catherine and Elgin streets, (clxxxviii) block bounded by Catherine and Percy streets, the Queensway (Highway 417) and Bronson Avenue, (clxxxix) block bounded by Catherine, Bay and Percy streets and the Queensway (Highway 417), (clxxxix) block bounded by Catherine and Bay streets, Lyon Street North and the Queensway (Highway 417), (cx) block bounded by Catherine and Kent streets, the Queensway

(Highway 417) and Lyon Street North, (cxci) block bounded by Catherine, Bank and Kent streets and the Queensway (Highway 417), (cxcii) block bounded by Catherine, O'Connor and Bank streets and the Queensway (Highway 417), (cxciii) block bounded by Catherine, Metcalfe and O'Connor streets and the Queensway (Highway 417), (cxciv) block bounded by Catherine, Elgin and Metcalfe streets and the Queensway (Highway 417), (cxcv) block bounded by Catherine and Elgin streets, Queen Elizabeth Driveway and the Queensway (Highway 417), (cxcvi) lands lying between Queen Elizabeth Driveway and the Rideau Canal, lying between Laurier Avenue West and the Queensway (Highway 417), (cxcvii) other blocks or lands in or near the City of Ottawa not mentioned in (i) to (cxcvi), broken down by block or other description of land?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 380—**Mr. Bob Zimmer:**

With regard to the Treasury Board's Guide to Delegating and Applying Spending and Financial Authorities: (a) which departments and agencies maintain a log (or similar type of record) of violations or noncompliance related to the requirements set out in the guide; (b) for each department or agency in (a), how many entries have been entered in the log since January 1, 2021; and (c) what are the details of each entry, including the (i) date of the incident, (ii) summary of the violation or non-compliance, (iii) action taken as a result of the incident, (iv) financial value of the transaction related incident?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 383—**Ms. Rachel Blaney:**

With regard to the one-time grant for Guaranteed Income Supplement recipients who received pandemic benefits being issued by Service Canada, broken down by province, region and constituency: (a) how many applications were received for the expedited manual payment offered ahead of April 19, 2022; (b) how many Canadians received the expedited manual payment offered ahead of April 19, 2022; (c) on what date was the expedited manual payment issued to each Canadian in (b); (d) how does the department define severe financial hardship; and (e) how many applications for the expedited manual payment were not approved, and why?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 384—**Ms. Rachel Blaney:**

With regard to the processing of applications for a Secure Certificate of Indian Status by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), since 2021, broken down by province, region and constituency: (a) what are the (i) mean, (ii) median, (iii) minimum, (iv) maximum processing times, broken down by applications that met the service standard and applications that did not meet the service standard; (b) what metrics and processes does ISC use to ensure that service times are optimized; (c) how many incomplete applications were received; (d) how many of the applications in (c) were returned for completion to the applicant; and (e) of the applications in (d), what are the processing times?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 386—**Mr. Eric Duncan:**

With regard to the VIA Rail stations in Brockville, Smiths Falls, Alexandria, Kingston, Belleville, Cobourg, Oshawa, Port Hope, Gananoque, Napanee, St. Marys, Trenton, Wyoming, and Ingersoll, Ontario, and broken down by station: what are the details of all capital investments which have occurred at the station since 2010, including the (i) date of the investment, (ii) project completion date, (iii) project description, (iv) amount of the investment?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 387—**Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay:**

With regard to the government's Defence Procurement Strategy: (a) is the government accelerating the delivery or completion dates of any military related procurement projects following the Russian invasion of Ukraine; and (b) if the answer in (a) is affirmative, what are the details of each project including, for each, the (i) value of the contract, (ii) vendor, (iii) original scheduled completion or delivery date, (iv) new expedited completion or delivery date, (v) project description, including items procured and number of units?

(Return tabled)

*Speaker's Ruling***PRIVILEGE****Question No. 388—Ms. Marilyn Gladu:**

With regard to the COVID-19 vaccination requirement for federal public servants: (a) how many employees have (i) been placed on unpaid administrative leave, (ii) had their employment terminated, as a result of not meeting the requirement; and (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by (i) province or territory, (ii) each of the government's designated Employment Equity Groups, including women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minorities?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 389—Mr. Dave MacKenzie:

With regard to the acquisition or loss of ammunition and weapons by government departments and agencies since 2016, broken down by year: (a) what is the total amount spent on (i) ammunition, (ii) weapons, (iii) combined total of ammunition and weapons; (b) what are the details of all ammunition and weapons acquired including, for each purchase, the (i) type, (ii) model, (iii) description, (iv) number of units; and (c) what is the total amount of ammunition and weapons that were lost or stolen, including, for each instance, (i) the date, (ii) the description of items lost or stolen, (iii) whether the items were lost, (iv) whether the items were stolen, (v) whether the items were ever recovered, and, if so, when, (vi) the value of the items, (vii) the description of the incident, (viii) whether the incident was reported to law enforcement?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 390—Ms. Lori Idlout:

With regard to the National Indian Residential School Crisis Line and the Hope for Wellness Help Line, broken down by month and by line since January 2021: (a) what is the total number of calls received; (b) what is the total number of text messages received; (c) how many employees are (i) full time employees, (ii) part-time employees, (iii) temporary employees; and (d) what is the total funding allocated to the operations of the Crisis Line and Help Line?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 391—Ms. Lori Idlout:

With regard to support given to the Bearskin Lake First Nation since they declared a state of emergency on December 28, 2021: (a) when was the Minister of Indigenous Services made aware of the state of emergency; (b) on what dates did the government receive requests for support; and (c) for each of the requests received in (b), (i) what was the nature of each request, (ii) was the government able to fulfill the request, and, if not, what was the reason for not meeting the request in full?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 392—Mr. Rob Moore:

With regard to public servants who process requests filed under the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act (ATIP) since March 1, 2020, and broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity that is subject to these acts: (a) how many employees have been placed on "Other Leave With Pay", also known as code 699, at any point since March 1, 2020; (b) what is the cumulative number of days that were paid out under code 699, broken down by month; and (c) were the individuals on code 699 leave replaced, or did the individuals being on leave contribute to further delays in processing ATIP requests?

(Return tabled)

[*English*]

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ALLEGED BREACHES OF PRIVILEGE PRESENTED IN THE THIRD REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised on March 31, 2022, by the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman concerning the events reported in the third report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

First off, the Chair wishes to briefly describe the events that led to the member raising the question.

In June 2021, the committee presented its second report to the House. The report described the difficulties encountered during its study of the questions of conflict of interest and lobbying in relation to pandemic spending. Subsequently, the 43rd Parliament was dissolved, which put an end to the business of the House and its committees. No action was taken by the House during the previous Parliament with respect to this report and the allegations found therein, including the question of privilege raised on June 10, 2021. Members may refer to the ruling of December 9, 2021, found at pages 953 and 954 of Debates for further context.

The Committee recently presented its third report, reiterating its support for the conclusions of the report from the previous parliament, which led the member from Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman to raise his question of privilege. He argued that, while dissolution ended the orders for the appearance of witnesses, it did not allow the contempt that was allegedly committed to be purged. The presentation of the report would now allow the House to rule on these questions.

For his part, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons responded that the orders of the previous parliament expired with its dissolution. He argued that, in order to raise a question of privilege, a committee should first order the appearance of witnesses during this Parliament, then those witnesses should refuse to appear and, finally, a report detailing this refusal should be presented. He said that the presentation to the House of a report from a previous parliament is not enough to trigger the process related to a question of privilege.

● (1530)

[*Translation*]

To deal with this issue, the Chair must determine whether the issues raised in the committee's report warrant the House to be seized of the matter and give it priority over other business during a new Parliament.

Dissolution put an end to all business of the House and its committees. Consequently, the order adopted by the House on March 25, 2021, expired and the persons summoned to appear were relieved of their obligations. The order to appear from the previous Parliament mentioned in the committee's report is no longer before the House.

Speaker's Ruling

The Chair has no doubt that the House or its committees can order a particular witness to appear. Any such order must be respected as long as it is in effect. However, a new question of privilege may not be raised regarding a failure to testify unless the witnesses fail to comply with a new order to appear adopted by the House or one of its committees during the current session.

[*English*]

The question that now arises is concerning the alleged contempt and dissolution's effect on it. Only the House can determine that contempt has been committed and decide to punish in accordance with its gravity as it sees fit. Until the House has ruled, the facts remain alleged.

As was mentioned previously, and in the ruling of December 9, 2021, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, states at page 81, “Instances of contempt in one Parliament may even be punished during another Parliament.”

This sentence is taken from an earlier edition of Erskine May, the procedural authority in the United Kingdom. However, the Chair would like to point out once again that the circumstances in which a question of privilege may be raised on an alleged case of contempt that occurred during a previous Parliament are much more limited than this quote suggests.

The rare instances in which this concept was invoked by my predecessors always involved incidents that were brought to the attention of the House for the first time in light of new facts. They were not a continuation of proceedings interrupted by dissolution.

A 1967 report from the Select Committee on Parliamentary Privilege of the U.K. House of Commons clearly illustrates the rare circumstances in which this concept could apply. It states, at page 95 of the report:

However flagrant the contempt, the House can only commit to the close of the existing session. If, however, the House consider that an offender, who has been released on Parliament being prorogued, has not been punished sufficiently, it may commit him again in the following session.

[*Translation*]

Thus, when an allegation of contempt is brought to the attention of the House, it must be dealt with during the session in which it was raised. Any sanction applied by the House is valid only until the end of the session. However, in the very specific case in which contempt was recognized by the House and punished, but prorogation or dissolution put a premature end to the punishment or sanctions, the House may decide to continue its efforts in the subsequent session to remedy it. The issue would not therefore be to reopen a discussion on the merits of the allegations raised in the previous parliament, but rather to decide to reimpose a sanction that had not been fully applied.

In the case before us, the issues raised in the committee's third report do not constitute new facts. The report raises the same elements that were presented in June 2021. In fact, this third report, reiterating the committee's second report from the previous Parliament, deals with the proceedings of the 43rd Parliament, which all ended with dissolution.

Since the House did not have the opportunity to decide on the merits of the alleged instances of contempt nor to reprimand them

before dissolution, it now seems to be too late to do so in this new Parliament.

● (1535)

[*English*]

By itself, the presentation of the committee's third report is not sufficient to conclude that this question must have priority over other House business. Consequently, the Chair cannot conclude that there is a *prima facie* case of privilege and give it priority over other House business.

I thank the members for their attention.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO QUESTION NO.351—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the point of order raised on April 4, 2022, by the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan concerning the government's response to written Question No. 351.

When he raised his point of order, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan argued that the government response tabled the same day was incomplete and did not respond to all elements of his written question. According to the member, the government is required to respond not only to the question in general, but to the specific elements contained in that question.

[*Translation*]

Written questions are one of the means that members have at their disposal to gather detailed or technical information from the government. Over the years, a number of interventions have been made in the House about the quality, accuracy and completeness of the government's responses to written questions.

[*English*]

The Chair is of the view that ruling on the completeness of responses to written questions is tantamount to ruling on their content, and that is not the Chair's role. At page 529 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, it states, “There are no provisions in the rules for the Speaker to review government responses to questions.”

[*Translation*]

In a ruling on a similar issue rendered on April 3, 2012, found at pages 6856 to 6858 of Debates, one of my predecessors also indicated that it is not the Chair's role to determine whether the content of these documents is “complete”.

*The Budget**[English]*

On February 15, 2017, Speaker Regan mentioned the following in a ruling found at page 8,974 of Debates: “By raising their dissatisfaction with the responses to their written questions, both members are in effect asking the Chair to assess the quality and completeness of answers provided to written questions.”

The Chair continues to encourage communication and co-operation between members and the responsible ministers as a way of obtaining more information.

I thus consider this matter closed and thank members for their attention.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

*[English]***THE BUDGET**

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: When this was last before the House, we were two minutes into questions and comments of the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have many concerns about the budgetary policy of the government. I wonder if the member could comment specifically, though, on the issues around the government's intention with respect to direction and control regulations. The government has finally recognized that there is a problem with direction and control, but there is still a lot of concern among stakeholders about what remedy the government will put forward. The budget refers to changes that are in the spirit of Bill S-216, which is a bill sponsored by a colleague of mine in the Conservative Party, but it does not address the specific measures.

I wonder if the member, who I know has some expertise in this area, can clarify for the House, and for stakeholders in the development community and elsewhere who are following this issue with great interest, what precisely the government intends to do on direction and control and when we will see those changes formally brought in.

- (1540)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in terms of the direction and control issue, obviously our government listens to stakeholders and consults with stakeholders. That is what we will continue to do. There was a nod in the budget to do that. We will continue to do that and go down that path.

As for a specific time period, I cannot answer that. I would defer to the parliamentary secretary or the minister on that direct question.

It is great to see that from day one, we consult, we listen and we will get to a solution that is optimal for all stakeholders.

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I start my speech today, I will inform you that I will be splitting my time with the member for Simcoe North.

It is always nice to rise in this House to speak on behalf of Miramichi—Grand Lake. A lot of times when I am in my riding, it is nice to go into Tim Hortons or one of the arenas or public facilities and learn that my constituents like the fact that I get up on my feet a lot. I am doing it all for my constituents and it is an honour to do it.

It is always an honour to rise in this House, but today I come with a sobering message from coast to coast to coast. Canadians cannot afford just inflation. No matter what this Liberal neo-democratic budget claims, we cannot spend our way—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the member just used a term that the Conservatives have decided to coin around the Prime Minister's first name and “inflation”. This has been ruled not to be admissible parliamentary language in this House. The Speaker, on a previous point of order that I raised, reconfirmed that.

I would ask that you ask the member to withdraw that comment.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It has been confirmed that it has been declared inadmissible, so I would like the hon. member to withdraw the comment.

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, I am going to stand on the point of order, if I could. I did not say the Prime Minister's name. I said “just”, which is one word, and “inflation”. I could have put a hyphen in there and I could have spelled that out too, I suppose, but I believe it is “just inflation”. I do not believe that has anything to do with—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, perhaps we will give the member the benefit of the doubt that he might be new, but we cannot do indirectly what we cannot do directly. It is very clear that he is indirectly trying to do that.

If the member disagrees with the ruling of the Chair, he has an option to challenge that ruling, and he should perhaps exercise that, but in the meantime, if he is not going to do that, he should accept that ruling, a ruling that was made by our Deputy Speaker, a member from his party, and a ruling that you just reinforced.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would remind all members that when we are sitting in this chair, we have no parties and we do not belong to any party.

The Budget

To go back to the point in question, yes, we cannot do indirectly what we cannot do directly, and it has been determined that the expression can lead to interpretation. I would like the hon. member to withdraw it, please.

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, any time I say something wrong, I will withdraw it. Just so I get this right, because I want to do right by you as the Speaker, are you asking me to withdraw the words “just inflation”?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am asking you to withdraw the expression that you just used, because it does lead to interpretation. It has been ruled as such.

Thank you.

Mr. Jake Stewart: Then, Madam Speaker, I would retract the words “just” and “inflation”. I thank you for that.

We cannot spend our way out of this historic inflation. This budget before the House is a classic Liberal tax-and-spend budget. Canadians know that they are the ones on the hook for this \$50 billion of brand new Liberal spending in this budget. This is not what Canadians signed up for when they voted Liberal this past summer. Canadian citizens did not vote for an NDP-Liberal government. They voted for a Liberal government, sadly, but now they are getting an NDP-Liberal budget. No one voted Liberal-NDP on the ballot box, yet this is exactly what Canadians have at this moment. It is shameful.

In Miramichi—Grand Lake, we rely on something to get things done: trucks. We rely on trucks to get things done. I live on a street with about 17 houses. There are at least four truck drivers and one transport company right on my residential street in Blackville, on Digby Street. That is why my office has been inundated with constituents concerned about the net-zero advisory body's annex of the Liberals' 2030 emissions reduction plan, where on page 192, it chooses trucks, vans and SUVs as public enemy number one. This NDP-Liberal government is doubling down on the people who drive trucks, vans and SUVs.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Jake Stewart: The member across knows that, and he should be ashamed because he has constituents who drive trucks and SUVs and vans. My constituents cannot afford inflation, paired with a tax on trucks. What my constituents and I believe all Canadians want is for the Liberal government to get its hands out of Canadians' pockets, take them out of there and give people the break they deserve.

When I reviewed this budget with my staff, we were floored by the exorbitant amount of new spending that the Liberal-NDP government is planning on handing out. This is despite the fact that Canadians are experiencing a 31-year inflationary high. How bad does it have to get for the government and its multiple prime ministers, at this point, to address the reality that Canadians are facing every single day? I know the people of Miramichi—Grand Lake cannot afford another inflationary budget that adds to the crisis we are facing across this country. The fact that home prices have doubled since the Liberals formed government should be enough to call for a non-confidence vote, a vote that could never happen now that

the NDP has been, what do we call it, bought off by the Liberal Party of Canada.

After seven years of Liberal policies, Canadians are facing record-high inflation and a skyrocketing cost of living, leading to higher grocery and gas prices and a growing housing affordability crisis. More than half of Canadians are \$200 or less away from not being able to pay their bills or rent, with three in 10 already falling behind at the end of the month. It is heartbreaking to hear the stories of families, in Miramichi—Grand Lake and across the country, being forced to go from shopping at the grocery store to now visiting the food bank. These are hard-working Canadian parents, struggling to feed their families.

Now is not the time to add an emission tax on to farmers, yet that is exactly what the government is doing. What is this fixation on farmers, construction workers, oil and gas workers, and people who drive trucks, vans and SUVs? This is the type of government that is literally zeroing in on certain groups of Canadians and making their lives twice as miserable as the inflationary times we are already faced with because of the government's decision-making to begin with.

These costs are being passed on to the consumer, driving higher costs in the grocery store aisles, and Canadians are feeling it. People in Miramichi—Grand Lake are feeling it.

● (1545)

History is repeating itself. As we saw in the late 1970s and early eighties, Canada's government is spending outside of its means, and Canadians are paying for it at the gas pumps, grocery stores and every time we buy anything. Inflation is currently 6.7% nationwide, but in my home province of New Brunswick, inflation is 7.4%, with no sign of slowing down. Moncton, New Brunswick, has the highest MLS listing hike in home prices year over year, at almost 60%. At what point will the government start working with the different levels of government to get a proper solution, instead of trying to spend its way out of the crisis? That just does not work.

The Liberal-NDP spending solution is one of the major reasons we are in this mess in the first place. This budget is adding \$3,500 per household in national debt. How is passing the buck on to taxpayers having their backs? I would like the explanation for that.

When looking at the budget and seeing how the government is planning on approaching the housing crisis, all I saw was a macroplan that will take many years to see any results. Many of those results will not be positive, if there are any, and there is no plan for immediate action. This will only add fuel to the inflationary fire, with no immediate help for Canadians trying to buy their first home.

The Budget

There are constituents calling me asking how a new registered savings plan would help them get into their first home when they are scraping by to pay their current bills. The Liberal-NDP government currently does not have Miramichi—Grand Lake's back. It does have its hands directly in both of our pockets, and probably the front pockets too. It is a government focusing on the perfect headline. What it really needs to be doing is focusing on a solution that will work. The government needs to get off its high horse, roll up its sleeves and get to work.

I am thankful for the opportunity to speak. This is a bad budget for Canadians. The Conservatives have a better plan, as always, and I am happy to speak against this budget. The Liberals do not have Canadians' backs.

• (1550)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am not entirely surprised to hear the Conservatives be so critical about different political parties within this chamber working together. After all, that is what we are here to do. Unlike the Conservatives, who just whine and complain day after day after day, the NDP has actually looked for an opportunity to use its leverage to do better for Canadians. Perhaps the member and the Conservative Party should do the same.

Is the member aware of the fact that our health care system came in during a minority Parliament and that the CPP, the Canada pension plan, came in during a minority Parliament? We would not have the Canadian flag had it not been for a minority Parliament, which approved and adopted our national flag.

The member talks about trucks. He says that somehow this government is against those who own large trucks or vehicles. Is he aware that \$550 million in this budget is to particularly incentivize the electrification of trucks and medium and large vehicles?

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, number one, if it was so amazing, why would it need the incentive?

To a couple of points the member opposite made, I was a provincial MLA not long ago when the Prime Minister, who is still the Prime Minister today, offered New Brunswick a lowball number for health transfer payments, and a weak, young Liberal premier accepted the deal when no other province in Canada would. My home province's health care system is in disarray currently because of a decision by the prior government. The member opposite needs to look at that. He needs to look at how critical and dire the situation in my province is because of his own party and his own decisions.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, my question for my colleague is one that I will repeat many times for many of his colleagues within the Conservative Party. They have made it very clear that they do not support spending on things like pharmacare, dental care and supports for seniors, and I am wondering how he justifies that to his constituents in New Brunswick. How does he justify that he does not think the people in his constituency deserve dental care?

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, I would ask why the member supports a multi-tiered senior system. Are the NDP MPs, who are now in the Liberal caucus, supporting moving the age of a senior from 65 to 70, like the Liberals and their Prime Minister have

already talked about? Are they supporting that? I would like to know.

• (1555)

Mr. Randall Garrison: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Conservatives like to take flights of rhetoric, but in this case, saying the NDP has joined the Liberal caucus is actually misleading the House and misleading the public. I would ask the member to withdraw it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member is correct.

The hon. member for Miramichi—Grand Lake will please withdraw the comment. There is no coalition.

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, I was under the impression that the NDP joined the Liberals in a coalition effort, so I just assumed they are in caucus together—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I remind the hon. member that no such thing exists.

The hon. member has the floor.

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, I will gladly retract that. They are not sitting in the same room, although I still think they are, but I will retract it, no problem.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is hard not to comment briefly that the hon. member for Miramichi—Grand Lake cannot possibly assert to this place that he honestly thinks the NDP members sit in the Liberal caucus. I will set that aside.

My question for him relates to his claims about SUVs and light trucks, and the notion that dealing with the pollution from those vehicles means we do not like the people who drive them. That is not the case. The pollution from automobiles between 1990 and 2015 dropped by 23% in Canada. In that same period, the pollution from light trucks, SUVs and vans increased so much that it actually doubled.

I will ask the hon. member to consider that the pollution from these vehicles creates more hospital visits, more smog and more asthma, and drives a climate emergency that his province knows well from extreme flooding. I ask him to reconsider deciding to treat a policy problem as though it is a personal vendetta against people who are still driving vehicles that need to be properly regulated regarding their emissions.

The Budget

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, I wish the member opposite could see my riding and could see that within a radius of two and a half hours, there are two places to plug in an electric car and nobody has one. People drive Camaros, trucks, SUVs and everything else. My point here today is that it is too bad the member opposite does not realize that New Brunswick is rich with natural gas and that we have so much opportunity in New Brunswick. The member opposite, Greenpeace and other organizations have been busy, with the Liberal Party of Canada, disrupting the very industries that would be paying the bills in Canada. She and I are not going to agree on a whole lot. I can say that with certainty.

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise, as it always is, in this chamber to talk with my colleagues. We are talking about the budget today, so it is helpful, before we ask the question, to set where we are and then ask this: Does the budget meet the expectations that Canadians had?

Gas prices have almost never been higher. Our food prices are going up and up. Retail prices are continuing to increase. Construction material prices and housing prices are going up too, and that includes rent, so both home ownership and rental accommodations are becoming incredibly more difficult to obtain for Canadians.

On the day after the budget, Canadians woke up to no immediate relief, no tax holidays and no tax rebates. In fact, on April 1, the government increased the carbon tax, which we know causes inflation. The Bank of Canada has been so kind to tell us that it has provided at least 0.5 of a percentage point to the inflationary measure that StatsCan puts out every year. The real question is, why is the government not doing everything in its power to reduce inflation?

I will give it to the government that all the inflationary pressures are not domestic. We have supply chain issues. We now have a war in Ukraine. However, the government has an easy lever to pull with respect to the inflationary pressures that it creates. It is the spending and carbon tax.

Let us talk about spending. Let us go through a few numbers and facts that are irrefutable. These are from the government's own documents. In 2015, the government spent about \$300 billion. In 2019, the government spent \$326 billion. In 2022, it is projected to spend about \$452 billion. That is a 25% annual growth rate for this year compared with 2019. It is 53% growth in annual spending from 2015 to today. All the economists have been telling the government to take its foot off the pedal of spending because it is increasing inflationary pressure, so any assertion that this budget is prudent is comical.

Furthermore, we are led to believe that, while the government has been increasing spending by 7% to 8% every year since 2015, now all of a sudden, from this year going forward, it will hold the rate of spending growth to 2% to 3%. The only problem is that nobody believes the government. Absolutely no one thinks that it is possible for the current government to hold spending growth to 2% to 3%. In fact, in this budget, we do not even have projections for spending on the promise of pharmacare. We do not have projections for the spending on new health care transfers. We are just coming out of a pandemic and the government is saying that it is not going to increase health care transfers.

However, we have a fiscal anchor, we are told. The debt-to-GDP ratio is going to continue going down. The only reason the debt-to-GDP ratio is going to go down is inflation. The entire government's fiscal plan is based on inflation. It is the only way it is going to work. In fact, in just one year, from last year to this year, the government is projecting \$170 billion in new revenue that it did not project last year. That money is coming from Canadians in the form of higher prices. That is money people are having to pay. Their dollar is not going far enough. It is a silent tax and it hurts the most vulnerable in our society.

In fact, in the tightest labour market in a generation, the government has spent money on hiring 10,000 civil servants a year every year since 2015. What do we have? In the tightest labour market, the government still wants to spend money and hire new civil servants. Where are these people going to come from? All of our small business owners across the country are crying for more people, so the government's decision is to hire some more people. Those are individuals who now cannot work in the private sector, cannot help a business grow and cannot help a business get back on its feet.

• (1600)

They pay taxes and salaries. That is going to lead to private sector growth, but let us talk about some specific measures. I am a balanced person, and there are some good things in the budget, no doubt.

Employee trusts set up an opportunity for individuals to pass their business on to employees, and I think that is a welcome measure. What the government proposes to do with the ready, willing and able initiative, which is a policy, by the way, that was started under former finance minister Jim Flaherty, is to give organizations some additional funds to encourage those people with intellectual disabilities to enter the workforce. It should be applauded.

The Great Lakes fishery investments are well needed, and there is some money for freshwater cleanup. On the freshwater cleanup, it was nice to see Lake Simcoe referenced. However, it is a much smaller number than what had been previously promised.

Everyone talks about how Conservatives just like to talk about all the spending and not about what they are going to cut. Here we go. Here are some ideas for the government to consider.

On the infrastructure investment bank, breaking up is really hard to do, it seems. Instead of walking away from something that is not working very well, the government expands the mandate and gives it more money. Not only that, but it is taking the same failed model and saying it is going to create a new \$15-billion innovation fund. Again, superclusters are reintroduced, with some expanded money. It would be unparliamentary to say the word I am thinking of right now.

The Budget

The government is planning on spending money on a buyback program for guns, instead of taking that money and putting it into reducing crime. We need to do much more of a comprehensive spending review. It is nice to see that there was one mentioned, but it is not nearly going to be enough.

Let us talk about young people for a minute. The new, shiny, tax-free home savings account sounds amazing, except when one finds out that it is going to take a full year before it comes into effect, and then it is going to take another five years for an individual to max out on the contributions. Also, the home tax-free savings account cannot be used with the homebuyers plan, so people must make a choice. It is one or the other. Really, one program is going to be gutted and replaced with another, for a shiny new object. It is mostly a marketing ploy, in my opinion.

Instead, what the government could have done was to tell individuals who use the homebuyers plan that they do not have to pay the \$35,000 back. That would have been a far more effective way to accomplish what it is trying to accomplish and have an immediate effect.

We asked young people to stay at home for two years. We asked this of all Canadians, but young people in particular put their lives on pause for two years for a virus that represented very little risk to them. Yes, Canada had a very low death rate, and I think that is a positive outcome of the pandemic and some of the responses. However, young people have now come forward and are re-emerging back into the economy. What have they found? The thanks they have found is that they now have a national debt that has doubled and that they are now responsible for, and a housing market that is completely unattainable. The Bank of Montreal released a report and singled out Orillia, which is in my riding, for having a 300% increase in house prices in six years. It is incredible to think of how young people are looking at this housing market and believing it is attainable.

I have talked about the bank tax before in this chamber. If the government thinks there are excess profits in that industry, we should really be revamping competition law. My prediction right now is that we will see an increasing number of bank branch closures across this country, particularly in rural Canada. It is no surprise that just last week, after the budget, banks made closure announcements in small communities across this country, including one in Brechin, which is in my riding, along with others in Pefferlaw, Cannington and Stayner.

I will close on another matter that is very close to my riding: the boat tax. There are 25 marinas and 15 boat dealers in my region. The government thinks that if a person can afford a boat, they deserve to be taxed. With the price of cottages and housing, these individuals are looking for other options for recreation, and boating is one of them.

• (1605)

However, this tax is only going to push jobs and investment elsewhere. These individuals are going to buy their boats south of the border and bring them here. That is going to hurt the people in my community, and that is going to bring in far less revenue than the government believes.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is interesting listening to the member, and one of the things that comes to my mind is the reality of truth. The member makes reference to there not having been any increase to health care, but there has been an increase of over \$2 billion. He asks what the Canadian Infrastructure Bank is doing. Talk to the city of Brampton and other cities and municipalities. The city of Brampton got a \$400-million zero-emissions public transit program.

When Conservative members stand to speak, they need to take the Conservative spin off the papers that they are reading or quoting from and focus on the reality. The reality is that this budget supports Canadians, supports businesses and provides hope for the future of Canada.

Mr. Adam Chambers: Madam Speaker, it is interesting. I am not really sure the member actually listened to my speech. I said that the government is not planning to increase health care transfers, but if we want to talk about the \$2 billion and all the other money that is provided to provinces with strings attached, this budget drips with paternalism. There are no more fearful words to hear in a province than when the federal government shows up and says, "Hi, we're here from the federal government and we're here to help you."

The Liberals should understand about jurisdiction. Anyone reading this budget would think that the Prime Minister wants to be the premier of a province and not the Prime Minister of the country.

• (1610)

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciated my colleague's speech, when he touched on the savings account, for example. I spoke to a few realtor association groups and talked about people trying to save \$50,000 within that account. We also see that about 40% of Canadians are within a couple of hundred dollars of insolvency, so the fact is that most people do not have the means or the wherewithal to save that \$50,000 to access the account for a down payment on their home.

I am wondering if the member has any thoughts or comments on that.

Mr. Adam Chambers: Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague is completely right. If we look at the number of individuals who could use this new tax-free home savings account, which is just another marketing ploy, it is about the same number of people who can use the homebuyers plan. Actually, not that many Canadians can afford to do that every year, so this relief is not going to help a significant number of people. I just offered a suggestion on how the Liberals could have done it more efficiently and quickly, but they wanted a new announcable, with a new name marketing scheme.

The Budget

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his very interesting speech.

The Conservatives appear to be very concerned about inflation. There are all sorts of ways of countering inflation. One good way is to foster green financing. This is a factor that the Bloc Québécois has been looking into for several months, even years. Right now, as we speak, green financing is becoming key to a healthy economy.

I would like to hear how my colleague envisions green financing as a way to foster economic development geared toward protecting the environment and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Adam Chambers: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

[English]

It is important to consider what the economy is willing to invest in. I know that our finance committee is considering studying things related to the green economy and how we might support that. We have not seen that study, but I would welcome a discussion at least around how this could impact inflation.

I would say one of the most important things that the federal government can do is to look at competition policy across our major sectors as a way to bring down prices for Canadians and deal with inflation, but of course, we should be considering transitions and moving on and helping other industries grow. Admittedly, I did see some investments in this budget for a green economy, including carbon capture and storage, which was a reasonable proposal.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a true honour for me to speak in this House on behalf of the residents of my riding of Davenport on federal budget 2022. I am very pleased to be sharing my time with the hon. member for Winnipeg South.

Budget 2022 invests in three main things: people, economic growth and a clean future for everyone. Since the budget is almost 400 pages, I cannot relay everything that is in it, but I am going to focus on a few key things that I know are really important for Davenport residents. They include housing, climate action, immigration, support for workers, growing our economy and prosperity.

The first issue is housing. This is a huge issue for Davenport residents, like it is for all Canadians. The issue is not only affordable housing, but it is also housing affordability. It has become a huge stressor for so many Davenport residents that they cannot even imagine being able to afford a house or a condo in the city they grew up in. For those who do not know, my riding of Davenport is in downtown west Toronto.

I should mention a little context around housing. The issue around housing has been 30 years in the making. It is not going to be resolved overnight. Indeed, it does not matter how much money the federal government is going to give. All three levels of government have to work together in order to resolve this problem.

We have already committed \$72 billion in financial support via the national housing strategy, and we have committed those funds

over the last five years. In budget 2022, we have the most ambitious investment in housing ever at the federal level. We have introduced a number of initiatives that are very much focused on doubling the number of homes built over the next 10 years and also on providing a number of supports that will help Canadians save for their first home.

I will mention a few of the items that are in the budget. The first is that we are continuing our focus on housing our most vulnerable, with an additional \$1.5 billion over two years to extend the rapid housing initiative, along with another half billion dollars for Reaching Home. These dollars, rightly, are focused on the vulnerable, because right now, we have to make sure that we are doing everything we can to eliminate chronic homelessness. We have made a promise to do so by 2030, although I am hoping that we will be able to do it much sooner.

The other thing I am really excited about on the housing front is that there is strong support for co-ops. Co-ops in my riding of Davenport are super popular, and we have a number of them. I will mention a few of them. We have the Tamil co-op, the Perth co-op and the Primrose co-op. I have a number of groups that have been saying for the last few years, "Julie, we would love to see the federal government put more money into helping to support the creation of more co-ops."

Indeed, this budget has, in a very strong way, brought back a substantial amount of funding, so that we will create a new generation of co-op housing. We are estimating that we are going to be investing enough money that 6,000 units will be constructed. We will also be reallocating \$500 million of the funding on a cash basis from the national housing co-investment fund to launch a new co-operative housing development program aimed at expanding co-op housing in Canada. In addition, we will be providing an additional \$1 billion in loans to be reallocated from the rental construction financing initiative to support co-op housing projects.

Just to remind everyone, for generations, co-ops have offered quality, affordable housing to Canadians, while empowering their members through inclusion, personal development and security of tenure through their community-oriented model of housing. While co-ops are home to approximately a quarter of a million Canadians, nowhere near enough of these co-ops have been built in recent years. I am delighted at the strong support and strong investment in co-op housing in the years to come.

The Budget

Another area that is maybe overlooked a bit and not mentioned enough in this House is the support in budget 2022 that is going to allow our federal government to incentivize cities to build more homes and create denser, more sustainable neighbourhoods while also increasing the housing supply. I will just mention a couple of funds. The first is the infrastructure fund, which we are going to use in budget 2022 to ensure that as we are giving the dollars to municipalities, we are going to create enough flexibility within the infrastructure programs to be able to tie access to infrastructure funding to actions taken by the provinces and municipalities to increase the housing supply where it makes sense to do so.

• (1615)

The other is that budget 2022 would also leverage transit funding to build more homes. The pandemic had a huge impact on public transit ridership. What we are trying to do, as we try to build up and create more public transit, is incentivize municipalities to also build greater housing and greater density along transit infrastructure lines.

I have a lot more to say on housing, but I want to get to some other topics. The key thing I want to leave everyone with is that we have made a historic investment in housing at the federal level, but it will take all three levels of government coming together to resolve this problem.

The next topic I would like to speak to is climate action. Climate change and climate action are super important to Davenport residents. They are one of the key reasons I ran for office. I wanted to be part of a federal government that was not only going to put together a plan but also commit the dollars and actions to implement that plan. Over six years, we have committed over \$100 billion and over 100 actions, and budget 2022 would add an additional \$13.2 billion.

Budget 2022 would focus those additional dollars on an emissions reduction plan, on expanding and extending the low-carbon economy fund, on new measures that would make it easier and more affordable for Canadians and Canadian businesses to adopt clean technologies, and on more funding to make zero-emission vehicles more affordable for Canadians. All of these measures taken together are going to ensure that Canada will continue to lead in global efforts to fight climate change, protect our nature and build a clean economy that would create the good-paying jobs of today and tomorrow.

As an aside, at the beginning of last week my heart was in the pit of my stomach when I read that the provincial Ford government was quietly altering its plan to hit its climate change targets. No matter how aggressive the federal government gets with \$100 billion and 100 actions, there is no way Canada is going to be able to reach its climate targets if our largest province does not do its part. As our climate is changing more quickly than we had thought, to me these inactions are irresponsible, unconscionable and a crime against humanity.

The last section I am going to talk about is growing our economy. We are not going to be able to continue to provide the generous social welfare programs we provide, and are not going to continue to have a great quality of life, if we are not going to become more

productive as an economy and if we are not going to invest in economic growth.

A key section of budget 2022 is child care. This is now a national program. It is not a social program. To me, this is an economic game-changer for women and families that is going to fully engage all Canadians in our workforce. It is going to help to add up to 4% to our GDP. It is huge for Davenport residents. It is huge for all Canadians.

I really love a lot of the investments we have made around immigration and supporting workers with more training and retraining. In 2021, we welcomed over 405,000 new permanent residents. We are going to be increasing that to 451,000 permanent residents, the majority of whom will be skilled workers who will help us address many of the persistent labour shortages we have.

On the worker front, the federal government, in budget 2022, talks about its commitment to work more closely with provinces and territories to adjust labour market transfer agreements, and to make sure Canadians have the training and retraining supports they need to help transition more workers and help local economies adapt and prosper.

I will end with one key idea I want to get across. We really need to work on harmonizing our regulations across provinces and territories, and we have to eliminate all barriers to people, goods and services. It is one of the key ways that we could increase our productivity and economic growth at no cost.

My time has come to an end. There is so much more I want to say, but I am going to end so I can answer questions. I am thankful for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the residents of Davenport on federal budget 2022.

• (1620)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is not entirely surprising that a Liberal member from Ontario would use a speech in the House of Commons to engage in politicking related to the provincial election that is going on in Ontario.

The member did actually use the term “crimes against humanity” to refer to a policy of the Ford government. That is quite a serious accusation to be making. I would encourage the member, especially in light of actual crimes against humanity that we are seeing in Europe right now, to take the opportunity to apologize and withdraw that comment.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, the hon. member's question gives me the opportunity to double down and say that in a world where our climate is changing so fast that we know it is going to have irreparable impacts on our economy, our lives, the air and water, to me it is unconscionable that there is a province, territory or municipality in this country that would not do its part to reduce its emissions and would not do its part to decarbonize and make sure that we meet our net zero targets by 2050.

The Budget

It is absolutely unconscionable. It is irresponsible. To me, it would be seen as a crime against humanity.

● (1625)

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her speech. She used strong words to describe reality, which certainly can be unfair sometimes.

She spoke about jobs for the middle class and housing, but she seems to have forgotten something. Chapter 6 of the budget is an unacceptable assault on Quebec's areas of jurisdiction.

With respect to health care, what will the government do to prevent what seems to be an inevitable conflict?

[*English*]

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, health care is something that Canadians are very proud of. It does not matter which province or territory we live in. Whether we live in Quebec or Ontario, all Canadians are very committed to continuing to support health care across this country.

This budget would also continue that support. We are actually increasing the top-up to the Canada health transfer to reduce the backlogs by \$2 billion. We have also committed an additional \$45.2 billion in support, which is an increase of more than 4.8% over the 2021-22 baseline.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Davenport for her speech, and I am going to pass over the irony of a government that just passed a new fossil fuel extraction project complaining, however justly, about the records of other governments.

I am also going to pass over the fact that, when Liberals speak now about their budget, they tend to emphasize the things that are in the confidence and supply agreement that they forged with our party.

I want to go to the question that I noticed the member did not talk about, and that is the fact that people with disabilities in this country continue to live in poverty. There is nothing in the budget to establish a universal income program at the federal level to lift people with disabilities out of poverty, or even to amend the disability tax credit to make it more accessible.

Does the hon. member support this failure on the part of her government?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, I agree with the member that we need to do more to support those with disabilities and exceptionalities in our country.

I do believe that our Minister of Employment has, in the past, introduced a disability tax credit. My understanding is that she is planning on introducing that once again. To me, it is critical that we support this as a House.

The last thing I would say is, as someone who has actually introduced a private member's bill on guaranteed basic income, I 100% support that. I believe that we have to do a better job of supporting Canadians, including and especially those with disabilities, to better meet their needs in the 21st century.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am sorry to put the hon. member for Davenport on the spot, but the words “irresponsible, unconscionable and a crime against humanity” apply equally to the Liberal government having approved Bay du Nord.

They apply to the Ford government in Ontario, but when the hon. member, and she is an honourable member, says that Canada will continue to lead, I must draw her attention to the most recent work of Earth Index, which says Canada is dead last in the G7 and among many other industrialized countries. We are failing to take the climate crisis seriously as an emergency, which it is.

On April 4, the IPCC told us it was now or never. The Liberal government seems to have decided it is never.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, I do not agree with the hon. member. I believe that \$100 billion over 100 actions is very serious. I do think we are taking action. I do not think we are just talking. I think we are serious about decarbonizing, and I think we are serious about meeting our net-zero by 2050 targets.

Hon. Jim Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will begin with just a short personal comment that tomorrow will be the 34th anniversary of my first election to the Manitoba legislature. My colleague for Winnipeg North will remember very well that exciting night, and I only make the point to remind my colleagues in the House that I have been around for a while and have seen a lot of budgets. I counted them last night as I was getting ready for today. I think that I have seen something like 80 provincial and federal budgets over an adult lifetime. They are all different, but what they share is that they capture a moment in time and a reflection of the financial state of the province, or of the nation, at the moment.

What does this moment in time look like? It looks unlike any other, because we have come through a pandemic that has changed the lives of our citizens and the very fabric of the country.

What have we learned? We have learned that governments work best when they work together. That was true during the first months of the pandemic, and Canadians benefited from it. We have also learned that following medical advice is the best guidepost, but the advice shifts with changing circumstances, so decision-makers need to be nimble. Governments had to move quickly, which is not in their DNA, but we did because the need was so great. We also know that the sky is not the limit and that the time to change gears is now.

The role of government and its responsibility to act in the public interest were widely accepted by Canadians. It is not about me: it is about us, but what I do can affect all of us.

The Budget

We know that reconciliation with indigenous peoples is a leading priority of our government. Last week, a proud moment occurred during a gifting ceremony, when the governor of the Hudson's Bay Company handed the ownership of the historic Bay building in downtown Winnipeg to the Southern Chiefs' Organization.

The federal government has committed \$65 million, and the province of Manitoba has pledged \$35 million, so that when it is complete this historic site will be the new seat for the Southern Chiefs' Organization, which represents more than 81,000 people from 34 Anishinabe and Dakota nations. It will offer 300 affordable housing units with spaces for gathering and for business. This is reconciliation in action, because everyone is acting together toward a common goal. This is an inspiring project.

What are the essentials for living a full life? They are affordable housing to rent or to own; affordable child care from trained and caring professionals; access to a well-run health care system; and protecting and nurturing our natural environment, which has become the preoccupation of this generation of young people, as it should.

Each of these aspirations, and there are so many more, needs investments that draw on the nation's wealth. Sometimes the lead comes from governments, federal, provincial or municipal, and sometimes the lead comes from the private sector. Governments distribute wealth, but the private sector creates it.

Finding that balance is what distinguishes political parties. I have always been comfortable with my party, because it appreciates the relationship between social and economic policy that reflects the Canadian sensibility of being pragmatic, yet principled, and rooted in the goals of fair opportunity and reward for initiative. That favours a fair tax regime, an equitable distribution of public resources and a collective commitment to the shared values of a healthy and vibrant democracy. Budget 2022 recognizes this.

However, this noble ambition cannot come to fruition if there is not the national will to make it happen, and in a country such as ours, which is so diverse and spread out across a continent, and with citizens whose backgrounds are as varied as all the world's peoples, the challenges are daunting, but we have largely succeeded because we are bound together by values stronger than the forces that would divide us.

• (1630)

The budget reinforces the vital relationship between and among governments and community leadership.

Our politics and political discourse are under great stress. In this chamber, some members shout and some members resort to personal attacks. False accusations are made, and name-calling can be mean-spirited and destructive. We can and should do better than that. The people we represent expect more from their parliamentarians, and they deserve it. If we play to the few who encourage division and clamour, and whose comfort zone is in deception and division, then we are not leading, we are succumbing.

Our national values are reflected in our foreign policy, and now, as we battle the Russian dictator, Canada's integral role in the NATO alliance is more important than ever before. More than 120,000

Manitobans are of Ukrainian descent, including two of my grandchildren. This is personal for many of us. This budget recognizes Canada's increasing obligation to secure our defence capability and be an important part of the international effort to stop wanton aggression.

I have been immersed in the social and economic development of the Prairies as a member of Parliament and as a minister. This budget acknowledges the critical contribution that prairie resources, natural and human, have made and continue to make to the Canadian economy. The new realities of the energy world and the growing importance of value-added agriculture, the life sciences, water management and artificial intelligence advances are only a few examples where the Prairies lead the nation and the world.

Whatever images or stereotypes people may have about Albertan, Saskatchewan or Manitoban dwellers, they are wrong. Stereotypes are obstacles to progress. Do colleagues know that Dr. Michael Houghton, who works at the University of Alberta, is a Nobel prize laureate for his work on hepatitis C? Do they know that Saskatchewan is the province that trades most with the rest of the world? Do they know that its advanced research and production of sources of protein is exactly what the world needs and wants? Do they know that we are not only feeding the world, but also powering it too, and that canola crops are food and energy?

We always have to keep a close eye on the national balance sheet, the bottom line. This budget does that with prudent investments, modest stimulus, incentives for private sector investment and an abiding confidence in the Canadian population to adapt to changing circumstances. Our young people are facing a different world and a more challenging future than many of us in this chamber confronted at their age, but they will adapt. They will take full advantage of our colleges and universities to equip themselves with the tools to compete in the dynamic international marketplace.

We are at a critical moment in our country's history. Our challenges are many and our abilities are impressive. We are on the road to reconciliation with indigenous peoples. Our public finances allow us to invest in people and ideas. Our values position us to take an honoured place among the nations of the world.

We live in a great country. We will build from strength to strength.

• (1635)

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's good comments about Saskatchewan and how we export the most of any province to the rest of the world. He is very right in that. We have a lot of great products.

The Budget

One thing I found interesting when he was speaking was when he talked about canola crops. We have a government policy directive right now to reduce fertilizer emissions by 30%, and the government has hinted it is aiming toward reducing nitrogen fertilizer emissions. Nitrogen fertilizer is the most common fertilizer type used to grow canola, which is one of the most important elements of the government's biofuel agenda going forward.

I am wondering how the member plans to increase canola crop production while simultaneously reducing the fertilizer use that is so necessary and important for that crop.

• (1640)

Hon. Jim Carr: Madam Speaker, it is by working with producers. I had the opportunity to roam the Prairies, however virtually, during the last two years and I have spent an awful lot of time chatting with younger farmers. They have a very refined sense of the future of farming, particularly on the Prairies.

They are leading in their understanding of sustainability. They have an understanding of the new technologies that are emerging. They are prepared to work with governments and regulators. I found the conversations with the producers, particularly in Saskatchewan, to be enlightening, and to tell the truth, inspiring.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed my colleague's speech. He appears to be attuned to the issues of youth and the next generation of farmers. I will ask him about Bill C-208. I am assuming he is familiar with this bill, which was democratically passed in the last Parliament and should now be in effect.

The Liberal government, however, announced in its budget that it would review the nature of the bill, which would put a freeze on the transfer of family businesses. Financial advisors are telling our farmers to wait before transferring their businesses, since no one knows what the Liberal government is going to do.

That is not helping the next generation of farmers, and I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about it.

[*English*]

Hon. Jim Carr: Madam Speaker, I would be very happy to have a conversation with my hon. colleague about this issue and how he anticipates it will affect his own constituents and farming families throughout the Prairies. I have an open mind to engage in that conversation and to have conversations with my colleague to make sure that we can end up in a place both of us would find comfortable.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to begin by congratulating the hon. member for his 34 years of service and thank him for that.

I know that communities in his riding in Winnipeg are very much like mine in Hamilton Centre, yet Canada continues to see major losses in existing affordable housing as big corporations and REITs continue to scoop up housing on the market and renovict tenants. We have so many constituents who are living houseless, living in despair and dying needlessly in our streets.

Organizations such as FCM and the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness have been calling for the creation of an acquisition fund to support non-profits to rapidly acquire apartment buildings that go onto market in order to preserve and increase housing affordability. Will this hon. member and his government commit to the creation of such a fund to help combat the erosion of truly affordable housing in our communities?

Hon. Jim Carr: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question and the values that underpin it. This budget, as we heard from the member for Davenport just recently, and from other members, is actually almost dominated in some of its sections by the understanding that affordable housing is a basic value and that for too long now across various governments of different stripes we have not met the need of supply and the need of affordability.

We have to do a better job because without affordable housing it is nearly impossible for Canadians and their families to thrive. It is a priority that ought to become an even more major one.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Canada Revenue Agency; the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, Natural Resources; the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill, Natural Resources.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to inform you that I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the member for Terrebonne.

I would like to extend my warmest thanks to all the volunteers in the riding of Salaberry—Suroît, because in Quebec we celebrate volunteerism and volunteers from April 24 to April 30. This year's theme is "volunteering changes lives".

It is true that volunteering changes lives. It changes the lives of those who receive from volunteers, as well as the lives of those who give of their time. I would like to say a big thank you to all volunteers in the riding of Salaberry—Suroît, whatever sector they work in. There are so many sectors in which people can feel fulfilled and thrive while giving time to others in need, to young people, to all those who benefit from the generosity of others. I would like to wish all of them a happy National Volunteer Week.

Of course, the budget contains things I am particularly interested in, specifically anything to do with seniors. I devoted my professional career to caring for seniors, whether in the community sector, where I managed a volunteer action centre, as a social worker in the home care support department, where I helped seniors and their families live at home longer, or as a manager in a long-term care facility.

The Budget

Most recently, prior to my re-election in 2019, I was in charge of housing. I managed spaces in private, non-unionized, long-term care facilities, in intermediate and family-type resources. I have dedicated my career to seniors and when I find myself in my riding, I am drawn to help them. My phone is definitely ringing these days. It has been ringing off the hook for almost a year now because seniors are angry; they are angry that they can no longer make ends meet. Facing the higher inflation rates since the pandemic, seniors have been calling and writing. They find it unreasonable that they have to go back to work in order to be able to afford rent or medication. I find this completely revolting, and we had expectations this budget would address that.

The FADOQ, with 500,000 members, is the largest seniors' group in Quebec, and it has called on the government to increase old age security starting at age 65. The government, however, has not indicated that it plans to do this nor did it put it in the budget, even though the House expressed a clear desire to do so. On March 8, 2021, the House voted on a motion to increase old age security by \$110 a month for those aged 65 and up, with 183 parliamentarians voting for and 147 voting against. It was government members across the way who voted against the motion, telling seniors that they still have some energy left to work and then they will get their increase at age 75. They created two classes of seniors.

We are talking about three million 65-year-old seniors in Canada, seniors who worked their whole lives, who contributed to society, and who unfortunately need an increase but are not entitled to one.

I hear my colleagues say that they increased the funding for the New Horizons program and that they have done this and that. That is not what seniors need. They need to receive enough money every month to cover all the expenses they have to pay to live in dignity.

In Salaberry—Suroît, one in five people, or 20% of the population, is 65 or older. One of our seniors works bagging groceries. He is 68 years old and he works at my IGA in Ormstown. He made me promise to share his message with the government: “Ms. DeBellefeuille, this is crazy. I have no choice but to come bag groceries at the Ormstown IGA because I can no longer cover the cost of living, even though I worked hard my whole life”. I am here for him today because I speak on behalf of my constituents. I am their voice and I am here to make this message loud and clear: We are furious about how this government is treating seniors who worked hard their whole lives.

The other issue in this budget that really speaks to me as a former public health care worker is health transfers.

• (1645)

People often think that the Bloc Québécois's demands need not be taken seriously, but our demands are based on unanimous demands of the Quebec National Assembly, all the premiers of every Canadian province, the population as a whole and important groups.

I will list some of them because a number of unions came to Parliament Hill on April 4, which is something that has not happened in quite a while. They talked and they asked for what the provincial premiers are asking for, what the Bloc is asking for and what the Quebec National Assembly is asking for. The FTQ, a major union,

was there along with the CSQ, the FIQ, the CSD, the Fédération des médecins omnipraticiens du Québec, the APTS, the Fédération des médecins spécialistes du Québec, the hematologists, the oncologists and the CSN.

That means a lot of people think like we do. We are seeing that the House, civil society, physicians, Quebec's health care workers, Quebec politicians and community groups feel the same way, even if the government does not. There is only one party that believes it is unreasonable to transfer the money that is in Ottawa to the National Assembly and the Quebec government so Quebec can manage it according to its priorities and expertise.

I have to say that it is the managers, the professionals and those involved in the day-to-day work on the ground who have the expertise and experience in health and social services. They are the ones in touch with the needs of our constituents in every riding.

I am expressing our disappointment not just with the fact that there is no money for health transfers, but also that if there ever is money one day, it will have strings attached, which is completely unacceptable. Quebec and the other provinces are capable of analyzing their own needs and putting everything required in place, including planning, organizing and providing services according to the needs of their communities.

However, Quebec and the provinces do not have the means. Considering our aging population, I would say that in the next 15 years, there will not be enough money to properly plan, organize and deliver services to everyone who needs them in our public health care system. We value our public health care system, and it needs to be funded properly. This means transferring the money that is sitting in Ottawa, the money that Ottawa would like to have a say in. Ottawa wants to tell us what to do and how to do it because it lacks confidence in the provinces when it comes to properly managing the transferred funds, even in an area that falls under provincial jurisdiction.

I have only two minutes left to once again explain how sad it makes me that the budget talks about increasing the maximum length of EI sickness benefits from 15 weeks to 26 weeks in the summer of 2022, allowing sick workers to fight illness. Members will recall that I introduced a bill in the previous Parliament to increase those benefits to 52 weeks, and the member for Lévis—Lotbinière has brought it back again in this Parliament.

For two years, the government has insisted that it will change the number of weeks, but only to 26 weeks and only effective July 2022. That is not enough. Someone who has colon cancer will need 36 weeks to recover. That is a documented fact. I do not understand what is stopping the government from giving 52 weeks to sick workers who need it.

The Budget

In closing, I can say that I would have liked the budget to include confirmation of a coming into force date for Bill C-208, on the next generation of farmers. I say that because people in my riding are asking me about it. Farmers are being reminded once again that not only has the Liberal government abandoned them, but it also does not respect the democratic will expressed in the House of Commons. It is frustrating to vote on a bill and pass it, only to see the government refuse to implement it. The House can count on me to take every opportunity to point out that this is unacceptable.

• (1650)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, for almost 20 years, I was a provincial member of the Manitoba legislature, and there was never a year that would go by in which provinces across Canada would not ask for more money with regard to health care. That is just the reality of things. Every year, provinces unanimously asked for additional funds, and why not?

What the member does not reference is that under this administration, we have signed health care accords with all of the provinces. We are now giving out record amounts, historic amounts, of cash to the provinces through transfers. In this budget alone, we are seeing a \$2-billion top-up to help with emergency backlogs for surgeries. We have allocated support for long-term care, something that even the people of Quebec and other provinces want to see. There is also more money for mental health, and we are looking at ways to ensure that pharmaceuticals are cheaper.

Would the member not recognize that Ottawa, according to the Canada Health Act, has more of a role to play than just being an ATM machine? We need to work together with other administrations to ensure that Canadians have the best quality health care that we can provide.

• (1655)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Winnipeg North for his question. My speech seems to have angered him, and I am not really sure why.

I can say one thing. I have been a manager before. If I am asked to organize long-term services and ensure that seniors are well taken care of in long-term care facilities, I know that there needs to be predictability.

Planning, organizing and providing services requires predictability, and that means that funding needs to be recurring, not a one-shot deal. It takes planning and forecasting. I am not denying that the federal government gave money to the provinces to help them deal with challenges during the worst of the pandemic, but now the pandemic is winding down, and the provinces are calling for the funding they need to reorganize their top-notch services for the patients who need it.

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, we have talked a lot in the House about supporting the people of Ukraine and the need to increase invest-

ments in our military. One of the critical things that I think we can do to stand with our partners and allies around the world is to supply them with a surer, clearer supply of Canadian energy resources to displace dependence on Russian oil and gas. We can play that role in Canada. About 75% of Russian gas exports go to Europe, and there is not going to be any way of delivering serious, intense economic sanctions against the Russian regime unless and until we are willing to seriously engage with the energy security issue.

I wonder if, as part of the budget, the Bloc has thoughts on what we need to be doing to displace Europe's dependence on Russian oil and gas.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, I think the member knows my answer.

We clearly know that the solution for supporting European countries is not to develop new pipelines to supply Europe. The war would likely be over before the pipelines could even be built. That is not a solution.

Investing in carbon capture and storage is not a solution either. We really need to move into energy transition mode. We need to support the people of Saskatchewan so they can shift gears and develop an alternative, diversified economy that is not based solely on oil.

I invite my colleague to listen up and make way for the energy and ecological transition.

[*English*]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for her service to seniors and the community. I really respect the work she has done in the community and also her comments today around seniors and the vulnerable.

I agree fully that money is lacking and is going to be lacking to deliver needed services. With the cost-of-living crisis and people paying more for groceries, rent and gas, one of the problems that we in the NDP see is the big tax avoidance from corporations. They are getting richer as those in our communities are getting poorer. The Liberals have long promised to overhaul the outdated tax rules to combat aggressive tax avoidance, but this does not seem to be in the budget.

Does the member think this budget should have proposed concrete improvements to the tax avoidance rules that corporations use to avoid paying their fair share?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, my colleague from Joliette has proposed countless solutions to curb tax avoidance. That fact that it is legal, in a G7 country like Canada, to hide money in tax havens to avoid paying taxes is a serious problem. It is being done in plain sight, for all to see.

I therefore agree with my colleague that the government must listen to the recommendations made by my colleague from Joliette, who gave them a winning formula to put an end to tax havens.

The Budget

• (1700)

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would first like to thank my colleague for sharing her time with me.

This year, I was fortunate enough to be one of the privileged members of Parliament who participated in an in camera review of the budget before other members and prior to the minister's speech. It was an opportunity for us to understand it and analyze it.

When I walked out of the room, a little earlier than expected, the first thing that came to my mind was that this was a missed opportunity. It is a missed opportunity to address real problems and, in the process, to create a sustainable economic recovery. Let me briefly go over the context in which this budget was tabled.

First of all, there is a labour shortage, a supply chain shortage, and a customer shortage, since people no longer want to return to performing arts venues, movie theatres and so on. The hospitality and tourism sector is still suffering, and I would remind members that the measures to help it will end next week.

Second, we have an inflationary context. Just this morning, the Governor of the Bank of Canada revised current and projected interest rates upward. Third, we are in a climate crisis.

Given these three overarching factors, the Bloc Québécois made five demands: higher health transfers, which my colleague talked about; a better standard of living for seniors; measures to fight inflation, including short-term protection measures; measures to encourage sustainable finance; and, lastly, indigenous housing. Of these five measures, only indigenous housing is in the budget. We are happy about that.

Unfortunately, none of the other four proposed measures wound up in the budget. My colleague did a great job describing the government's approach to the Canada health transfers and seniors' standard of living.

As for the fight against inflation, unfortunately, the budget contains very few measures to help people get through what is likely to be a longer period than expected, as the governor said this morning. In 2022, we are going to see high inflation.

Given the need for economic recovery and a green transition, I have to say again that this budget is a missed opportunity.

First of all, the budget proposes numerous measures for housing, especially for affordable housing. A few days ago, the Gatineau newspaper *Le Droit* reported that affordable housing means a one-bedroom apartment costing \$1,950 a month. I wonder who here would agree that this is really what is needed. Imagine a single mother of three who does not want to transfer her children to another school and who is offered affordable housing at \$1,950 for a one-bedroom unit. I think most of us would agree that this is not necessarily what will most help those suffering from inflation.

Second, the budget proposes dental coverage. Clearly, this encroaches on an area of provincial jurisdiction. As we keep saying over and over again, we do not want measures that encroach on provincial jurisdictions. It is also important to remember that the proposed coverage is meant to help children aged 12 and under, but

Quebec already has a program that covers children aged 10 and under. We therefore thank the federal government for wanting to help 11- and 12-year-olds, but that is not exactly what we were asking for.

Finally, on the environment, the budget proposes some good measures, such as electric vehicles. At the same time, however, it is completely undoing its own environmental efforts, particularly by increasing funding for an extremely expensive technology that is not even proven: carbon capture and storage. If this technology were reflected in gas prices, the consumer price index I mentioned earlier would be even higher.

This response to the climate crisis is disappointing, especially since only a few days earlier, the government had approved the Bay du Nord project, which will involve the extraction of almost one billion barrels of oil over the next few years.

• (1705)

We expected a bit more ambition and vision in this budget. As far as the five Bloc measures are concerned, sustainable finance was not addressed either. There are very few measures in the budget.

Once again, we saw very little with regard to fighting inflation. There are several measures that could have been proposed to fight inflation, such as social housing instead of affordable housing, as I was saying, as well as measures to fight monopolies and cartels. We know that that helps boost consumer purchasing power.

The government could have brought in tangible measures to deal with the semiconductor shortage that has been mentioned and that is causing a major problem for the supply chain. As I was saying, there is a shortage of products in the supply chain.

The budget contains a lot of proposals about creating working groups and task forces, but it is weak on tangible action. The proposals in the budget are sorely lacking in vision in areas that are very important.

The proposed measures intrude considerably on provincial jurisdictions. In a nutshell, the federal government is putting money into areas where Quebec has already made investments. It is rather rich that the new areas in which the federal government is innovating with this budget, such as electric vehicles, dental insurance, or even the day care system that copies the Quebec model, are all already covered in Quebec. It is unbelievable that the budget proposes to interfere in provincial measures that already exist in Quebec. What this means is that Quebec is already doing quite well.

I have a question for the Quebeckers watching me today: Why are we still part of a country that is undermining us?

*The Budget**[English]*

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I look at it as a way in which the Province of Quebec and the people of Quebec recognize its true value. For example, the member referenced electric vehicles and, yes, there is a tax incentive provided by the Province of Quebec for electric vehicles. Now there is one nationally. By having a national and provincial incentive, it means that those who want to see fewer emissions will be that much happier to see that both levels of government recognize that. I only wish that the Province of Manitoba would do likewise.

Would the member not agree that having ambitious goals, whether they are federal or provincial, that address what the population wants to see is a positive thing?

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. I also thank him for agreeing that we are doing quite well in Quebec.

We are already supporting the purchase of electric vehicles. That measure was financed by Quebecers' taxes. Hydro-Québec has done a lot of work. As usual, Hydro-Québec financed the work with our own money and without the federal government's help.

I would say that Manitoba may need it, but Quebec does not. Why propose a budget containing measures that Quebec does not really need?

[English]

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, I heard my colleague from the Bloc mention carbon capture and storage as part of the budget, and it is one of the few budgetary items that I will admit is a good investment by the government. Unfortunately, it does not have enhanced oil recovery as part of it.

However, one of the arguments we hear from the Bloc and the NDP quite often is, "We cannot measure it, so it is not effective and we should not do it." I toured the Boundary Dam Carbon Capture Project facility a couple of weeks ago, and there is nice big sign out there that tells us how much CO₂ it has sequestered. It is just shy of 4.5 million tonnes of CO₂ that it has sequestered since the facility started up.

If it is all about emissions, for my colleague from the Bloc, I would be happy to say that maybe carbon capture and storage is actually a great idea and something we should consider doing more of in the future.

• (1710)

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, with whom I have the pleasure of sitting on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

My response will be brief. No, I do not think that carbon capture and storage is the solution. The problem is not just emissions, but production as well.

We want to halt production. We do not want as much oil to be produced in the coming decades, so that demand decreases and our children and grandchildren can have a future without oil and gas.

Carbon capture and storage only rewards increased production. It is not the solution.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am sorry about this, but I am going to speak in French, because it is important to try.

The federal government has reduced its share of funding over many years, leaving hospitals with a shortfall of several billions of dollars.

Does the member think that the federal government should restore its share of the funding and increase health transfers to the provinces?

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my esteemed colleague for making a real effort to speak in French. I encourage her to continue speaking French in the House because the French language is very important in Canada.

I completely agree with her. I think it is quite unfortunate that the government is not increasing the Canada health transfers. For once, the provinces all agree, which is quite rare. The government must increase these health transfers, and we are calling for the transfers to be increased to 35%, which is not even the level of funding that would be required to address all of the problems on the horizon in health care.

Our population is aging, which makes this increase absolutely necessary. All professional associations in Quebec and all of the provincial governments agree that the federal government must increase the Canada health transfers.

[English]

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook.

I am rising today to participate in this very important debate. On an annual basis, when we have a chance to speak about the budget and the plan the government has going forward for the people of Canada, it is a critical time to participate in debate in this chamber and discuss some of the issues contained in the budget and some of the policies that are being focused on.

There are about five or six areas that I am going to touch upon, but I am going to start with one that is very close to the residents I represent in Parkdale—High Park. It is the issue of Ukraine. We are now past the second month of the conflict in Ukraine, and we heard the Minister of Finance deliver a budget that she was very emotional about as a woman of Ukrainian heritage.

The Budget

What we have done to support Ukraine with sanctions, humanitarian aid and military aid is extensive. What this budget included very specifically is something that a lot of my constituents have talked to me about. They talked about further military aid and further economic aid to prop up the economy as it comes out of and exits this period of Russian unlawful and illegal aggression. Those are very significant initiatives, and I wanted to start by highlighting them.

The second piece dovetails with a commitment we made going back to the campaign and that we concluded just before the tabling of this budget. It is what we are doing to assist people who are raising families in this country. The people who are raising families in my province of Ontario unfortunately had to wait a little longer than the rest of the country because of the obstinacy in some respects on the part of the Government of Ontario. However, lo and behold, even the Government of Ontario got across the finish line, and now we have concluded a deal that will allow affordable child care to be provided to families with children under six in licensed facilities in every province and every territory in this country. This is a terrific day for Canada and a terrific day for families.

What does this mean for my constituents? It means direct assistance. Already, in the month of April alone, the cost of child care has been reduced by 25% in licensed facilities. This is just in the past month. By the end of this year, it will go down 50%. The Speaker's riding is in the beautiful province of Montreal and my riding is in Toronto. All of us have very expensive child care, particularly those of us in cities. The cost of child care is between approximately \$1,500 and \$2,200 per child per month in my riding. That is staggering. To take that in half by the end of this year is equally staggering. To take it to \$10 a day by the end of four years is dramatic. That is what we are doing to help serve Canadians.

Who does this help? It helps children with their early childhood development, but it also helps women. I specify women because we know the choice is still made in 2022 that one parent has to stay home, and too often and more often than not, it is the woman who is compelled to stay home. It is the woman who is deprived of the ability to stay in the workforce or return to the workforce. That does not help women, does not help their empowerment and does not help Canada's economic bottom line. This policy will, and it is contained in this budget.

We are also addressing what we have heard about, rightly, regarding the growing income disparity we have seen during the pandemic and even after the pandemic between the haves and have-nots. What I am talking about is large financial institutions. This is about banks in particular, but includes large insurance companies. There are provisions in this budget that address exactly that.

We have proposed that where profits of over \$1 billion were made, there will be a 15% tax on any profits above \$1 billion in the 2021 taxation year. On top of that, we proposed, and are implementing through this budget, an increase in the corporate income taxation rate from the current 15% to 16.5% on banking income that is above \$100 million. That is critical because it helps produce some of the fairness we are seeking to achieve in Canadian society, since some have done very well during this pandemic and some have done very poorly. We are also initiating more investigations and prosecutions of those who use aggressive tax planning to ex-

ploit loopholes. There is \$1.2 billion dedicated to the CRA to promote just that.

Who else are we helping? We are helping people with their broader health care. I am talking about oral health and dental health, which are also contained in this budget. It is momentous. We know that today 33% of Canadians do not have dental insurance. I, like every other member of this chamber, benefit from the fact that we are provided dental benefits, along with other benefits, as members of this chamber. Not every Canadian is so lucky.

What we are doing is correcting that situation via a significant financial investment that will go toward the dental health of Canadians and helping with their overall health. How are we doing this? Children under 12 are targeted in 2022. By 2023, it will be children under 18, seniors and those living with a disability. By 2025, there will be full implementation. What does that mean? It means that \$5 billion will be spent over five years to ensure the dental health of families with an annual income of less than \$90,000. We are targeting this help to those who need it the most.

• (1715)

Members have heard me speak many times in this chamber over the past seven years and know that I am committed to a basic premise, which is about promoting equality and combatting discrimination. It is something that I spent 15 years doing as a practising lawyer. It is something I continue to do as a member of Parliament. I am very pleased that this document, this budget that has just been tabled, outlines the next steps in that important fight.

How are we doing this? We are reinvigorating the anti-racism strategy, which was launched in my riding by the former minister of heritage during the 42nd Parliament. That national anti-racism strategy is getting another funding injection of \$85 million over four years. That will also include a national plan on combatting hate, hate that we have seen too much of, not just during this pandemic but even prior to the pandemic. It has spread online through things like misinformation and disinformation. We are also dedicating two special representatives: one on combatting Islamophobia and one on combatting anti-Semitism. Both roles are critical. Both roles will continue, in perpetuity, going forward with the funding we have announced.

Last is something that is very germane to my riding, because one of the lead proponents of this initiative is a U of T law professor who is my constituent. That man is named Anver Emon. He started something called the Muslims in Canada archives. What is that all about? Why am I talking about the Muslims in Canada archives in the middle of a budget speech? I am talking about it because if we want to address Islamophobia, we need to do short-term things, like promoting people's safety at mosques, and we also need to do medium- and long-term things.

The Budget

How do we do that? We change the narrative. We disabuse the stereotypes. We change the perceptions and generalizations, giving positive imagery to replace negative imagery. We get rid of the tropes and stereotypes, and we replace them with positive history about Muslims and their contributions in this country. That is what the Muslims in Canada archives will do. That is what is being funded by this budget, to the tune of \$4 million, so that, whether Muslims live in Quebec, Alberta, the Maritimes, Ontario or anywhere else in this country, their stories can be told, shared and spread throughout the community so we can cure the pernicious impacts of Islamophobia. It is something I am very proud to stand by, and that is what is in this budget.

There are two large components to this budget: the housing component and the environmental component. In the last couple of minutes I have, I will just draw on a few specific points under each heading.

On the housing front, I am very pleased to represent six different co-ops in my riding of Parkdale—High Park. What I am even more pleased by is that in this budget, for the first time in several decades, we are injecting new funding to further expand the breadth of co-op housing that exists in this country. This is critical for people who desperately need and deserve adequate housing. That is on top of the rapid housing initiative investments and on top of the housing accelerator, which will build more units. It is a critical thing to address a very basic need.

On the environment, we are talking about a number of things that dovetail with our emissions reduction plan, but what I will focus on in the brief time remaining is ZEVs. I am pleased at this point that when we turn on the television, we see things like Ford trucks being advertised that are going to be electric. I am pleased that people are talking to me more about charging stations and vehicle charging infrastructure. That shows that the idea is taking hold.

We are transforming an industry. We are transforming work for those who work in the industry through things like the just transition. We are also transforming things in terms of the quality of air in the environment that we all have for our families, for our children and for our children's children's families. That is critical in terms of getting to net zero. We are doing that with yet another commitment to furthering zero-emission vehicles in terms of providing the critical minerals for the batteries that they need, providing the charging infrastructure and continuing the rebates for those cars.

I started off by talking about the Government of Ontario. I will return to talking about the Government of Ontario. On June 2, there is an election coming up. What is unfortunate is that there was a previous government that coupled our rebate on zero-emission vehicles with its provincial rebate, but that was summarily dismissed by the government of Doug Ford during his first couple of months in office. It has not been restored, and he is not even campaigning on restoring it.

We all need to get to net zero. Doug Ford's constituents, like mine, are longing to purchase a zero-emission vehicle but could use some help in doing so. I think it is incumbent upon all provincial governments to join us in providing similar rebates so that we can get to that net-zero future together.

That is what is contained in the budget. I am happy to defend it in this House.

● (1720)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. member spoke about certain actions with respect to anti-Semitism and Islamophobia and the appointment of special envoys. Certainly, in the Conservative caucus, we are very supportive of action on those issues.

Last summer, dozens of churches were either burned down or vandalized in western Canada, including the complete destruction of a Coptic church in Surrey, for example, and the burning down of a 100-year-old historic francophone church close to my house. We are seeing increasing acts of violence targeting churches and other people of faith in this country. Unfortunately, we did not see a single statement from the Prime Minister on any of those actions.

In fact, his former senior adviser Gerald Butts called this violence “understandable”. I wonder if the member could explain to people who are wondering what the government is going to do about acts of violence targeting the Christian community. At least will it issue a statement? Let us start with that.

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, I am not surprised to see the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan on the first day back after Easter participating in the debate.

I will say, unequivocally, that any act of violence toward a place of worship, regardless of the religion or faith, is unacceptable. That is point blank.

I will say, proof positive to that, when the Our Lady of Lebanon church in my riding shockingly had the statue of the Virgin Mary beheaded on Queen Street, I was there, with members of the official opposition, to participate in the prayer service with the congregation that dealt with showing solidarity after an attack on the Christian community.

I would also say that there is a lot of angst among my constituents, and among Canadians writ large, about the role of the church in terms of indigenous residential schools. What we are seeing from the current Pope is a step in the right direction toward healing that rift. That is a step that needs to be taken by the church and by Canadians together so that we can overcome these types of acts of violence.

● (1725)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, at the end of his speech, my colleague talked about the importance of breathing clean air and how important that is to our health.

The Budget

Let me make another connection. The Government of Canada provides the most subsidies for fossil fuel, including oil and gas extraction, which generates huge amounts of air pollution, which in turn results in high rates of heart, lung and kidney problems and other health issues.

Does my colleague not think that human health should come before the oil and gas industry?

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question.

This is such an important issue. I would point out that, in our latest campaign platform, we made a very clear promise to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies by 2023. Previously, our goal was 2025, but now it is 2023. That is a meaningful target. We are taking the situation seriously. We will eliminate this kind of subsidy because we have to for the sake of our environment and the air, as she said.

[*English*]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I just want to say to the member that I was very pleased to hear words around promoting equality, addressing fairness and fixing some of those long-standing inequities in our economy. I am happy for the day care. It is coming. One of the things I would say, though, is that I see the Liberals taking many victory laps on day care. Twenty-five years is a long time for women to wait for day care, and the reason we are getting it right now is because the economy needs more women in it. I just want to express that I am disheartened that it took 25 years to get here.

The other piece that the Liberals are wanting to address in the economy is to get people with disabilities working. I am really pleased that there is going to be support for them, but we need support on the Canada disability benefit or income supplement for those who cannot work full-time or those who cannot work at all.

Why did the budget for 2022 not include money for the Canada disability benefit?

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, this is an incredibly important area. I have a lot of faith in the current Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion. As a woman with a disability herself, she has shown a great deal of attentiveness to this issue. The prospect of employing those who are underprivileged and marginalized and vulnerable in our community is critical, in terms of ensuring that full participation.

It applies to the women the member mentioned at the start of her question. It applies to persons with disabilities. I will commit to her quite openly on the floor of this chamber that I will personally work hard to ensure that access for persons with disabilities to work and to increased benefits is a priority.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the House for giving me the opportunity to share a little information about my Nova Scotia riding in connection with budget 2022.

[*English*]

I would like to begin by saying that our government, since 2015, has been a government focused on transformational changes. That is very important. This is not something that will happen tomorrow or next week, but in five, 10, 20, 30 or 40 years from now. It is so important to have a government focused on the needs of the future. By that, I am talking about the Canada child benefit and tax-free savings money for families. We encourage more growth, of course.

As well, there is the national housing strategy. Back in 2017, we brought forward the first housing strategy in Canada. That is transformational. There is more work to be done and I will talk about that. With child care, all of the 10 provinces, as well as the territories, have signed on. This is transformative. This is what was needed. This will benefit Canadians and bring more women into the economy as well.

The investments in dental care are extremely important. Again, over 30% of Canadians do not have access to dental care, and they will have it through this. Then there is pharmacare. We are taking steps forward in many, many areas that will make Canada even better.

In this speech I want to talk about, of course, the people. I want to talk about the businesses. I want to talk about clean energy. Those are key areas I want to focus on.

Before I begin, let us talk about where we were prepandemic. We were in a very good position economically. We had Canadians who had created 1.2 million jobs, which was very impressive in the time leading up to 2019. We had the lowest unemployment rate in 40 years. It was down to 5.4%. Those are very, very important numbers. Being in that position allowed us to get through this pandemic, invest in Canadians, invest in communities, and invest in families and businesses. Those are key areas of investment, of course, which are so important.

Where are we at now? Have we built back better? We absolutely have. How have we done it? Let us look at jobs, with 112% of jobs coming back. Three million-plus jobs are back here. We have 112%, whereas in the United States about 89% of the jobs have returned. The unemployment rate here is at 5.5%, which is 0.1% more than it was prepandemic, which was the lowest in 40 years. Those are very, very impressive numbers.

Now, let us talk about health care. Health care is very important. I think back. If the fathers of Confederation back in 1867 had known what we know now, they probably would have taken control of the health jurisdiction because it is very costly. We have many seniors. Provinces and territories are struggling, of course, to support Canadians through that avenue. That is why our government has been there, continues to be there and will continue to be there.

The Budget

How are we doing it? We know that there is a need for more health care workers. The pandemic showed us a very important gap. What are we going to do to respond to that gap? First will be to provide the incentive to bring more doctors, nurses and health care workers to Canada. It is also helping those with student loans. Nurses can get up to 50% of their student loans back with rebates, which would be about \$30,000. Doctors can get up to 60%. Those are very important numbers and incentives which will definitely encourage more to come.

Also, internationally, it is very important that we have the foreign accreditation program. We can improve that program. We feel that, with the improvements we are bringing forward, we will see about 11,000 more health care workers in Canada per year. Those are very, very important numbers that we need to see as we move forward.

Concerning the backlog of surgeries and procedures, which the minister has talked about on a number of occasions. I know lots of family members who have been waiting to have those procedures. Our government moved forward quickly last month to bring forward \$2 billion extra for the provinces and territories so they can catch up on that backlog, which is so important.

Dental care is essential, as 30% of Canadians do not have dental care. I indicated that at the beginning of my speech. In 2022, we will see those under 12 years old receiving that support for dental care. In 2023, we will see it for those under 18 years old. By 2025-26, we will see all Canadians who do not have dental care today receiving that support.

• (1730)

The Canadian Labour Congress said, “Canada’s unions welcome the \$5.3 billion investment in dental care that will give coverage to millions of Canadians, because everyone deserves a healthy smile.”

In the housing area, as I said, we have the first-ever national housing strategy, but now we need to continue to build on that, and these are the steps forward that we need to take. We are going to double our investments, which is very important.

What are some of the investments and programs we put in place that are working extremely well and that we are going to expand on? Let us talk about the new housing accelerator fund, which gives more flexibility to cities and municipalities to get affordable housing built. Also, we have the extension, if you will, of the rapid housing initiative, which has been working tremendously across the country. Within a year, we have affordable housing. For example, we might take an old school and renovate it, or we might see some improvements to buildings. These are structures that are already in place with permits that are already in place, and we can improve that access much faster.

I also want to talk about the tax-free first home savings account, which is very important. In my riding, I am hearing that young people are having trouble accessing housing, and this is one strategy. There are a number of strategies, but I want to talk about this one, because it is tax-free: It is deductible on the way in and tax-free on the way out. This is a little different from RRSPs, which of course are tax free on the way in but on the way out we have to pay taxes.

This would allow young people to build up to \$40,000 as a tax-free investment. This is very important. As well, we would see the doubling of the first-time homebuyer tax credit, up to \$10,000, for those building homes. These are all strategies to try to help young people get into the market.

Of course, for housing in general, we would ban foreign investments for two years in investment properties and also prevent the flipping of houses over 12 months. We should not let the Conservatives continue to tell the story that they have been telling since before the election, which is that we are going to tax principal homes. We absolutely are not. That is not the case at all.

The seniors file is very important. As I have talked about, in Atlantic Canada, we have the most seniors in the country. Let us look at some of the needs on the ground. It is always about what is happening on the ground and how we can help the people short-term, medium-term and long-term.

The multi-generational strategy is very important, because it looks at having a secondary suite in a home for grandparents or even young people with disabilities. One could get a tax credit of up to \$7,500 on an investment of \$50,000. There is also the doubling of the accessibility tax credit, which is extremely important. We want more people to stay in their homes. They are challenged, so we are going to help people have access in that area.

Veterans are very important. I am the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence. We have launched a new veterans homelessness program that will see services and rent supplements for homeless veterans. One veteran who is homeless is one too many. There is \$140 million to help with reducing the wait time for veterans’ benefits and \$140 million ASAP for mental health treatment. While veterans’ applications are waiting, they would be receiving the services.

Unions are very happy, of course, with the job growth, and we would see a labour mobility deduction of up to \$4,000. Over the past 20 years, I have heard how some people have to travel for work or have to temporarily relocate and have not been able to claim that. We are doing that, and Canadian business and trade unions are very happy with that as well.

The Budget

On climate change, there are two main areas that our government is focused on over and above all the good things we are doing, because we had the strongest green plan going into the election. There will be an extension of the zero emissions incentive program for vehicles and more charging stations for them, as well. These are key areas. Finally, there is the expansion of the ocean protection plan, which has many strategies to support our Canadian shores.

• (1735)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the member's intervention here today. He specifically cited the tax-free first home savings account as being a measure that his constituents would utilize, so I have some questions for him.

First, what about the member's constituents who do not have \$8,000 a year to set aside? Second, what happens over the next five years? Obviously, in the previous five years we have seen housing prices almost double. Last, many people, particularly young millennials, are getting bounced because of the Liberal stress test today. Let us say someone scrimps and saves, puts aside all that money, has \$40,000 five years from now and then goes to apply and gets bounced. What will the member do? Will he send them an "I'm sorry" card?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, I know the member has talked in the House several times about first-time homebuyers. We are doubling the first-time homebuyer tax credit. This will see more investments, which is so important for young people. The money set aside, the \$40,000, is tax-free and going toward the investment. It could bring prosperity to young people to increase that \$40,000, if the investment is successful, of course.

Those are key areas and pieces of some of the initiatives we have that we will bring forward as a government.

• (1740)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at various times in his remarks, the member mentioned Canadians living with disabilities. The signature item that Canadians living with disabilities have been waiting for from the government for some time now is the Canada disability benefit.

At one point, the government had signalled to this place that it was ready to move on that. In fact, it tabled legislation last June. I do not think that legislation was beyond criticism, but we did not have time to make those criticisms because of course the Prime Minister dissolved Parliament shortly after the legislation was introduced. People do want to know when that legislation is coming. Many people, including us here in the NDP, thought that we would see some kind of significant detail about the Canada disability benefit, if not a new piece of legislation, promptly.

I am wondering why the member believes that was not included in this budget, and when we might expect to see some proper legislation to establish a good Canada disability benefit that would help raise people living with disabilities in Canada out of poverty.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, as the member indicated, we tabled legislation prior to the election. I am very hopeful that legislation would be coming very soon. I have had conversations, as I

am sure he has, with the minister. We are working on the details of that piece.

In this budget, there is a multi-generational part for people with disabilities. I think that would be effective as another piece. I know an organization, Ready, Willing & Able, that is doing some excellent work right across the country to get more people with disabilities working in the private sector. That is really beneficial, and as I said, I believe the legislation will come soon.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at the very end of his speech, the member mentioned shoreline protection, which is obviously very important to me. We think there should be a federal program to protect the shores of the St. Lawrence Seaway, since that falls under federal jurisdiction.

I would like my colleague to comment further on this. Does he think the federal government should step in? I would like him to expand on what he meant when he mentioned this.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for this very important question. Protecting our rivers and waterways is extremely important and crucial, and we have an action plan for this. In my riding, the Sackville Rivers Association is dedicated to protecting the waters of the Sackville River.

We have all kinds of action plans, including the creation of a water protection agency or river protection agency. Moving this forward, however, requires a commitment from all Canadians, so we are working with Canadians to develop a broader action plan.

[*English*]

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member, right off the top, mentioned build back better. I am wondering how long he has been getting his talking points from the World Economic Forum.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for giving me the opportunity to remind him of how many deficits the Conservatives, prior to 2015, had in this House.

Looking at what we have put together, the transformative changes are extremely impressive. The economy is very strong, as I indicated. We have 112% of our jobs back. The unemployment rate is down to 5.4%, and the best was 5.3%. Those numbers speak for themselves. Facts are facts.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in this place and talk about things that my constituents, the great people of Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, care about and to talk a bit about the budget.

The Budget

Obviously, the budget is the social economic blueprint for the government to give the bureaucracy direction as to what it wants to have done. I looked at the budget in its totality, and it has been billed in so many different ways. It was billed as an affordability budget, which it is not, and as an innovation budget, which it is not. It has been billed as a fiscal return to reality budget, which it is not. It has also been talked about as being a growth budget, but it is really a mass of discombobulated measures. Obviously, a government has to pay attention to a lot of different things. As I said, a budget is its biggest social economic blueprint, but by the same token, I have never seen a budget that seems to be so disconnected from reality.

I am going to pick a couple of different areas where I will list what the government has said it wants to do in this budget and some of the things it has done previously to point out that it is following a very similar path. For example, on the innovation front, we have something called a Canada growth fund. This is brought to us by the government that brought us superclusters, which were not so super, and the Canada Infrastructure Bank, which Canadians cannot bank on. Now we are on this Canada growth fund.

• (1745)

[*Translation*]

On page 61 we can read the following:

The fund will be initially capitalized at \$15 billion over the next five years. It will invest on a concessionary basis, with the goal that for every dollar invested by the fund, it will aim to attract at least three dollars of private capital.

In standing up the Canada Growth Fund, the government intends to seek expert advice from within Canada and abroad. Following these consultations, details about the launch of the fund will be included in the 2022 fall economic and fiscal update.

[*English*]

Essentially, the government is saying that we have a new shiny object, much as at one point it had the Canada Infrastructure Bank. We do not have any idea yet about the details. The government puts it in the budget and then it will ask people how it can make it work, but it will put aside lots of money for it.

On the money side, Paul Wells, in his shiny new Substack, which, unlike this shiny new program, did not cost taxpayers anything, sought to get to the bottom of this new shiny Canada growth fund and how much it would spend. He could not get an answer on the cost. He asked the government what it would cost. It said that it would cost anything from nothing to who knows what.

This is not the first time an agency was created. In fact, back when Bill Morneau was the finance minister, the Liberals eliminated the Public-Private Partnerships Canada Crown agency, PPP Canada, rather than change its mandate, and brought in the Canada Infrastructure Bank. I asked the minister about this at committee. I said that it would take five years before the government even figured out the governance policies for it, and I asked why it would do that. He said that it was because we needed to get big transformational things done.

Here we are and the only big and transformative thing this bank has done is give its executive and workers bonuses. Therefore, this way of putting out a shiny new object, putting billions of dollars aside for it, and then trying to figure out how it is going to make it work just goes down again as another idea to distract and say that it wants it. Really, the mandate of this new growth fund is almost

identical to the infrastructure bank, for which the government has also changed the mandate. It just seems strange to me that it is doubling down on these policies that have been not proven to work in the past.

This is the problem. Rather than, for example, the government saying what it wants to do and then giving out small trial balloons of money to various teams to actually show they have business models that can work and then choosing from among those options if they bear fruit, the government does the worst of big government thinking. It throws money at the wall, see what sticks, and then continues on to throw money at another wall to see what sticks, so we have a Canada Infrastructure Bank we cannot bank on and now we will have a Canada growth fund.

This is the worst element of big government, and the worst part of it is that we are all paying for it and will continue to pay for it even if it does not bear fruit. That is what the current government seems to do. It is always about more; it is never about doing it right.

As to new programs, I have heard a few members talk about this. I want to remind my friends in the NDP, who are going to be taking credit for a new dental program, that the only NDP premier in the Confederation is in my home province of British Columbia. John Horgan is the one who is actually leading the charge in asking the government to please not put money into new government programs since we need it for health care. I spoke to someone in Princeton the other day who has cancer. He is seriously ill and does not have a doctor. I spoke to a would-be medical student too, and for the second year in a row, despite having all the grades, UBC Okanagan does not have a spot for him. In our health care system, the backlog from COVID is large, yet the government is pushing into new areas.

A dentist called me the other day and said that as long as they have been a dentist, they remember the healthy kids program and B.C. one. The healthy kids program is for young people so they can access dental services. B.C. one is for low-income adults. These programs are being provided, and government members are saying this is going to be done this year. I have never seen a new program established that quickly, so it will be interesting to see.

Moving on to a key aspect from a financial perspective, there is no greater challenge to this country right now than inflation. Inflation is hitting Canadians hard and it is affecting our economy. Stephen Gordon, an economics professor at Université Laval, said, “We’re at full employment, inflation has burst out of our comfort zone and the Bank of Canada is embarking on an aggressive tightening cycle. This not the time for expansionary fiscal policy.”

The Budget

Stephen Tapp, chief economist from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, said, “Here’s the thing: Even after raising its nominal policy rate by 75 bps in last two announcements up to 1%, and ending further GoC asset purchases (starting ‘Quantitative Tightening’ next week), BoC policy remains highly stimulative. The ‘real’ rate has never been this low! Not only is the nominal rate well below the elevated rate of current inflation, so the real rate is negative. The nominal policy rate (1%) is still below the Bank’s estimate of neutral (2-3%). Until its rate rises above 2-3%, the Bank is pouring gas on the inflation fire.”

Stephen Tapp is saying that the current policy today is pouring fuel on inflation, and the government is adding more spending. It is completely unheard of. At least the Governor of the Bank of Canada came to committee today with some humility. He said mistakes were made and they are trying to reverse them. They are trying to raise interest rates, obviously being mindful of the fact that we have so much debt in this country.

The government is full charge ahead. It is the spend-DP, as I call it. Again, the ship of state right now is pointed at a spend-DP iceberg. Let us all agree that inflation, especially if it becomes unanchored and persistent, is what makes an economy less efficient at best or hollows it out at worst. We need to make sure that government is constraining its spending so that we do not make inflation worse.

Last, on housing, a member stood up previously and said that we have a first-time homebuyers’ tax credit and that it was doubled from \$750 to \$1,500. This is a tacit admission by the government. House prices have doubled under the Liberals’ watch, and this is the very least they can do. We talked about the first-time homebuyers’ savings account. Most people do not have \$40,000. We have millennials who get bounced by the Liberals’ stress test every day.

In summation, the government has thrown a lot into this budget. It is inflationary. It does not do what it needs to. It is the very worst of big government. I hope that the government will start to tighten up and do things it needs to, like getting flood supports to areas that are affected in my riding and in other areas of British Columbia. That would be helpful. However, with the way the government works, it is just pointing the ship of state, as I said, toward that spend-DP-Liberal iceberg.

• (1750)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really do believe there are a number of Conservatives who completely close their eyes when it comes to economic matters. Do they not realize when they talk about inflation that there are some things they need to factor in, such as that there is a war taking place in Ukraine and there is a world pandemic that has taken place over the last two-plus years?

If we look at the inflation rate in the U.S.A., it is higher than in Canada. If we look at the inflation rate in many of the European countries, it is higher than in Canada. Yes, as a government we have invested in the people of Canada. Yes, this is a budget that will ultimately provide hope and future jobs. By the way, when it comes to jobs, Canada again is ahead of the U.S. in regard to recuperating the jobs that were lost during the pandemic.

I am wondering if my friend would open his eyes and acknowledge that inflation is a concern, but we need to put it into a proper perspective.

• (1755)

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member from Winnipeg for giving me this stimulative lesson. I will say again that Stephen Gordon, professor of economics at Laval University, said, “We’re at full employment, inflation has burst out of our comfort zone and the Bank of Canada is embarking on an aggressive tightening cycle. This is not the time for expansionary fiscal policy.”

I am glad to open my eyes to read this to the member. I really hope that he opens up his ears to hear mine.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his mention of the new homebuyer program. We have listened at the finance committee to some of the very real problems that exist in the housing market.

This particular policy innovation, let us call it, is not something that we have heard a lot of people talking about or calling for. I wonder if the member would like to give some reflections on the kinds of housing policy items that would be constructive and would make a difference to make more housing available for more Canadians, versus the risk of a program that allows Canadians to save more money to put into a hot market with constantly escalating prices. The problem is that people continue to throw more money at the same houses in competition. What is the role of the government if not to try to tame that competition so that Canadians can get value for the money they have?

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the member’s intervention. He is very thoughtful and I do appreciate his work at the finance committee.

Let us start with supply. Supply needs to happen, rather than giving CMHC \$4 billion over the next five years for a program that says it is going to be flexible with municipalities but does not actually say what the money is supposed to do. One of the key aspects we need to do is to have that ready supply. I read in a book recently about the issue that if we do not have housing, then, with the constraints around that, the wealthiest take the best spots and then all the way down it is cruel musical chairs, except with housing.

The Budget

We need to focus on the supply issue, and I believe that the Government of Canada and the provinces need to start pounding the table with municipalities and saying we have a societal goal here, and that is to get young people where they have that first chance. We need to deal with this. We already have rents that are going out of control. If there were no government controls at the provincial level, we would be having people who would not be able to afford where they are. That is a terrible state for a modern economy. We need to fix this. We are the second-largest land mass in the world. We have always been open to immigration, and yet we have allowed ourselves to be stuck into this problem.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has been promising a high-frequency train in my riding of Trois-Rivières since 2015. This train is an election promise more than anything else.

In the current budget, the sum of \$400 million appears to have been allocated to finding an external partner to draw up plans that may be used for something.

How confident does my colleague feel about the government's proposals when the train project has been in the works for 10 years and will probably never see the light of day?

[English]

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, it is a challenge because the Liberals continually promise things that they either have no idea how to deliver or no intention of delivering. We have seen this with infrastructure. Again, they dangle out that they are going to fund certain things and then they do not do them. When they are promising to deal with transit or even military spending in this budget, here is the question. Three times they tried to procure Browning pistols, yet somehow they say that we are going to be putting more into military spending. They can say they are going to, but whether they actually do it is another thing, until they fix that broken system.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to rise and add the voice of the people of Thornhill to today's debate. I am deeply concerned on their behalf by the latest NDP-Liberal budget. Every single day, we ask the government what it is doing to make life more affordable for Canadians, and every day it tells us how much it is spending. I was hopeful today that we could see some results for the money spent rather than just a projection of answers we will get when, again and again, we ask the government what it is doing to make life more affordable.

The answer for the people of Thornhill and Canadians across the country is that it is doing nothing much. We can skip the partial answers and gloss over the large sums of money in an effort to distract Canadians from the government's failure to deliver actual results for a while, but Canadians had every reason to fear the federal budget, especially after a deal between our colleagues on the other side of the House. The deal is frightening to the future of the fiscal health of Canada, driving the government further and further astray in an effort only to hold on to power, because after seven years, many simply cannot understand the plot.

Canadians were treated to over \$50 billion of new spending, which, of course, could have been far worse given the government's

propensity to spend beyond its means at every available opportunity. I suppose aiming for "it could have been worse" is the best that we can hope for, but with spending levels that far exceed the prepandemic highs, it could have been much more responsible, and it should have been.

Most troubling, however, is what was absent from this budget, which was any meaningful attempt to address economic growth by lowering taxes and reducing the choking regulations raised by nearly every industry, every stakeholder and every union at every opportunity, only to fall on what are seemingly deaf ears. Families are struggling with the cost-of-living crisis. That much is clear. In survey after survey and poll after poll, they have made their voices heard loud and clear. Two-thirds of Canadians say that inflation and affordability are their top concerns. It is hard to get by. That is what that means.

I know members of the House hear that refrain constantly when they are at home in their constituencies. It is hard not to. It is hard not to run into somebody we know at the grocery store or the gas station who does not bring up the cost of living as the first issue they talk about, yet after two of the highest spending sprees in Canadian history, even before the gigantic splurge during the pandemic, the Liberal government had bigger spending plans all along. Child care, dental care and the possibility of pharmacare in 2023 represent the biggest social program expansion in the past couple of decades. While there might be gleeful cheers from the other side, I think Canadians, including members opposite, need a reality check on the numbers. They tell a very different story about our fiscal health than the fairy tales we have been hearing about.

Liberals are coming in with a federal debt projected to reach \$1.25 trillion this fiscal year. Canada's debt-to-GDP ratio is 47.6%. We have a \$52.8-billion deficit. We have a record high of personal indebtedness to disposable income of over 186%. We have inflation at a staggering 6.7%, and the reality that the Bank of Canada will aggressively raise interest rates beyond what we have already seen. There is more. There will be more reality checks for those who will be responsible for the sharpest rise in cost-of-living expenses in a generation.

The problem is that inflation is only going to get worse, not better, over the coming months. It will be much worse than I have ever seen and than most adults today have ever seen. Maybe they heard stories from their parents' trials and tribulations or saw a historical reference in a book, but while some in the House are not students of monetary policy, and that is fine, others will know that the latest inflation numbers do not account for the increase in the carbon tax or the annual increase in alcohol and tobacco taxes.

The Budget

Also missing from that number is the recently hiked interest rate. It is the first of the aforementioned number of raises that may, of course, lower inflation over time, but in the immediate term, will drive up housing and borrowing costs. There is more. We also learned that Stats Canada will add used-vehicle prices to the CPI in next month's report. For those who are still keeping score, that may bring us to about 8%. This will be a new number for many Canadians, and most certainly a disastrous new number for average Canadians.

● (1800)

While members opposite will twist themselves into a frenzy listing off the countries and their corresponding inflation rates, Canadians should know that, if this was an entirely international problem, then others would mirror our rates, others like Japan or Australia. I could do the same thing.

There are two ways to control inflation. One, of course, is the rate hikes, the aggressive rate hikes we are about to see, and the other is to slow spending. We see no evidence of slower spending. That should be of great concern to the over 65% of Canadians who have indicated that inflation and affordability top their list of anxieties.

Many of these numbers may be abstract to those across the aisle, because it is the only plausible explanation for why they continue to spend at this rate, but let me remind members of the real toll that these abstract numbers have on Canadians working harder and simply not getting ahead. Gasoline is up 11.9%, compared to just February, and a shocking 39.8% compared to a year earlier. Some might find glee in that, whispering to themselves quietly that the plan is working. To them I say that it is actually not working. It is hurting Canadian families. It is hurting our industry. It is hurting our recovery, on the odd chance that the government might want to include oil and gas in their plans.

How about the groceries? I cannot think about why a government would be ideologically opposed to food as they would be opposed to oil, so let me try to get its attention with the cost of groceries in the country. It is an area where people notice it the most. It is an area that I am sure members opposite have heard about in their constituencies from their neighbours time and time again.

Overall, grocery prices have gone up 8.7%, but most items are much, much higher. On average, the basket was \$100 last March, and it is almost \$109 this March, but for some items, the increase is much, much more severe, such as for milk, cheese, butter, cereal and beef. These are the staples.

These are unsustainable increases for most family budgets, and most families will tell us that. To make matter worse, our country is confronting supply chain constraints, scarcity of materials and labour shortages, all compounded, of course, by a war in Ukraine. We are seeing the continued rise of unaffordable housing for those trying to make the dream of home ownership a reality, as well as urgent military commitments in a time of global instability and an infrastructure deficit lacking the private capital investments we need to actually get things built. Even more concerning is the lower productivity and lagging long-term growth and what that means for GDP per capita.

Its decline relative to those of our allies is the appalling reality of the government's policy failures and the likely failure on the horizon for the magnitude of promises in the wings, which we have not even seen reflected in the government's upcoming fiscal document. The government's approach has become a silly mix of virtue signalling and expensive promises and rerun after rerun of not being able to deliver on them. How does a government spend so much and accomplish so little? How does a country rack up so much debt for the goodies that it believes we need today without thinking for a moment about tomorrow?

What is of greater concern are the policies of intrusion into people's lives, the intrusion into provincial jurisdiction, the pretend projects about tree planting and an ideological drive against the country's natural resources at a time when the world is begging for them.

The government has trafficked in divisiveness, othering those who do not agree with them while affecting economic fortunes at the cost of choosing winners and losers in different geographies based on different identities they see as tolerable and therefore worthy of their reward. Now the concern is that the NDP influence will accelerate this spending, pump up the virtue signalling and leave future generations with a bill, just so activists and alarmists could be placated in 2022 without thinking about a day in the future.

A laser focus on growth would have helped the multitude of fiscal, economic and social problems brought on by the government, and still, I suppose we should be relieved, though hardly gratified, that this could have been worse. If the government was aiming for "it could have been worse", then, I guess, mission accomplished, but on this side of the House, we think Canadians deserve better.

● (1805)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the speech from my colleague from across the way, and she particularly talked about the debt-to-GDP ratio in Canada. I think what she misses is the bigger picture, and in the bigger picture we have the second lowest debt-to-GDP ratio among the G7 countries, at least for 2021. We have prepared ourselves in a way that allows us to benefit from the investments we made in Canadians during the pandemic by coming out stronger on the other end of the pandemic. We are seeing that with the levels of employment and we are seeing that with the economic growth in Canada.

I realize that Conservatives will quite often say, "Do not worry about what other countries are doing; just worry about what is happening in Canada." The reality of this situation is that in a global economy and with a global market, where we are continually interchanging goods and services throughout the world, we cannot look at one country in isolation.

The Budget

I am wondering this. Can the member at least comment on the fact that we do have the second-lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7 countries, and does she think that is a good thing?

• (1810)

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Speaker, if the member is explaining to someone in his riding who is telling him that the cost of groceries is going up, that the cost of gas is going up, that the cost of rent is unaffordable or that their kids cannot move out of their basement, I am wondering if he states the debt-to-GDP ratio as a statistic for his support.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: You said it, not me.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Speaker, I know that he is yelling about it now, but I am wondering if that is the answer he gives to constituents when they talk about an affordability crisis that has happened under his government's watch.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I just want to say I was asking her a question about something she said.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talks a lot about inflation. She also talks about housing. Access to housing is a huge problem.

One way to combat inflation is to increase housing supply. I would like her to tell us about the measures announced in the budget, which, in my opinion, are still too weak.

I would like to hear her thoughts on this. What measures could we take to quickly increase housing supply, and in particular social housing?

[*English*]

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right on the issue of supply, when it comes to the government's housing plan. I think the government has lacked any creation of supply or any significant creation of supply within our housing market, which is why we are seeing unaffordable 50% rises in places like the GTA, where I am from. I think the government needs to get on an aggressive track to build more, and we know from this budget that not a single home will be built this year. I asked the minister about it earlier today and he certainly could not give an answer, so I agree with the member that this is a supply-side solution where more of the same programs are not going to get houses built.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, just a few days ago Conservative MPs, including this one, were in the House arguing that we needed to increase our defence budget by \$24 billion, but they opposed the increase in dental care that many Canadians, including ones in her riding, would benefit from.

How does the member justify denying people the dental care they need because it is too expensive, but also wanting to spend three times as much on our defence spending?

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the government does neither in this budget. The government promised to increase defence spending to the 2% NATO target, and it fell short of that. If the member wants to come to my riding, he can run in a

provincial election that is happening in Ontario on June 2 to provide dental care for the residents of Ontario. That is an incursion into provincial jurisdiction. The member knows that, and this is a false promise.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6:15, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the amendment to the amendment now before the House.

The question is on the amendment to the amendment.

• (1815)

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

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1900)

[*Translation*]

(The House divided on the amendment to the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 56*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultair	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Bloch	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chabot	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
Desbiens	Desilets
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Fortin
Gallant	Garon
Gaudreau	Généreux
Genius	Gill
Gladu	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kitchen	Kmieć
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman

Adjournment Proceedings

Larouche
Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)
Lloyd
MacKenzie
Martel
Mazier
McLean
Michaud
Morantz
Morrison
Muys
Normandin
Patzner
Pauzé
Perron
Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Savard-Tremblay
Schmale
Shields
Simard
Small
Steinley
Stewart
Stubbs
Therrien
Tochor
Trudel
Vecchio
Viersen
Villemure
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

Lawrence
Lemire
Liepert
Lobb
Maguire
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Melillo
Moore
Morrice
Motz
Nater
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Perkins
Plamondon
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Rood
Scheer
Seebach
Shipley
Sinclair-Desgagné
Soroka
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Thériault
Thomas
Tolmie
Uppal
Vien
Vignola
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zimmer — 148

Fraser
Fry
Garneau
Gazan
Gould
Guilbeault
Hardie
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Joly
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
Oliphant
Petipas Taylor
Qualtrough
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Singh
Spengemann
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Trudeau
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

Freeland
Gaheer
Garrison
Gerretsen
Green
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Johns
Jones
Julian
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Lapointe
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Murray
Ng
O'Connell
O'Regan
Powlowski
Robillard
Rogers
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Schiefke
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sorbara
St-Onge
Tassi
Thompson
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Virani
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi — 178

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Ali
Angus
Arya
Bachrach
Bains
Barron
Beech
Bennett
Bittle
Blair
Blois
Boulerice
Brière
Carr
Chagger
Champagne
Chiang
Collins (Victoria)
Coteau
Damoff
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Fergus
Fisher
Fortier

Alghabra
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Battiste
Bendayan
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blaney
Boissonnault
Bradford
Cannings
Casey
Chahal
Chatel
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier
Dabrusin
Davies
Dhaliwal
Diab
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fillmore
Fonseca
Fragiskatos

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment to the amendment lost.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

Adjournment Proceedings

[English]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have been advocating for a very long time on the issue of direction and control. Direction and control are regulations that severely limit the ability of the charitable sector to do its job. They require that any charitable activities be fully under the direction and control of the charitable organization. This creates problems and needless red tape for organizations that are operating in Canada. It is a particular problem for organizations that are operating internationally.

As many members know and understand, the best practice of international development is when organizations in Canada are able to empower and support those who are acting in their own countries to support development, which really recognizes that the people who are in the process of doing the developing are the heroes of their own story, and the role of international organizations is merely a supporting role for those who are doing that important work. However, direction and control regulations require effectively that those organizations operating overseas be fully under the direction and control of that Canadian organization insofar as it wishes to maintain its charitable status. Not only does this create inefficiencies, needless bureaucratic red tape and millions of dollars in lawyer fees that charitable organizations have to pay every year, it also perpetuates this kind of colonial structure of donor control and the requirement for the foreign organization to be in control of the development activity that is happening on the ground.

We have been advocating for a long time for reforms to direction and control. It was a commitment in the last Conservative platform to make these reforms. It also reflected a unanimous recommendation coming out of the foreign affairs committee in the last Parliament, which directly called out these regulations for being neocolonial in nature. I want to recognize the work of the Senator Omidvar, who put forward a Senate public bill on this, Bill S-216. That bill passed in the Senate twice and is currently being sponsored by my colleague in this House.

With that in mind, I raised the question on this issue in the House a number of weeks ago. Unfortunately, I did not get a very good answer. I was cautiously pleased to see a reference to direction and control on page 195 of budget 2022, which is the first time the government has acknowledged that direction and control regulations are a problem and need to be reformed. The section references Bill S-216 directly, and that the government intends, in its budget implementation acts, to implement the spirit of that bill.

We cannot assume that the fix will fully address the issues. We cannot assume until we have seen those proposed changes what the actual change in the nature of the regulations will be, because Bill S-216 removes the “own activities” requirement and replaces it with an accountability requirement for charitable organizations. The budget does not reference removing the “own activities” requirement. It simply references trying to facilitate mechanisms for easier transfers. It claims it will implement the spirit of Bill S-216, but it does not say it will implement the letter of the bill. As we have seen before, the devil can be in the details, so although the development sector and charitable organizations across Canada are

very pleased to finally see at least a recognition of the problem, we are far from certain about whether the solution will be adequate.

Therefore, I would like to hear more from the government on this, because the reference is there in the budget, but it is lacking in clarity. When can we expect the government to implement these changes? Is the government prepared to actually implement the changes in Bill S-216, removing the “own activities” requirement and replacing it with an accountability mechanism? Is the government prepared to work with the charitable sector, including those who work in international development and members of other parties, to ensure that we get it right? It would sure be a shame to get people's hopes up and then not deliver the fix that is required.

- (1905)

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to clarify the government's position for my opposition colleague for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan. I also heard him inquiring about Bill S-216 during the budget debate today, and I am very happy to have this opportunity to address the issue directly.

Let me begin by pointing out that budget 2022 proposes to amend the Income Tax Act to allow a charity to provide its resources to organizations that are not qualified donees, provided that the charity meets certain requirements designed to ensure accountability. I thank the member opposite for citing the page number for that reference. This is intended to implement the spirit of Bill S-216, Effective and Accountable Charities Act, which is currently being considered by Parliament. I personally have had the opportunity to meet with parliamentarians and senators over the past number of months in order to better understand the spirit and to help navigate some of the concerns that have been raised.

We have proposed changes in recognition of the fact that Canadian charities carry out a wide range of important work, including vital international development and relief activities around the world and direct support to Canadians here at home.

Adjournment Proceedings

NATURAL RESOURCES

Our government recognizes that Canada's tax rules should support their work and minimize their administrative burdens, while still ensuring accountability for how charitable resources are used. Both the charitable sector and parliamentarians have put forward a number of proposals to achieve these goals, while allowing greater flexibility for charities to support non-profit groups that may not have the ability to pursue charitable status on their own. Our government supports these efforts and our budget proposal reflects this support. Our support for charitable donations is also reflected in the fact that Canada's tax assistance for charitable donations is recognized as being among the most generous in the world, in fact.

In 2022, tax assistance associated with the charitable donations tax credit and deduction is estimated to be over \$4 billion. However, given the generosity, registered charities are required to follow the rules set out in the Income Tax Act that ensure the funds are applied to charitable purposes. We recognize the need to ensure that these rules are as up to date as possible and that they support the important work that charities do. Our budget proposal reflects this. I look forward to working with this member and all parliamentarians to implement the measure in the most appropriate way.

• (1910)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, certainly the requirement for alignment with a charitable purpose is very important. It is also important that we do more to address the red tape that charitable organizations face across the board. I was very proud of the work done by the previous Conservative government around red tape reduction for business. I think we need a similar, broad red-tape reduction initiative around charities saying what all the areas of red tape are that charitable organizations have to deal with and finding ways of achieving the same objectives and necessary oversight that is required, while minimizing red tape and removing direction and control requirements. Doing so in a full and complete way, in alignment with the spirit and the text of Bill S-216 would, I think, go a very long way. Of course, the budget states the general policy direction of the government but the rubber really hits the road when we see the budget implementation act.

I wonder if the member could just share with the House when we will see the changes that are referenced in the budget with respect to direction and control. When will we see them in a budget implementation act, what can we expect and when can we expect them?

Mr. Terry Beech: Mr. Speaker, as I have noted, our government supports the spirit of Bill S-216. I appreciate the member's comments about reducing red tape. I also look forward to the delivery in this house of the budget implementation act and am hopeful to be able to commence that work very soon.

The changes proposed in budget 2022 reflect the spirit of this bill by removing barriers to charities working in partnership with others, while including additional concrete accountability measures that both protect the integrity of the tax system and ensure that tax-assisted donations are used to support charitable activities at home and abroad.

My thanks for the opportunity to make this crystal clear for the benefit of my friend opposite, for all Canadians and for all members of the House.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this place to pursue, in Adjournment Proceedings, a question that I originally asked not that long ago, actually, on March 24. My question related to something we have debated in the House quite a lot, mostly on supply day motions of opposition parties. It is the notion that somehow Canada can step up and do more for Ukraine by producing more fossil fuels and exporting them. There are many fallacies in that proposition.

At the time, I directed my question to anyone on the government benches, but it was the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources who responded. I said the notion that we needed more pipelines was quite misguided and there was not any evidence for it, and when I posed my question, I noted that the International Energy Agency, which is an unquestioned expert on supply, price and sustainability of energy supplies, put forward a recommendation to reduce the use of oil daily by 2.7 million barrels. That 2.7 million barrels of oil a day could reduce the demand within the European Union. There are other quite simple things too. I mentioned some of them in the 10-point plan and asked if Canada would consider joining the European Union in implementing this 10-point plan.

The hon. parliamentary secretary, who happens to be the member for Toronto—Danforth, as there are a couple of parliamentary secretaries to the Minister of Environment, was very positive in her response and said they are considering it, but did not actually suggest what we might do. That is why I wanted to pursue this in Adjournment Proceedings.

The world has paid a lot of attention to many things that President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said since his country has been so cruelly and viciously attacked by Russia, but it has not paid a lot of attention to the things that President Zelenskyy has said about the climate crisis and his commitment to climate action. In other words, whenever we hear someone in Canada say that we need more pipelines, we need to produce more oil, we need to produce more gas and this is how we help Ukraine, that is not something the President of Ukraine, the extraordinarily courageous leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy, has said.

In fact, on March 29, after the war had been raging for a month at that point and just as he came to us on Zoom and addressed this Parliament, President Zelenskyy addressed the Parliament of Denmark. These are statements that I think would be worth having on the record for people to consider in the Canadian Parliament. President Zelenskyy, in addressing the Danish Parliament, said, "Russian aggression against Ukraine and against everything on which life in Europe is built is an argument for accelerating the green transformation on the continent." He went on to say, "long before this war, it was obvious that humanity should reduce the use of fossil fuels. The era of coal and oil has caused very serious damage to...our planet as a whole. Green technologies, green energy have become a logical and fair response to this challenge."

Adjournment Proceedings

If the European Union understands what needs to be done, the International Energy Agency understands what needs to be done, the Government of Ukraine understands what needs to be done and the Government of Germany understands, why is it that Canada is failing to understand that in the context of a Russian invasion of Ukraine, the best way we can support Ukraine and President Zelenskyy is to go off fossil fuels as quickly as possible? It would mean no more Russian oil and no more oil.

• (1915)

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for raising the crisis in Europe and what that means to all of us. I know that Russia's brutal and illegal assault on Ukraine has affected her, as it has affected myself and many throughout our country. It is truly heartbreaking, and I think we have all felt that over the last number of days and weeks.

I want to highlight two matters that have been raised that led to tonight's discussion. She noted that one party in this chamber has been focusing very heavily on its belief for the need for more oil and gas production. Indeed, the official opposition seems to be implying that our government should respond to the crisis by abandoning large parts of our climate plan, a plan which is recognized as one of the most comprehensive in the world.

However, the member opposite is also focusing heavily on a specific part of the democratic world's response to Russian aggression. I am referring to her focus on the International Energy Agency's call for Europe to reduce its dependency on Russian gas by reducing demand. Though actions such as improved public transit, a more aggressive focus on energy efficiency and the expanded use of electric vehicles are all necessary and need to happen, the fact is we need a comprehensive approach.

First and foremost, we have to counter Putin's aggression by working with our allies to punish Russia with sweeping sanctions to provide Ukraine's heroic defenders with lethal and non-lethal military equipment, and to do everything we can to ease Europe's worst humanitarian crisis since the Second World War.

We also need to do our part to deal with energy security, because right now Putin's war machine is being funded with profits from the sale of petroleum products to the European nations that depend upon them, especially for gas to heat their homes. Diversity is necessary. The energy agency's 10-point plan, which the member refers to, urges Europe to find new energy suppliers in order to reduce and ultimately end this dependency.

Canadian producers have responded by agreeing to increase production this year by up to 200,000 barrels of oil, and the equivalent of up to 100,000 barrels of gas. We will do this without compromising Canada's climate plan. We also support the agency's call for quicker action on reducing demand and finding alternative energy sources.

We encourage this, and in fact our government has a strategy that we hope will eventually make Canada an important hydrogen supplier to Europe. We also agree with the member that we have to act

in the areas she has mentioned, and we have been doing just that by making large scale investments since 2016.

We are on the right track, and we will continue on that path.

• (1920)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the call for reducing demand for fossil fuel products is one that resonates for people in Ukraine. The call is for Canada to do the same, as much or more than our European Union colleagues.

They are ramping up the transition to 100% renewable energy. Contrary to what the hon. parliamentary secretary has said, Canada's plan is not recognized as one of the best in the world. Our record is one of the worst, and our targets are not aligned with what the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has warned us we must do.

I want to mention a Ukrainian activist who formed a group called Stand With Ukraine. Her name is Svitlana Romanko. She describes people who promote fossil fuel expansion while claiming it is to help Ukraine as “peace washing”, not “green washing”, but “peace washing”. She calls it out as something to justify fossil fuel expansion that is unforgivable.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, I want to point out some of the things that we are already doing.

Since 2016, we have pledged more than \$10 billion towards decarbonizing homes and buildings, and encouraging energy efficient retrofits. We have also signalled to the auto industry and Canadians that, starting in 2035, all light-duty vehicles must be zero-emission. We are investing across Canada in charging stations. We are investing to fund charging infrastructure in suburban and remote communities.

In Vancouver, the TransLink has used the federal gas tax fund to help add 15 new battery-powered buses to its fleet. In Guelph, Ontario, we have invested \$40 million to help the city replace diesel buses with electric ones. In Prince Edward Island, we are helping the province replace its 300 school buses with electric alternatives.

We are stepping up, and we are doing it aggressively.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would hope that everybody in this place would agree that lots of Canadians are really looking to us in this place to address the issue of the rising cost of living. Certainly one area where we have seen major increases in the cost of living is energy prices.

Adjournment Proceedings

I would like to say that every Canadian wants Canada to do its part when it comes to ensuring that we have renewable energy and non-carbon-emitting energy. At the same time, the reality is that as much as the government wants to talk about investment in this and investment in that, what it has done is reduce Canada's capacity to produce energy to supply the demand for energy. Now that we are in a time of a global supply crunch, that means higher prices for Canadians when we have that resource here.

Again, I think it is wonderful that we are looking for ways both to produce Canadian energy sustainably and to ensure that we have all sorts of good ways to address climate change, but the reality is that many Canadians cannot afford to fill up their cars. For many Canadians, including in my community of Calgary Nose Hill, there are not public transit options available to them. When we look at the price of groceries with fuel as an input cost, those groceries are getting to people based on carbon-based energy.

We have to address the climate crisis, but at the same time, listening to a debate that ignores the fact that every Canadian needs carbon energy right now is so out of touch. The question should be how we are producing Canadian energy, which is some of the cleanest and most sustainably produced energy in the world, and meeting this need while looking at producing low-carbon, readily available, low-cost carbon alternatives such as public transit and all of these other good things. People in my community still need to fill up their cars. That is just the reality. Ignoring that reality really says that we, as a Parliament, are out of touch.

A while ago, the Americans went to Saudi Arabia and Iran to ask for increased production and exports to the United States to meet the U.S.'s increased demand issue and its supply issues. They did not come to Canada, and that was such a missed opportunity for our country. I had asked the government why the minister of trade had not really addressed this issue of why the Americans were going to these other countries as opposed to coming to Canada. We should be ensuring that we are producing Canadian energy and supplying it, not just to people in our country, to lower prices and reap the benefits, but also to have energy supply security on the North American continent. I just wonder whether the government has made any progress on this, given the increased costs of energy in Canada.

• (1925)

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is fair to say that there is no better supplier of responsibly produced oil and gas than Canada during this transition to a net-zero future. Why is that? It is simply because we have one of the strongest and most comprehensive climate plans in the world, a plan that is leading the way for the oil-producing nations around the world and certainly right here in Canada. Our plan is bold and is working, and it is in partnership with the industry, as the member knows. In fact, it is industry partners that have talked about placing a cap on emissions in the oil and gas sector, and as a government we have agreed and are working with them to look at those outcomes.

Companies representing a full 90% of Canada's oil sands production have committed to reaching net-zero emissions by 2050. It is our job to work with the industry to get there, but it is also our job

to help diversify our dependency on the oil and gas industry and look at different options that are more respectful of the climate and of the place we are developing and shaping together.

The member talked about our relationship with the United States. The fact is that there are no two countries in this world that share a highly integrated energy and economic relationship that is stronger than the one we have with the United States. We have more than 70 pipelines and nearly three dozen transmission lines that cross the borders between our two countries. That network helps make America our largest energy customer, with \$100 billion in energy trade each year. There are always going to be projects that we may not agree on, and there are going to be moments when we will disagree in any relationship. However, at the end of the day, never undervalue the relationship we share as a country with the United States when it comes to the energy sector.

In saying all this, I also want to point out to the member that any transition we do in oil and gas in this country will include the protection of jobs and the protection of communities. We can transition to a safe and sustainable future for our children and as a country, and we can do so as a world leader. We can also do so while protecting the people who depend on those jobs, ensuring that they have skills and have a strong future in the country.

In terms of the affordability of gas, we all share that concern. I share it in my own riding and right across the north, an area that I represent in the House. It is a huge concern. However, the member knows that we are coming off a COVID crisis and we are in the middle of a Russian-Ukrainian war. The nature of the world has changed. It is the global picture and global impacts that are shaping the price of fuel at the pumps today, not anything that is directly happening in our Parliament.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, this is except for the fact that the Liberal government, prior to COVID, spent several years offshoring Canadian jobs to Iran and Saudi Arabia because it worked to shut down the energy sector. Can we imagine if the Keystone XL pipeline had actually been built and if the Prime Minister had actually gone out and advocated for it? Can we imagine if energy infrastructure had been put in place? We could have supplied ethical, cleanly produced energy to the world at a time when it needed it, and perhaps we would have seen lower demand. Some say it is a global problem, and it is a global problem. We could have been the solution, but the Liberals have really sat on their hands and tried to make things worse over the last few years.

I am just wondering if there has been a change in tone. I would like to know if my colleague, given her attachment to Newfoundland, will stand up and proudly support the Bay du Nord project and if she will also support the Keystone XL pipeline.

Adjournment Proceedings

• (1930)

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, of course I will support the Bay du Nord project. I lobbied our government very hard given the benefit of that particular development, only because I knew the project would be one of the lowest emitters of oil and gas emissions in the country and it was necessary. Our dependency on oil and gas is going to be around for the next two decades at least, and for us to transition off oil and gas, we will need to produce low-carbon oil and gas.

In terms of the XL pipeline, that was a decision of the Government of the United States. That was never a decision of our government. I noticed that Senator Manchin, when he was in Alberta a while ago, spoke to this issue, and we will see what happens. However, as it is right now, that was not a decision of the Government of Canada.

I think we need to understand that we are the single largest supplier of energy to the United States, and we know that it is important to be competitive no matter what energy sector it is.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank everybody for their interventions this evening.

[*Translation*]

The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:32 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Monday, April 25, 2022

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Improvements to Long-Term Care

Mr. McDonald	4255
Motion	4255
Mr. Cannings	4256
Mr. Patzer	4256
Mrs. DeBellefeuille	4257
Mrs. Kramp-Neuman	4257
Mr. Thériault	4258
Mr. Cannings	4260
Ms. Yip	4261
Mr. McCauley	4263

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

The Budget

Financial Statement of Minister of Finance

Motion	4264
Mr. Barrett	4264
Mr. Lamoureux	4265
Mr. Beaulieu	4266
Mr. Julian	4266
Mrs. Roberts	4266
Mr. Lamoureux	4267
Mr. Trudel	4268
Mr. Angus	4268
Mr. Arya	4268
Mr. Vis	4270
Mr. Trudel	4270
Mr. Desjarlais	4270
Mr. Gerretsen	4270
Mr. Hardie	4270
Mr. Small	4272
Ms. Gaudreau	4272
Mr. Cannings	4273
Mr. Généreux	4273
Mr. Lamoureux	4274
Ms. Gaudreau	4275
Mr. Boulerice	4275
Mr. Brassard	4275
Mr. Lamoureux	4277
Mr. Perron	4277
Mr. Julian	4277
Mr. Lamoureux	4277
Ms. Ferreri	4278
Mr. Perron	4279
Mr. Desjarlais	4279
Mr. Sorbara	4279
Mr. Angus	4281
Mr. Morrice	4281

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Ovarian Cancer

Mr. Kelloway	4282
--------------------	------

Hockey Marathon for the Kids

Mr. Hallan	4282
------------------	------

Sikh Heritage Month

Mrs. Valdez	4282
-------------------	------

Mike Bossy

Mr. Trudel	4282
------------------	------

Acadian and Francophone Education

Ms. Diab	4282
----------------	------

Terry Raymond

Mr. Vis	4283
---------------	------

The Environment

Mr. Longfield	4283
---------------------	------

Housing

Ms. Hepfner	4283
-------------------	------

Hockey

Mr. Stewart	4283
-------------------	------

Armenia

Mr. May (Cambridge)	4283
---------------------------	------

Charities

Mr. Morantz	4284
-------------------	------

National Suicide Prevention Hotline

Mr. Doherty	4284
-------------------	------

Guy Lafleur

Mr. Lauzon	4284
------------------	------

Mike Bossy and Guy Lafleur

Mr. Angus	4284
-----------------	------

Guy Lafleur

Mr. Therrien	4285
--------------------	------

Guy Lafleur

Mr. Martel	4285
------------------	------

Bjarni Tryggvason

Mr. Garneau	4285
-------------------	------

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Economy

Mr. Berthold	4285
--------------------	------

Ms. Freeland	4285
--------------------	------

Ethics

Mr. Berthold	4286
--------------------	------

Mr. Holland	4286
-------------------	------

Committees of the House**Public Safety and National Security**

Mr. Carr	4296
Ms. Dancho	4296

Indigenous and Northern Affairs

Mr. Garneau	4296
-------------------	------

Telecommunications Act

Mr. Doherty	4296
Bill C-269. Introduction and first reading	4296
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	4296

Petitions**Vaccine Mandates**

Mr. Kmiec	4296
-----------------	------

Salmon Fishery

Ms. Blaney	4297
------------------	------

Pensions

Ms. Blaney	4297
------------------	------

Climate Change

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	4297
--------------------------------------	------

Volunteer Firefighters and Search and Rescue Personnel

Mr. Johns	4297
-----------------	------

Medical Assistance in Dying

Mr. Patzer	4297
------------------	------

Human Organ Trafficking

Mr. Genuis	4297
------------------	------

Vaccine Mandates

Mr. Viersen	4297
-------------------	------

Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Lamoureux	4298
---------------------	------

Questions Passed as Orders for Returns

Mr. Lamoureux	4305
---------------------	------

Privilege**Alleged Breaches of Privilege Presented in the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics—Speaker's Ruling**

The Deputy Speaker	4309
--------------------------	------

Points of Order**Government Response to Question No.351—Speaker's Ruling**

The Deputy Speaker	4310
--------------------------	------

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**The Budget****Financial Statement of Minister of Finance**

Motion	4311
Mr. Genuis	4311
Mr. Sorbara	4311

Mr. Stewart	4311
Mr. Gerretsen	4313
Ms. McPherson	4313
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	4313
Mr. Chambers	4314
Mr. Lamoureux	4315
Mr. Patzer	4315
Mrs. Desbiens	4316
Ms. Dzerowicz	4316
Mr. Genuis	4317
Mr. Villemure	4318
Mr. Garrison	4318
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	4318
Mr. Carr	4318
Mr. Patzer	4319
Mr. Perron	4320
Mr. Green	4320
Mrs. DeBellefeuille	4320
Mr. Lamoureux	4322
Mr. Genuis	4322
Ms. Zarrillo	4322
Ms. Sinclair-Desgagné	4323
Mr. Lamoureux	4324
Mr. Patzer	4324
Ms. McPherson	4324
Mr. Virani	4324
Mr. Genuis	4326
Ms. Paupé	4326
Ms. Zarrillo	4327
Mr. Samson	4327
Mr. Albas	4329
Mr. Blaikie	4329
Mr. Perron	4329
Mr. Viersen	4329
Mr. Albas	4329
Mr. Lamoureux	4331
Mr. Blaikie	4331
Mr. Villemure	4332
Ms. Lantsman	4332
Mr. Gerretsen	4333
Mr. Perron	4334
Mr. Green	4334
Amendment to the amendment negated	4335

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS**Canada Revenue Agency**

Mr. Genuis	4336
Mr. Beech	4336

Natural Resources

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	4337
Ms. Jones	4338

Natural Resources

Ms. Rempel Garner	4338
Ms. Jones	4339

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