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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 4, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

COMMISSIONER OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Speaker: It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsection 23(5) of the Auditor General Act, the fall 2022 reports of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development.

[*English*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 32(5), these reports are permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

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CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

The Speaker: It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsection 94(2) of the Access to Information Act and subsection 72(2) of the Privacy Act, the reports of the Chief Electoral Officer on the administration of these acts for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2022.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(h), these reports are deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

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INFORMATION COMMISSIONER

The Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to subsection 94(2) of the Access to Information Act and subsection 72(2) of the Privacy Act, to lay upon the table the reports of the Auditor General of Canada on the administration of these acts for the fiscal year ending March 31.

[*English*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(h), these reports are deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present today, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, entitled “Facial Recognition Technology and the Growing Power of Artificial Intelligence”.

I will take a moment to thank the analysts for the work they did on behalf of the committee and all the committee members, who agreed entirely with the 19 recommendations that are contained in this report. I certainly hope the government will quickly respond to the report and work toward expeditiously implementing the recommendations contained in it.

FINANCE

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Finance in relation to Bill C-30, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (temporary enhancement to the Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax credit).

I do not know, but we may have set a record to pass a bill through committee. To make that achievement possible, I want to thank all members of the finance committee, as well as the clerk, Alexandre Roger; Carine Grand-Jean; legislative clerks Jean-François Pagé and Émilie Thivierge; the analysts; the interpreters; the staff; and all members and parties in this House for their support on Bill C-30.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Therefore, pursuant to an order made on Monday, October 3, the bill is deemed concurred in at report stage without further amendment.

(Bill C-30 concurred in at report stage)

Routine Proceedings

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-299, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (life imprisonment).

He said: Madam Speaker, it an honour to stand here on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: And the Conservative Party.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order.

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, it is interesting that my colleague from Winnipeg is heckling me as I am saying this, because I am speaking about a bill that should be of interest to everybody in the House. Now the member for Kingston and the Islands is getting in on the act.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Can we have order and let the hon. member introduce his bill?

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, this is what we are talking about: sexual offences against children and adults.

When somebody commits a robbery in this country, it is the taking of property by force and they are liable to life imprisonment. When someone's consent and dignity are taken by force when it comes to sexual assault, the maximum sentence is 10 years in jail. We therefore treat the taking of someone's sexual inviolability, innocence, dignity and consent by force less seriously than we treat the taking of property by force.

If people want to treat this as a joke, that is fine, but for me and for everybody in this House, my exhortation is that we start getting hard on sexual offences, especially sexual offences against children. This bill does just that. It raises the maximum sentence to life imprisonment for most sexual offences to recognize that victims are often put in a psychological prison for life themselves.

I exhort all members of the House to pass this bill expeditiously given the seriousness that this subject matter deserves.

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

* * *

• (1010)

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT

Hon. Mona Fortier (for the Minister of Public Safety) moved for leave to introduce Bill S-8, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, to make consequential amendments to other Acts and to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations.

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Hon. Mona Fortier (for the Minister of Foreign Affairs) moved for leave to introduce Bill S-9, An Act to amend the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act.

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

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[English]

PETITIONS

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to present to the House today.

The first petition is for the Prime Minister and the Government of Canada. The citizens in the preamble who signed this petition recognize that Canada is facing a climate emergency. Therefore, they are calling on the government to implement just transition legislation that will reduce emissions by at least 60% below 2005 levels; create new public institutions and expand public ownership of services and utilities across the economy to implement the transition; create good green jobs and drive inclusive workforce development; expand the social safety net; and pay for this transition by increasing taxes on the wealthiest and corporations, and financing through a public national bank.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, in this second petition, the petitioners recognize that disability financial support payments in Canada are currently far below the official poverty line and that 1.5 million disabled Canadians currently suffer every single day in a state of legislated poverty. Therefore, the petitioners are calling upon the government to end this practice of legislated poverty and ensure that a federal disability benefit of \$2,200 per month is implemented.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise in this place to present a petition that deals with public transportation.

The petitioners note that the government's current 10-year transit plan will end in 2027, yet we still have not seen public transit significantly improved to reduce greenhouse gases, nor to reach areas of Canada that are remote and more rural. As members will know, today actually happens to be the day for recognition of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, and that report called for public transit to be available, secure and safe for people across Canada, including outside urban areas.

The petitioners call on us to establish permanent federal funding for public transit that goes above and beyond the current 10-year transit plan, to work together to provide sustainable, predictable, long-term and adequate funding and to establish accountability to ensure that all orders of government in Canada work together to provide public transit to Canadians.

• (1015)

ONLINE PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my honour to present a number of petitions today.

In the first petition, petitioners are concerned about how easy it is for young people to access sexually explicit material online, including violent and degrading explicit material. They note that this is a public health and public safety concern.

The petitioners note that a significant portion of commercially accessed sexually explicit material have no age verification software. Moreover, that age verification software could ascertain the age of users without breaching their privacy rights. They note many serious harms associated with sexually explicit material, including the development of addiction and the development of attitudes favourable to sexual violence and harassment of women.

As such, the petitioners call on the House of Commons to quickly pass Bill S-210, the protection of young persons from exposure to pornography act.

UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition comes from people across the country concerned about legislation related to universal basic income. I have received countless messages from across the country about this.

The petitioners note that people who would get paycheques regardless of whether they helped or worked in their communities would cost our economy billions of dollars. They state that universal income would disincentivize people from working and maintaining a job and that taxes would need to be greatly raised to pay for this.

As such, the petitioners call on parliamentarians to vote against Bill S-233 and Bill C-223. They want an end to a carbon tax, they want an end to inflationary spending and they want to see pipelines and other projects approved to ensure our economy can grow so there are good jobs for everyone.

FORCED LABOUR AND CHILD LABOUR

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition is from Canadians from across the country who are supporting Bill S-211. They state that modern slavery has deepened in the last two years. They are looking for the Canadian government to pass a bill that would ensure Canadian businesses are not participating in child forced labour.

Approximately 50 million people around the world are currently stuck in forced labour and approximately 20 billion dollars' worth of goods imported into our country each year are at risk of being produced through modern slavery. They also state that large compa-

Routine Proceedings

nies are not required to report these measures to prevent modern slavery in their supply chains.

The petitioners call on the House of Commons to pass Bill S-211 quickly, which is an act to enact the fighting against forced labour and child labour in supply chains act and to amend the Customs Tariff. If and when this is passed, it would greatly improve our impact in the world.

COVID-19 MANDATES

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition is from Canadians across the country who want an end to the ArriveCAN app, vaccine mandates and all COVID-19 mandates. Currently, the government has only suspended some of these mandates. They are looking forward to having all these mandates removed.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to finally and permanently end all federally regulated regulations around the COVID-19 vaccine mandates and restrictions.

FIREARMS

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

The petitioners acknowledge Canada is the only G7 country that criminally prohibits sound moderators. Moreover, the majority of G7 countries have recognized the health and safety benefits of sound moderators, allowing them for hunting, sport shooting and noise pollution reduction.

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

NORTHERN LIVING ALLOWANCE

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, next I am presenting a petition on behalf of my constituents living in Fox Creek and Swan Hills, two rural and remote communities in northern Alberta. They are calling for the extension of the intermediate prescribed zone for the northern living allowance to be used for their communities.

Currently there is an arbitrary line that runs across northern Alberta, from which they are 15 kilometres away. It would be great if they could access that tax incentive. Neither Fox Creek nor Swan Hills are in the intermediate prescribed zone, but they are very much remote and rural communities.

Government Orders

The petitioners therefore call on the government to include Swan Hills and Fox Creek as communities within the intermediate prescribed zone and allow these residents to claim the residency deductions for living in northern Alberta.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, finally, I want to present a petition on behalf of Canadians who are concerned that certain charities would be targeted based on their views.

● (1020)

The petitioners call on MPs to ensure that charities that hold views that differ from the government's views are not harassed, or criminalized or have their charitable status removed. They call on the government to not enforce the judgment that it put in place in its 2021 campaign platform to remove charitable status from some organizations.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

COST OF LIVING RELIEF ACT, NO. 1

Hon. Mona Fortier (for the Minister of Finance) moved that Bill C-30, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (temporary enhancement to the Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax credit), be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to speak to major legislation that would provide substantial support to Canadians in every region of our country. It is a good day.

We are ensuring there will be more disposable income for Canadians to assist them in dealing with issues such as inflation by providing additional financial support so they will have a bit more to spend. It is quite encouraging to see the support for passing the legislation.

Let us think about it. For many years, the government, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, with guidance of the cabinet and members of the Liberal caucus, has talked a great deal about Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it. We are providing the necessary supports to show we can build a healthier, stronger middle class.

Appreciating the importance of Canada's middle class gives us a better sense of our economy. A healthy middle class gives us a

healthier economy. There is good reason for that to be taking place. We live in a consumer society where the consumption of products improves the quality of life. It increases the demand for local manufactured products and services, and it creates jobs.

In fact, if we look at the first number of years since we became government, we saw a relatively healthy growing economy. We invested in infrastructure, in tangible ways, for the first time in many years. All of this was in support of Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it.

We invested in individuals who had financial needs that were far greater than other Canadians at the lower end of household income. We did that by enhancing the Canada child care program. We did that by looking at some of the poorest seniors in the country, seniors who were on fixed incomes, and came up with ways we could ensure they would have more money in their pockets, such as substantial increases to GIS. This was for the poorest of our seniors.

Ensuring we have an economy that works for all Canadians is a priority for the government and the Liberal caucus. We take this very seriously. Seven days a week we are focused on ensuring we are there, in a tangible way, for Canadians no matter where they live in our great nation.

We saw that during the pandemic. When the pandemic hit the world, Canada responded. Our response was second to no other. We saw that with tangible results. At the beginning, we had a high sense of co-operation from all political entities, and we see that today with Bill C-30. We see universal support from members in the chamber. That is why the bill will pass.

It is much like what we saw for the first few months of the pandemic, when the government recognized that there would be a cost to the pandemic. We made the decision that it was better for the government to do the borrowing as opposed to seeing the consequences of the government not supporting its citizens and the small businesses.

That is why we invested billions of dollars in supporting Canadians, like what Bill C-30 would do by putting money in the pockets of Canadians.

● (1025)

We invested in programs such as CERB. Over nine million Canadians benefited from that program. With this legislation, we would see over 11 million Canadians and families benefit. We were there to support Canadians.

We supported small businesses. I ask members to imagine if we had not provided the billions of dollars to support small businesses, whether through loans, rent subsidies, or wage subsidy programs, or the billions for average Canadians. It cost a great deal of money, and it meant that we had to borrow.

Government Orders

The Conservatives in recent days have been very critical of the government, talking about the deficit and trying to position themselves as if though they had not supported the government's expenditures during the pandemic. They say that we have the highest deficit of any other government in Canadian history, knowing full well that they voted in favour of the billions of dollars we had to borrow in order to support Canadians during a worldwide pandemic.

Now, postpandemic, even though it is not completely over, they are starting to change their attitude toward the money we had to borrow in order to support small businesses and Canadians during a world pandemic. It speaks to the Conservative policy mentality. We have seen that. We have seen policies from the Conservative Party that I would ultimately argue are to the detriment of Canadians. We see the Conservative Party flip-flopping, which should cause Canadians to be really concerned.

These are not just words I am putting on the record, but facts. Talking about policy, we can remember today's leader of the Conservative Party, less than a year ago, gave economic advice to anyone who would listen and said that cryptocurrency, Bitcoin, was the way to fight inflation. That is what he was telling Canadians less than a year ago, as he was criticizing the Governor of the Bank of Canada.

The member for Abbotsford knows this full well. After all, he gave that leadership candidate some sound advice, which was well received, not only by the Liberal caucus, but also on Bay Street and, generally speaking, by anyone who understands the importance and significance of the Bank of Canada and its governor.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1030)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Could we agree that this is not a conversation? An hon. member is making his speech, so members can make their comments during questions and comments. It is mutual.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I do not mind heckling at all. They can go ahead all they want. At the end of the day, the member for Abbotsford was right, and he knows he was right. Unfortunately there was a cost, but I will leave that for another day. I do respect that, on that particular occasion, he was right.

However, we have to remember that the Conservative leader was telling people that the governor of the Bank of Canada was bad and that he would fire him. He was advising Canadians to buy cryptocurrency. I wonder if any Conservative members of Parliament bought cryptocurrency. Could all those who bought cryptocurrency please put up a hand? After all, no doubt they would want to impress their leader. I wonder how many of them actually followed the advice of the member for Carleton, today's leader of the Conservative Party.

An hon. member: The member for Abbotsford did not.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, no, the member for Abbotsford would not have done that. I agree. Having said that, we can imagine those individuals who did. It is somewhat sad, because

many people we represent have confidence in what they are hearing. With a leadership candidate going around saying, "Invest in cryptocurrency", I suspect many Canadians did just that.

Unfortunately those who followed that advice lost a great deal of money. I think a conservative estimate would be at least 20%, some might even say it is considerably higher than that. My colleague suggests it might be much higher.

The bottom line is that that is the type of economic advice that was being provided, but it does not stop there. Let us remember that the initial response from the Conservative Party to Bill C-30, the bill we are actually debating today, was to not support it. I like to think that the response received by the Conservative Party over a few days ultimately caused them to change their mind, and I am glad they did because it is good legislation.

However, initially they were not going to support it. In part, it was because the Conservative Party feels that everything involving a collection of money from Canadians is called a tax, as a member across the way suggests. It is such a sad statement, and I will give two examples of that shortly. I do believe the Conservatives were shamed into supporting Bill C-30. I would like to see them do the same thing for Bill C-31.

If Conservatives support the children they represent in their constituencies who are under the age of 12 and who do not have dental plans being able to access dental services, they should be supporting Bill C-31, not filibustering. That is how children would receive the dental services they need. Many of those children who do not receive dental services often end up in a hospital situation, getting surgery for things that could have been prevented. That is what Bill C-31 would do, not to mention also supporting renters by giving them payments.

However, the Conservatives do not want to support that. They say it is about taxes, and I said there is a couple of issues I want to raise on that particular front. A number of years ago, when I was in opposition, I used to be fairly disappointed in Stephen Harper not recognizing the importance of CPP. CPP is an investment, not a tax. The Conservatives would argue today, as they did from their seats, that CPP is a tax.

• (1035)

Stephen Harper refused to negotiate with and talk to premiers about increasing CPP contributions. When we took government, we worked with all political parties, and provinces and territories, to get an agreement to increase CPP contributions, what the Conservative Party today calls a "tax". It really is for individuals who are working today to invest in their retirement, so when they do retire, they will have more disposable income.

Government Orders

Only the Conservative Party of Canada, not Conservatives at the provincial level, just the national Conservative Party, does not believe in the importance of CPP and the importance of ensuring that people have more disposable income when it comes time for retirement.

When it comes to taxes, in the Conservative Party we see a party that is in complete disarray. Do members remember when I spoke about flip-flopping? I have referenced the analogy of pulling in a fish and it ending up on the dock, and we see it flip-flop around. That is what I think about when I think about the price on pollution and the Conservative Party of Canada. Again, it really does stand alone.

Back in 2015 and 2016, governments around the world, with the Paris Accord, came together and said that we need to deal with the environment, and one of the best ways to deal with the environment was to deal with the price on pollution as a policy tool that would have a real impact. At the time when the accord was reached, and the Prime Minister, along with a delegation from different provinces, came back from Paris, there was a great deal of enthusiasm about it. It was only the Conservative Party here in the chamber that was negative toward it.

The Conservatives had had a change in leadership, if members will recall. Shortly after the second change of leadership, the Conservative Party changed its mind, and it was applauded. I believe the record will show I stood up inside the House and complimented the Conservatives for changing their minds on the issue. They, or at least a good number of them, finally recognized that climate change was in fact real and that having a price on pollution was a good thing.

Let us pause to stop and think about that. When we think about that, let us reflect back to a year ago when we were all knocking on doors. It was not that long ago that we were knocking on doors. What was the Conservative Party saying as its members were knocking on doors? The Conservatives were saying that they believed in a price on pollution. The leader at the time insisted that candidates and the Conservative platform would dictate a price on pollution. That has changed once again. There is new leadership and new direction. The climate change deniers are prevailing, and we now have the leader of the official opposition saying, “No, we are going to get rid of the price on pollution”, or the carbon tax, as he refers to it.

Let us remember that the federal carbon tax is only applied Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Is the federal Conservative Party now going to go into the provinces and say to the other provinces that do not have the national program and that they are going to get rid of any price on pollution? I would be interested in seeing the negotiations that would take place about that. Is the Conservative Party saying only some parts of Canada should have a price on pollution?

• (1040)

This is the reason I look at Bill C-30 as a positive step. It is an encouraging thing to see Conservatives change their minds and support Bill C-30. I applaud that. I would like them to revisit a number of the issues I have pointed out that continue to support Canadians in a very real and tangible way. One of the things they

can do, and I will conclude my remarks on this, is not only support Bill C-30 but also support Bill C-31. They should do it for the individuals who need that rent subsidy and the children under the age of 12 who need the dental insurance.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. member spoke about the carbon tax. What he did not acknowledge is that his government has a plan to triple, triple, triple the carbon tax. For Canadians who are already struggling with affordability, tripling down on this failed policy—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Triple, triple, triple.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, the member for Kingston and the Islands is saying, “triple”. He is listening for once.

The Liberals are tripling down on this policy that has not achieved any kind of improvement in terms of the environment. The Liberals have not met any of their targets, and the member spoke about provincial premiers. We are seeing now that in some cases, like in the case of Newfoundland, we have premier who, as I understand it, is supportive of the principle of a carbon tax but very much opposed to the government's plan to increase it next year and to triple it going forward.

Will the member get up and either repudiate this tripling of the carbon tax policy or explain why his government is planning on tripling the burden on Canadians?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it was interesting yesterday, when the Conservative members would stand up during QP and say, “triple, triple, triple”. The thing that came across my mind was Tim Hortons' double-double.

I am wondering if someone was going through the drive-through and said, “I have an idea. Why do we not take Tim Hortons' double-double and say triple, triple, triple?” That is the only thing I can figure out. I have no idea where they get this “triple, triple, triple” thing from. Are they trying to hoodwink Canadians again on some stupid thought? It does not make sense.

The bottom line—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Can I remind members that interpreters have to deal with all the noise in the background? It is very hard for them, so can we allow the hon. parliamentary secretary to finish his answer to the hon. member?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, what is very clear is that the climate deniers are prevailing once again in the Conservative Party of Canada. I think those voices that have been silenced need to come back and try to get a bit more common sense applied in the Conservative Party today.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am sure my colleague from Winnipeg North will agree with the Bloc Québécois that fighting inflation and avoiding a recession calls for sustainable solutions and intelligent measures. One-size-fits-all is not the answer. We definitely have to steer clear of measures that, although popular, or even populist, are not real solutions.

Government Orders

Basically, we have to steer clear of measures designed primarily to win votes.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would concur with the member from the Bloc. Inflation is very real; we know that. Whether it is what has taken place with the war in Europe or the pandemic, we recognize that around the world inflation is happening. Even though Canada is doing exceptionally well. When we compare us to the United States, England and Europe, our inflation rate has been lower, but that does not mean that we ignore it. That is why we have a Prime Minister, members of the Liberal caucus and others who are trying to develop and support ideas that would be targeted to ensure we are helping the people who need the help the most.

In terms of people who are on fixed incomes, a 10% increase, to those who are 75 and over, on OAS is significant. I am talking about hundreds of millions of dollars. Bill C-30 and Bill C-31 would do exactly what it is—

• (1045)

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

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is nice to see this moment in the House of Commons, where, on this bill, it seems we have the unanimous consent of the House. There is a realization that this is a targeted measure that is going to people who desperately need it.

Before the Liberals pat themselves too hard on the back, I want to remind them that throughout May and June the NDP leader, the member for Burnaby South, repeatedly called on the government to put this measure into place because families back then needed this measure. Yes, Bill C-30 is welcome, though it is coming a bit late. What changed with the Liberals? Why did they not see this need back in May and June when the New Democrats were first calling for it?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, we have to put things into the perspective of time and how government ultimately evolves its policies. I, for one, have always advocated strongly on pharmacare. That is an area the government could expand in. I often talked about dental care also. I am very glad that we have been able to achieve what we have in Bill C-31 and I appreciate the contributions and support that the NDP has offered.

Canadians elected a minority government and they expect opposition and government members to work together. We have at least two political entities in the House that saw fit to come up with an idea of providing, as a first step, dental services to children under the age of 12. I see that as a positive thing, and I look forward to ongoing discussions on how we can help Canadians during this difficult time.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I agree with the member for Winnipeg North that we need to get help to those who need it the most.

I have two questions for the parliamentary secretary. First, refundable tax credits like the GST are indexed annually to inflation.

It could be indexed on a quarterly basis, as is the case for seniors' benefits already. Why is it not in this bill?

Second, on the disability benefit, last night on the floor of the House, I asked the parliamentary secretary for a timeline for when Bill C-22 would be brought back to the floor of the House. It has been up for debate once so far. This is about ensuring some trust from the disability community to follow through on the benefit. We are not seeing any demonstration of that yet. Can the parliamentary secretary commit to a date when Bill C-22 will be back for debate on the floor of the House?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, on the first question, I suggest the member sit down and talk with the Minister of Finance. I am sure the minister would be more than happy to provide an explanation as to why it might not be able to be done. I do not know the answer.

With regard to Bill C-22, I can assure the member that the minister responsible for the disability legislation is very eager and wants to see the legislation come back. Unfortunately, with a limited amount of House debate time, there is only so much legislation we can bring in. For example, I would have loved to debate that bill today, but the problem is that we have to get Bill C-30 through and Bill C-31.

There are a number of pieces of legislation. If we had more opportunities to bring forward government bills, that would probably be the ideal. For example, Bill C-30 is universally supported by all members of the House from what I can tell. Right after I sit down, we could pass it and go right to the disability bill. I would be in favour of that.

• (1050)

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the parliamentary secretary and his team on their achievement in delivering over 10% inflation on food to Canadians, which I am sure his constituents are quite pleased with. Most of it is due to the carbon tax. It goes in everywhere on the logistics chain, and it is compounded and then passed on to consumers. However, it has not reduced our emissions in Canada.

In the U.S., there has been a reduction in emissions without a carbon tax. I wonder if the parliamentary secretary can explain to the House how that could be possible.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I guess the hon. member wants to remain focused on the Conservative spin with respect to what he calls the carbon tax or the price on pollution. I just do not agree with the question at all.

Government Orders

One could do a comparison when he talks about a 10% increase on groceries. Canada is a vast country. Provinces, municipalities, the federal government: all of us have a contribution in terms of what our inflation rate is. Even the member for Abbotsford, I think, would have an appreciation of that fact. That is why we see variations of inflation rates across the different regions. To try to say that inflation is there only because of the price on pollution is just wrong. The member needs to get a more comprehensive understanding of why it is that we have inflation.

I would encourage him to recognize two quick points. The first is that inflation is around the world and Canada is doing relatively well. The second is that the government is doing whatever it can to try to make life affordable for all—

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

The hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise on Bill C-30 today.

Yesterday, I was intrigued by a poll commissioned by the national accounting firm MNP. It found that half of B.C. residents are having a hard time saving money, and that 46% in the Ipsos poll feel that transportation is getting increasingly unaffordable. According to the poll, 40% of British Columbians also said that housing was a real and significant challenge. It does not take an Ipsos poll or an article in *Business in Vancouver*, though, to understand and to know what is going on in our province and the major challenges that people are facing right now.

Before I go on, I want to seek unanimous consent to split my time with the member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, indeed, just the other night I stopped by for gas at the Centex station in Abbotsford. I had to fill up at \$2.23 a litre to drive to the airport. I drive a RAV4, but even filling up a RAV4, at \$150 for a tank of gas, is expensive.

Grocery costs at the Superstore in Abbotsford go up and up. I made a dinner for my family on Sunday night, and I noticed the price of the filet of fish, the Pacific cod that my family ate. It was over \$30 for a piece of fish to feed my family that night. Fish is up 10.4%. This is a staple food in British Columbia, and it is getting harder and harder to buy. Butter and eggs are up 10% and 16% respectively. Margarine is up 37.5%; pasta, 32.5%; fresh fruit across the board, 13.2%; coffee, 14.2%; potatoes, 10.9%. I could go on, but the reality is that purchasing food is getting harder and harder for families.

In British Columbia we are also challenged with the highest housing costs in all of Canada and perhaps, in some cases, even many parts of North America. For the average home in British Columbia, the price today is over \$918,000. Even for someone making a six-figure income today, the chances of being able to save up for that mortgage to cover the property transfer tax, the legal fees and everything involved in purchasing a house, are really, real-

ly slim. For a young father or mother working to support their family, even if they are making 100 grand, saving up for a townhouse or a condo is a challenge right now. Across the board, British Columbians are struggling.

Linda Paul from MNP noted in a survey that indeed, life is getting more unaffordable and Canadians are allocating more of their paycheques to cover these basic necessities that I just outlined. Further hikes and rising costs, she said, could drive more people into vulnerable positions.

That brings us to the bill before us today, Bill C-30, which amends the Income Tax Act in order to double the goods and services tax or harmonized sales tax credit for six months, increasing the credit amounts by 50% for the 2022-23 benefit year. Eligibility for the payment is based on one's income reported to CRA in the previous fiscal year. For my constituents and other Canadians who are listening, in July the government may send a letter outlining what credits people are eligible for. If someone's notice indicated that they should receive the GST tax credit, they can assume that the payment they get will be effectively double the amount on the notice. Payments are generally made three or four times a year. The next one is actually coming up tomorrow, on October 5; the second one is on January 5 and the third is on April 5. Assuming this bill passes both houses of Parliament, people can expect that on January 5 and April 5, their GST tax credit will be effectively doubled.

It is also important to know that the GST credit, generally across the board, if one were to look at the Government of Canada's schedule for payments, applies only to Canadians making below \$60,000. The Parliamentary Budget Officer also outlined what, in general, this bill before us today would equate to for the average family. For a single person it would be \$369, and for a single parent with a child it would be about \$402 extra. Indeed, this measure is needed and welcomed by a lot of people struggling to get by with those basic costs, like groceries and gas, where more of their paycheques are going today.

I would be remiss if I did not outline that the government, despite putting this bill forward that the Conservatives will, in good faith, support, is not doing anything to address the structural challenges facing the Canadian economy today. The structural challenges are increasing. Businesses across Canada are having a harder and harder time planning for their future.

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• (1055)

Small business insolvency is on the rise. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business reported that one in six businesses are considering closing their doors, with 62% of small businesses still carrying debt from the pandemic. In other words, the environment that businesses and workers find themselves in today is risky. It is scary. As I did in Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, I know MPs went and visited businesses this summer. If businesses in Liberal-held ridings are anything like businesses in the Fraser Canyon and the Fraser Valley, which I represent, Liberal members know that businesses are struggling and do not know what to do next.

I had the opportunity to visit the Lillooet Brewing Company, which is about to open up. Sam, one of the two owners, is an expert in the procurement of agricultural goods. He said that, first off, starting his business was the hardest thing he has ever done, but procuring the necessary equipment and products to make this business work is increasingly challenging, and he barely made it through. He talked about the ability to purchase an aluminum container in which the beer would be brewed. He talked about how the input costs for products like barley and malt are going through the roof. He does not know how he is going to solve all these problems.

I heard from the tourism industry in my riding, Fraser Valley RV and other similar businesses that are wondering whether they can plan to build and assemble more RVs with the increased input costs of equipment across the board. In many cases, when they combine the energy and property costs they are incurring, and the additional CPP and payroll taxes they will be paying on behalf of their employees, they are wondering whether they want to do business in Canada any longer. I heard the same thing from people at KMS Tools in Abbotsford, who said they were not going to invest in Canada anymore because they do not think the government has their back. All they want to do is create jobs and build things to help people live better lives, and they do not feel they can do that right now.

Therefore, my plea to the government today is very simple. It should look at the structural challenges facing the Canadian economy and the major supply chain issues that we need to address. It should look at how Canadian businesses are able to get the products they need to build things in Canada and address that problem. We are not going to get this done overnight, but what Canadian businesses want to hear is that the Government of Canada is going to make a reasonable effort to move in the right direction.

The second thing I would like to raise with respect to what the government could be doing right now relates to agriculture. I noted at the beginning of my speech that the price of margarine has gone up 37.5%. That is largely due to products like canola oil. Canada has an opportunity, especially given the global disruption in agricultural production, to stand behind Canadian farmers and play a role in addressing the food shortage. Canada wants to be a global player in food production, and the current government can help it get there if it gets out of the way and stops threatening farmers with future agricultural input costs on such things as fertilizer.

• (1100)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was listening carefully to the hon. member across the way and his de-

scription of what businesses are facing. The businesses in Guelph, across Canada and around the world are facing similar challenges around the supply side. What we have right now is supply-side inflation. The ability to bring product in or to have labour produce product is something all businesses are struggling with right now, which is causing the inflation we are seeing.

The bill before us today is targeted to help young families support their young children with dental care. It is a very targeted measure that will not add inflationary costs. Could the member reflect on how this targeted program, with the GST and dental credits, is not going to stimulate inflation, which is being caused by the problems he described?

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, I read Bill C-30 this morning and there is no mention of dental care in the legislation before us today. Bill C-30, as I outlined, is related to the GST credit. The bill before us today will effectively double the GST credit for Canadians who are eligible to receive it. Dental care is in another piece of legislation before this House, and it is not before Parliament today.

I acknowledge that the member outlined the structural challenges related to labour and supply chains. I would much rather see the government put forward a strategy to get goods moving in Canada and to give businesses the ability to produce things once again. That is not before the House, and those challenges will last much longer than six months, when the GST credit we are talking about today finishes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon for his brilliant speech. I would like to know if he thinks this measure is fair for everyone or not.

If my colleague does think it is fair, could he tell me what fairness means to him?

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, the measure we are discussing in the House today does not affect everyone.

• (1105)

[*English*]

The bill before us today is for people only making under \$60,000. The bill will apply only to Canadians who already qualified, as I outlined in my speech, for the GST credit. This bill applies only to Canadians who received a GST credit notice in July, when the government sent those letters out to Canadians.

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Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his speech. I know he is a real champion for his riding. I am glad he brought up craft breweries. My riding has more craft breweries per capita than anywhere else in Canada.

Can he comment on the craft brewers' proposal to restructure the excise tax on beer, so that it gives a break to these small craft breweries and, at the same time, stops the escalating cost of that tax?

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Penticton in the South Okanagan for his excellent question. In fact, beer producers, liquor producers and wine producers in Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, like those in his riding, are wondering why, at this time of inflation, the government is putting yet an additional tax on them.

There are thousands upon thousands of people who work in these sectors in British Columbia. All they want to do is have an honest go, go to work and make a product that people love. The government is making it harder for them to do that. I am glad to see that the NDP stands with the Conservative Party in opposing this tax measure, which is punitive against our producers.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member. I think he accurately portrayed the fear and anxiety that exist among not just businesses, but also residents. I travelled across the country this summer, and I talked to a lot of young people. They are neither fearful nor anxious; they are despondent.

How are young people in his riding feeling right now?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We will have a very brief answer from the hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, on the weekend I had an opportunity to hang out with a number of young men at a sporting event in Abbotsford. I asked one of them whether the property he lived in was owned or rented. He said, "Thank you for even thinking that I would have the opportunity to buy a home. I don't think I ever will." This was a young, educated man who was recently married, and he does not see an ability in his future to ever own a home. We need to restore, for these despondent young people, the dream of home ownership, the dream that their paycheque is going to get them far—

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

The hon. member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-30, the inflation bill, because I am deeply concerned about the financial state of my constituents in Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame.

We all know that this piece of legislation will get passed, but in this place it is our job as His Majesty's loyal opposition to debate legislation and perhaps effect positive change to it when it goes to committee. The government has passed some extremely hurtful legislation since first being elected in 2015, when it had a budgetary surplus and inflation was at just 1.13%.

The carbon tax was implemented as a result of hurtful Liberal legislation. It is set to triple since its inception, and it will keep on going. By 2030, nearly 50¢ per litre of carbon tax will be placed on fuel, and then with HST on top of that, Canadians will pay almost 60¢ more per litre for fuel than they paid when they voted for sunny days and sunny ways.

When goods arrive at the back door of a grocery store and the invoice is given to the owner, there is a line at the bottom that says "fuel surcharge", but it is not a one-time charge on our goods. Fuel price increases are passed on at every point in the logistics chain, so by the time goods reach the last link in the chain, the Canadian consumer, all of these inflationary fuel surcharges are reflected in the price of these goods. Therefore, we identify the carbon tax as a major cause of inflation to every single parent, every senior and every struggling family in Canada. By 2030, can members imagine the effect the carbon tax would have on Canadian households?

What we see here today is just the tip of the iceberg. Yesterday, the government voted against our motion to stop increasing the carbon tax. Instead of that, once again, the government ATM machine is ready to add more inflationary fuel to the fire.

I hear from my constituents on a daily basis that times were tough before, but now, after seven years of the government and its insatiable desire to spend, it is more difficult than ever to make ends meet.

I heard from Julie, a single mother of two who is now unable to enrol her children in soccer because it will cost too much to drive them to games and practices. Under the Liberal government, according to statistics, transportation costs have risen 10.3%. I heard from Mary, a senior who is one of the 24% of Canadians cutting back on the amount of food they are buying because they cannot keep up with the rising cost of groceries.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister this: When was the last time he stepped into a grocery store to purchase a week's worth of groceries? I do not actually believe the Prime Minister has ever bought groceries, so let me help to open his eyes. Groceries, some of the basic necessities of life, are up by 10.8%, rising at the fastest pace in 40 years. Fish is up 10.4%. Butter is up 16.9%. Eggs are up by 10.9%. God help us if we break one. Margarine is up by 37.5%. Bread, rolls and buns are 7.6% more expensive than last year. Dry and fresh pasta is up 32.4%. Fresh fruit is up 13.2%.

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I heard from Kyle. Although he received a slight wage increase, he still cannot keep up. Why? It is because although on average wages have increased by 5.4%, inflation has increased by 7%. It does not take a doctorate in mathematics to know those numbers are not sustainable.

However, wait. Not all is lost. The Liberals have come up with a plan. They are going to help combat inflation caused by overspending by spending more. Do not misinterpret my criticism of their plan as a lack of desire to help those who need it most, but let us take a look at how we got into this situation to begin with: The government spending money it does not have. How did the government get the money it spent? It borrowed it, and the Prime Minister continues to borrow more and more at higher and higher interest rates, which only causes higher inflation and the cost of everything to go up.

• (1110)

Members do not have to take my word for it. Avery Shenfeld, chief economist at the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, when asked about the Liberals' inflationary bill, stated in the Vancouver news:

While there are times where fiscal largesse is just what the economy needs, these aren't such times. In a period of high inflation and excess demand, cutting taxes or handing out cheques can add fuel to the inflationary fire, and make the job of a central bank that's raising rates to cool demand all that more troublesome.

In a recent news article published in Bloomberg, Mr. Robert Kavcic, senior economist with the Bank of Montreal, cautioned against new government support measures, stating, "We're not going to deny that there are households seriously in need of help right now in this inflationary environment. But, from a policy perspective, we all know that sending out money as an inflation-support measure is inherently inflationary."

While the Prime Minister flies around the world in his private air accommodations, espousing the virtues of a green economy and warming up his vocal cords with a little rhapsody at his hotel lobby debut, hard-working Canadians here at home are tightening their belts and making tough choices. The average family of four is now spending over \$1,200 more each year to put food on the table. This is not to mention the rising costs of heat, gasoline and rent.

However, the Liberals' one-time support benefit is for \$467. Who does this help? Individuals without children earning more than \$49,200 or a family of four, a couple with two children, earning more than \$58,500 would receive no benefits, and it certainly would not help Canadians who are not renting.

By printing more cash, the government's inflationary spending does nothing to help Canadians who are struggling to make ends meet. Because of the Prime Minister's uncontrolled spending with borrowed cash at higher interest rates, all Canadians will feel the pain of more inflation and higher prices, making it harder for workers, families and seniors to make ends meet. For years, the Conservatives have warned the Prime Minister about the consequences of his actions and how much they hurt Canadians from coast to coast.

The GST rebate will provide welcome relief that the Conservatives support, but it will not address the real problem. Inflationary

deficits and taxes are driving up costs at the fastest rate in nearly 40 years.

To avoid adding costs to government, this side of the House proposes that the government look for savings in other areas to pay for its proposals. I do not stand here simply to criticize; I can also offer suggestions. For example, I fully support eliminating, and completely not allowing back, the ArriveCAN app. That would give us a cost savings of \$25 million a year. Here is one the NDP should be able to get onside with: Let us scrap the \$35-billion Infrastructure Bank to cancel corporate welfare programs that only help large and powerful companies.

Families are struggling now more than ever and they need help. Bill from Grand Falls-Windsor is wondering how he will be able to heat his home this winter and keep food on his table.

Let us ensure we do this right. Borrowing money to give this much-needed one-time help, in the long run, will do more harm and we will be right back here again. It is time to stop the vicious circle the government has created. Borrowing money to give to people who are struggling due to the high cost of living will only increase the cost of everything and drive up inflation. The Canadian economy has been thrown off a cliff, but unlike the Prime Minister when he bungee jumps, it does not have a bungee cord to stop it from crashing.

• (1115)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was trying to follow the hon. member's train of thought around inflation and the causes of inflation. The previous speaker talked about the root cause being supply chain issues and labour issues.

This bill was put in place to address helping the most vulnerable people in our communities. We know that in Atlantic Canada, many vulnerable people have been affected by Fiona and are looking for help in any way it can come. I was surprised that the hon. member would not want the government to help people on the lowest income scale and the ones who are the most vulnerable in our communities, thinking that would drive inflation. How does that square? I do not understand.

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, I know my hon. colleague does not agree with the Conservatives' stand on what is causing inflation, but I would like to take my colleague back to 2008, 2009 and 2010 when the world was reeling from a financial crisis. No one said then that it was a global problem. It was a global problem, but Canada sailed through it. Why should we have to be like the rest of Canada?

If the current government was doing the job the government in 2009 was doing, we would not have this inflation problem. We could be an anomaly. Inflation is driven by the carbon tax.

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Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, a critical piece to the rise in the cost of living for Canadians is actually corporate greed. Some 23.6% of Canadians have to cut back on their food. Simultaneously, we are seeing CEOs at Loblaws, for example, bringing in literally billions of dollars, \$9 billion. We see some CEOs pay out upwards of \$125 million to their shareholders.

Could the member comment on the role greed is playing in Canada's economy and the cost that Canadians are paying?

• (1120)

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, I agree there is lots of corporate greed. It is now, it has always been and it always will be. However, corporations that manufacture things consume energy. When they consume energy, they pay carbon tax. That carbon tax is tax on goods. Then the goods are shipped out to the grocery store and there is a fuel surcharge. The carbon tax is compounded all the way along. On top of that, HST is thrown on the carbon tax. I know this. I have seen the bills and the invoices. It is not just greed. The number one factor here is the carbon tax.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, it is not up to political parties to decide what is causing inflation. In a recent paper from the University of Calgary, economists found that three-quarters of inflation in Canada since the second quarter of 2021 has been driven by supply-side challenges such as food crops and oil production disruptions, for example.

The GST credit top-up we are discussing from this bill would be received by low- and modest-income households, folks who would be using the additional benefit to purchase the same goods they would have otherwise already consumed. It is the same reason that investing in the Canada disability benefit would not be inflationary spending.

Is the member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame aware of, and has he seen, this research?

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, yes, I have seen the research, but we have to go back to the base here. We have a carbon tax that goes into every point of the logistics chain, and then HST is placed on that. It keeps pushing the cost of goods higher and higher. It is a failed tax-and-spend program. Actually, it is great. It achieved spending targets and is driving up our inflation. The United States, with no carbon tax, has lower emissions than it had in 2015 and our emissions are higher. This is a failure.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, before I begin my comments on Bill C-30, I would like to say a few words about democracy.

As members know, I am strongly committed to democracy. Of course, everyone knows that I am a sovereignist, but I am first and foremost a democrat. I am a sovereignist precisely because the democratic ideal is the very foundation of the sovereignty of a people. Yesterday, in Quebec, 125 elections took place. I repeat, 125 elections. This was not “the Quebec election”; we held “elections”. There were 125 elections, and I would like to congratulate all the candidates, from all parties, who ran in my riding. In Montcalm, there are three Quebec ridings—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Jonquière on a point of order.

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, my colleague is indeed a great democrat, and I am sure he would like to share his time.

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague. To assuage his existential angst, I would seek unanimous consent to split my time with the hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to split his time?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is agreed.

The hon. member for Montcalm.

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, behind all these numbers and causes, behind what we call inflation, the risk of recession and the economy, are human beings. I would propose taking a people-centred view or reading of what we experiencing as a result of this pressure, this crisis, this inflationary spike.

First, the bill proposes—and it is very technical—to amend the Income Tax Act with a temporary enhancement to the goods and services tax and the harmonized sales tax credit. The bill effectively creates a new refundable and therefore tax-free tax credit of \$229.50 for a single person, \$459 for a couple, and \$114.75 per dependent child. People will then receive a cheque.

Obviously that is a good thing. I was saying earlier that we need meaningful solutions that are not strictly one-time measures. However, if they are, they need to be targeted in order to help the people who need them most, those who are struggling to make ends meet. To be eligible for the full amount, people have to have earned less than \$39,826 in 2021. The cheque is reduced by 15¢ per dollar for people who earned more than that amount. In the end some 11 million people will have access to this measure.

The Bloc Québécois obviously supports this bill. A rare consensus has emerged in the House to get this small measure passed. It should come as no surprise that the Bloc Québécois agrees with Bill C-30, since we included this measure in the budget expectations we sent to the Minister of Finance back in March. Inflation demands a comprehensive approach to the economy. What we need to avoid above all else is proposing simplistic measures that may look very interesting on the surface and fire up our collective imagination but that, in reality, are not sustainable or strategic for the economy.

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Since the pandemic, the Bloc Québécois has always been in favour of government intervention and support. However, while we did need to support the people who really needed it, the Bloc said very early on that the measures needed to be adjusted to avoid any negative effects.

That is the same message we are sending the government about inflation. We want the measures to be adjusted so they are properly targeted, well thought out and intelligent. However, the document that was tabled, which proposes \$100 billion in spending, is all over the map. It does not have the comprehensive approach and meaningful measures we advised.

Statistics Canada has identified the factors behind the rapid increase in prices, such as food prices.

• (1125)

These include ongoing supply chain disruptions, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, extreme weather and higher input costs. This situation calls not for one-time measures, but for long-term measures that will have a meaningful effect on the economy and provide predictability for people grappling with these ups and downs. Those are the kinds of measures that the Bloc Québécois is proposing to fight inflation. It is not enough to say that gas taxes must be cut.

I am a consumer and, unfortunately, I still have a gas-powered vehicle. Naturally, I would be happy to stop paying tax on gas. As I am protected by parliamentary privilege, I will say that it seems like the price at the pump is fixed by some kind of cartel. There seems to be some collusion in that regard.

I have never known oil companies to not turn a profit and not take advantage of all that. I even have the sense that there is enough fossil fuel for the next 50 years, but that they want to make us pay more because they know all this will end soon, given all the transitions that must be made.

Bernard Landry was one of my mentors, and he told me that he would love to do this, but he was not sure the money would reach consumers.

The government is getting richer as it collects more taxes on the higher prices. It should take this surplus and redistribute it intelligently, implementing targeted measures for people in need. I am not an economist, but I have learned that the last thing we should do in an inflationary period is unilaterally lower taxes. Not everyone needs that anyway.

In addition, the government should use its surplus to rebuild the economy and insulate it from a future inflationary crisis or recession. It must invest in the parts of the economic system that will enable us to face the challenges of tomorrow. One of those challenges is the labour shortage. I will come back to that because what is really bothering me at this point is the fact that our seniors are the first to suffer from higher inflation. A society that cannot take care of its frailest, most vulnerable members is a society that is heading for disaster.

Seniors no longer have an income or a salary that could increase. Their income is capped. They have a small amount of savings that is dwindling, causing them stress. As my mother used to say, people do not die of good health. We must therefore take care of these

people, and those who are still able must be allowed to rejoin the workforce because there is a labour shortage. These are skilled workers, and if any of them are willing to go back to work, we should let them. It is going to take meaningful measures to fix this issue, and that is what I meant when I was talking about meaningful solutions. The Bloc Québécois has many to propose.

I am now ready to take questions.

• (1130)

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I very much liked the speech by my colleague, the member for Montcalm.

That is a discussion we can have in Quebec since we have already set a price on pollution through the carbon exchange.

I have a question about that for my colleague. I know that in Quebec we have our own way of doing things. Quebec and other provinces such as British Columbia have shown that it is possible to put a price on pollution and still meet consumer needs.

Can my colleague elaborate on that?

• (1135)

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, I was talking about meaningful measures that will have a lasting impact on the economy. The Bloc Québécois believes that we need to put our resources and ramp up all our investments into the green economy and thereby speed up the energy transition.

In Quebec, we do not have a carbon tax. We have a carbon exchange and I invite the other provinces to take part in it. That may be the best solution for everyone. When we look at the current crisis and the global economies, it is clear that we need to speed up the energy transition.

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member for Montcalm talked about seniors, and I was very touched to hear that. I also read an article just yesterday on how inflation was having a huge impact on the lives of retired seniors. The article basically talked about how they would have to come back to the workforce, because they realized their pensions were not enough. Inflation had driven up costs and the high costs of taxes are driving them out of retirement.

I am interested to hear what the member has to say about those aspects and the reality of the carbon tax, not to mention the GST that is on top of that carbon tax. These huge costs are impacting seniors.

Could the member expand on how these will have huge impacts not only on seniors in Quebec but across the whole country?

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[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. Even before this inflationary crisis, in 2015, 2016 and 2017, seniors in my riding were telling me that it was possible to combat isolation and the undermining of their social independence. However, ageism is currently running rampant in our society.

Seniors have experience that can be transferred to other types of jobs. They would like to get up in the morning and tell themselves that they will contribute to society, albeit at their own pace. They would like to be sure that when they do go to work, the government is not going to claw it all back, as if they were volunteering and were again putting more money into government coffers.

By working, seniors are making a little extra money for themselves. People do not save at this age. They put their money back into the economy. They are less isolated, share their abilities and skills with society, can afford a few small luxuries, and are less sick and less stressed. From an economic and human perspective, it is a good solution. It is not for everyone, but we should encourage those who want to do it.

[English]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I did appreciate how the member for Montcalm made mention about corporate profits, especially in oil and gas. If we are going to talk about inflationary costs related to fuel and completely ignore the windfall profits that oil and gas companies are making off the backs of working families right now, we are doing a very real disservice.

Today, a report came out from Canadians for Tax Fairness. It reported that Canadian corporations paid \$30 billion less than would be expected under the current corporate tax rates, so there is a very real problem here.

I wonder if the member for Montcalm can inform the House as to why both the official opposition and the governing Liberals seem to avoid talking about this serious issue in any real and meaningful way.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, I am not certain that I understood the last part of the interpretation, but I would say to my colleague that all those individuals and businesses that are currently making outrageous profits should be able to pay their fair share.

He knows our views on tax avoidance and tax evasion. In 2015, the first measure we introduced when we arrived in the House was about tax havens. I believe that it is totally unacceptable and unfair that some people are not paying their fair share.

* * *

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

COMMITTEE TRAVEL

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and if you

seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That:

1. Seven members of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology be authorized to travel to Helsinki, Finland, in the fall of 2022, during an adjournment period, to attend the World Summit of Committees of the Future, and that necessary staff accompany the committee.

2. That, in relation to its study of Threat Analysis Affecting Canada and the Canadian Armed Forces' Operational Readiness to meet those threats, seven members of the Standing Committee on National Defence be authorized to travel to Washington, D.C., United States of America and Colorado Springs, Colorado, United States of America, in the fall of 2022, during an adjournment period, and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

3. That, in relation to its study of Use and Impact of Facial Recognition Technology, seven members of the Standing Committee on the Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics be authorized to travel to Denver, Colorado, United States of America, in the fall of 2022, during an adjournment period, and that the necessary staff accompany the committee.

● (1140)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): All those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay.

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

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

COST OF LIVING RELIEF ACT, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-30, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (temporary enhancement to the Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax credit), be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, before I begin my speech, I would like to congratulate everyone who participated in Quebec's general election. As everyone knows, yesterday was election day in Quebec. I would like to congratulate the two new MNAs I will be working with in my riding.

I also want to congratulate all the people who took part in yesterday's great democratic process. Their participation is important to our democracy. As we all know, being in politics is not always easy. It takes a lot of courage, so I have a lot of respect for them. Naturally, I am grateful to everyone who contributed to the general election.

Today, we are taking part in the debate on Bill C-30, which would increase the GST-HST credit. That will put money back into the pockets of people who need it. There is nothing random about this; it is a direct response to the worst inflationary crisis of the past 30 years.

Obviously, the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of this bill. However, we have a lot of questions.

Government Orders

Also, I would like to begin with a quick introduction to highlight what happens when there is inflation and to talk about the various misconceptions we have heard.

Yesterday, I called the representatives of the organizations in Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques and asked them what they thought of the GST credit top-up. Of course, this is a welcome measure. Everyone is hurt by inflation. That said, when there is inflation, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

When I spoke yesterday with representatives from advocacy groups for people experiencing poverty and unemployment, they told me that poverty was already a growing problem even before the inflationary crisis, before the war in Ukraine. What is interesting, however, is that fewer people are applying for welfare, even though poverty rates are rising. What this actually means is that the people who are living in poverty now are the working poor and seniors. In other words, poverty is changing.

In order to paint a picture of the reality facing people back home, I would say that the image of poverty is also changing. I represent a riding that is largely rural, and in these areas, we are not used to seeing homeless people on a daily basis, as one does in big urban centres. These days, however, with the rising cost of groceries, prescription drugs and housing, some people do have to live on the street. This was unthinkable a few years ago. Of course I stand in solidarity with them, and I am trying to describe the reality facing people in my region.

I wanted to emphasize that because, despite what some people are saying, poverty is on the rise. A one-time GST-HST cheque is not going to make a huge difference.

When we talk about inflation, we have to be responsible. There are many things that we could say or consider doing so we could wave a magic wand and make inflation disappear. We have to be serious. We have to implement solutions that address the problems caused by inflation, and that goes beyond issuing a simple little cheque, contrary to what the government thinks and contrary to the claims of certain members who seem to think that inflation would disappear if only taxes were cut. I do not agree with their magical way of thinking.

We are in uncharted territory and we have to understand that. I am putting it in perspective.

We are currently seeing a rise in demand. In order to control inflation, we must try to change supply. Right now, there is a problem on both sides. Demand is growing but the supply is not necessarily keeping up. Inflation can be explained by a myriad of factors. Government is not responsible for all of our woes, although it is responsible for some of them. About 70% of the causes of inflation are related to external factors.

• (1145)

Consider the labour shortage, for example. The government does have a role to play in addressing the current labour shortage. However, there are other, external factors, such as the global disruptions in the supply chain and the war in Ukraine. These are complex issues that cannot be resolved by changing our monetary policy or passing a special act.

I will put forward constructive solutions to help the most vulnerable Canadians and to counter inflation.

These solutions are nothing new. I did not wake up this morning and decide that I had solutions for fighting inflation. That was already in our budgetary expectations for the 2022 budget tabled in April. There is something I still do not understand, and I hope that the government will clear up the mystery: Why did they not take action sooner?

In April, inflation was at 6.9%. When the government tabled its budget, the inflationary situation was practically identical. According to the latest data, inflation was at approximately 7% in August. What is the difference?

I do not understand. It is as if the government always reacts instead of being proactive. Governing involves being proactive. Although there was already an inflationary crisis last April, there was nothing in the last budget. Today's bill represents \$2.5 billion in government investment.

I will give an example. I like comparing things. This same government invested \$2.6 billion to help oil companies develop carbon sequestration technology. For the people in need they wanted to help they decided to invest \$2.5 billion, but for the ultrawealthy oil companies, no problem, they gave them \$2.6 billion in the last budget. That is the Liberal government's real priority.

Let us get back to concrete solutions. First, it is important to understand that the Bloc Québécois is not against financial assistance. We stood with the government when it wanted to provide targeted assistance at the beginning of the pandemic, whether through the emergency benefit or the wage subsidy for businesses. When the economy began to rebound after the pandemic, we even said that we should target certain sectors and help Canadians in need, low-income Canadians, vulnerable Canadians. Unfortunately, there was nothing like that in the last budget.

The thing to understand is that the Bloc Québécois does not like to waste money. Sending cheques left and right is not the answer. I think that today's measure is a good one, but it is late in coming. We are not a week or a month late, but five months late. The Minister of Finance spoke at the Empire Club last June, when inflation was raging. The theme of her conference was inflation. She only repeated what she had announced some months before, in the previous budget. There was not a single new measure to fight inflation.

Then, May, June, July, August and September came and went. The government finally woke up. It realized it needed to act. There was inflation. It decided to put meaningful measures in place to help Canadians. The government is now taking measures to support the people who need it, but, unfortunately, once again, it is working backward. We still do not understand why.

Government Orders

The Bloc Québécois believes in supporting the most vulnerable low-income earners. It is particularly concerned about seniors. They are the ones who are hardest hit. We know that. Their fixed income will not increase. We need to help them. They have told me, with great sadness, that they have to choose between going without medication, postponing their rent payments or taking food out of their grocery cart. It is imperative that we help them.

To boost supply, we need to address and resolve the labour shortage. To do that, we need to ensure that there are incentives, tax incentives for example, for experienced workers, particularly those aged 60 or 65 and over who want to stay in the workforce.

• (1150)

One last thing I would like to mention is Bill C-295, which I introduced in the last Parliament. It was intended to provide a tax credit to attract new graduates to the regions. The population in the regions is aging, and that obviously plays into the labour shortage.

It is never too late to do the right thing, and today we want to give credit where credit is due. For the next time, however, let us remember that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

[*English*]

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am really enjoying the discussion today.

The Bank of Canada has a target of 2% inflation that it is trying to bring us back to. As the member mentioned, in June inflation was growing, in July it peaked at 8.1%, and now it is coming back down to 7% because the Bank of Canada has introduced higher interest rates. The higher interest rates are impacting the more vulnerable people in Canada, so there is a combination there of trying to cool the housing market and trying to slow down the inflation caused by the out-of-control housing market. As the member says, the impact on seniors is something that we need to be addressing.

Could the member talk about how this is a targeted approach with a time limit so that, when inflation comes back toward 2%, we do not have something that is going to fuel inflation going forward?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Speaker, it is good to have a targeted measure for people who are truly in need, low-income Canadians and the most vulnerable.

My colleague mentioned the central bank. I think that it is also important to point out that we must reaffirm our confidence in our institutions. That is very important.

We heard many things from a new party leader, in particular that he wanted to abolish Canada's central bank. It is sensible and perfectly normal to criticize the role of Canada's central bank. We need to understand that, as an institution, it has succeeded in containing and maintaining inflation at a rate of 1% to 3% since 1991. Right now, however, we are facing the unknown, in terms of both supply and demand. Obviously, there are a number of external factors beyond the Bank of Canada's control that are driving the rise in inflation. In this respect, we need to implement targeted measures, and the Bloc Québécois agrees.

I hope that the government will learn how to take action when faced with a particular situation rather than waking up five months later as it is doing now.

[*English*]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I really appreciated the speech from the member today about the uncharted territory. I would ask the member if he could share some thoughts on how he thinks the axing of the affordable housing programs back in the nineties by the Liberal government, and their not being reinstated by successive Conservative governments and Liberal governments, has really impacted affordable housing in the province of Quebec.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her very good question.

In my riding of Rimouski, the vacancy rate is 0.2%. It is unprecedented. It is historic, and it is serious. We are awaiting federal government programs, and I could name one, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's rapid housing initiative. The federal government announced \$4 billion in the last budget, but so far no programs have been implemented.

I completely agree with my colleague that the federal government started disinvesting in the 1990s and that we are feeling the consequences of that disinvestment today. As I said before, the vacancy rate is 0.2%. It is unbelievable, and it hinders regional development. We need to attract both new workers and students to the region.

I hope that the government will release the funding and transfer the money to Quebec so that it can build new social housing units.

• (1155)

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, as the member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques noted, inflation is not new. Canadians have been living with inflation and a cost of living crisis for the better part of the past year. Only now is the government taking some short-term measures that I would submit constitute nothing more than band-aid solutions. At the same time, while the government is handing out a few hundred dollars here in rent cheques, the government will be taking back with the other hand, from those few Canadians who will benefit, in the form of increased taxes, the tripling of the carbon tax and an increase in payroll taxes in the new year.

Would the hon. member agree that what we have before us, with both Bill C-30 and Bill C-31, is nothing more than Liberal smoke and mirrors?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Speaker, I do not completely agree with my colleague. I will explain my point of view in more detail.

Obviously, it looks good to send a cheque to people in need, but there are different ways of doing things. We can improve the productivity of our businesses; we can improve the competitiveness of our businesses.

Government Orders

Canada is among the countries with the least competitiveness. Canadians pay the highest cellphone bills. The government could step in to try to rebalance the market, which would help many taxpayers save tens, or even hundreds, of dollars a month.

[*English*]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, before I begin discussing Bill C-30, I must stop to recognize that indigenous women and girls continue to be violated and marginalized at rates much higher than those in the general population.

Today is the National Day of Action for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. New Democrats add their voices to the collective call to bring an end to the injustices suffered by Canada's indigenous women and girls. I raise my hands to the members for Winnipeg Centre and Nunavut, who continue to advocate and bring understanding to this House of the causes of the systemic abuses that indigenous women and girls continue to experience and to hold the Liberal government accountable for its lack of action.

Bill C-30 is here at a very critical time for Canadians. There are too many struggling with the rising cost of living and the challenge of keeping rents paid and food in the fridge. The fact that there is a need for immediate financial support for millions of Canadians is not an accident. It is a result of bad Liberal and Conservative policies. Successive Liberal and Conservative governments have prioritized tax breaks and subsidies for the wealthiest in this country while intentionally eroding the social safety nets that support the well-being of the majority of Canadians. Poverty and homelessness are growing in this country, and they are a reality in every city and town.

While fossil fuel companies and big corporate grocery chains are bringing in billions of dollars in profits, people are falling further and further behind. It is far past time the Liberal government needs to close the long-standing tax loopholes for the superwealthy and finally make large corporations and the largest polluters pay their fair share. It is no secret that corporate greed is hurting Canadians, and it has only increased and magnified like so many other things during this pandemic. While the Liberals and Conservatives protect the profits of the wealthiest corporations, persons with disabilities, single moms, seniors and families on fixed and low incomes are not able to afford to purchase fresh fruit, cheese or meats. Some of the moms I have spoken to in Port Moody—Coquitlam are limiting their meals to one a day so that they can afford to feed their kids.

After too many years of consecutive Liberal and Conservative governments making decisions to put corporations above everyday people, our social safety net is eroded. The social safety net that supports the well-being of Canadians has been eroded to the point that we are here today trying to put patches of immediate support in place.

New Democrats are here to act on this immediate need. We are using our power to get the government to send financial support out to people with Bill C-30 and Bill C-31. I include Bill C-31 because the two bills are connected. They are both offering immediate investments in the well-being of people, investments that never

would have come from the government without the pressure from New Democrats.

New Democrats will not stop fighting for people even after these immediate benefits kick in. We will continue to force the government to do the right thing and put people first. We will continue to stop fossil fuel subsidies from going to the largest polluters, close tax loopholes for the wealthiest, stop the exploitation of workers and get our health care system back on track. The health care system is broken. We see it in our communities every day. A broken health care system is hurting people. Nurses have worked tirelessly, as well as doctors and hospital staff, to the extent that they are burnt-out and people who are sick are not getting access to the care they need.

• (1200)

We have all heard the heartbreaking stories in our communities of those who have gone to the hospital for help and have not been able to make it in time or have decided not to go at all with fatal consequences. The government must invest in care workers immediately and increase the health care transfers the provinces have been calling for.

One in five people in this country work in the care economy, and those professionals, personal care workers, nurses and doctors have been exploited. That exploitation comes from discrimination. Gender discrimination has kept wages low in nursing. Nurses, teachers and child care workers are all disproportionately women. The government has not invested in their wages or their pensions, yet it expects them to carry the burden of an overloaded and underfunded economy and underfunded system.

The care economy is underpinned by the exploitation of immigrants as well. More often they are women without secured status. This is unacceptable. Immigrants deserve better. They deserve investment and support. New Democrats will continue to force the government to respect the workers in the care economy by paying them properly, giving immigrant care workers immediate permanent status and giving long-term care workers the protection they deserve with legislation.

We need workers in this country. Labour shortages are happening in every industry. This is a real problem that the government has not brought any solutions to yet. When we think about the labour force, we know that unaffordable housing is exasperating this problem. Workers cannot afford to live where they work. The Conservatives under the Mulroney government and then the Liberals under Chrétien axed housing programs in this country. In fact, the Liberals outright cancelled the national affordable housing program in 1993. That was almost 30 years ago. That is why we have a housing crisis before us.

Government Orders

Bill C-31 has a \$500 housing subsidy that is coming for renters. This is a small, good gesture. This housing benefit is a one-time \$500 payment to Canadians who qualify. Specifically, it will help families who earn a net income of less than \$35,000 a year. There are many people in Canada who earn less than \$35,000 a year in this environment. That is 1.8 million Canadians. This renters' benefit will make a real difference at this critical time.

Financialization of housing needs to be addressed immediately. It is contributing to unaffordability. The Conservatives will say that they are there for people on housing, but they do not talk about the need for affordable housing and the right kind of housing. This is not just a supply issue. One in five Canadians are paying more than 30% of their total income for their housing and that is not sustainable. At the same time, for every new unit of affordable rental housing, 15 units are being lost. There are 15 units lost for every new one, and we wonder why we are seeing homelessness on our streets. This is affecting the most marginalized people in the country, pushing them every day to the brink, to a tent pitched in a street.

As the NDP disability critic, I hear from the disability community of the realities of not being able to make ends meet with skyrocketing housing costs and the threat of displacement every day. Food costs are also becoming unmanageable. As they wait for movement on the Canada disability benefit, they are falling further and further behind. Bill C-22 needs to come back to the House immediately so that the long-term support that persons living with disabilities deserve, and should be legislated, can be passed in the House.

• (1205)

Almost one million persons with disabilities are living in poverty. It is a disgrace. It will only take the will of the Liberals and Conservatives, who could have supported the unanimous consent motion from the member for Kitchener Centre last week, to fast-track this benefit. The New Democrats are ready to do so.

Coming back to the cost of food, in my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam, a disproportionate number of food bank and food rescue recipients are persons with disabilities, and more children are becoming food insecure. Too many schools are having to feed the children of our communities. We are in a country full of natural resources and with a new bursting aspiration to make batteries for electric vehicles, yet we are not investing in food. If it were not for the not-for-profit sector, even more Canadians would be hungry right now.

Failed policies to give to the rich while taking away social safety nets, such as affordable housing, are hurting people in this country. A beacon of the Canadian social safety net is our health care plan. Thanks to the New Democrats, that finally includes a historical dental care plan, which is a profound and long-lasting benefit for millions of Canadians and will be transformational for generations to come. We have heard many times while discussing Bill C-31 that the number one surgery for kids in hospitals is for tooth decay. How is it possible in Canada that kids need to go to the hospital to be put to sleep to deal with their dental care?

With the heavy lifting of the New Democrats, the Liberals have finally taken the first steps to true universal health care by adding

long-awaited dental care. It should not have taken this long, and the New Democrats will hold the current government to account for a full rollout to every Canadian who needs it.

I will take a moment here to speak about persons with disabilities and their dental care. There was a woman in my riding who was on disability benefits and had coverage for dental care. However, the clinic she was going to was charging \$20 per visit, and she could not go for her second visit because she did not have the \$20. It is not acceptable that this is the situation we are putting too many Canadians in.

We know that 35% of Canadians lack proper dental insurance, and that number jumps to 50% when we talk about low-income Canadians. There are seven million Canadians who avoid going to the dentist because of costs. It is shameful and something that has to change. Canada's most vulnerable face the highest rates of dental decay and disease and have the worst dental care. The New Democrats are going to change that. We will not give up until all Canadians have access to the dental care they need. This is health care, and we need to start with kids.

Lastly, when it comes to getting immediate support to Canadians, the New Democrats led the way on Bill C-30, which would double the GST credit. This rebate should have come a lot sooner. In fact, for over six months, the NDP has been calling on the government to double the GST credit. We have relentlessly pushed for this, and now we know that 11 million Canadians who need it the most would get some financial relief, likely before the end of this year. People in my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam are asking when they can get it. They are desperately in need of any kind of financial support in these times.

Because of successive Conservative and Liberal governments, we do not have social safety nets to keep people in homes, keep food in the fridge or keep people healthy in this country. With much pressure on the Liberal government from the NDP, and with no help from the Conservatives, the House is in a position to make lives just a tiny bit better for people by providing these very small income supports immediately. New Democrats will always put people first, but the Liberal government needs to start making real investments in people and their well-being in Canada.

Government Orders

• (1210)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member has not been fair in her comments. Let me give two examples. She talks about the issue of housing and was critical of the Liberals on housing back in 1993. In the 1992 Charlottetown Accord, the federal New Democrats, along with the Liberals and the Conservatives at the time, actually wanted no role for the federal government in housing. The Prime Minister has invested more money in public housing than any other prime minister before him.

The member made reference to corporate greed. When it comes to corporate greed, the provincial NDP Government of Manitoba cut corporate taxes, not only once, twice or three times, but about five or six times. The Prime Minister and the Liberal government put a special tax on the 1% wealthiest Canadians.

Would the member not agree that over time there is a need for a change in policy, as illustrated in both of those examples?

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Mr. Speaker, there are people living in tents in this country and not by choice. There are people living in tents in urban centres and rural communities in this country. I do not think it is the time for the Liberals to be taking a victory lap on housing, because the Prime Minister had no choice but to make these very large investments, which, as the member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques said, we have not seen hit the ground yet.

I have been on the front line of housing for eight years, and there is no scenario where the Liberals should be taking any victory lap on getting us to the point where Canadians need to live in tents.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP, with its partnership and coalition with the Liberals, keeps propping them up for these victory laps.

My question is a simple one. His Majesty's Loyal Opposition has been proposing, over the last several days, a series of propositions to make life more affordable for Canadians by reducing taxes and reducing, or not implementing, the tripling of the carbon tax, yet this member has voted against every single measure Conservatives have brought forward to improve the affordability and inflationary crises Canadians are facing. I am wondering how the member could justify that to her constituents.

• (1215)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Mr. Speaker, this is exactly why we are in the situation that we are in, these one-sided approaches to cutting taxes.

In B.C., the roads were washed out by floods caused by climate change. We need to have a real discussion about what is happening with climate change, and how impactful and expensive it is. I am not going to just talk about expenses. Right now in my community of Coquitlam, there is a wildfire burning, and people with asthma or any kind of breathing difficulties have to stay inside. This is what is going on.

The Conservative member asking me this question is such a magnification of why we are here. There is no reasonable way that pollution is not causing hardship to Canadians. We need to have a

real discussion about that. If we do not have a discussion about climate change and pollution, we are doing a disservice to every Canadian now and in the future.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam spoke specifically about encampments across the country. My community is an example. We have seen the unsheltered population triple in recent years. As a result, encampments have grown. She named one of the root causes, which is that corporate investors are treating our houses like stocks. Instead, homes should be for people to live in.

Could the member speak more to specific solutions, for example, taxing real estate investment trusts at the same rate as the corporate income tax rate?

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Mr. Speaker, I did want to share something similar on the encampments.

In my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam, there has basically been a gentrification. I met an EA, a woman in her sixties, on the street a couple of weeks ago. She is afraid that she is going to lose her home because she is being lobbied weekly by these large real estate developers. They want to be sold the land. They want her out of her home, and she does not actually own that home. She rents the basement suite.

It is the Wild West of real estate right now. I think that it starts with a moratorium on REITs. We are losing co-op housing and affordable rental housing to REITs. We need to start with that moratorium, and then we need to move on to, yes, more taxes.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge my colleague's speech. I appreciate the voice she gave to so many important issues, which are important not only in her community, but also in mine and those right across this country.

I think here in Canada we actually have a revenue problem. A new report came out today from Canadians for Tax Fairness. It reports that last year, \$30 billion less was collected in tax from corporations than would be expected under existing rates. We can look at that revenue problem and look at the fact that oil and gas companies are making well over 100% in profit off of the back of working families right now. I hear Conservatives talk about the carbon tax, but there has not been a word from them on the corporate windfalls in oil and gas, which are affecting their constituents right now. They are not speaking up for them.

Could the member expand on the theme of the revenue problem we have in this country and the huge deficits in social spending, housing, health care and the ability to put good quality food on the table? Could she expand on the structural problems we have in place, from both the Liberals and the Conservatives, and how they have done a disservice not only to this generation but also to future generations?

Government Orders

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for bringing this to light. This is the conversation that we need to be having.

Why is it that there is a very, very small slice of this country, made up of a few people and a few corporations, that is unloading the burden of the social safety net, the burden of taking care of people, on average Canadian workers and then walking away with unlimited profits to offshore them? This is a serious systemic problem with tax fairness, and the New Democrats are ready to tackle it.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really welcomed the speech by my hon. colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam because I think we share many of the same concerns.

Getting back to housing, I do remember in the 1990s when the federal government pulled out of the housing sector. It was a big shock to many of us who were involved in the co-operative movement at that time. I am very glad to see the federal government is back there.

Recently, in Châteauguay, we had the opportunity to announce a supportive housing project in the rapid housing initiative. Does my hon. colleague think that this is going in the right direction? By the way, that supportive housing initiative of \$6 million is to renovate an abandoned hotel to provide housing for youth in transition from Châteauguay and Kahnawake. It is an excellent example of collaboration between our two communities.

• (1220)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Mr. Speaker, I do like hearing about the initiatives that are hitting the ground and actually moving forward. I am very happy to hear that.

I wanted to speak a little bit about the rapid housing initiative because it is something that municipalities so desperately want and need. Too many of those rapid housing initiatives have been denied. In fact, one of my colleagues here from the NDP had a fully planned partner for a rapid housing initiative that they wanted to proceed with, but there was no ability to, no money.

I have an Order Paper question on how many of these rapid housing initiatives were denied, but the government is not capturing it. It does not even understand the size of the demand.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is great to see my colleagues engaged on a really important topic, which is Bill C-30.

I will be splitting my time with my hon. colleague from Vaughan—Woodbridge.

We are talking about Bill C-30, legislation that would double the GST credit for the next six months. Fortunately, we have been able to move the legislation forward quickly, because Canadians need support, particularly those who are vulnerable. There have been a lot of conversations around affordability and the inflationary pressures being felt around the world and, indeed, right here in Canada.

I will give credit to His Majesty's loyal opposition for helping to work with the parties in advancing the legislation the government has put forward, because we are on third reading now. The hope is

that we can approve it, I believe this week, and get it to the Senate and ultimately out to Canadians.

This is part of an affordability package that also includes Bill C-31, which would increase the Canadian housing benefit by up to \$500 for those who are vulnerable. It would also introduce a dental care program for those children who are under 12 in a household with an income of less than \$90,000 and do not already have private coverage.

I will call it as I see it. I commend the Conservatives for supporting this legislation, but I am a little disappointed that they are not supporting the legislation that is really important for those children who are vulnerable. I have not heard a whole lot of compelling rationale as to why they would not support this.

There is another issue about which I want to go on record. I have had conversations with my colleagues on this side of the House and have been querying the NDP over the last couple of days as it relates to the dental care piece. The NDP has been calling for this to be a fully federally administered program, and I want to be very clear about my position on that.

I support the idea of the Government of Canada investing in money to support those who do not have the ability to take care of their dental needs themselves, that there is a program in place for vulnerable Canadians, but I would like to see this administered similar to our child care program. We talked about child care for a long time. It was this government that stepped up and ensured there was a national child care program, by putting federal funds on the table and working with the provinces and territories.

I have a bit of concern on the NDP position that this should be completely fully administered federally. It is not that there is no federal funding, which is not the part I disagree with; it is about the delivery mechanism. I truly believe that the provinces and territories are in a better place. I want to ensure that my position as a parliamentarian is on the record. It is not that we disagree about the need for it, but I might disagree with the NDP about the delivery mechanism. The provinces are actually better suited to handle that.

This is all happening in the context of a government that is trying to walk the line between helping vulnerable Canadians who need support, but also not pouring fuel on the fire in an area where we do have inflationary pressures. The Bank of Canada is increasing its interest rates to try to bring down inflation, and it is responsible government to ensure that any type of spending measures coming forward are very targeted. I want to give credit to this government for doing that.

Government Orders

Our government has been there. This is a targeted measure that will apply to Canadian households under \$50,000, so this is not a GST benefit that is going to those who are quite wealthy and well off. It tries to help those who are truly trying to get by. It is a targeted measure. My understanding of the cost estimate is that it will be about \$2.5 billion, which is from the Minister of Finance. When we look at the global scale of the inflationary pressures, of the work of the Bank of Canada, it is a reasonable amount that I do not think will upset the apple cart vis-à-vis those conversations between monetary and fiscal policy.

I want to contrast that to what we are seeing in the United Kingdom. I have a great affinity with this being the mother Parliament, and we take a lot of British tradition in Canada from a Westminster perspective. However, we saw what happened in the United Kingdom, where its government introduced a level of government spending by virtue of tax credits, particularly those on some of the most wealthy, and that has had real consequences. It has driven interest rates even higher for the Bank of Canada. It has shaken financial markets in that country. The United Kingdom just announced yesterday that it actually walked back the tax cut that was proposed for those of the highest income earners.

• (1225)

It is not perhaps my job to opine on fiscal policy in the United Kingdom, but it is clear that the consequences of that government's choice has led to a real disruption of the work of monetary policy and has had a big impact on financial markets.

Compare that to how this government has responded in a reasonable and targeted way, working in lockstep with the Bank of Canada. It should be commended, and it shows reasonable fiscal management.

As a result, our Minister of Finance has been able to update the House that we are in a current surplus situation. We have had to rein in our spending. There was record spending during the pandemic to ensure we took care of Canadian households and businesses. However, it is also our job to ensure that we do not continue to drive inflationary pressures that have been felt around the world, that we take measures to help support those who are most vulnerable.

I would like to focus on some other measures that will be important for supporting affordability and economic growth and competitiveness in the days ahead. I think the next 18 to 24 months are going to be difficult for the Canadian economy and for Canadian households. That is in the form of regulatory modernization and approach. I take great pride in trying to be a member of Parliament that raises these issues. They are of great benefit and consequence to our country and for our government.

I want to go through a few of them for the benefit of my colleagues in the House and talk about elements this government can take on to drive and help benefit all Canadians.

One is the huge opportunity that we have in Atlantic Canada on offshore wind, particularly with regard to the conversation of hydrogen. Premier Tim Houston, the Premier of Nova Scotia, announced a desire to roll out offshore wind opportunities. I am looking at my colleague, the member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity,

Newfoundland and Labrador has the same desire, but we have to amend legislation on the offshore petroleum board act, which would actually allow these types of regulatory models to exist. This would give the investor confidence for those projects to move forward.

There is one example on which the government can move forward, and I know it will. In short order, we need to give that certainty, so we can drive investment on our renewable future.

I want to talk about Health Canada. As the chair of the agriculture committee, I often talk to farmers. I talk to other stakeholders who talk about Health Canada approvals.

I will give one example, which is 3-NOP, a feed additive to help support the reduction of methane from livestock. We call them cow burps. This is a product that can help us fight climate change. It has regulatory approval in Europe. It has regulatory approval in the United States. The company is now in the process of applying to Health Canada. It could be another 18 to 24 months by the time it actually works its way through Health Canada's system.

What if we took trusted jurisdictions around the world, let us say, the United States, Europe, New Zealand and Australia, which have similar values to what we have with respect to public safety and public protection, and changed the model. What if we allowed a company, which had a product, a service or some type of element that would have to go through Health Canada but it already had approvals in those jurisdictions in which we have trust, to start operating in Canada, go through the regulatory process and until such time that Health Canada found a rationale for why it should not operate in our country, it would have a presumptive approval to go ahead?

Those are some examples where we can move forward. I want to discuss this one further. These are the type of elements that we need to start thinking about. We have to be creative on how we can create wealth, how we can drive innovation and foreign direct investment on elements that do not cost money. It is going to be important.

Another example would be gene editing, and we have talked about this in the House, with regard to plant proteins. This is something for which the guidance documents were provided by Health Canada. That is driving important investment in the country, because it is giving the regulatory certainty.

Airports, whether it border modernization, or the Canada Grain Act, or seed modernization or even SMR technologies, the government and we, as parliamentarians can do a lot of work that is non-cost-measures that will help drive innovation.

I wish I had more time. Perhaps I will find another time in the days ahead to continue to elaborate on those points, but on regulatory reform modernization, we can continue to drive that bus and it will help drive Canada in the days ahead.

Government Orders

• (1230)

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the member talk about regulatory reform and things like that. One of the things that is costing the economy dramatically is the tripling of the carbon tax. I wonder if the hon. member would say that perhaps now is not the time to increase the carbon tax, never mind triple it.

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are driving a narrative about tripling the carbon price in Canada. It is actually a tripling between now and 2030, not right now. It is going up by \$15 this year. What the Conservatives also do not recognize is that this money is returned back to households and businesses.

I know the Conservatives take issue with the carbon price. Instead of offering tangible alternatives or amendments to the existing federal backstop, they simply have a slogan “technology over taxes”, but no idea of how to even incentivize the private sector to drive those technologies.

It is a bit of a false narrative. The money is returned to Canadians. It is seen as the most economic way to reduce emissions. I do not hear any tangible alternative from the opposition bench on what the Conservatives would do to fight climate change or if it is even a priority for them.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncass (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a simple question for my colleague.

Inflation was 6.9% in April when the government tabled its budget. The latest data show that it was 7% in August. Today, the government has suddenly woken up and decided to implement measures to counter inflation.

My question is very simple: Why did the government wait five months after tabling the budget to propose concrete, meaningful measures to deal with inflation? Why did it not do it in April's budget?

[*English*]

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member speaks on economic policy. I think he would know that with inflation no one has a perfect handle, exactly. Its root causes are driven by a lot of different factors. Whether they are demographic, supply chain or government spending, there is a whole lot in it.

When the government tabled its budget in the spring, it would have been looking at the situation and wondering whether that inflationary period was going to continue. It is clear that it is still hanging on right now. Notwithstanding that the work of the Bank of Canada to help bring down demand and inflation, we felt it was necessary at this point to put support measures in place. We do not want to overplay our hand. We do not want to pour fuel on the fire. Notwithstanding that the member would have liked to see even more support at that time, we think it is important to hold back some of that support until such time that it is needed. The government feels that right now is an important time.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are going through one of the greatest cost of

living crises for this generation. A recent study, for example, showed that 23.6% of Canadians have had to cut back on their food purchases. These are critical foods, from fresh produce to things like flour, but what I have not heard the member mention is the cost of corporate greed. The reality is that people, everyday Canadians, are paying more at the pump and at grocery stores, while the CEO of Sobeys, for example, raked in 15.5% more in his total compensation budget, coming in at \$8.6 million.

Would the member agree that we have to rein in the massive excess profits of companies like Sobeys that are profiting off the backs of hurting Canadians?

• (1235)

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, there are a couple things. On nutritious food for Canadians, on a policy matter, the government continued to pursue in earnest the national school food program. I believe a billion dollars was allocated in last year's budget to help roll out that program over the next five years. The member mentioned healthy food and support for Canadians. We should be pursuing that in earnest through the school system to help ensure children have support.

As it relates to CEOs, I have had the opportunity to speak to that in the House. If the New Democrats want to put forward motions or put forward proposals to increase taxes for those who are most wealthy in the country, they can do so. I am concerned a bit about the narrative, particularly from the leader of the NDP who is almost villainizing Canadian corporate leadership in the way that it is robbing Canadians blind.

There needs to be a bit more evidence of whether that is the case. I know we will be studying this in the agriculture committee. However, there is this class warfare and this villainizing of Canadian corporate leadership and I worry about the consequences of what that means. I would call the same thing on the Conservatives in terms of some of their villainizing of these unknown gatekeepers. At the end of the day, we need to have a tone that is respectful and policy solutions that will move us forward.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon to all my colleagues here.

I would be remiss if I did not say that for these last few weeks and for a very long time, my heart, my thoughts and my prayers are with the Iranian Canadian community and with Iranians in Iran. Obviously, we want all countries to abide by the principles of human rights, democracy and freedom. What we are seeing now in Iran is that young people, this young woman and many women there are fighting for their rights. We are in full support of them. I have a very vibrant, growing and generous Persian community in the city of Vaughan and in York Region. I have spoken with many of them, and I want them to know that I fully support them, that I fully stand beside them, and that we are there with them.

I am pleased to contribute to the debate on this bill. Making life more affordable for Canadians is a key priority for this government, and I would like to highlight some of the measures we are taking to address the cost of living.

[*Translation*]

The bills tabled in Parliament on Tuesday represent the latest suite of measures to support Canadians with the rising cost of living without adding fuel to the fire of inflation.

The government's affordability plan is delivering targeted and fiscally responsible financial support to the Canadians who need it most, with particular emphasis on addressing the needs of low-income Canadians who are most exposed to inflation.

[*English*]

It has been a tough couple of years for all of us, with COVID-19, inflation and the war in Ukraine. It seems like we have to overcome one thing after another, but there are always better days ahead. The pandemic has been, we hope, a once-in-a-generation crisis, but like any major crisis, this one has aftershocks, and inflation is chief among them.

Inflation is not a made-in-Canada challenge. It is actually less severe here than it is among our peers. Nonetheless, we must assist Canadians. Inflation has made the cost of living into a real struggle for many Canadians, including residents in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge, and especially for the most vulnerable: our seniors, folks on fixed incomes and working Canadians. We understand that there are people going through hard times, so Bill C-30, the cost of living relief act, would double the goods and services tax credit for six months. Bill C-31, the cost of living relief act, no. 2, would enact two important measures: the Canada dental benefit and a one-time top-up to the Canada housing benefit.

● (1240)

[*Translation*]

Doubling the GST credit for six months would provide \$2.5 billion in additional targeted support to the roughly 11 million individuals and families who already receive the tax credit, including about half of Canadian families with children and more than half of Canadian seniors.

Single Canadians without children would receive up to an extra \$234, and couples with two children would receive up to an extra \$467 this year. Seniors would receive an extra \$225 on average.

[*English*]

The proposed extra GST credit amounts would be paid to all current recipients through the existing GST credit system as a one-time lump-sum payment before the end of this year, pending the adoption of the legislation. Importantly, recipients would not need to apply for the additional payment, but they need to file their 2021 tax return, if they have not done so already, to be able to receive both the current credit and the additional payment. I am happy to say that it is estimated that 11 million individuals and families would benefit from this additional support, including about nine million single people and almost two million couples. In total, this represents about half of Canadian families with children and more than half of Canadian seniors.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Let us look at the next measure. The Canada dental benefit would be provided to children under 12 who do not have access to private dental insurance, starting this year. Direct payments totalling up to \$1,300 per child over the next two years, or up to \$650 per year, would be provided for dental care services.

This is the first stage of the government's plan to deliver dental coverage for families with an adjusted net income under \$90,000 and will allow children under 12 to receive the dental care they need while the government works to develop a comprehensive national dental care program.

Also, the one-time top-up to the Canada housing benefit program would deliver a \$500 payment to 1.8 million renters who are struggling with the cost of housing. This more than doubles the government's budget 2022 commitment, reaching twice as many Canadians as initially promised. The federal benefit will be available to applicants with an adjusted net income below \$35,000 for families, or below \$20,000 for individuals, who spend at least 30% of their adjusted net income on rent.

[*English*]

In addition to these important pieces of legislation, I would also like to speak about another important measure to help Canadian families, and that is early learning and child care. On child care, the economic argument is clear. The government believes it is an economic malpractice to force women to choose between their families and a career. Early learning and child care is a feminist economic policy in action.

[*Translation*]

That is why, despite reasonable doubts about our ability to make it happen, we have already signed early learning and child care agreements with every province and territory.

We are building a universal early learning and child care system at precisely the time when our economy needs all mothers who want to work, as long as they can be certain their children are receiving good care and a good education. Our plan makes it easier for people to work, and it makes life more affordable for middle-class Canadian families.

Three years from now, the average cost of child care across the country will be \$10 a day.

Government Orders

[English]

Affordable early learning and child care, with savings that start immediately, promises to be an important part of the solution to affordability challenges for many Canadian families. Labour force shortages are a problem right now for our economy. In actual fact, there are 952,000 vacancies across Canada where employers are looking for employees. I will repeat, there are 952,000, and affordable early learning and child care is going to be such an important part of Canada's solution. It is going to help us build an economy and a country that is stronger and, yes, more prosperous.

The measures that the government tabled on Tuesday would deliver targeted support to Canadians who need it most, without exacerbating inflation, building on our government's affordability plan and, yes, being fiscally prudent. We are putting more money back in the pockets of the middle class and those working hard to join the middle class.

• (1245)

[Translation]

For those Canadians who need it most, Bill C-30, Bill C-31 and early learning and child care services are measures that will help make life more affordable.

We will continue to provide support where it is needed most and in a timely fashion, while maintaining fiscal discipline.

[English]

Our economy is strong in respect of our labour market. We know Canadian employers need workers, which I am asked about all the time in the area I represent, but we also must deal with the affordability challenges that Canadians face. As a father of three daughters, my wife and I know what the prices are at the grocery stores. I empathize with Canadians who are facing those challenges. Our government, working with all parties, needs to rise up to those challenges and help Canadians expeditiously. It is great to see the opposition parties supporting the doubling of the GST tax credit by the end of the year.

I encourage all Canadians, as the former parliamentary secretary to the national revenue minister, to please file their taxes. That is how they receive all their credits and benefits, and that is how our government can help them expeditiously, efficiently and before the end of the year with the challenges they and their families may be facing at this critical juncture.

We know we are building a stronger economy, and we know we are maintaining a strong fiscal footprint and framework for my children and all Canadian children, but we have work to do.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the member that grocery prices are at their highest rate since 1981, that more than 70% of families with children will not receive this support and, in fact, lower-income families will receive no benefits at all.

Will the member support those who are hardest hit by the cost of living crisis and call for the Prime Minister to cancel the carbon tax?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, Canadian families from coast to coast to coast are dealing with the pressures of inflation when they are buying diapers, food and groceries of any sort. We know what those prices are. I definitely know them.

What I can say is that our government has undertaken concrete measures, not only today but in the past. These include the Canada child benefit, which means more money flowing tax-free monthly to nine out of every 10 Canadian families; the Canada workers benefit, which gives up to \$2,500 to working Canadians at the end of the year; the doubling of the GST credit; and cutting middle-class taxes, not just once, but twice. It will be literally billions of dollars returned.

We are there and will continue to be there to help Canadian families, especially the most vulnerable. We will continue to make the middle class stronger in Canada and to assist those working hard to join the middle class.

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. He made several references to wanting to help families.

In Bill C-30, the measure seeking to introduce a non-refundable tax credit to help the people who need it, that is, the most vulnerable and low-income Canadians, will cost the government \$2.5 billion.

In the last budget, the same government subsidized oil companies to the tune of \$2.6 billion to deploy new carbon capture technologies.

What is more important? Is it subsidizing oil companies or helping low-income families that really need it?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from *la belle province* for his question.

[English]

I will say this: I support Canada's energy workers from coast to coast to coast. I always will. They do a great job in supporting our economy. They are necessary, now more than ever.

If members read this week's Economist, they will see that investments in LNG and natural gas throughout the world are very critical at this important time. We will also, at the same time, continue to build a very strong economy by helping the Canadians who are most vulnerable, including low-income Canadians. That is what we have done since day one. We are building a stronger middle class and helping those working hard to join the middle class.

Government Orders

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-30 is a welcome thing. It is nice to see some unanimity and agreement on Bill C-30 at this present time among all the parties. On the GST credit, I believe that families in my riding and across the country could have used this a lot earlier. In May and June, the NDP leader, the member for Burnaby South, was calling on the government repeatedly to do just that, but it was refused each and every time.

What happened with the Liberals? What changed over the summer? Why did they not seek to do this sooner, so that Canadian families who were struggling in May and June could have had this help a lot faster?

• (1250)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, I will say this: We have had the backs of Canadians since day one, when we formed government in 2015. We demonstrated that through the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to demonstrate it now that we have inflationary pressures hitting Canadian families. Whether it is through the Canada child benefit, the raising of old age security by 10% for seniors, or lowering the age for seniors from 67 to 65, we have introduced a number of measures. We have lifted hundreds of thousands of Canadians out of poverty. We will continue to do so with targeted measures and good policy that is good for our economy, good for people, reducing inequality and ensuring inclusive economic growth.

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to this bill today but also to follow my friend from Vaughan—Woodbridge. I appreciate the opportunity.

First, I would ask for members' indulgence to address what many members already have this morning, and that is what we are seeing happening in geopolitical affairs, in particular in Iran. As I walked home last night, we saw the colours of Iran's flag flashed on Parliament Hill, but I could not help but feel just a little embarrassed because that seems to be what the government wants to do, which is to put out more signals or do things that do not cost much money as a way to show our solidarity.

It would be okay if we were doing many other things, but let us remember that the government said it would put these colours on the Peace Tower on Sunday. That was the first thing it said it would do when 50,000 people gathered at a rally to show their solidarity with what is happening with people in Iran and those who are fighting for their fundamental freedoms. It is almost like it was the same ministers holding up the sign that said, "I stand with Ukraine," but never following it up with concrete actions.

I have to commend at least one member from that side of the House while I have the floor, the member for Willowdale, who had the courage to go on TV and say that the government has not done enough. I hope that more members in the House feel empowered to speak on behalf of themselves and the issues they feel strongly about.

Now let us talk about Bill C-30 while we are here. This is the temporary enhancement to the goods and services tax, the HST tax credit. I want to commend our chair for getting this bill through Parliament very well. It was a very lively committee with the minister. It is always a pleasure to have her there. I cannot say many

questions were answered, but it was nice to see some co-operation on all sides of the aisle to get this bill back to the House in short order.

Inflation is at a 40-year high. The Bank of Canada says inflation crushes the most vulnerable people the hardest. That is why it is important we get inflation under control. I do believe this measure is supported on all sides of the House. It is important that we stand together with our most vulnerable. This tax credit would help those individuals.

The government needs to be doing more to help Canadians with inflation. This is why I was surprised the Deputy Prime Minister could not answer the question at committee yesterday of whether this initiative would lead to more inflation. I was not asking the question of whether it would lead to more inflation so we would not do this policy. It was so that maybe the government could take other steps elsewhere to reduce its impact on inflation.

We are paying for this with more debt. We are still in a deficit. Let us remember it was not long ago that people were questioning spending in this House and other people were saying it was irresponsible not to spend because interest rates were so low. Now, interest rates are much higher, so the cost of the debt we are putting on future generations is incredible.

The PBO says interest costs could potentially double if the trajectory of interest rates continues. That is a lot of money that is not going to be able to be spent on social programs in this country, programs that everyone relies on: health care, helping seniors, making sure that our social security safety nets are there for generations.

At committee yesterday, we were told that the government has a new-found religion called fiscal restraint. I think the young kids these days would say that fiscal restraint has entered the chat. However, I am not really sure if that is going to happen. Let us let history be our guide. This is a government that is addicted to debt and spending. It is placing an incredible burden on our future generations.

The solution to every problem that the Liberal government sees is more spending. The government has grown spending by well over 8% every year since coming into office. In fact, its spending is up 25% this year when compared to pre-COVID levels. Now we are to believe that, from this time going forward, the government is going to keep spending growth to 2%. I find that very hard to believe. In fact, some would say it is very unlikely.

• (1255)

If we were at a party and saw a teenager going back to the punch bowl and could not tear them away, and all of a sudden that teenager had one last big swig and said, "That's it. I'm done," would we believe that youngster? I do not think so.

Government Orders

The dirty secret of the government right now is that it is awash in revenues. It has never made as much money as it is right now. The NDP want to discuss windfall tax profits from those corporations that are having record profits this year, but let us talk about a windfall tax on the government. Why does it not give some of that tax money back to Canadians or maybe cut some taxes to begin with? Every week that goes by it is breaking a record for the amount of money it is bringing in due to inflation.

I would submit the government does not need more money with additional tax increases. It has to provide relief to Canadians by either cutting taxes or providing additional relief. Germany, the U.K., France, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Australia and I could go on, but I think I only have four minutes left and I would exhaust that. These are all countries that have reduced taxes on fuel or paused tax increases. They have provided relief for people with energy bills in their countries. We are approaching a cold season. It is going to be hard for many Canadians across this country to heat their homes, yet they hear the government talk about how important it is that we pay a carbon tax.

Let us just take a break. We do not have to be all or nothing. If gasoline is at two dollars a litre, maybe the carbon tax could be reduced to zero. If gasoline is \$1.25 a litre, perhaps the government could come up with a much lower number to be applied. It should at least give us a break. At two dollars a litre, people cannot afford it. It is not as though people have a choice. Many people have to put a certain amount of gas in their car every week to get to work, to take the kids to soccer practice and activities or to get to the grocery store. Not everybody lives near a subway line. Not everybody lives with public transit right around the corner. They cannot walk anywhere. We do not have horse and buggies everywhere, at least not in many parts of this province. Although some very wonderful people rely on that mode of transportation, it is not realistic for all Canadians.

Therefore, let us acknowledge that people are hurting right now. Instead of lowering our taxes like our peers, our answer to higher energy prices is to make them higher. The carbon tax is inflationary. The Bank of Canada admits this, but the government does not seem to want to answer that question. What is it that our government knows that all of these other countries somehow do not know? We are the only country in the world that is choosing to make energy more expensive.

As I conclude, I want to say that, on our side of the House, we were pleased to see this bill move forward quickly because it is going to provide relief, albeit a small relief, to Canadians in need. I appreciate that opportunity.

I would also like to say that I will be splitting my time with the wonderful member for Northumberland—Peterborough South, whom I very much look forward to hearing on this matter as well.

I welcome any questions from my hon. colleagues.

• (1300)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member across the way for Simcoe North mentioned one half of an equation, which is that Canada's debt level has increased over the last few years, particularly as we were dealing with COVID. In or-

der to keep Canadians alive and well through those difficult times, the government had many programs in place to help.

The other side of the equation is GDP growth, which I did not hear the member mention. We are second in the G7 with respect to GDP growth. We are leading some of the countries he mentioned with two times the GDP growth. Our fiscal anchor is the debt-to-GDP ratio. Could the member comment on how our strong GDP growth is helping us get through what we are going through right now?

Mr. Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, we have had some strong GDP growth, but we are also coming off of some significant GDP losses. In fact, the economy was quite slow and shrunk over a period of time, so we are actually coming up from a lower base. That is why we have GDP growth.

Let us talk about what GDP growth allows us to do. It provides a lot of revenues to the government in the form of taxation. Therefore, I do not understand why we need to talk about increasing taxes on Canadians when, as the member opposite has said, GDP is doing okay. By the way, when the Liberals ran in the 2015 election they said that a 1.5% or 1.6% growth in GDP was not enough, which is about where we are right now.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is one thing the Conservative Party suggested to counter inflation: cryptocurrency. We learned in a recent Privy Council backgrounder that cryptocurrency offers no protection against inflationary shocks.

This summer, cryptocurrency lost half of its value compared with the beginning of last year. I would like my colleague to explain why it is that his leader, the hon. member for Carleton, claims that cryptocurrency protects against inflation. Specifically, I would like to know whether my colleague really believes that cryptocurrency is protected from surges in inflation.

[*English*]

Mr. Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, I follow some of the financial markets, like my fellow colleague. I am not sure that members of the Conservative Party have said that cryptocurrency is going to solve inflation. If we say that Canada should be a destination for fintech revolution, I would welcome that.

Let us remember what is happening around the world and why some people use cryptocurrency. We can look at countries like Venezuela and Argentina where inflation is incredible. Those people have turned to cryptoassets as a hedge against inflation. Yes, the amount has come down in some cases by 10% or 20% or even 30%, but if we look at what is happening to inflation in those countries we see that those people are losing purchasing power at upward of 50% in some years.

Government Orders

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about how important it is not to put an additional burden on Canadians and not to increase taxation on Canadians. However, what I would like to point out is that it has been over half a century since corporations paid the same rate that Canadians pay, since 1952, in fact. I wonder if the member would be open to the idea of taxing corporations that are making massive profits right now so that they are paying their fair share and we would have that revenue stream in this county.

Mr. Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, before we increase taxes on companies, why do we not just make the companies in Canada pay the taxes they owe? Why do we not start there? There was just a report from the Canadians for Tax Fairness that said there is upward of \$30 billion, which I am sure will make my friends in the NDP happy, that the government is not collecting. Before we talk about increasing taxes on other companies and Canadians, why do we not just make the people and the corporations pay the taxes they currently owe?

● (1305)

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I stand here in the House of Commons today in a very sheltered environment. Outside these walls there are many challenges. With the inflation rate now increasing to over 7%, we have seen in the last couple of months some of the highest inflation in the last 40 years.

The Conservatives, over the last seven years, have warned the Prime Minister about where the end of the road is and what the consequences are of his tax-and-spend agenda. However, our warnings have gone unheeded. This is perhaps not surprising from a Prime Minister who does not think about monetary policy.

Think about what that means, actually. The Prime Minister said this right before we headed into one of the biggest monetary disasters we have had in the last 50 years. He literally said that he does not think about monetary policy, which would later make single moms unable to feed their families and workers unable to put gas in their cars. It is unbelievable that he does not think about monetary policy. Perhaps he should think again.

As we talk about Bill C-30, it is important to put some context around the bill, and we need to start with the relationship between the economy and the government. Oftentimes, I find they unfortunately get confused in this House. We must first, as our bedrock, ensure that the goods and services produced in this economy, the wealth and prosperity of this nation, are primarily the responsibility of our businesses and workers.

It is through the delivery of those services and the production of goods that our country generates its value. When a company is able to produce more goods and deliver more services, or in other words increase our productivity, the prosperity of the nation increases. The secret of this, which is not often mentioned in this House, is that it is the most vulnerable who often benefit the most when the prosperity of the nation increases, and they suffer the most, as has happened in the last couple of years, when prosperity is under assault, this time by inflation.

A country can produce a modest, temporary and artificial increase in economic performance through monetary policy and the

printing of money. When the government spends and spends on a spending spree funded by the printing of money, there is an initial exuberance that results as Canadians see money coming into their bank accounts. However, this exuberance is quickly replaced by disillusion as they realize the cost of everything has increased and benefits are now replaced by the stubborn and corrosive impact of inflation, which continues. Once it is out of the box, inflation runs and runs, eroding savings, eroding wages and eroding the pensions of seniors.

The true path to a more prosperous nation is not through the printing of money. It is through the creation of value. Specifically, we need to increase our productivity. When a nation can produce more goods and deliver more services more efficiently and effectively, it drives real value that increases the wages of workers and, dare I say it, increases the profits of businesses. It also creates jobs.

Unfortunately, the government appears bent on doing everything it can to reduce the productivity of businesses and workers, and we see the result of seven years of Liberal governments. Food inflation is at over 10%. It is 10.8%, to be precise. That is causing real-life struggles. Outside the comfort and shelter of these walls, there are people who will go to bed tonight hungry, and probably many more people than in the last decade or two decades. That is because of the impact of a Prime Minister who does not think about monetary policy.

Food inflation at 10.8% has caused a 20% increase in the last two years in the use of food banks. Think about that. Some 20% more Canadians are going to food banks now than did two years ago. In addition to that, 20% of Canadians have had to make changes in their diets. About 8% of Canadians out there are skipping meals. This challenge is not just for adults but for children. In fact, people who have children are now three times more likely to go to a food bank than those who do not. This is making life more difficult for all Canadians and the most vulnerable, and children are among them.

It is not that Bill C-30 is a wrong step. It is just unfortunately too little too late, as it were. I will be supporting this legislation because it is going in the right direction, but let us look at, first, the fact that it is months behind when any type of relief was needed. Second, let us look at the quantum or the amounts of that.

● (1310)

Keeping in mind the statistic that food inflation is up over 10%, it is increasing the amount that families spend on food by over \$1,300 a year. This GST/HST temporary relief, according to the finance minister, who went before the committee, will create somewhere between \$450 and \$500 in benefits for the families that are eligible. However, as we have heard throughout this House, many are not. This is nowhere near the amount of relief needed. Ultimately, that relief will come from our workers and businesses, but they need to be empowered, not penalized.

Thomas Sowell once famously wrote that he never understood why it is greed to want to keep the money we have earned but not greed to want to take money that other people have earned. That is a lesson the government needs to hear loud and clear.

Government Orders

Some will say, and it was even in the news in the U.K., that tax relief is inflationary. I am here to say that when done correctly, it is not. In fact, it is the exact opposite of what happens when the government spends and is funded by debt or the printing of money. I will give four examples.

When John F. Kennedy cut taxes in 1963, the inflation rate the year before a massive tax cut in post-world war United States was 1.2%. In the year after his tax cuts, it was 1.28%. When Ronald Reagan introduced in the United States a massive tax cut in 1981, it came into effect in 1982. In 1981, the inflation rate was 6.13%, and the inflation rate in 1984 was 4.3%. That is a decrease of 2% after massive tax cuts. Once again the Reagan administration cut taxes in 1986. In the year before, the inflation rate was 3.9%, and in the year after, it was 3.65%. When Prime Minister Harper reduced the GST, the inflation rate in 2007 was 2.1% and the inflation rate in 2009 was 0.3%.

Inflation is not fuelled by tax relief. What is fuelled is our economy. We need to give more relief, and a great way to do it is to cancel the planned tax hikes that are coming into place. The government will triple the carbon tax by 2030, and starting this April, it will increase the taxation on nearly everything, which includes heating, gas and groceries. It is increasing the cost of everything. That, by definition, will increase inflation.

When we see Canadians working hard and trying to save what money they can, and when we have food inflation at 10%, is the government's response to reduce taxation? No, it is not. It is increasing the tax on paycheques starting April 1, and a sizable number of taxes will be increased. This is not the time for this. In my estimation, it is never the time to increase taxes given our current rates, but this is certainly not the time, as it will drive inflation and make our economy less productive.

When we look at what we need at the end of the day in order to solve this affordability crisis, we need to not drive artificial monetary policy through the printing of money, as we have seen what this can create. We do not need more government spending funded by the printing of money. We need our economy to increase its productivity. How we do that is by supporting our workers, empowering our businesses, supporting all Canadians, getting the government's hands out of their pockets and, instead, giving them a helping hand by reducing their burden in the future.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we are witnessing today is universal support for Canadians at a time of need and inflation. Unfortunately, there are people exploiting the situation.

I will convey a text that I just received. It says, "You can now claim your GST rebate. Reply 'yes' to receive your payment." After conferring with the CRA, it made very clear that it would never send a text like that. Scammers are fast and started sending texts right after the announcement was made about the GST. CRA is aware that there is something circulating and it has increased scam awareness messaging on all channels.

I am wondering if my friend could provide his thoughts about the types of people who exploit situations such as this. We should be warning constituents that there are scams out there.

• (1315)

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, it is sad that there are people out there doing this. Those folks should be held to account. That is why I am proud to be part of the law and order party. I do appreciate the member calling that out.

Being the former shadow minister for national revenue, I unfortunately became familiar with the many scammers out there. The CRA will not ask for anyone's social insurance number or bank information through email. When in doubt, pick up the phone, call the CRA and confirm it before providing any type of information. People can talk to those they trust. They can call their MP's office and we will be happy to help sort it out. I have seen way too many seniors and others taken advantage of this way.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Northumberland—Peterborough South on his speech. I hold him in high regard as a colleague. I had the opportunity to work with him in the previous Parliament on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

There are things in his speech that I agree with, and others that I do not agree with. I agree that this is too little too late. In the last federal budget, there were no special measures to help seniors, low-income Canadians or more vulnerable Canadians.

Here is the thing I do not agree with. The Conservative Party talks a lot about inflation and monetary policy. The Bloc Québécois is against populism. We strongly believe that the Bank of Canada, the central bank, should be independent of any political authority. In the last Conservative Party leadership race, we often heard the hon. member for Carleton, now the leader of the Conservative Party, say that he wanted to fire the Governor of the Bank of Canada. He is sending the wrong message. These are dangerous words.

I would like to know whether my colleague agrees that the central bank should be independent of all political influence, and if not, why not.

[*English*]

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, we have to acknowledge that the Bank of Canada got it wrong. It said that inflation was transitory and it was not. It said that inflation would not increase and it did. Our leader, who puts people first and thinks about monetary policy, got it right. That should be on the record. He was scoffed at. He was laughed at by the Bloc and other members of the elite saying that there would be no inflation. Well, guess what. We have food inflation at 10% and that should not be acceptable to Canadians or anyone.

Government Orders

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear that my friend from Northumberland—Peterborough South supports the relief measure in this bill. He noted that it is months late, and we would agree with him on that. I would ask where he was when we were calling for it back in May.

This is targeted relief for the people most affected by inflation. There is another measure in another bill that is also targeted relief for the people across our country most affected by inflation. The revenue for each of these measures comes from the same fund. These are very similar measures, yet the Conservative Party is voting for one and not the other.

I wonder if he could explain to me why he is not voting to support the increase in the Canada housing benefit?

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, the government's tax-and-spend policies will create nothing but more inflation. As we are seeing, the initial exuberance of government spending will quickly be eroded by the corrosive impacts of inflation. If we want to make people poor, then let us spend more money and print more money.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to take part in the debate today. I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, and I look forward to his comments.

The cost of living relief act is what we are talking about and how we help with affordability for Canadians who are facing the inflation we are now seeing as a result of global inflation as well as what has happened as a result of COVID-19.

When we went into COVID-19, one of the things that, early on, our government was focused on was setting Canada up for success on the other side of COVID, to make sure that Canadians would be able to return to their jobs through things like the wage subsidy program and keeping a relationship between the employer and the employee so that when jobs came back the employee would still be on their files. The CERB was to make sure that people who were really facing a tough time, those whose incomes had dropped and independent business owners, in particular, could get through what we were facing collectively as a society around the world with the global pandemic.

This bill is looking at what we do, going forward, now that we have protected our economy and have economic growth but have many people who are not participating in the success that other Canadians are taking part in. The once-in-a-generation COVID-19 pandemic has impacted other countries such as China, with its zero COVID policies. On top of that, there is the illegal invasion by Russia in Ukraine.

Here at home we have had housing prices skyrocketing so that we have had to work with the Bank of Canada, which focuses on monetary policy while we are focused on fiscal policy. The monetary policy that the Bank of Canada, which is an independent organization, has put in place is to increase interest rates, which almost immediately brought down the house price acceleration that we saw last year and even into early this year.

The inflation that we are seeing overall has come from the supply side. People are having trouble hiring and they are having trou-

ble getting components out of their supply chains. Around the world, it is something that everybody is facing. In Canada, we have been able to temper that through good policy, with the government looking at inflation that peaked in June at 8.1% and has come down to 7%. Other countries are still on the increase. The United States at 8.3%, the United Kingdom at 9.9%, and Germany at 7.9% are all at higher inflation rates than Canada faces.

However, it does nothing for Canadians to say, “Yes, but the other guys are worse than we are.” This is why we are introducing the affordability plan. It is a targeted suite of programs of \$12.1 billion that are being introduced this year, including doubling the GST credit for the next six months.

As monetary policy hopefully brings inflation back down toward the 2% target that the Bank of Canada has, we have to have something that bridges us through the hump that we are going through right now. This measure is Bill C-30, which would make life more affordable for Canadians. As an illustration, some of the measures that the plan is working on to fight inflation are to help with access to dental care and with the rental costs people are facing. There are parts of the bill that will be coming back to the House, hopefully in the next few days, and passing quickly so that Canadians will have access to other supports. As has been mentioned in the debate today, all of these things are there to help people who are vulnerable and who are being impacted by the inflation we are all going through.

For more than three decades, the Bank of Canada has had the mandate to tackle inflation here in Canada, and our government reaffirmed this central mandate last December. As the Bank of Canada is working on inflation and bringing it down, we have to work on the impacts on Canadians who are facing higher interest rates, the higher food costs that have been mentioned in the debate this morning and the other higher living costs that we have.

● (1320)

As we get down toward the 2%, and it is really the bank's job to help us get there, we have to look at the supply route constraints that are also impacting businesses and the labour shortages. How do we help businesses find the workers they need with the right skills? How do we help the people who are looking for jobs get those skills, so that they align with the needs of the businesses? The better we do this and the faster we do this, the better Canada will be positioned to continue the growth curve we are on.

Government Orders

The last recession I remember was the 2008 major recession. We just coasted on the other side of it, and we did not have economic growth. The result of that was that we fell behind. We are now in a position to continue our leadership position in growth in the world and provide clean technology jobs and the jobs of tomorrow around climate change solutions, nanotechnologies and emerging technologies, but in order to do that we need labour.

To rebuild communities that have been ravaged by the impacts of climate change, like the communities in Atlantic Canada and eastern Quebec, we need skilled trade workers, so we have to work as a government to help position people for success to get into those projects. In Guelph we have had six projects recently announced, with \$45 million to create 263 housing units. Those housing units are being built, but it is a strain on the local labour. In fact, we have one crew that is in Guelph from Prince Edward Island doing steel work, and they are doing it quickly because they want to go home. There is a local benefit to our getting some labour force in Guelph to help us build the housing as well as help the communities in Atlantic Canada that need the help they need on the economic front.

The plan we have is rooted in fiscal restraint. We are looking at how we can provide supports without fuelling inflation. The suite of measures we are putting forward through the affordability plan, like the GST credit for the next six months, are going to support Canadians with the cost of living without adding fuel to the fire of inflation.

We look at what other programs we are supporting in addition to the doubling of the GST credit. It is going to provide \$2.5 billion in additional targeted support for this year, and that is going to help 11 million individuals and families who already receive their tax credits through their tax filings. The relationship we have with Canadians through the Canada Revenue Agency helps us to deliver these programs.

We will also be delivering the Canada workers benefit to put up to another \$2,400 into families' bank accounts this year. A 10% increase in old age security to help seniors over 75, which began in July, is providing up to \$766 more for three million seniors this year. We will deliver a \$500 payment this year to 1.8 million Canadian renters who are struggling with the cost of housing through a one-time top-up on the housing benefit. We are cutting child care fees by an average of 50% this year. Dental care for Canadians, hopefully getting passed through the House of Commons, for people earning less than \$90,000 would provide hundreds of dollars to Canadian families this year. The indexation of inflation of benefits, including the Canada child benefit, the GST credit, Canada pension plan, old age security, the guaranteed income supplement and the federal minimum wage will carry us through normal economic times, when inflation is back down to the 2% level we are shooting for.

We are trying to manage the fiscal situation in an inflationary time by providing benefits to the people who really need them when they need them, and they need them now.

• (1325)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Guelph raised the Bank of Canada multiple times, as he also raised the ideas of helping strug-

gling Canadians and the need to fight inflation. On March 11 of this year, Tiff Macklem, the Governor of the Bank of Canada, wrote to the finance committee, and I am just going to take an excerpt from that:

According to the Bank's calculations, if the charge were to be removed from the three main fuel components of the consumer price index (gasoline, natural gas and fuel oil) it would reduce the inflation rate by 0.4 percentage points. In other words, if that policy had come into effect at the start of the year, January's inflation rate would have been 4.7% instead of 5.1%.

That is the governor saying that the carbon tax is inflationary. The member for Guelph said it is important to support struggling Canadians. Would he say exactly why he supports the government in tripling the carbon tax on gas, groceries and heat? Does he not believe this is a time to take a pause and give Canadians a break?

• (1330)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Mr. Speaker, the price on pollution is going from \$50 a tonne to \$65 a tonne. In my math, that is not tripling.

When we look at the sustainability of the planet, we cannot separate the sustainability of the planet from economic sustainability and social sustainability. We need to support Canadians in all areas, economic, social and environmental, so that we still have a planet for future generations.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech. Inflation did not fall out of the sky like a hot summer rain. It is the result of several factors, including external factors. One of these factors is very important: the supply chain.

It is important to understand that the war in Ukraine and the global pandemic disrupted the supply chain. Many of our companies rely on the availability of products or consumer goods.

The Bank of Canada observed that, during the summer, approximately 50% of companies found themselves facing a bottleneck. That means that their supply chain is blocked. They are awaiting parts to be able to resume production.

There is a way of fixing this and ensuring fewer inflationary shocks. It is by making sure that our supply chain is more flexible, agile and resilient.

Does my colleague agree that the government should be doing more to make sure that we are less dependent on the products we need to import from foreign countries?

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques not only for that question but for the questions he has posed throughout the day. They are always very thoughtful questions.

One of the lessons of COVID was that we have to have more reliance on Canadian supply chains. When it came to getting PPE and things to help people in medical need in Canada, having that product built in Canada made a lot of sense as supply chains from other countries were cut off. I agree 100% that we have to look at developing business in Canada and developing innovation in Canada so that we can get the economic benefit from it, as well as that security going forward.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the comments the member just made about the Canadian supply chain. I want the member to know that in my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam there was a supplier that retooled their factory instantly to be able to create PPE, but they were unable to get a contract from the Canadian government. I also know of vaccine suppliers in the country who were not identified by the government. In fact, I think there was a lack of coordination on the government side to even know who was producing PPE and vaccines here in Canada. That is what I understand.

Would the member like to share some thoughts on why Canadian suppliers of PPE and even vaccines were not able to get contracts with the government?

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Mr. Speaker, the Buyandsell.gc.ca network is something I used during COVID, when I had businesses calling me in Guelph asking how they could get into the supply chain and how they could provide solutions for the government. There was one call that was from a known Conservative and we have disagreed on many things, but he was able to get a contract to provide parts for ventilators going into Toronto with another partner from Montreal.

The Buyandsell.gc.ca network is something that I have recommended to my constituents. I would say to the hon. member across the way that it would be a great source for her constituents as well.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-30, a very important piece of legislation that attempts to relieve some of the pressure being put on individuals right now in our country, in particular those who are struggling the most. The individuals who will receive this GST credit will, no doubt, be people who immediately use this money for very important needs that they have. It is money that will go directly back into our economy. Despite some of the things we have heard about contributing to inflation, the economists have pretty much resoundingly asserted that such a measure is not going to lead to inflation or, at least, is so marginal that it will be unnoticeable.

I want to focus my comments today on addressing some of what I have heard said in the House. In particular, I want to talk a bit about what I heard the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South talk about a few minutes ago and then go to some comments that I heard from the member for Simcoe North even earlier.

First of all, I think it is very interesting that all of the conversations or all of the discussion that has been happening today regarding Bill C-30, from the Conservatives anyhow, spent very little time actually talking about the bill. Instead, they want to use the slogans they have recently come up with, such as “triple, triple, triple”. I am still trying to wrap my head around why that is supposed to be so funny. I do not understand how that works, but perhaps that line was given to everybody by the leader's office and it is their responsibility to deliver it repeatedly in this place.

The member for Northumberland—Peterborough South was not talking about the bill. He went on a long tangent from the discussion about why it is so important that the government not spend money right now, because it is leading to inflation. He was basically saying that when the government spends more, it leads to more inflation, and so on and so forth.

Just putting aside for a second his argument on that, I would remind him that my understanding, at least, is that Conservatives are voting in favour of this bill. They are voting in favour of this spending. For the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South to stand there for 10 minutes and talk about government spending leading to inflation and how the government should not be spending while on the topic of a bill about spending that he supports is extremely rich and, I think, underscores the hypocrisy that we hear over and over from Conservatives in this House. It is just on constant repeat, the way that they come out and say one thing but do another. I do not know if this is due to the new leadership of the crypto king from Carleton or what it is exactly, but it is certainly—

• (1335)

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, it is one thing to actually refer to people using a derogatory term, which is a violation of Standing Order 18, but using other terms to describe members in here is something that is unconscionable. That individual should apologize and resign.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, if the chair does not find the term “Justinflation” to be offensive but does find the term “crypto king” to be offensive, then I think we really have to go back and look at the rules.

However, I will leave it up to you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: How about if we refer to one another by our actual riding names? If we stick to that, we will stay out of trouble.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, let us talk about crypto, since we are on the topic.

With regard to the member for Simcoe North, I found it just astounding when, moments ago in the House, the Bloc Québécois member asked him a very good question about his party's position on crypto. I want to thank the member for Simcoe North for doing what I have been asking the Leader of the Opposition to do for a long time, which was to explain the Conservatives' policy on cryptocurrency.

Government Orders

Instead of completely avoiding the question from the member from the Bloc, the member for Simcoe North tried to address it, which I think was very admirable of him.

What did he say? He basically said this: First of all, he compared Canada to Venezuela, saying that, well, if we look at countries like Venezuela, people have decided to hedge their bets against their currency by investing in cryptocurrency.

Can we extrapolate, then, the objective of the Leader of the Opposition? When he made those comments months ago about cryptocurrency, he was basically telling the Canadian people to not trust the Canadian dollar and to put their money into cryptocurrency and bet against the Canadian dollar. That is exactly what the Leader of the Opposition was doing.

I hand it to the member for Simcoe North for actually standing up and saying what he thinks, because the rest of them would not do it.

This is what we are seeing, so now we get to start to understand a bit of the picture of what is going on. We have the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, the leader of the official opposition, the individual whom I crown as the king of cryptocurrency, in the House, in public, telling Canadians—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1340)

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Let us just refer to the member for Carleton or to the member for Kingston and the Islands or just His Majesty's official opposition, or something like that.

I am getting a lot of noise. I want to keep the noise in the House down to a minimum, because we are coming up to question period. I just want to make sure we all take our seats at a reasonable time and keep it down a little.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, you are always going to get a lot of noise from that side when I am speaking, regardless of what I say. I will leave it to you and to chair occupants to rule, because you do a very good job of that. I have a lot of respect for you, but I do not think it is unprecedented that we describe the actions of people in this room based on terms like that. As a matter of fact, probably the one who is the most egregious—

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Frank Caputo: Mr. Speaker, now the member for Kingston and the Islands is justifying what he is doing. That is not relevant to the bill at hand. He should be sticking to what is relevant.

The Deputy Speaker: We have relevancy called. We are running out of time. We want to get at least one more person in here.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, nobody is more egregious with regard to calling people names based on actions that they do than the leader of the official opposition during his 22 years or however long he has been in the House.

Nonetheless, the reality is that what we discovered in the House today, thanks to the member for Simcoe North, is that the Conservatives are actively encouraging Canadians to hedge against the Canadian dollar by investing in cryptocurrency.

I do not think this is responsible for any member of Parliament to do, let alone the leader of the official opposition in the House.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Kingston and the Islands for his timely comments about the need for this legislation and how it is going to help hard-working Canadians who are suffering as a result of inflation.

I have also heard from a lot of people who took the advice of the Leader of the Opposition on cryptocurrency because somehow they thought it was a legitimate way of investing their money. They have, unfortunately, lost a lot of money.

Can the member for Kingston and the Islands tell us why that advice was so dangerous and how it has impacted the lives of so many Canadians?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I would note, for starters, that this is the second time in a row that I have given a speech and both this time and the last time I spoke, no Conservative got up to ask me a question. As we know, the first opportunity to ask a question goes to the Conservatives. I just want them to know that I certainly take that as a compliment.

To the question that the member asked me about those who may have taken the advice, the Leader of the Opposition is seemingly unaware of the fact that his words have consequences. When he says something in the position that he is in or in the position that he was seeking to be in at the time, people will listen.

Those who did listen to him and chose to invest in cryptocurrency at the time will have seen their life savings absolutely diminish, and he does not recognize that his words can transpire into those actual actions, but it does happen.

For those who did take his advice and invest, I feel sorry that they were put in that position, and I deeply regret that the Leader of the Opposition, who was at the time the candidate seeking to be the leader, made those comments.

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

My colleague made a point about leadership and people listening to leaders. A motion was put forward in this very House yesterday, on which we should all have shown leadership, with respect to declaring an organization as a criminal or terrorist organization. That was shot down and given a nay by the Liberals, so it is a bit rich for them to talk about leading by example when that just happened yesterday.

Government Orders

• (1345)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I am so glad the member asked me that question because it gives me an opportunity to once again talk about the games the members on that side of the House play. They brought forward a motion with three parts to it. This is what the Conservatives do. They insert a poison pill into it, knowing that we cannot vote in favour of it. In this case, the second clause was to chastise the government over an issue. They did this just so this member could get up later on and ask the exact question he did.

The Conservatives know exactly what they are up to. They know the games they play in this House. If the member actually cared, like he says he does, the Conservatives would have brought forward a straightforward motion that did not include a poison pill, and he probably would have seen a lot—

The Deputy Speaker: I believe we have a point of order from the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

Mr. Frank Caputo: Mr. Speaker, if we are going to be in this place, we must use parliamentary language. Imputing thoughts of not caring on another member is completely unparliamentary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, the truth certainly hurts. We can see the number of times the Conservatives get up to try to interrupt me when I am speaking. What they do not understand, and it has been going on for three years now, is the more they do it, the more it encourages me, so they really have to reassess their position on this.

With respect to the member's point, had the Conservatives brought forward a simple motion that addressed exactly what he just said, I am sure it would have gone over much better on this side of the House than the way they introduced it, and he knows that.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, hopefully we can bring the debate back to Bill C-30 and the income support gaps that are hurting people right now in Canada.

These are short-term emergency income support gap measures that the New Democrats support. We know people need help with rent and food. I want to ask the member specifically about the long-term measures that need to be taken, because more Canadians are falling into poverty and homelessness. I speak specifically about persons with disabilities right now. Is this House going to see Bill C-22 come back this week?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, over the last few decades the disparity between the haves and the have-nots has certainly been growing, and it is incumbent upon us to find ways to try to reduce that. That is why we increased taxes on the richest 1% when we were first elected and reduced taxes for the middle class. That is why we brought in \$10-a-day child care. That is why we continue to strengthen the various social programs we have.

With respect to the member's question, I would like nothing more than to see that bill, which is intended for the disabled communities in Canada, move expeditiously through this House, go to committee and come back here so that we can implement it and bring it into law. I hope and have faith that all members in this House can put partisanship aside for one issue like this.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are laughing right now. This is about helping some of the most vulnerable people in our country and they are laughing, so I guess the partisanship will not be put aside.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Banff—Airdrie.

It is really hard to talk to people in my community right now because they are really struggling. They are struggling so hard to make ends meet. I was at the grocery store a couple of weeks ago, and I watched a woman from my community in the bakery aisle take a loaf of bread, look at it, put it back on the shelf, take it again, look at it and put it back on the shelf again. I knew what she was doing. She was asking herself if she could afford it.

That is the crisis our country is facing right now, and that is the level of gravity each of us should be treating the country's finances and our economic policy with right now. People in our country are asking themselves if they can afford to put another loaf of bread in their cart. I have to ask myself why, and I really want to direct this to the Liberal backbench. Why are the liberals raising taxes right now? Why would they do this? Why would they do this to that woman who is trying to figure out if she can afford an extra loaf of bread this week?

There is no reason for the government to raise taxes, yet yesterday that is what the government, the Liberals, voted to do. They voted to raise taxes. Every single member of the Liberal backbench has the ability in their caucus meetings or on their own social media platforms to push back and hold the government to account just as much as I do. We all have that right.

In January, small business owners and employers should not need to be worried about their payroll taxes increasing. Canadians, including that woman who is thinking about whether she can afford that extra loaf of bread, should not be thinking about whether their take-home pay is going to go down because the government is taking more money off paycheques. It is ludicrous. We are in a generational inflation crisis.

This is something many Canadians have never had to deal with. Before this crisis even started, the Canadian economy was on the brink. We are seeing a mental health crisis and a housing crisis, and what are the Liberals doing? They want to raise taxes. It is not just the payroll tax the Liberals voted to raise. It is also voting to raise taxes on something that will increase the cost of everything.

Let us talk about a loaf of bread. The way the Liberals and the Prime Minister have approached dealing with inflation is by saying, "Okay, Canadians, you have a loaf of bread. We are going to take it from you and give you back the crumbs." This is what we are debating here today, and that is not right, but let us talk about that loaf of bread.

Government Orders

For a Canadian farmer who is growing the wheat for that bread, the Liberals want to raise taxes on the power that goes into drying that grain. What does that do to the cost of a loaf of bread? It increases it at a time when we cannot afford it and when people are asking if they can put another loaf of bread in their cart.

What about when that grain is dry? How does that grain magically get to a processing plant? It is transported. If it is transported in a truck, the fuel that goes to getting that grain to a processing plant is going to increase with this tax increase. Who pays for that? It is the person who is eventually going to buy that loaf of bread.

Once the manufacturing plant that mills the flour, which might be looking to relocate because of payroll taxes and tax increases on their input costs, such as electricity, has somehow managed to mill that flour, then the flour needs to be transported somewhere else. What is going to happen? The tax on that gas will be increased too next year, in the middle of an inflationary crisis, when people are struggling to choose whether to put another loaf of bread in their cart.

Then how is that loaf of bread going to get to the grocery store? How does that happen? It does not magically happen. It needs to be transported, again using something the Liberals are increasing the cost of. They are again raising taxes on this. Of course that increase in taxes goes through the entire system. It raises the cost of everything.

The other thing is that the Liberals try to tell people that somehow that bit of grain, that loaf of bread, can magically get from one place to another because they failed to put any sort of substitute good for carbon on the market, in spite of raising these taxes.

• (1350)

What have they done instead? They have raised the costs of these goods. They have made it harder for that woman to choose whether or not she is going to put that loaf of bread in her cart. They have done this while making us more dependent on countries such as Iran and Russia for their oil. Greenhouse gas emissions have risen under the government. It has to stop.

The Liberal backbench members should hold their leader to account. One of them actually said something that made sense. They were quoted in a news article after their caucus meeting, and they said something to the effect that they wished the leadership of their party would stop being so woke and focus on inflation. Now is the time.

Every single one of their community members is struggling with that question of whether or not to put another loaf of bread in their cart, and they do not want silence. Courage is lacking in that backbench right now. We should not be raising taxes. The Liberals had an opportunity yesterday to prevent the raising of taxes, yet what did they do? They voted to raise taxes. It has to stop. This is not the time to do that.

Some will say that they are spending money on x , y , and z . Let us talk about what the Liberals have been spending money on. There was a federal election in 2021 that got us a polarized electorate. It did not do anything else for the Liberals. We just found out that the Liberals spent a half a billion dollars making it easier for people in

upstate New York to jump the immigration queue in Canada. The other thing the Liberals have done is spend how much money, and on what? It takes two, three, four, five, six months to get a passport, so we are seeing not only the government raise taxes in the middle of an inflationary crisis, but also service delivery being worse. This is it, and that is not good government.

What we have here is a scandal-plagued government that does not give a rip about the price of bread. The government members do not give a rip. They do not understand what people in my community or any of their communities are going through to try to make ends meet after filling up their tank of gas.

It is beyond me that the Liberals would raise taxes right now, and we will fight back. This is crazy. They should not be raising taxes in the middle of an inflationary crisis. I would ask them to give their heads a shake. This is not a game. That is what each of the members of the Liberal backbench should be saying. The Liberals have to do something to actually address the inflationary crisis, and taking Canadians' loaves of bread, trying to give them a few crumbs back and saying it is good enough is not good enough. It has to stop.

Canadians are sharing this message. Even people who voted for the Liberals in the past have said they have had enough, as one of their backbench said, of this woke stuff. They want solutions. They want a solution to the problem.

We should have energy sovereignty. We should not be waiting for OPEC+ to raise or lower production and raise the cost of energy on us because we do not have energy sovereignty here. The Liberals should be addressing the labour shortage instead of making it easier for people in upstate New York to skip the line into this country. They should be addressing that we have the poorest levels of service in government programs in generations, all while it is impossible for people to make ends meet.

We should all have had enough with the cabinet and the government's failed approach to economic growth while our country stares down the barrel of a looming recession, and it is the government's problem. It has failed to repatriate manufacturing. It has failed to inspire investment in our country. It is making it harder for women in my community to put loaves of bread in their cart.

I have had enough. People in this place have had enough, and people across the country have had enough. Tomorrow morning is their caucus meeting, so I challenge every Liberal backbencher here today to stand up and say what that one person said off the record to a reporter: Enough with the woke shit.

Mr. Speaker, I take that back. I apologize immediately for my unparliamentary language. I am very sorry.

Enough with the woke stuff and let us get on with the plan. It is right to be passionate with this. We have to do better things to protect Canadians from inflation.

• (1355)

The Deputy Speaker: I appreciate the retraction.

We will move on to questions and comments with the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's candour. She certainly speaks with passion, and sometimes I wish I could use language like that in here too, even if just accidentally.

My question is in relation to the member's private member's bill. This member has a private member's bill on cryptocurrency. We were actually supposed to debate it the first day that the House resumed, and for some reason we did not. It got bumped.

I understand that the member's private member's bill on cryptocurrency is coming up in the next couple of days. I wonder if she could provide some insight into what her bill is about, to inform the House.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleague to talk to the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance, who actually holds digital assets, as revealed in his ethics disclosure. I would also invite him to talk to the Minister of Finance, who approved tens of thousands of dollars for a crypto-trading platform in her home riding.

The government has talked a big game on the digital economy and now, when we are staring down the barrel of a recession, is trying to score cheap political points, when we should be trying to grow jobs through a framework that protects investors and consumers while allowing the economy to grow. However, the government does not get it, and that is a shame.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

IRAN

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, it has been 1,000 days since Ukrainian International Airlines flight PS752 was shot down by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps: 167 passengers and nine crew murdered; 57 Canadian citizens murdered; 138 students and academics returning to Canada to attend or teach at our universities murdered.

One was Dr. Mohammad Amin Jebelli. He was my friend. He was a student of mine at the University of Toronto. Amin was always willing to help out. He was always there to ensure no student was left out. I will never forget him.

The Iranian regime, the murderers of Zahra Kazemi, Mahsa Amini and all those on PS752, must be made to understand that the passage of time will never erase its crimes nor fade the memories that we hold of its victims.

The Holy Quran commands “to act against those who oppress people and transgress in the land against all justice.” Canadians demand their government hold that regime accountable and to finally declare the IRGC as a terrorist organization.

Statements by Members

KEITH SIMMONDS

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Milton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Niagara has lost a giant. Keith Simmonds was a business leader at Great Wolf Lodge, a mentor, a friend, a celebrated community member, a father and a husband. Keith died last weekend on a charity bike ride doing what he loved: raising money for charity with his friends.

I only met Keith three weeks ago. Along with 36 other riders, we were part of R2//NYC. We rode our bikes to New York City from Toronto, which was 850 kilometres, to raise money for Campfire Circle, a summer camp for kids and families impacted by childhood cancer. The healing powers of fun, friendship and self-confidence were never lost on Keith. He had MS, but it never slowed him down a bit.

Keith's team, The Wolf Pack, out-fundraised the rest of us two to one, but his energy, enthusiasm and ethic on that ride is what really stood out.

His celebration of life was on Sunday and over 2,500 people attended. I have never seen anything like it. People packed into the Niagara Falls Convention Centre to laugh, cry and remember Keith Simmonds.

Keith is survived by his boys Ben and Nick, his wife Toby, his brother Greg, and his mom Ellen Mae, who he called “the goat”. Keith was the greatest of all time, too. We would all do well to live our lives more like him, all in and howling until the end.

May Keith rest in peace.

* * *

CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I was honoured to celebrate true excellence in teaching.

Red Deer's Glendale Sciences and Technology School educator, Ashton Lutz, was awarded the national certificate of excellence in recognition of her unique leadership in new-learning approaches and her success in harnessing the power of educational activity in an impressive ceremony here in Ottawa.

As a former math and physics teacher, it gives me great pleasure to know that her students have been blessed with her passionate commitment to all aspects of their educational experience, as she connects them with the digital world by harnessing the power of technology.

Ashton shared this special moment with her mother Sandy, her husband Bryden, and his parents Fred and Robin Lutz, as she proudly took her place as one of Canada's most exceptional teachers.

Well done, Ashton. Her students, colleagues, friends and family are so proud of her accomplishments.

*Statements by Members***LATIN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH**

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, cha-cha-cha, *olé, olé, olé*.

October is Latin American Heritage Month, and it is so exciting to know that we have a whole month to celebrate the unbelievable music, literature, food, language and culture of over 20 diverse and beautiful Latin American cultures in Canada.

It is also a month to acknowledge the many contributions of Latin Americans to our country. This large and growing community enriches our national fabric with its contributions and it plays an important role in Canada's growth and prosperity.

This evening, I am inviting everyone to join the Hispanic and Latin American community to celebrate an amazing month, at Sir John A. Macdonald building, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Come out for empanadas, pastelitos de carne, vino, mojitos, musica allegra and so much fun.

I look forward to seeing everyone. *Viva los latinos en Canadá. Viva.*

* * *

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

WORLD SIGHT DAY

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the second Thursday in October is World Sight Day, a day to raise awareness of the importance of eye health.

With one blind grandmother and two blind great-grandmothers, my father feels there is a sword of Damocles hanging over his head. The same goes for my youngest son and several members of my family.

By developing our knowledge about what affects our vision, we will hopefully be able to prevent many sight-related diseases. By being more aware of the day-to-day challenges facing people born with a visual impairment, we will all be able to understand them better and do more for them, as well as support research aimed at alleviating those challenges.

Let us all increase our awareness and work together to make life easier and simpler for people living with vision loss.

I hope everyone has a good World Sight Day.

* * *

VACCINE MANUFACTURING PLANT

Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today about the great news that Moderna will set up its first vaccine manufacturing plant outside the United States in my riding of Vimy.

As we all know, Moderna manufactures one of the two vaccines that have helped ensure Canadians' safety during the COVID-19 pandemic and saved many lives. It continues to be one of the world's leading biotech companies. The Moderna plant will allow Canada to manufacture its own vaccines. Also, Moderna will undertake research in collaboration with McGill University.

I am proud that this investment will further improve Laval's flourishing industry, and add over 200 high-tech jobs to the 5,000 jobs that already exist in the science sector. Vimy is home to world-class researchers, doctors and scientists, and the sector will continue to grow. Moderna's investment is an excellent recognition of Vimy's biotech sector, and a source of pride for all Canadians.

* * *

[*English*]

ANGUS BEEF

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a tremendous honour to represent the people of Lethbridge and have the opportunity to stand for them today.

One of the things that we are extremely proud of in my riding is the production of Angus beef. It is our goal to fill more plates with this healthy protein and sheer tastiness.

The cattle breed is hardy and originates from Scotland. That is a long way away. The meat is known to be tender, juicy and packed with flavour. It is enough to make one sing, actually. Perhaps that is because these cattle tarry on green pastures for long hours in May.

While an Angus steak is great on the grill, people can also fast fry it in their kitchens, should they choose. However, people should make sure they do not cram the pan; then that is not good.

Sadly, many Canadians are blocked, unfortunately, from being able to taste this beef because they just cannot afford it. Personally, I think that is rude.

While the government wants Canadians to start eating small critters for their protein, I believe that more Canadians should have access to beef, but for that to happen, the government needs to put Canadians first and stop "Justinflation".

The Speaker: I believe the Deputy Speaker this morning put it best. If both sides play by the rules and follow the rules, we will all be better off.

The hon. member for Vancouver Granville.

* * *

LITTLE MOUNTAIN BASEBALL ALL-STARS

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am so proud to rise today and recognize the Little Mountain Baseball All-Stars on their big win at the Canadian Little League Championship earlier this summer. As they represented our Vancouver Granville community as Team BC, we were proud to cheer on these amazing athletes on their path to victory.

The All-Stars went on to make us proud as team Canada at the Little League World Series earlier this summer, where they played in some thrilling games and showed incredible sportsmanship. Together, they showed what it means to work as a team and to show grit, determination and grace.

I congratulate the players, coaches and their families on this incredible success and for the hard work they have done to make Canadians proud from coast to coast to coast.

* * *

WORLD SIGHT DAY

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge October 13 as World Sight Day, reminding my colleagues in the House and every Canadian about the importance of eye health.

Unfortunately, we all take our eyesight for granted until it is often too late. There are 1.2 million Canadians who are currently blind or partially sighted and over eight million have an eye disease that puts them at risk for vision loss and blindness.

Losing one's vision can be extremely physically and psychologically damaging. The impacts include increased risk of financial hardship, a loss of independence and mobility, an inability to live independently, to drive, to read or participate in physical activity, resulting in a loss of social interaction, which can often lead to depression and other mental illnesses. I ask my colleagues to simply close their eyes and ask how they would get out of this room.

I invite everyone in the House to come and have their eyes tested tonight, starting at 5 p.m., at the World Sight Day Hill reception that I have the honour of hosting at the Wellington Building, room 430. Everyone is welcome.

* * *

• (1410)

[*Translation*]

QUEBEC ELECTION

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, October 3, was an important day for Quebeckers as a whole.

The people have made their choice and returned to power the incumbent Coalition avenir Québec government, with a majority.

Today, I want to congratulate the Premier of Quebec, François Legault, and his entire team. I want to reiterate my interest in collaborating with both members of the national assembly in my riding: Jonatan Julien, MNA for Charlesbourg, and Sylvain Lévesque, MNA for Chauveau.

As the political lieutenant for Quebec for the leader of the official opposition, I also offer my support to the Government of Quebec, with whom I wish to continue the work to create a better future for Quebeckers within a stronger Canada.

Let us be proud to live in a country that offers us the privilege to exercise our fundamental right to choose our representatives. Let us

Statements by Members

be proud to be Quebeckers. Now that democracy has spoken, let us look to the future and build together.

* * *

[*English*]

STATION GALLERY

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise in the House today to recognize the phenomenal work of Whitby's beloved Station Gallery, as it recently held its 29th annual Drawing for Art fundraiser.

The Station Gallery is a historic and well known place in Whitby. Many will recognize it for its 119-year-old exterior, as it was formerly Whitby's Grand Trunk Railway station that was saved from demolition nearly 50 years ago thanks to the gallery's founders, who restored it to be the beautiful creative art hub that generations in Whitby have enjoyed.

I have had the pleasure of attending this event in past years, as it is an important fundraiser that supports the gallery financially, enabling it to continue delivering fun, creative art programs and exhibits that the Whitby community appreciates immensely. This year, the gallery received a record 160 outstanding and unique pieces of art, generously donated by talented local and national artists, and sold out tickets to people who were eager to select and take home a stunning masterpiece.

I hope everyone will join me in congratulating the many energetic and passionate staff and volunteers who made the Station Gallery's event successful.

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HURRICANE FIONA

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the people of Cumberland—Colchester continue to be profoundly and disproportionately affected by hurricane Fiona.

Being out of power is one thing; however being without power and water is in another realm altogether. The uncertainty surrounding when electricity will be restored adds to the tremendous burden of suffering being experienced. Crews are working hard to remove trees and repair damaged lines 24 hours a day, and we commend them for their work. We will continue to ask for more aid until power is fully restored, and we will continue to ask for support as the cleanup progresses and life returns to normal.

As always, let us be mindful of those in our neighbourhoods who need our support and encouragement. Let us honour our shared history of being tough Maritimers and being willing to always help in a time of great need.

*Statements by Members***NATURAL RESOURCES**

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the new Conservative leader will put the people first, their paycheques, their savings, their home and their country. Therefore, we celebrate the historic agreement between Enbridge and 23 first nations and Métis communities. They now own 12%, over a billion dollars' worth, of pipelines in the Athabasca region, with long-term, predictable cash flow to build schools, fix roads, meet basic needs and improve their quality of life.

Indigenous people have long been partners, contractors, workers, suppliers and producers in oil and gas. They are leaders in Canadian natural resources, but the Liberals' anti-energy agenda risks dozens of indigenous-led and supported projects from pipelines to mines and LNG.

All nine communities in Lakeland beat barriers to get this economic development, and are now all owners in the largest deal of its kind in North America.

Therefore, I congratulate, Buffalo Lake, Elizabeth, Fishing Lake and Kikino Métis Settlements, Frog Lake, Kehewin, Onion Lake, Saddle Lake and Goodfish Lake first nations on this landmark achievement and on all their progress turning hurt into hope.

* * *

● (1415)

RICHMOND HILL

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently Richmond Hill has been through many ups and downs.

We lost our beloved former mayor on September 22 and, today, his memorial is taking place in the city of Richmond Hill. With a heavy heart, I extend my condolences on the passing of our longest-serving mayor and my dear friend, Dave Barrow. May he rest in eternal peace, our community leader, mentor and friend.

Also this past weekend, we witnessed the rally of over 50,000 people of Iranian Canadian descent in support of the global day of action for Iran's current uprising and the freedom movement led women and youth at the forefront. In solidarity, I joined the rally. What a historic moment of global magnitude for the community of Richmond Hill.

Today, also marks the 1,000th day since the shooting down of flight PS752. At this very moment, in front of Parliament, we are joined by family members of the flight PS752 victims.

We will not rest until those responsible for these heinous crimes are brought to justice.

The Speaker: Before going on, I just want to remind everyone that Statements by Members are very important to the individuals.

[*Translation*]

I want to ensure that everyone can hear what members have to say. I would therefore ask members to whisper or to go into the hallway to carry on their conversations.

[*English*]

The hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

IRONMAN CANADA PENTICTON

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after a 10-year absence, Penticton once again hosted Ironman Canada this year and re-established itself as one of the premier Ironman venues in the world.

The history of Ironman in Penticton goes back to 1983 when it was the site of the first Ironman-distance triathlon in North America. Three years later, it was named the official host for Ironman Canada. Word soon spread of the stunning landscapes, warm lakes, challenging hills and the army of enthusiastic and friendly volunteers that make the Penticton Ironman venue so special. It quickly became the favourite destination for triathletes from around the world.

Sadly, Ironman Canada moved out of Penticton for eight years, starting in 2012. It returned in 2020, only to be cancelled by COVID, but this year the athletes were back. Thousands of fans cheered them on. Long-time announcer Steve King called the race, and all were rewarded with a convincing win by local favourite Jeff Symonds.

Ironman Canada is back in Penticton.

* * *

[*Translation*]

JULIE BELLEROSE

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when I was appointed the Bloc Québécois's foreign affairs critic, I did not know that included space. However, today I will be talking about space thanks to Julie Bellerose.

Last week, this engineer from Sainte-Julie led a NASA mission that was straight out of science fiction. Ms. Bellerose had to deflect an asteroid 10 million kilometres from earth by hitting it with a space probe travelling 22,500 kilometres per hour. The objective of this experiment was to assess whether it is possible to change the trajectory of an asteroid headed dangerously towards our planet.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to congratulate Julie Bellerose for this mission accomplished. This is a new high-light in a career that has led her from Sainte-Julie to California via Japan. With this achievement, she is now a member of a select group of Quebecers showing young people where Quebec engineering can go. The answer: far, far away.

[English]

IRAN

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Iranian regime is a brutal regime. It killed Montrealer Zahra Kazemi, executed Navid Afkari, imprisoned Nasrin Sotoudeh and supports terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah.

That is why, in June of 2018, this House adopted a motion calling on the government to list the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist entity under the Criminal Code of Canada. The government, including the Prime Minister, voted for that motion, but once it disappeared from the media, the government did nothing.

Subsequently, in January of 2020, flight 752 was shot down as it took off from Tehran airport, killing over 50 Canadians brutally. Subsequent investigations found that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps was responsible for the downing of flight 752 and still the Government of Canada did nothing. Now, Mahsa Amini has been brutally tortured and murdered by this regime.

When will the government take action and list the IRGC as a terrorist entity under the Criminal Code of Canada?

* * *

• (1420)

[Translation]

LATIN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my turn to celebrate Canada's Latin American community, of which I am a proud member.

The personal journeys that brought the members of our community to Canada are all very different, but we all have one thing in common: We now feel at home here.

Over the next few weeks, through music, food and art, people will have the opportunity to discover the different Latin American cultures and traditions that surround us throughout the year. Some of my colleagues may have attended a *quinceañera* or celebrated *el día de los muertos*, while others may be fans of Frida Kahlo or be familiar with the poems of Pablo Neruda.

The history of the ancient civilizations that lived on this continent is an intrinsic part of our heritage and story now. Think of the Aztecs, the Mayans and the Incas. This heritage includes the stories of the indigenous peoples who still live here today.

Let us look back and make amends for our colonial past, but let us also celebrate Latin American Heritage Month today together across the country.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the accounting firm MNP reported this week that almost

Oral Questions

half of all Canadians are about \$200 away from not being able to pay their bills. That means insolvency for nearly half the population. This is the result of seven years of this government's inflationary policies.

What is the Liberals' solution today? It is to raise taxes, including by tripling the carbon tax on gas, home heating and groceries.

Will they cancel this plan to triple the tax?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me start with some good news today. We have a solution that everyone in the House agrees on: the inflation relief payments. Yesterday, the Standing Committee on Finance voted unanimously for this measure. I hope that the House will have a chance this week to vote for these payments that Canadians so urgently need.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the accounting firm MNP reported this week that almost half of Canadians are \$200 from insolvency. That means that they are about to default on a debt or other legal payment. They cannot afford groceries. Four in five families have had to cut their diets to pay their bills. Nine in 10 young people without a home say they will never afford one.

The Liberal solution to all of this is to raise taxes on paycheques and on energy, including by tripling the carbon tax on gas, heat and groceries. Will they cancel their plan to triple the tax?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government knows that many Canadians are struggling today with the cost of living, and we do have a Liberal solution: the GST tax credit that would give up to nearly \$500 to Canadian families. Eleven million households would be supported.

Do members know what else is good news? That is not just a Liberal solution. That is a solution unanimously supported by all members of the House. I am looking forward to that measure passing third reading in the House so that we can get that support to the communities.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the problem is that the government wants to tax it all away. In fact, it wants to triple the carbon tax on gas, heat and groceries at a time when Vancouver's gas prices hit \$2.40 a litre, and we learned today that Ontario will soon have a 10¢ a litre sudden spike in gas prices.

Oral Questions

This is exactly the wrong time for a tax hike. Will the government cancel its plan to triple the tax?

[Translation]

• (1425)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have already spoken today about one part of our government's solution that now enjoys support from all members of the House, and that is the GST tax credit. I would like to take this opportunity to call on all members of the House to support the other two elements of our plan, the \$500 one-off payment to help Canadians struggling to pay their rent, surely that makes sense to everyone, and supporting Canadian kids to be able to go to the dentist. Who in in this House thinks a child under 12 should not go to the dentist just because their parents cannot afford it? I hope we will all support these wise measures.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 1,000 days ago today the IRGC, a terrorist group, murdered 55 Canadian citizens, yet 1,000 days later it is perfectly legal for that same terrorist organization to raise money, coordinate, plan and act right here in Canada. Why?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to be unequivocally clear that we condemn the downing of PS752. We stood with those families. We unequivocally condemn the brutal murder of Mahsa Amini, and we stand with her family and with all of the women who are marching for their rights.

I want to be clear that Canada will never be a safe haven for any IRGC operative, or for anyone who supports terrorists. We have taken tangible, consequential action, and we will continue to deliver consequences so that we can stand up for human rights here and around the world.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is a safe haven for this terrorist group, which killed 55 Canadian citizens by shooting down a civilian aircraft. The government has the legal authority today to list that group as a terrorist entity, banning it from raising money, operating, coordinating or, in other ways, existing here in this country.

A thousand days after this murder of our citizens, it has not done so. Why?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would hope that all members are united in standing with the families of PS752. This is what we did right from the outset by repatriating bodies so that families could grieve with them, what we did by creating pathways so families could be reunited here in Canada and what we are going to continue to do in calling for real, tangible consequences for the perpetrators of the downing of PS752. We have listed the IRGC Quds Force, we have ensured that Iran is listed as a state that supports terrorism and we will deliver more sanctions to stand up for human rights here and around the world.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we need to talk about employment insurance. The government's decision to scrap the temporary measures is a disaster for seasonal workers. At the very end of their season, Ottawa changed the rules of the game and increased the minimum number of hours from 420 to 700. That means workers who qualified for EI 10 days ago now have nothing: no job, no benefits.

I know this might seem trivial to the government, but for workers left out in the cold, it is a big deal. It means no income until next summer. That is a very big deal.

What is the government going to do to help these workers?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that Canada needs an EI system fit for the 21st century. That is why we set up extensive consultations with Canadians so we can build a system that works for everyone, including seasonal workers.

Although our temporary support measures are ending, regular benefits will continue to be paid out. In budget 2022, we are investing \$110 million to extend the seasonal pilot project until 2023.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, she talked about the pilot project, which is fine for workers who qualify. The problem is that seasonal workers no longer qualify because the government changed the rules by removing the temporary measures. The federal government is essentially condemning them to poverty. It is threatening the seasonal industry as a whole, and it is threatening the regions.

Will the government show some empathy for people who are caught in this trap and restore the temporary measures while we await EI reform?

That is what needs to happen.

• (1430)

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government understands that EI benefits need to be more fair, more responsive and more adaptable to the needs of Canada's ever-evolving workforce. We look forward to announcing our long-term plan to improve the EI system before the end of the year.

TAXATION

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are missing out on \$30 billion in revenue because this government refuses to close tax loopholes. Our health care system is in crisis and needs more investments, but this government prefers to protect the profits of the ultrarich rather than defending the interests of ordinary Canadians.

When will the government close the tax loopholes being exploited by the ultrarich?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring that everyone pays their fair share. We have taken action by permanently raising the corporate income tax rate on banks and insurance companies by 1.5%, bringing in a 15% Canada recovery dividend and introducing a luxury tax on certain vehicles, planes and boats.

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, none of that changes the fact that our country has lost \$30 billion in revenue because the Liberal government refuses to end tax loopholes for the superwealthy. Here is the reality. After seven years of the Liberal government being in power, the effective tax rate for corporations is lower today. That is wrong.

When will the government stop defending the profits of the superwealthy, stand up for working people and put an end to the tax loopholes for the superwealthy?

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, there is an expectation that Canadians and Canadian businesses pay their fair share. To that end, just on tax evasion alone, this government has invested over a billion dollars to counter that.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Mr. Speaker, in addition, we have put forward in response to the Panama papers, which I know the member opposite who is yelling is quite interested in, 900 Canadians. They have been identified and are under observation. There are 160 audits under way and over 200 have been completed. That work will continue.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition puts Canadians first.

Since his resounding victory, the Conservative leader has been the voice of millions of Canadians, calling on the government to end the unjust inflation. Day after day, he asks the costly coalition to show some compassion for workers, fathers and mothers and cancel the planned tax increase, which will make life more expensive for everyone.

The opposition leader is reaching out. Will the Prime Minister listen to him and scrap his plan to raise taxes?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us lay the facts on the table.

Oral Questions

The first thing that our government did in 2015 was lower taxes for the majority of Canadians. What did the Conservatives do? They voted against that tax cut.

On this side, we will continue to respond to Canadians' expectations. The Conservatives can say what they like, but we will let our actions speak for themselves.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only promises Liberals keep are the ones that empty the pockets of all Canadians.

Yesterday, the Minister of the Environment said that Quebec would be spared from the decision to triple the carbon tax for Canadians next year.

Can the Prime Minister confirm that Quebecers will be completely spared the carbon tax hike, that no Quebecer will pay more taxes and that no one will be burdened by an increase in the costs of their purchases? Will the carbon tax be more expensive for Quebecers, yes or no?

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

Sadly, he does not understand carbon pricing in Canada and Quebec. Quebec does not have carbon pricing, but rather a cap-and-trade system. It is a little complicated, I know. I will be happy to explain the difference to him. My office could organize a briefing if my hon. colleague so wishes.

• (1435)

[English]

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 51% of Canadians are struggling to afford food. That is over half the country. Seven years of the Liberal government and that is its record, yet the Liberals have the audacity to sit there and roll their eyes at us as we ask questions about their lack of action on inflation. Now they are going to raise taxes on Canadians by tripling the carbon tax on groceries, tripling it on home heating and tripling it on gas. It is triple, triple, triple.

Canadians cannot afford the Liberal government any longer. Will the Liberals show some compassion and cancel their plans to triple the carbon tax?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in university I took social sciences and did some math, calculus 101. It is actually called 103 in Quebec. Three times three times three equals 27, so I am not sure what the Conservatives are talking about. Imagine if they had to do a budget for the entire country.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am having a hard time hearing the answer. I am going to have to ask the minister to start from the top.

Oral Questions

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, I took social sciences in university and some math, calculus 101, and three times three times three is 27. The Conservatives cannot even get this right. Imagine if they were trying to do a federal budget for the entire country. The carbon tax would go up by \$15. How they get to three times three times three I simply do not understand.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Jay told me he had to cancel a family trip to see family because of the high cost of gas. Inflation and carbon tax increases are keeping families apart this Thanksgiving, but changing behaviour is exactly what the Liberals want. They have said it. They continue to pretend that failed climate change plans are anything but another tax grab.

Will the Liberal government cancel its plans to force British Columbia to triple taxes on gas, groceries and home heating?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure my hon. colleague that we are having a very cordial and productive conversation with British Columbia about putting a price on pollution. In fact, British Columbia is one of the first jurisdictions in North America to have done this. We will continue working collaboratively with B.C. on carbon pricing.

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, because of the Liberal government's failed economic policies, the Canadian dream of owning a home, putting kids in sports and taking a modest family vacation is impossible. At a time when Canadians need some help, what do the Liberals do? They triple the carbon tax.

Will the Liberals cancel their plans to triple the tax on gas, groceries and home heating and give hard-working Canadian families some hope?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the good news is that we do have a plan, and all of us, working together this week, are going to be able to give hard-working Canadian families some real hope and some real support. That is because I am very hopeful that this week the House will vote on third reading of Bill C-30. That is the GST rebate that would give nearly \$500 to Canadian families. Eleven million households would be helped. That is real hope. That is real support for Canadian families. I am glad the Conservatives are on board with that. I hope now they will support the housing payments and dental care.

• (1440)

Mr. Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a veteran in my riding noticed that GST was being charged on top of the carbon tax on his power bill. The Liberal government plans to triple the carbon tax. Guess what. This would also triple the GST on a basic necessity.

Life is getting too expensive for Canadians. When will the government scrap its plans to triple the carbon tax, and axe the tax on the carbon tax?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. Listen to the whip. He is wonderful.

The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, around the world we are facing very difficult times. The member references a veteran whom I have no doubt is experiencing the global phenomenon that we are all dealing with.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Mark Holland: This is not a sporting event. This is not an opportunity to yell and scream and hoot and holler. It is an opportunity to help people who are in need. I absolutely want to take these questions.

The Speaker: I missed half of that.

The government House leader, from the top, please.

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, we are ready to hear real questions. We are ready to give real answers.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, every time we ask about federal action for Roxham Road, the government answers that it is negotiating the modernization of the safe third country agreement with the U.S. Roxham Road has been an issue for five years. The federal government has been negotiating for years. It was even in the Liberals' 2019 election platform.

At this point, we have every right to ask how the negotiations are going, do we not?

Can the government provide us with the dates of every meeting held to discuss the safe third country agreement with Washington, and will it provide the minutes of those meetings?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. Closing Roxham Road or suspending the agreement is not a solution. That would not solve the problem.

As the member opposite knows, Canada shares the longest demilitarized border in the country. Roxham Road gives officials an opportunity to obtain identification documents from these asylum claimants and prevent dangerous crossings.

We need to modernize the agreement, and that is what we are doing.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, so everything is as it should be at Roxham Road. That is what they just said.

Does it seem as though negotiations are moving forward? I do not think so.

The safe third country agreement is a seven-page document, not a free trade agreement. The Liberals have been telling us for five years that they are in negotiations. Meanwhile, what is obvious on the ground is that they are making Roxham Road permanent. We have just been told flat out. They even plan to open new facilities on November 1. Permanent means permanent.

Can the minister provide us with any concrete evidence of these discussions, or should we rely on the government's actions and therefore conclude that no negotiations are actually taking place?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, discussions and negotiations are indeed taking place.

I would ask the Bloc Québécois to tone down the rhetoric just a bit and stop playing petty politics on the backs of men, women and children who, more often than not, leave extremely difficult situations to make it there or elsewhere.

When we talk about immigration, we are talking about men, women and children who are seeking a better life. They have the right to dignity, and I would ask the Bloc Québécois members to be careful about what they say.

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PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, every time we ask the government for the Roxham Road contracts that it refuses to disclose, it responds that to the government, and I quote: transparency is critically important.

That is a rather Orwellian response. Refusing to disclose contracts out of concern for transparency is not that far removed from being told that war is peace.

I am blinded by all that transparency. Seriously, hiding public contracts is not transparency, it is secrecy.

Can the government actually be transparent and simply disclose who it gave taxpayers' money to for Roxham Road? People have the right to know.

● (1445)

Hon. Helena Jaczek (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

As is practice, disclosing confidential contractual information would violate the agreement we have with the supplier. We will continue to work with the departments and agencies to meet their needs through fair and open contracts.

* * *

[English]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have been dealing with a lot of gaslighting from the other side of the chamber when it comes to EI tax hikes. It is refreshing that the finance minister has finally admitted it, when she

Oral Questions

said, "Doubling the GST...for six months is around \$2.5 billion and the proposed EI freeze is around \$2.5 billion".

Given that she is finally admitting that EI is a tax, will she commit the government today to stopping the planned tax hike on Canadian paycheques?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the facts are clear. EI premiums are lower today than when the official opposition leader oversaw them. In fact, they are the lowest they have been in decades. Come next January, the premium rate will be 25¢ lower than in 2015 under the opposition leader.

On this side of the House, we believe in supporting Canadian workers and jobs.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, only Liberals would believe those lines. The Canadian families I am hearing from are just hanging on by a thread. Four out of five Canadians have changed their diets because of this Liberal government. Canadians cannot afford any more little tax grabs on Canadian paycheques.

When will the minister stop printing money, stop with the wasteful government spending that is fuelling inflation and stop the tripling of taxes on Canadians?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here is an idea. We can support dental care for kids with disabilities. Here is another idea. We can pass Bill C-22 and lift hundreds of thousands of persons with disabilities out of poverty. Those are two really big concrete things that we can deliver together for Canadians.

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Germany, U.K., France, Sweden, Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Australia and more have all cut fuel taxes or duties to help households deal with rising inflation. Instead of lowering taxes like our peers, the government wants to make energy more expensive.

The Liberal government must know something the rest of the world does not. What it will not admit is that the carbon tax is inflationary because it gets passed through to everything. Will the government cancel its plans to hike taxes and finally give Canadians a break?

Oral Questions

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a riddle for you. What does the following list of states and countries have in common: Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Korea, Norway, Mexico, South Africa, Sweden, the U.K., provinces like Quebec, B.C. and Alberta and countries like China? They all have a price on carbon. Alberta, in fact, has had a price on carbon since 2004. It is almost 20 years.

That is what is happening in Canada and around the world. We are fighting climate change and we are helping Canadians.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister downplays a 9% increase in the employment insurance tax. She says it is no big deal, even though the Liberal government collects billions more in EI premiums than it pays out to workers, just when inflation is at a 40-year high and gas is \$2.40 a litre in Vancouver. Hard-working Canadians are struggling to make ends meet. Do Liberals just not care or are they just incompetent?

Will the Liberal government cancel its plan to raise taxes on Canadian paycheques?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what hard-working Canadians need is the security of knowing that when they retire, their pensions will be there. What hard-working Canadians need is the security of knowing that our EI system is going to be there when someone loses their job. That is why our government is standing by the Canada pension plan. We are standing by EI. We know it would be the height of irresponsibility today, at a time of real global economic uncertainty, to slash and starve these essential programs Canadians need.

* * *

● (1450)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it has been years since the national inquiry, and progress on ending violence against indigenous women and girls and two-spirit people has been painfully slow. Yesterday, advocates and families of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls raised serious concerns about how police have handled their cases. This includes inadequate communication. In fact, 11 of the 231 calls for justice from the inquiry relate to policing, but families keep reporting the same issues.

When will the government act to implement the calls for justice on policing so families can finally have justice?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, coming off of the weekend where we marked the second National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, I want to assure my colleague and all members in the House that we are united in taking concrete steps toward the path of reconciliation as it relates to public safety. We are accelerating the rollout of our first nations and indigenous policing program, where we have allocated nearly \$1 bil-

lion. Very recently, we issued a joint statement with Alberta to bring back the Siksika police service. That is a concrete step toward reconciliation.

There is far more to do when it comes to providing culturally sensitive training. When it comes to empowering indigenous communities to protect the members who live within those communities, this government will walk that path with indigenous peoples.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, colonial laws and policies remain deep-rooted. Death by suicide in Nunavut is 10 times higher than the rest of Canada. I have asked the government repeatedly to invest in Nunavut and indigenous communities so they can thrive, but the government is still failing to deliver the mental health supports needed. Monday is World Mental Health Day and indigenous communities are watching.

Will the government deliver by indigenous, for indigenous mental health services?

Hon. Dan Vandal (Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely right that losing one person to suicide is one too many. Our government is committed, through the actions we are taking, to do all things necessary to eradicate the horrible problem. We are working co-operatively with Inuit rights holders, with the Government of Nunavut, with territorial governments and all provinces to eradicate the suicide crisis that is prevalent in the north.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today marks 1,000 painful days since the Islamic Republic of Iran shot down flight PS752, killing all 176 passengers, including 85 Canadians and permanent residents. Last week, Canada hosted the 41st assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization in Montreal.

Would the Minister of Transport share with members of the House what Canada is doing to hold Iran to account?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his advocacy on holding Iran accountable for criminally shooting down flight PS752. Our government made a solemn commitment to the families of the victims that we will pursue justice and accountability with vigour. We have been utilizing and we will continue to utilize all legal and international mechanisms to achieve that goal.

In the process, we are leading the world in advancing reforms to ensure such tragedies never occur again. At ICAO, Canada is advancing action to implement the safer skies initiative and reform the way tragedies are investigated. We owe it to the families that we remain focused on honouring their loved ones.

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[Translation]

TAXATION

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not news to my colleagues that the cost of living has now made things so difficult that more and more Canadians are living paycheque to paycheque. The Conservatives have made concrete suggestions to give them a bit of relief: Cancel the January 1 tax increase and above all cancel the carbon tax that the government wants to triple.

What is the government doing? It refuses to listen. Is it too much to ask this government and the Prime Minister of Canada to please listen and be compassionate?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has a plan with very concrete suggestions.

First, we will double the GST credit. The conservatives now agree, bravo, but there are two other measures. I encourage the Conservatives to support these as well. We will make a \$500 payment to help the poor pay their rent. The other very important measure is for children and dental care.

I believe that Canadians agree that children must—

• (1455)

[English]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with grocery inflation at 40-year highs, half of Canadian households are struggling just to be able to feed themselves. Food bank shelves are nearly bare. Canadians are beyond just struggling. Most of them, many of them, are hanging on by a thread. Canadians are tough, but they have a government that continues to punish them while they are just trying to get by.

Will the Liberals cancel their plans to triple the taxes on gas, home heating and groceries?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to read an excerpt from the last report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer on carbon pricing in Canada, which states, “we project most households will see a net gain, receiving more in rebates from federal carbon pricing under the [government] than the total amount they pay in federal fuel charges”. He adds, “For the vast majority of households in the backstop provinces, their rebates exceed their carbon costs.”

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the cost of living is rising for all Canadians. There is an energy and a food security crisis in Europe and it is coming to

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Canada. Germany is firing up its coal plants again so it can survive the winter. By tripling the carbon tax, the Prime Minister is tripling the taxes on home heating, gas and groceries. These tax increases make Canada less competitive, driving investment and good jobs out of our country.

Will the government end its triple tax plan for Canadians?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, \$7 billion was the cost to Canadians of the forest fire in Fort McMurray. Nine billion dollars was the cost to Canadians of the floods in B.C. last year. The cost of Fiona will likely be above anything we have seen in Canada.

The cost of climate impacts in this country have gone up 400% in the last decade. Canadians are paying the cost of that. What is the answer from the Conservative Party of Canada? There is nothing. On this side of the House, we will fight climate change and we will support Canadians.

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a real question and I expect a real answer.

In a recent poll, over 80% of Canadians said they are cutting back on spending because of the high cost of living. Over half said they cannot keep up with the prices they are paying. Because of the Liberal mismanagement of our economy, people are hanging on by a financial thread. Our seniors are worried they will not be able to survive.

Will the Liberal government do the right thing and cancel its plan to triple taxes on gas, groceries and home heating?

Hon. Kamal Khara (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will not take any lessons from the party opposite, whose plan for seniors was to raise the age of retirement to 67.

We know Canadians are struggling, and that is precisely why we are doubling the GST credit. That means seniors would receive an extra \$233 in their pockets. We also increased old age security for seniors. That is \$800 more for a full pension. On this side of the House, we will continue to have the backs of Canadians and seniors.

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[Translation]

SPORT

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the fact that Hockey Canada had a fund to settle sexual assault claims against its players is unacceptable. That it needed a second fund, as we learned yesterday, is disgusting. Everyone agrees on that.

Oral Questions

The management and the board of directors need to step down. It is time to clean house. Today in committee we again saw that they are determined to stay put. Since the beginning of the summer, it has been scandal after scandal. There is a new one every week. Enough is enough. We need to get to the bottom of this for once and for all.

When will the minister launch an independent investigation into Hockey Canada?

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the stories we hear week after week about Hockey Canada are painful to say the least.

We get the impression that leadership at Hockey Canada is more interested in protecting its jobs than taking care of the safety of the public, women and its players. That is why I have suspended funding for Hockey Canada. We will reinstate it only when Hockey Canada becomes a member of the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner, which could investigate the matter.

• (1500)

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would remind the members that in June, the House unanimously adopted a motion calling for an independent inquiry into Hockey Canada. More than three months later, the same people are sitting on the board of directors, following the same practices of protecting sexual misconduct. It is the same toxic culture, and there is no indication that it is being challenged.

Hockey Canada no longer has the trust of the male players, let alone the female players. It does not have the trust of parents. It does not have the trust of the House; that part is unanimous.

After more than three months, why is the minister still refusing to launch an independent investigation into how Hockey Canada is handling sexual misconduct complaints?

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by acknowledging my parliamentary colleagues who have done an outstanding job with the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage and who have asked the right questions of Hockey Canada officials.

We expect voting members to ensure that there will be a permanent change in leadership at Hockey Canada and to ensure that changes are made to the culture of sport and sexual abuse once and for all.

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[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been 1,000 days since IRGC terrorists killed 55 Canadians in the plane they shot down, 1,000 days for the families who still have not been given the justice they deserve.

How is banning a group that has murdered Canadians, that brutalizes its own citizens and that oppresses minorities even a question for the Liberal government? How is it okay to allow terrorists

associated with this regime to come to Canada, raise money and intimidate Canadians? Will the minister have the guts to ban these terrorists today?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it has been 1,000 days, 1,000 long days for moms, dads, sisters and brothers to deal with the tragedy, the criminal action that was the downing of flight PS752. The government has been taking action every day in that regard, and we are incredibly seized with constantly making sure we listen to the families, we act within international law and we continue to get justice for the families. We will not stop until justice is done.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we should have the strongest sanctions, but we do not.

In 2018, every member of the Liberal cabinet voted to list the IRGC as a terrorist organization. Yesterday, they would not reaffirm their position. What happened in between? The IRGC has blown up a plane, killing 50 Canadians, and they have killed thousands of innocent people, including Mahsa Amini. The IRGC terrorists have organized, raised money and made Canada home.

I have one question: When did the government lose its way? When did it happen?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we believe in action, and we have been taking action for 1,000 days.

Canada will never be a sanctuary for any terrorist from any country, including from Iran. Canada will always have a strong sanctions regime. That is why this week we announced 35 more sanctions on people who have committed crimes in Iran. That adds to the already 200 sanctions that were put on. That is why we have continually stood with the people of Iran as we name Iran as a sponsor of state terrorism. That is what it is, and we will continue to act for the people of Iran to ensure human rights.

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want real action.

The House voted four years ago to list the IRGC as a terrorist organization, yet the government chose not to do it. Then, in 2020, the IRGC killed 55 Canadians and 30 permanent Canadian residents by shooting down their flight, and still the government has not banned the IRGC from organizing, planning and raising money in Canada.

When will the Liberals ban the IRGC from operating in Canada?

Oral Questions

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I share my colleague's sentiments, and I want to assure him and every member of Parliament that we are indeed taking concrete action to ensure that no one who would operate within the IRGC would have the capability of doing so in Canada. We are doing that by listing the IRGC Quds Force; we are doing that by sanctioning the members of the morality police; we are doing that by listing Iran as a state supporter of terrorism.

We have delivered consequences, and we will continue to explore and exhaust all options to hold those responsible accountable and defend human rights here and around the world.

* * *

• (1505)

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in August, the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change announced the 10 members of the Environment and Climate Change Youth Council. At home, I have already seen that the youth on my youth council have the determination, collaborative spirit and creativity to find bold solutions to today's environmental challenges.

Can the minister tell us about the importance of youth involvement in climate action?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Châteauguay—Lacolle for her question and her dedication to the issue of climate change and the environment.

I am pleased to announce that we will be welcoming the first members of this youth council tomorrow and Thursday in Ottawa. This council will provide the Government of Canada with the opportunity to hear from young Canadians who are passionate about urgent climate and environmental issues and to work together to find solutions to climate change in their communities. The skills, experience and ingenuity of these members are an invaluable contribution to Canada's efforts to create a better environment, a better future for all.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, where is the Prime Minister?

The last time I saw him he was on video, bungee jumping.

In the meantime, women, men and children are being killed by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in Iran. If that were not bad enough, the Prime Minister is allowing this same terrorist organization to continue to organize, make plans and raise money here in Canada.

When will the Prime Minister show some courage and stop the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps from operating in Canada?

The Speaker: I would remind members that when they are asking questions, or responding to them or speaking in the House, they

are not allowed to question the presence of anyone. The work of a member, whether he or she is a minister, the prime minister or an opposition member, can be done anywhere in the country.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

We need to show some respect for people who are not here and are working outside the House. Every member has the right to work elsewhere. When they are not here, we do not ask where they are.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[English]

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am going to rather humbly suggest we pack the rhetoric aside for a moment. One thing I heard very clearly from the families of victims of flight 752 was that we should not make this a partisan issue. That is what they said out there today. That is what they are asking every day. They are asking for us to work constructively and creatively together.

Yesterday I had the opportunity to meet with family members, with the Prime Minister, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, with the Minister of Transport and with the High Commissioner from London. We will continue to work every day for those families, because we care about them.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one thing the families have made very clear is that they want to see the IRGC listed as a terrorist organization, so that it can no longer operate here in Canada. This can cease to be a partisan issue as soon as the government comes along with us and does the right thing by listing it.

The fact is that the families of the victims have been harassed by the IRGC even here on Canadian soil when they have spoken out. No family deserves to see their relatives murdered and receive harassment by foreign governments here on Canadian soil.

When will the government defend our sovereignty, stand with Canadians of all backgrounds and shut down IRGC operations here in Canada?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past June I went to Northern Secondary School for their graduation ceremony. I watched about 400 kids graduate from grade 12. One person was not there. Her name was Maya Zibaie, and she was in grade 10 when she was killed by criminal action that downed a plane, flight 752. Let us respect Maya's memory for a moment. Let us for a moment respect her family and all the families who lost their loved ones.

Oral Questions

We will continue to work with them as we take every measure, as we continue to impose sanctions, as we continue to list the appropriate bodies and as we make a real difference to get this work done.

• (1510)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not doubt the member's sincerity, but the way to honour the victims is by punishing the perpetrators. It is very simple.

The member, the Prime Minister and the entire cabinet voted for my motion to list the IRGC as a terrorist entity. In 2012, Conservatives listed the Quds Force and listed Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism, but since taking power the Liberal government has done absolutely nothing. One of its own members acknowledged on CBC yesterday that the IRGC is still operating in Canada. He called the government's actions "too little, too late".

When will it end the inaction and shut down the IRGC in Canada?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful my colleague has set aside partisanship for a moment to honour the memories of Mahsa Amini, and set aside partisanship to honour the memories of the loved ones who were lost in the downing of PS752.

We need to work together to continue to deliver consequences for those who are responsible for transgressions of human rights and for those who are suppressing the rights of women and other vulnerable groups. We stand with those groups. We know they are marching. We know they are speaking with their voices. This is a moment for us to do the work that is necessary to hold those responsible to account so that we can stand up for human rights here and around the world. We will do that.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Philippines is among Canada's most vital trading partners in the Indo-Pacific region. We share strong people-to-people ties with the Philippines and have roughly one million Canadians from the Filipino diaspora who currently call Canada home.

Could the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development inform the members of the House about Canada's recent investments and the success of her recent trip to the Philippines?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Mississauga-Streetsville for her question and, indeed, for her advocacy for the Filipino-Canadian community.

I had a very productive trip to the Philippines. I have seen the people-to-people ties and the trade and investment opportunities being created in both countries. I had the opportunity to see Canadian infrastructure and construction giant WSP in the middle of a skyway that has been built there. I visited Jollibee, which now has 24 locations here in Canada and plans to expand. I met with terrific

women entrepreneurs and, finally, with clean-tech companies that are pitching to climate investors in—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver East.

* * *

HOUSING

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' 1% vacancy tax does not come close to adequately addressing the financialization of housing. It lets corporate landlords off the hook who profit from renovating tenants and jacking up rent. Financial firms now hold up to 30% of Canada's rental housing stock. They do not care about families. Their goal is to line their own pockets, yet the Liberals continue to finance them, knowing that they are a key driver of the housing affordability crisis.

Will the Liberals stop financing these corporate landlords that are keeping families from having a roof over their heads?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in addition to the 1% tax, we have introduced a two-year ban on foreign ownership of Canadian residential real estate, but we are not stopping there. We have also launched a review of the tax treatment with real estate investment trusts. Through budget 2022, we have launched a federal review of housing as an asset class.

We are committed to making housing more affordable by doing our part in tackling the financialization of the housing sector.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, right now, heroic women and men are risking their lives fighting for their rights and freedoms, demanding justice for Mahsa "Gina" Amini and for the victims of flight PS752. The government must use the Magnitsky act to punish every guilty member of the murderous IRGC. The violence and intimidation in Canada must stop, and Canada must support bids for justice at the ICAO and the ICC.

It has been a thousand days. We need justice, we need action and we need it now. When will the government stop with the half-symbolic measures and support the Iranian people?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is an important question and a sincere one. I share with her the frustration. I share with her the anger and the impatience of victims of flight PS752. I also share the expression of courage and tenacity of the women who are bravely on the streets and in the universities of Iran today.

We will continue to work with her, her party and anyone else in the House who would like to find the best and the most important and effective ways of sanctioning individuals to show that there should be no impunity for any violation of human rights in Iran or anywhere in the world.

* * *

• (1515)

[Translation]

HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and I believe that you will find unanimous consent for the following motion, which I will read in English.

[English]

That the House strongly condemn the killing of Jina Mahsa Amini at the hands of the so-called Iranian “morality police”, a direct consequence of the systemic and sustained harassment and repression of women by the Iranian government; that the House reiterates its support for women's rights as human rights; that the House salutes the courage of Iranian women and men protesting in over 100 cities across the country and stands in solidarity with all those demonstrating against the Iranian regime's appalling practices; that the House calls on the Iranian authorities to immediately cease its use of deadly force against peaceful protesters and refrain from committing further acts of violence against its own population; that the House reiterates its support of Canadian sanctions against Iran; and that today, 1,000 days since Ukraine International Airlines flight 752 was shot down by the Iranian regime, the House stand united in solidarity with the families of the victims.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I was just trying to follow the language on mine, and there was one line that may have been missed: and that the House call on the government to immediately list the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist entity under the Criminal Code.

Did the member mean to read that part of the motion?

The Speaker: I just want to remind the hon. members that the generosity of the Speaker is there, but not to take advantage of it.

All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay.

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

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if there would be unanimous consent of the House—

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: —for the following motion: that the House call on the government to immediately list the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, IRGC, as a terrorist entity under the—

The Speaker: I believe that with unanimous consent, we try to have consultation before hand. I was pretty clear about that, and so was the Deputy Speaker, on consulting with everyone, so when we get here, we have already spoken about it, we know what is going on and we go from there. That is unanimous consent.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been consultation with all parties and the member was simply moving a motion in search of unanimous consent, as is his right, and I ask that you, Mr. Speaker, honour his right.

The Speaker: It was clear that he did not have unanimous consent, but I thank the member for bringing that up.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent, which was given earlier, for the following motion that, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House, (a) the debate pursuant to Standing Order 66 on motions—

An hon. member: No.

The Speaker: I am afraid I am hearing no unanimous consent already. I will leave it there.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe that if you check this side of the House, we were not withholding unanimous consent. We were not saying boo; we were saying boo-urns. Please allow him to continue.

• (1520)

The Speaker: I just want to make it clear what the rules are. If one person says no, we do not have unanimous consent, and I was hearing very clearly that we did not.

Therefore, I am going to take that as a retraction. If the hon. member who disagreed wants to say no, I will let that person say it again. In the meantime, we will let the hon. member for Winnipeg North continue, on the advice of the opposition House leader.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HEALTH AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am asking for unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House:

(a) the debate pursuant to Standing Order 66 on Motion No. 8 to concur in the third report of the Standing Committee on Health be resumed today at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment, and at the conclusion of the time provided for the debate or when no member rises to speak, whichever is earlier, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be deemed put and a recorded division be deemed requested and deferred until Wednesday, October 5, 2022, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions; and

Routine Proceedings

(b) the remainder of the debate pursuant to Standing Order 66 on Motion No. 11 to concur in the first report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, be deemed to have taken place and the motion be deemed agreed to.

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

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

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The House resumed from October 3 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3.20 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion to concur in the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

Call in the members.

• (1535)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 183*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison	Davies	DeBellefeuille
Albas	Aldag	Deltell	d'Entremont
Alghabra	Ali	Desbiens	Desilets
Allison	Anandasangaree	Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Angus	Arnold	Dhillon	Diab
Arseneault	Arya	Doherty	Dong
Ashton	Atwin	Dowdall	Dreeshen
Bachrach	Badawey	Drouin	Dubourg
Bains	Baker	Duclos	Duguid
Baldinelli	Barlow	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Barrett	Barron	Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste	Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Beaulieu	Beech	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Bendayan	Bennett	Fast	Fergus
Benzen	Bergen	Ferri	Fillmore
Bergeron	Berthold	Findlay	Fisher
Bérubé	Bezan	Fonseca	Fortier
Bibeau	Bittle	Fortin	Fragiskatos
Blair	Blanchette-Joncas	Fraser	Freeland
Blaney	Block	Fry	Gaheer
Blois	Boissonnault	Gallant	Garneau
Boulerice	Bradford	Garon	Garrison
Bragdon	Brassard	Gaudreau	Gazan
Brière	Brock	Généreux	Genuis
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins	Gerretsen	Gladu
Cannings	Caputo	Godin	Goodridge
Carrie	Casey	Gould	Gourde
Chabot	Chagger	Gray	Green
Chahal	Chambers	Guilbeault	Hajdu
Champagne	Champoux	Hallan	Hanley
Chatel	Chen	Hardie	Hepfner
Chiang	Chong	Hoback	Holland
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)	Housefather	Hughes
Cooper	Cormier	Hussen	Hutchings
Coteau	Dabrusin	Iacono	Idlout
Dalton	Damoff	Jaczek	Jeneroux
Dancho	Davidson	Johns	Jones
		Jowhari	Julian
		Kayabaga	Kelloway
		Kelly	Khalid
		Khera	Kitchen
		Kmiec	Koutrakis
		Kram	Kramp-Neuman
		Kurek	Kusie
		Kusmierczyk	Kwan
		Lake	Lalonde
		Lamoureux	Lantsman
		Lapointe	Larouche
		Lattanzio	Lauzon
		Lawrence	LeBlanc
		Lebouthillier	Lehoux
		Lemire	Lewis (Essex)
		Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
		Lightbound	Lloyd
		Lobb	Long
		Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
		MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
		MacGregor	MacKenzie
		MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire
		Maloney	Martel
		Martinez Ferrada	Masse
		Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
		May (Saenich—Gulf Islands)	Mazier
		McCauley (Edmonton West)	McDonald (Avalon)
		McGuinty	McKay
		McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLean
		McLeod	McPherson
		Melillo	Mendès
		Mendicino	Miao
		Michaud	Miller
		Moore	Morantz
		Morrice	Morrison
		Morrissey	Motz

Speaker's Ruling

Murray
 Naqvi
 Ng
 Normandin
 Oliphant
 O'Toole
 Paul-Hus
 Perkins
 Petitpas Taylor
 Poilievre
 Qualtrough
 Redekopp
 Rempel Garner
 Roberts
 Rodriguez
 Romanado
 Ruff
 Sajjan
 Sarai
 Scarpaleggia
 Schiefke
 Seeback
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Shipley
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Sinclair-Desgagné
 Sorbara
 Steinley
 Stewart
 Strahl
 Suds
 Taylor Roy
 Therrien
 Thompson
 Tolmie
 Trudel
 Uppal
 Van Bynen
 Van Popta
 Vandenberg
 Vidal
 Viersen
 Villemure
 Vis
 Wagantall
 Waugh
 Weiler
 Williams
 Yip
 Zarrillo
 Zuberi — 323

Muys
 Nater
 Noormohamed
 O'Connell
 O'Regan
 Patzer
 Pauzé
 Perron
 Plamondon
 Powlowski
 Rayes
 Reid
 Richards
 Robillard
 Rogers
 Rood
 Sahota
 Saks
 Savard-Tremblay
 Scheer
 Schmale
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Shields
 Sidhu (Brampton East)
 Simard
 Small
 Soroka
 Ste-Marie
 St-Onge
 Stubbs
 Tassi
 Thériault
 Thomas
 Tochor
 Trudeau
 Turnbull
 Valdez
 van Koeverden
 Vandal
 Vecchio
 Vien
 Vignola
 Virani
 Vuong
 Warkentin
 Webber
 Wilkinson
 Williamson
 Zahid
 Zimmer

Wellington concerning an allegation of intimidation of a committee witness.

The member for Perth—Wellington informed the Chair of a situation that he finds troubling. Following a witness's appearance before a Senate committee, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage submitted an inquiry request to the Commissioner of Lobbying regarding the witness's activities. The witness had also appeared before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage in March and May of this year.

According to the member, the parliamentary secretary's conduct constitutes an attempt to intimidate the witness, an act which could be considered a contempt of the House.

While the member acknowledged that this matter relates to the work of the other place, he argued that the House of Commons should be able to take up the issue because the alleged act was committed by a member and only the House can exercise disciplinary authority over its members.

[Translation]

As the member for Perth—Wellington noted, this question of privilege stems from the deliberations of a Senate committee. My role as Speaker is limited to only protecting the rights and privileges of the House of Commons and its members. As stated in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, on page 317, and I quote: "It is the responsibility of the Speaker to act as the guardian of the rights and privileges of Members and of the House as an institution."

[English]

Therefore, the Chair cannot exercise its authority to protect the rights and privileges of the other house of Parliament. The Chair will not review or rule on that house's business.

[Translation]

That said, the Chair has reviewed the facts submitted that are within its purview. It is not immediately apparent that the conduct in question was intended as an attempt to intimidate the witness or an act of reprisal for his appearances before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

The Chair would also remind members of the importance of choosing their words carefully when discussing the conduct of other members.

● (1540)

[English]

In the opinion of the Chair, this matter does not warrant priority consideration over all other House business. I therefore consider the matter closed.

I thank members for their attention.

[Translation]

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by 13 minutes.

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Members

Epp

Joly — 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED INTIMIDATION OF A COMMITTEE WITNESS BY A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised on September 28, 2022, by the member for Perth—

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***COST OF LIVING RELIEF ACT, NO. 1**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-30, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (temporary enhancement to the Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax credit), be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I used to serve as a volunteer firefighter in my community. However, one does not need to be a firefighter to know that one cannot put out a fire by pouring more gas on it. That is exactly what the Liberals have done.

They have created the worst cost of living crisis by overspending the hard-earned tax dollars of Canadians, causing a rapid increase in inflation. With inflation at a staggering 7% and economists warning about an impending economic recession, the Liberals continue to spend.

Many contend that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. Here we are, with a government that overspends Canadians' hard-earned tax dollars, causing inflation. It then continues to spend while claiming that it is helping.

It has lost the plot. As we have learned recently, the Prime Minister enjoys plunging from great heights. I just wish he did not enjoy doing the same thing to the Canadian economy. The Prime Minister's determination to plunge the Canadian economy to record lows is mirrored by the enthusiasm that he showed when he recently went bungee jumping in Chelsea.

Now, the Prime Minister's recent bungee jumping trip was not brave or funny or relatable. It was actually just a metaphor for what he is doing to the Canadian economy, which is making it do a nose-dive.

While the Prime Minister laughs and plays around, 23% of Canadians have reported eating less than they should have because of rising inflation at the grocery store, and 53% of Canadian households are within \$200 or less of financial insolvency. Despite working hard, many Canadians have nothing to show for it. Many more are forced to walk a financial tightrope.

Continued spending will only worsen the existing crisis and squeeze even more Canadian families into financial ruin. Simultaneously, spending is racking up our national debt, which has more than doubled to almost \$1.2 trillion under this Liberal government, with their spending accounting for more spending than all previous governments in Canadian history. They have actually put more onto the national debt than all other governments in this country's history combined.

That amounts to \$32,000 of debt for each and every Canadian. Every hour, that debt increases by over \$6 million. Every day, it increases by \$144 million. Every month, we pay 2 billion dollars' worth of interest on that debt.

What exactly is the government's plan to pay down the debt they have created? Someone needs to be the adult in the room here and

say that enough is enough. Perpetual spending with no end in sight is a reckless economic policy with dire consequences for this and for many future generations.

Now, with this so-called cost of living bill, finally the Liberals are at least admitting that their approach has not worked and that Canadians are suffering as a result.

Conservatives know that the government continues to collect increased GST revenue because of inflation and high gas prices. When the Parliamentary Budget Office releases its upcoming report, we will see just how much they have collected while Canadians were being forced to choose between food and fuel.

At a time when so many Canadians are struggling with high prices, the Liberal government should not be profiteering off of the crisis, especially because gas is so critical to our increasingly vulnerable supply chains, our farmers and our job-creating industries. That is why, in March, Conservatives put forward a motion to suspend the government's collection of GST on fuel. I was disheartened that not a single Liberal or NDP member voted in favour of this much-needed relief.

At least they are coming around a little now. However, the proposal in this bill is too little, too late for the Canadians who need it the most, and it is certainly a poor substitute for Conservative tax relief proposals.

First of all, what is included in this bill is only a temporary measure that lasts for only six months. I am certainly not naive enough to believe that the Liberal government is going to be able to clean up the inflation crisis that it has created and have things back to normal in that six months.

• (1545)

This bill also only applies to individuals who make over \$49,200 and families with children that have a household income of under \$58,500. Believe me, there are individuals making over \$49,200 who are certainly struggling. There are even more families with children making over \$58,000 that are also struggling.

More than 70% of families with children would not be eligible for this support. Even for those that are, this measure certainly falls short. For a qualifying family of four, this measure would only work out to about \$77 a month. That is not even \$20 per family member. It is certainly not enough to displace the cost of inflation.

In the past few weeks, Conservatives have come together and have continued to put forward realistic, responsible proposals that would help to fix the cost of living crisis. Conservatives know that one of the biggest financial burdens facing Canadians right now is the unpredictable and ever-increasing price of gas, due in part to the existing Liberal carbon tax. For many Canadians, especially rural Canadians and business owners, owning and operating a gas-powered vehicle is not a choice. It is an absolute necessity. However, the out-of-touch government continues to impose a punitive tax on them, intending to make them suffer financially. That is what it is intended to do, make them suffer financially for what Liberals consider an immoral choice, to drive a truck or a car.

Government Orders

When the Conservatives learned that the government was planning to go ahead with its plan to triple the carbon tax on Canadians in the middle of this affordability crisis, we fought back. Last week, in the House of Commons, we put forward a motion calling on the Liberals to have some compassion for Canadians who were struggling and cancel their plan to triple the carbon tax. Sadly, not a single member of the Liberal caucus joined us on that motion.

Similarly, Conservatives put forward a motion asking the Liberal government to commit to no new taxes on gas, groceries, home heating and paycheques. Given that our country is in an economic crisis and people are already struggling as it is, we think that would be a pretty easy motion to support. I do not think it was a very big ask at all. We were only asking the government not to increase taxes on the necessities that Canadians need to keep alive, to keep warm and to keep fed. However, the Liberals voted against our motion.

What message are the Liberals sending to Canadians? Are they planning even more tax hikes? Do they really believe that now, of all times, is a good time to raise taxes on Canadians even further?

Our party has made it clear that a Conservative government would fight inflation, fix the cost of living crisis and pay down the national debt by adhering to a responsible pay-as-you-go system. Under this system, our government would find a dollar in savings for taxpayers for every government dollar spent, returning Canada to fiscal responsibility. A Conservative government would reflect on the financial values that Canadians practice in their everyday lives by budgeting responsibly and by ensuring that we are spending wisely, finding savings wherever possible.

I do not think it is too much to ask that governments conduct themselves in the same way that we expect all Canadians to conduct themselves. Canadians, when there are tough times, sometimes have a need to put a little money on their credit card. Maybe the roof springs a leak right when they lose a job. They might have to take on a little debt just to cover that. However, once they are employed again, they are going to try to pay down that debt. That is always the first thing any Canadian would do, try to pay down the debt. Then they would undertake whatever other spending they might think is necessary for their household. They would try to pay down that debt and try to make the prudent choices.

I do not think it is too much to ask that governments do the same thing. That money comes from somewhere. It comes from Canadians. It is their hard-earned tax dollars. It is money that Canadians have worked hard to earn, to help make sure that they meet the needs of themselves and their families. Every dollar that the government takes from those Canadian families needs to be done with the mindset in government that it is only taking what is absolutely needed for the core services that government provides and to make sure that money is spent appropriately and wisely, because the government is taking away the opportunity for Canadian to make choices for themselves with their own money, so all we expect is for the government to do the same.

• (1550)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in listening to the member's comments, I think it is impor-

tant that we recognize that we are debating Bill C-30, a bill that will give 11 million people in Canada a break with respect to the GST and put more money into their pockets. Every member of the House of Commons today is supporting Bill C-30. We could send a very strong and powerful message to Canadians and pass this legislation. The speech the member gave could have been given on Bill C-31, which is a bill the Conservatives oppose.

I wonder if the member could comment on this from his perspective. If he sees a bill he likes and he wants to help Canadians, should we pass it through and have more debate on Bill C-31, so we can find out what the differences are between the two sides, the governing and opposition parties. Would he agree?

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, the member wants to know what the difference is between the Liberals and the Conservatives. I can tell him that very clearly.

The Conservatives want to ensure we take good care of the hard-earned tax dollars of Canadians. We want to make sure we are putting Canadians first and not making life more difficult for them through the kinds of things we have seen from the Liberal government. That is the difference between the Liberals and the Conservatives.

We are talking about a bill that does have the support of everyone in the House. I heard it put really well by one of my colleagues earlier today. If taxpayers have a loaf of bread, the government is going to take that bread from them and give them just a few crumbs back. That is what the government is doing. It has no compassion and no understanding of what Canadians are dealing with.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am glad to hear my hon. colleague say that all parties in the House will support this bill, but I was taken aback by his attempt to make it seem like this amount of money is inconsequential. It is easy for a member of Parliament, who makes a minimum of \$185,000 a year, to stand in the House to say that \$500 does not mean much to someone. My daughter is an adult with special needs. She has friends who live on \$15,000 a year. For someone who is earning \$15,000, \$20,000 or \$25,000 a year, that \$500 is incredibly significant.

I wonder if the member could speak to that. Would he agree with me that giving temporary relief of \$500 to help fight inflation to people who make under \$40,000 or \$50,000 a year can make a real difference in their lives?

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, I would first point out that the member certainly misunderstood or misconstrued my comments. I understand that. He is simply trying to justify the fact that the NDP are trying to prop up a government that does not deserve to be propped up. He has to try to justify that somehow to his voters, so I get what he is trying to do, and it is his prerogative to do that.

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Having said that, is the amount of money we are talking about here going to help people? Sure it will. That is why we are supporting it. Does it do enough? No, it certainly does not do enough. There are a lot of Canadians who will not receive any support from this. There are far better ways this could be done. That is what I was trying to point out in my speech.

• (1555)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Banff—Airdrie for keeping the focus on Canadians in his speech.

The Liberal member across the way was talking about Bill C-31, not Bill C-30. The Parliamentary Budget Officer will be doing an update next week on the cost of that, so I think it is important that we all wait and get that costing before we have a fair analysis of Bill C-31.

I want to reiterate the point that the member made that the government did not use the summer to do the hard work to find offsetting spending cuts so it could avoid the criticism of being more inflationary. I would like him to comment on how important it is that Canadians not only deserve support, but also have a government that does not fuel inflation and actually fights it.

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, the member made a great point. There is no doubt that the spending the government has undertaken has led to more difficulties and more pain for Canadians with the inflation we have seen as a result of some of its actions. Canadians deserve a government that will consider what the effect would be on Canadians when it needs to spend money and try to find ways where it can find savings.

One of the policies the new leader of the Conservative Party, the Leader of the Opposition, has put forward is the idea that for every new dollar spent we find some savings, because we expect government to be run the same way we expect Canadians to run their households.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

I am pleased to contribute to the debate on this important legislation today. Making life more affordable for Canadians is a key priority for our government. The pandemic has been tough for everyone, and unfortunately one of the consequences has been inflation. This worldwide inflation problem has made affordability a real concern for many Canadians, including in my riding of Whitby, and especially for the most vulnerable.

We understand that there are those who are going through hard times, but this government has real solutions to the cost of living struggles of many Canadians. Overall, the government's affordability plan is delivering targeted and fiscally responsible financial support to the Canadians who need it most, with particular emphasis on addressing the needs of low-income Canadians who are most exposed to inflation.

The government's affordability plan includes an enhanced Canada workers benefit that will put up to \$2,400 more into the pockets of low-income families. There is a 10% increase in old age security for seniors over 75, which will provide more than \$800 in

new support to full pensioners over the first year and increase benefits for more than three million seniors.

We are also cutting regulated child care fees in half by the end of this year. We have doubled the Canada student grant until July 2023 and are waiving interest on Canada student loans through to March 2023. The main support programs, including the Canada child benefit, the GST tax credit, the Canada pension plan, old age security and the guaranteed income supplement, are all indexed to inflation so those will be increasing as well.

Two weeks ago, the government tabled two important pieces of legislation in Parliament. The bills represent the latest suite of measures to support Canadians with the rising cost of living without adding to inflation. Bill C-31 would make it so that up to half a million children under 12 would be able to see a dentist, and low-income renters would receive a little extra breathing room with a \$500 payment to help with the cost of rent.

The bill we are discussing today is Bill C-30, which would double the GST tax credit for six months. Doubling the GST credit would provide \$2.5 billion in additional targeted support to the roughly 11 million individuals and families who already receive the tax credit. That includes about nine million single individuals, almost two million couples and more than half of all Canadian seniors. Just think about that. Over half of all Canadian seniors are going to be supported by this measure.

The GST tax credit is indexed to inflation on an annual basis. For the July 2022 to June 2023 benefit year, the value of the GST credit grew by 2.4%. However, because these increases are based on the inflation rate from the prior year, the sharp rise in inflation in 2022 is not yet reflected in the GST credit payments that Canadians are currently receiving. This is why the extra top-up is the right thing to do at this particular time, because Canadians are not going to get the benefit of an increased GST tax credit payment until the following year. It is a good thing that we are topping it up.

Single Canadians without children would receive up to an extra \$234, and seniors would receive an extra \$225 on average. I have another example of how it would work. A single mother with one child and \$30,000 in net income will receive \$386.50 for the July through December 2022 period, and another payment of the same amount for the January through June 2023 period under the current GST credit. With the temporary doubling of the GST credit amounts for six months, she would receive an additional \$386.50. In total, she would be receiving about \$1,160 this benefit year through the GST credit.

• (1600)

A couple with two children and \$35,000 in net income would receive \$467 for the July through December 2022 period and another \$467 for the January through June 2023 period under the current GST credit. With the temporary doubling of the GST credit amounts for six months, this family would receive an additional \$467. In total, it would receive \$1,401 this benefit year through the GST credit.

The proposed extra GST credit amounts would be paid to all current recipients through the existing GST credit system as a one-time lump sum payment before the end of the year, pending, of course, the adoption of the legislation. This highlights the importance of getting this done as quickly as possible, as we all can agree Canadians are feeling the pressures of inflation and the cost of living increases.

Importantly, recipients would not need to apply for the additional payment, but should make sure to file their 2021 tax returns, if they have not done so already, to be able to receive the current credit and the additional payment. Bill C-30 and the other important measures I mentioned would deliver targeted support to the Canadians who need it most without adding unnecessary fuel to the fire and allow inflation to become entrenched. That is a major concern, and we do not want inflation to become entrenched. That is something that would in fact be counterproductive and make life more expensive for everyone for years to come.

However, we cannot compensate every single Canadian for rising costs driven by global events. To do so would make inflation worse. Bill C-30 is about balancing fiscal responsibility with compassion. This support is the right thing to do at the right time. Even as we deal with the very real challenges that the global economy is facing right now, it is important for us to take real comfort in the reality that Canada has a very strong economic foundation as we face these global challenges.

Canada has the lowest deficit this year in the G7. Canada has the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7, and Canada's AAA credit rating was reaffirmed this year by Moody's, S&P and DBRS. The International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development predict that Canada's recovery will be the second fastest in the G7 this year and next. That is a pretty good track record.

The government's affordability plan has already been putting more money back in the pockets of Canadians who need it most. We will continue to provide timely support where it is needed most, all while maintaining fiscal discipline.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, we certainly welcome and are pleased with this new GST credit, because the Bloc Québécois has been asking for it for several months and the government was refusing to listen.

That being said, my constituents, who are struggling to make ends meet, buy groceries every week, pay their rent every month and fill up regularly at the pump. How is it that the government has not yet thought to send households their GST rebate checks on a

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monthly basis, so they can receive the money quickly, at the same time they incur their costs?

• (1605)

[*English*]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, the member opposite mentioned, just as constituents in my riding have shared with me, concerns about the cost of living, which are very real for Canadian families. Our government has put forward a whole suite of measures. There is the 50% reduction in child care fees, which is thousands of dollars per year to Canadian families with children. There is dental care for children under 12, rental assistance payments, financial assistance for those with disabilities, which will hopefully be passed in the House shortly, and a 10% increase in OAS for seniors over 75. We have doubled Canada student grants and waived interest on Canada student loans. CCB payments are going up, and the price on pollution has moved to direct quarterly payments. What more can we—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have to allow time for other questions.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to quickly raise that students will actually be paying higher interest rates under the government. That is something that has recently been revealed. The member may want to consider his caucus talking about that.

The member talked about fiscal discipline. Conservatives are supporting this bill because it has targeted tax relief to help Canadians who are struggling right now. However, will the member recognize that right now the average family of four may receive \$467, but they are going to be paying over \$1,200 just in groceries alone? The Governor of the Bank of Canada has written to the finance committee saying that the carbon tax is an inflationary tax and that the government's plan to triple, triple, triple the carbon tax over the next few years is going to hit them the hardest, by paying more for groceries, gas and heat.

Does the member recognize that fiscal discipline means recognizing when people are at a breaking point?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, I really am at a loss for words with the incessant repetition of “triple, triple, triple” so many times in the House. It reminds me of a Tim Hortons drive-through. Maybe the Conservatives should stop their caffeine-induced rage farming over the climate plan we have and the price on pollution and rather focus on what Canadians really need, which is information and solutions.

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To me, when I look at the price on pollution, it has moved to direct quarterly payments. Families in my ridings are getting \$745 this year directly from the federal government. If we look at the whole package of supports, it is well beyond what families are paying extra at the grocery store or at the pump.

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, I hear that from the Liberals all the time. They like to put out all sorts of numbers, and they put them out so much that people who are watching can hear all these big numbers, like the \$1,000 they are going to get back, when in reality it is a much smaller number. They inflate that number, just like they inflate inflation and just like they inflate the taxes that are on these people. Unfortunately, taxes are going up and prices are going up. Seniors, I suspect, in the member's riding, after taking retirement, are going to turn around and now say, especially those in my riding, that they are going to have to go back to work because they cannot afford the cost of living anymore because of increased costs.

It is one thing to help out, and it is nice to see that, but the bottom line is that ending the taxes will help these people much faster.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, my apologies to the member opposite if he does not like the numbers the Liberal Party puts out, but they are factual and based in reality. Based on the many measures we have put out there, Canadian families are getting a whole package of supports in their time of need, everything from the Canada child benefit and a reduction in child care fees to direct quarterly payments for the price on pollution and the GST tax credit. When we put all those together, there are hundreds and even thousands of dollars that Canadian families are getting benefit from.

• (1610)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the hon. member for Whittby, for sharing his time with me. I am honoured to stand here on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin nation and say *meegwetch*.

This has been a somewhat frustrating debate, as many speakers have noted. There is unanimous support in this place for Bill C-30, yet there are things we want to debate. For my part, I would just like to say that I support Bill C-30 because Canadians need help. Raising and doubling the GST rebate that would go to lowest-income Canadians would amount to \$2.5 billion in total, and it would reach, in small amounts, 11 million Canadians. That is not something to sneeze at. People want help, and as my hon. colleague from Vancouver Kingsway said moments ago, \$500 is not a small amount of money when one is really up against it. It will make a difference, and that is why I will vote for this.

We also have Bill C-31 that would provide a one-time only payment of \$500 to help low-income renters as well as begin the really important work toward including dental care in our health care system, an idea originally proposed by the Green Party of Canada.

There is nothing not to like in this bill, but there is much to talk about because it does not address really large problems like what happens if we go into a recession. What if this inflationary problem is not solved by what the Bank of Canada has done in raising rates? The rate hikes have been quite dramatic. What if the rate hikes push

us into a recession? That is a reasonable thing to ask, since that has happened many times before. As a matter of fact, according to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' economist David Macdonald, every time over the last 60 years that rate hikes have been used to address inflation, recession has occurred.

[*Translation*]

This really is a very difficult situation because we must also face international crises, including the climate change crisis, the pandemic, and the war between Russia and Ukraine.

[*English*]

These are complex problems, but those debating in this place, and for obvious reasons political parties, want short, simple bumper sticker solutions that convey support for their party by being definitive and being clear. It reminds me so much of the debate in this place over Bill C-30 or Bill C-31. It also reminds me of a somewhat famous quote from H.L. Mencken, a great journalist who wrote that for every complex problem, there is an answer that is clear, simple and wrong. We see that here so often in what we hear.

I will say what the complexities are and how they are not respected in this debate. This is not something that we can say is a simple problem. Even inflation in its traditional sense is not really simple, but this is not simple inflation. We have many factors. We thought initially that if we saw inflation in some prices of goods post-COVID that it would be in response to the pent-up spending desires of Canadians, who were not able to spend because COVID kept people from enjoying themselves, basically. The same thing happened after the Spanish influenza epidemic in the early part of the 20th century. The roaring twenties were a response to a very dismal period of people being locked down and to the massive number of deaths, in the millions, from the Spanish flu.

We were also told that we would see some initial inflation but it would be transitory and short-lived. That seemed to be holding true until February, when Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine. That led to different costs and real costs rising because of the enormous impact it had immediately on the price of oil. Then there are climate impacts. Climate impacts are inflationary. It is important for my friends across the way to recognize that climate impacts have increased drought, have increased food prices and have increased the high price of some specific ingredients that make a difference in our shopping carts. All of these things combine to create what we are now experiencing in higher prices.

• (1615)

The response we get to this in terms of the interest rates is a debate in this place about how much money the Liberals spent in dealing with COVID and how they were just printing money. I would say this to my Conservative colleagues: I have no doubt that if Stephen Harper had been prime minister through a pandemic, he would have done exactly the same things the current Prime Minister did, because every economy in the G20 followed the same playbook. Every economy in the OECD was taking the same advice. Central bankers were using quantitative easing, a term I learned from the great former finance minister Jim Flaherty, who used quantitative easing. We were doing exactly what all the other economies around the world were doing, with virtually 0% interest rates and quantitative easing to get billions and trillions of dollars of money flowing into the global economy to confront the pandemic and try to save lives. These were complex issues, for sure, but they are simplified.

What I hear from the Conservative benches as we debate Bill C-30 is about inflation and the pain we are undergoing, to which Bill C-30 provides a band-aid. A band-aid is good when one is bleeding, by the way, but it is not a long-term solution. In this debate on Bill C-30, we have been hearing from the Conservatives that all the pain Canadians are experiencing is from the failures of the current government, that inflation is the fault of the current government and that global supply chain problems are the fault of the current government. I suppose the war in Ukraine, by extension, since that has been the proximate cause of the biggest price hikes in energy supply, is the fault of the government as well.

Disproportionately in this debate, the Conservative benches want to blame it for a very small increase, at 2¢ a tonne, in the price on carbon. That affects only some provinces. We have heard more than three times what the impact is. It is minuscule in the context of what we are experiencing and the real pain Canadians are feeling.

The simplification on the Liberal side is to ask us to compare Canada to other countries, as we are doing so much better than them. By the way, we have talked about our debt-to-GDP ratio, but just look at the U.S. debt-to-GDP ratio. It is over 100%, so we are doing better than the United States by quite a lot. However, a single mother who is trying to buy groceries does not really care that overall Canada is doing better on our debt-to-GDP ratio. That is not top of mind. She really wants to know that somebody has her back, as the Liberals like to claim they do.

Both camps, to varying degrees, have oversimplified the problems we are facing. In doing so, I do not think we adequately respect the intelligence of thoughtful Canadians, who are more than prepared to understand that this is a global problem and that we are not the only country experiencing inflation. In fact, some of the countries that are experiencing inflation that is much worse than ours have no carbon price and have not gone through the same policy instruments. This is not a specific problem for which we can blame the Liberals. I will blame the Liberals for many things, but I cannot blame them for this inflation.

When we look at what this is about, I want to refer my colleagues to a book that I think is prescient and worth looking at. It came out in 2005. It is by James Howard Kunstler, who is a best-

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selling author. The book is called *The Long Emergency: Surviving the Converging Catastrophes of the Twenty-First Century*. In it, he pointed out that when the price of gas and oil becomes constrained by real events, we have a real challenge to what we presume to be our right to a certain standard of living, to a certain lifestyle, for lack of a better word.

We can look at the real costs of everything. I am going to quote Andrew Nikiforuk, writing in *The Tyee* and referring to *The Long Emergency*: “Since April 2020 the cost of oil has climbed five-fold. The price of coal, the cheapest of fossil fuels, has hit new highs by nearly 150 per cent.” These are real costs that really affect prices.

What do we need to do if we are serious? We do not need band-aid solutions. We need long-term solutions, anticipating that we may well be in a recession. Let us look at a wealth tax. We need to go back and look at a general wealth tax, but specifically let us look at a windfall tax on oil and gas profits. Oil and gas profits due to the war in Ukraine have had unbelievable gains.

• (1620)

I have come to the end of my time. We need to tax back.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member brought up a really interesting point, which is that the Governor of the Bank of Canada made predictions regarding inflation and then something else was thrown in. It was a wrench. I do not think it is fair to assume that the governor should have known that a war in Ukraine was going to break out. However, the narrative that always comes from the Conservatives is that since the Governor of the Bank of Canada said one thing would happen but another thing happened, he is wrong and is therefore to blame.

Given that the governor could not have possibly known that a war in Ukraine would break out and what the sanctions would be, and hence the impact of it, would she agree that he is indeed not to blame for the fact that he may have gotten that wrong?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, obviously no one can blame the Governor of the Bank of Canada for assuming that it was situation normal. It is not situation normal. I remember when the previous governor of the Bank of Canada, Stephen Poloz, was testifying at the finance committee. When asked if he was worried about the inflationary impact of the government using quantitative easing, he said that inflation was a problem he would love to have. He was worried about deflation.

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The best and brightest folks, who are really bright, did not think that inflation was going to be a problem, and that if it was, it would be temporary and short-lived. We saw the price on some things go way up and the price of other things fall. It is not conventional inflation and it never was.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives will always support lower taxes. That is why we are supporting Bill C-30. My concern is that with one hand, the government is giving a few hundred dollars back to Canadians, but with the other hand, it is actually taking that money away by increasing payroll taxes and the carbon tax and by continuing to spend in a way that financial experts are saying is fuelling the inflationary pressures we are seeing.

Would the member agree that this temporary band-aid is really not going to fix the problem?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, we may not agree on exactly what the problem is. I can agree that the temporary band-aid is not going to fix it.

Just on the point I had before closing, the profits that big oil is getting right now, which are off the charts and are really contributing to pain for Canadians, are essentially war profiteering. The profits are solely due to the war in Ukraine. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has said that if we increase the tax temporarily on the profits of big oil from 15% to 30%, \$8 billion could be distributed to the Canadians who need it most. Let us get in a guaranteed livable income.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, for some time now we have been talking a lot about household purchasing power. We know that part of the decline in purchasing power is due to the drastic increase in the cost of resources, mainly fossil fuels. We know that, in the future, there will be policies to fight climate change that will end up increasing the cost of certain highly polluting goods.

I am wondering if this is now a good time, given the inflation crisis, to think about long-term solutions for Canadian and Quebec households. I am thinking in particular of households in western Canada, who are becoming less vulnerable to price increases by making the transition. I am wondering if the current crisis could inspire us to be more constructive in the long term.

In that light, I am wondering what solutions the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands would suggest.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, my sincere thanks to my colleague.

We have to think about preparing for future hurricanes, floods and heat waves.

In my province, British Columbia, more than 700 people died last summer because of climate change and heat waves. At this time, we are not ready to deal with disasters, which really damage our economy. We must eliminate subsidies to fossil fuel industries and plan to stop producing fossil fuels here, in Canada, with a plan to protect communities and workers. It is a long list.

• (1625)

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Calgary Midnapore.

It is a privilege for me to rise today and speak to Bill C-30 and to be able to enlighten Parliament and Canadians about the real concerns behind this seemingly noble and generous bill.

As everyone knows, setbacks in life cannot always be predicted, but they can be prevented through strong leadership, good judgment and common sense.

Unfortunately, we are feeling the harmful effects of Liberal governance, which was undermining our economies long before the pandemic. It is quite simple to understand. All the economic challenges we are facing at the moment are the result of an irresponsible and free-spending government that has been in place since 2015.

We are caught in a spiral where the cost of living is rising and where this Liberal government's spending to date has significantly increased the cost of living. We call this phenomenon "Justinflation". We are doing the best we can to get through this unprecedented economic scandal. For our economy and our future, "Justinflation" is a real scandal.

Once again, the Liberal government is patting itself on the back of its tattered, old shirt for giving certain Canadians a refund cheque, when in reality that money was taken out of the pockets of Canadians who work hard and are overtaxed. They pay too much in taxes, reflective of a country that has turned communist.

If that is not a real scandal, I wonder what is. It is a grand deception. When the Liberals give money away, people should be wary.

I have heard a lot from my constituents about family allowance cheques and CERB cheques they received in the past, with the same type of masked noble intentions. I also heard about those who did not receive anything: our seniors.

The only support offered in Bill C-30 is some much-needed relief for families. It amounts to \$467. However, once again, some have been forgotten. People with no children who make over \$49,200 and couples with two children, but who make over \$58,500, will not receive a cent.

More than ever, we know that money does not grow on trees. The Liberals, with their inflationary policies, are the only ones who do not know that. The country's coffers are empty. We are living on borrowed money and we are tightening our belts as far as they can go. We certainly warned the Prime Minister during his years of reckless spending, and now we are seeing the results.

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Canadians' wallets are empty too. They are living on their credit card and filling the pantry has become a challenge for many families who are struggling to make ends meet, even with an income that was considered adequate before the arrival of the Liberals in this government. The fact of the matter is that the average family of four now has to spend at least \$1,200 more every year to put food on the table. That is to say nothing of the triple increase in the cost of heating, gas and food.

I will provide some examples and it will all become clear. The price of groceries has increased by 6.8%. It is said to be the most rapid increase in 40 years. The increase in the price of fish is 10.4%; the price of butter, 16.9%; the price of eggs, 10.9%; the price of margarine, 37.5%; the price of bread, 17.6%; the price of dry and fresh pasta, 32.4%; the price of fruit, 13.2%; the price of oranges, 18.5%; the price of apples, 11.8%; the price of coffee, 14.2%; the price of soup, 19.6%; the price of lettuce, 12.4%; the price of potatoes, 10.9%.

• (1630)

I want to talk about our businesses, our regional success stories that are a source of pride both at home and abroad. Contractors are experiencing the same Liberal-induced headaches. For many of them, the money is running out. Not only are businesses suffering from rising material costs and labour shortages, but they are also suffering more than ever from the Liberal government's inflationary measures. The harsh reality is that even small-business bankruptcies are on the rise. According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, one in six businesses are considering closing their doors and 62% of small businesses still have pandemic-related debt. I should mention in passing that I am not talking about the marijuana facilities run by the Liberals' friends. That is a whole other debate.

The Liberals have created a risky environment for small businesses. They cannot afford to do business anymore because of the tax hikes the Liberals are about to bring in, the rising cost of debt and skyrocketing inflation. If the Liberals are serious about the survival, recovery and growth of small business in Canada, they must immediately reverse all tax increases that affect small business.

Now I would like to talk about something that I find totally absurd, the carbon tax increase. If the Liberal government really wanted to make life more affordable for workers, families and seniors, it would cancel the carbon tax increase immediately. These tax hikes are happening at the worst possible time for Canadian families struggling with the rising cost of living due to inflation caused by our Prime Minister's choices. Instead of freezing taxes, the Prime Minister increased them for people who are having trouble making ends meet.

As we all know, life is harder and more complicated, and the machinery of government is moving slowly. People are struggling to stay afloat. Many have lost hope because of the Liberals. Problems keep piling up, everything from passports, temporary foreign workers, immigration and obtaining citizenship to the deficit and balancing the budget.

As for our justice system and the legacy the Liberals are leaving our youth by legalizing soft and hard drugs, what can I say? At this point, even organized crime is getting involved in legal marijuana

production. According to an article in *La Presse*, there is an industrial model of medical marijuana production. A single location is using 36 personal certificates to grow 18,000 plants. If that is not organized, I do not know what is.

In closing, while we can no longer dream of a return to balanced budgets for our children and grandchildren, we can see the light at the end of the tunnel with the recent election of the new Conservative leader, Canada's next prime minister. We promise Canadians leadership and a strong opposition to the NDP-Liberal coalition. In the coming weeks, we will relentlessly continue calling on the Liberal government to cancel all planned tax increases, including the payroll tax increases planned for January 1 and the tax increases on gas, groceries and home heating planned for April 1. Unlike the NDP, which is silently and blindly supporting this government, we will also unconditionally support any good measures brought forward to help seniors, families and those who really need it.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member talks about supporting small businesses, and I can say that virtually from day one this government has supported small businesses. I could talk about the cut to the middle class tax bracket, which the Conservative Party voted against. That tax break put money in the pockets of consumers, who invested first-hand in small businesses. There were more direct small business tax breaks that were given to small business owners, and that is not to mention the billions and billions of dollars that was spent during the pandemic to support small business owners through loans, rent subsidies and wage subsidies. Now the Conservatives are saying we spend too much money in support of small businesses.

It is great that the Conservatives are supporting Bill C-30. However, why do they try to give the false impression that they support small businesses when, in fact, the Conservatives opposed what we did to support small businesses?

• (1635)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Madam Speaker, this Liberal government's inflationary policies have made Canadians so poor that the only outing they can afford each week is to go and pick up their mail at the mailbox. They go and pick up the bills that they cannot afford to pay because of the Liberal policies that have been in place since 2015. Canadians deserve better. Canadians deserve change. That is what they are going to get in the future.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his colourful speech. I personally confess to being a great admirer of our colleague, and I do not think I am the only one in our party to feel that way.

Points of Order

There is a problem that is even bigger than consumer prices, and that is housing prices. There is truly a lack of available housing. Home ownership is really problematic. I would like to know the position of my colleague and his party on that subject, because that, also, is scandalous.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. It is really very important to be able to give Canadians back the hope of being able to stay in or own a home or a house. In a society such as ours, in Canada, a responsible government must give future generations and everyone a chance to exercise their right to fair and affordable housing. The opportunity to access housing is really very important.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I will give him the opportunity to clarify a little the remarks made by the Conservative Party in recent weeks. They seem to be confusing a tax with a contribution.

When people contribute to EI, they are putting money aside for the day when they will need it because they have lost their jobs. When people contribute to the Canada pension plan, they are putting money aside for their golden years so they can have it when they retire. These are not taxes, they are contributions. These are investments, an insurance in the event of unemployment and a means to live with dignity upon retirement.

Does my colleague not want seniors in his riding to put money aside and have a good retirement?

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Madam Speaker, yes, before 2015, Canadians could think about saving because they paid less taxes and had the chance to have a future. At present, with all this inflationary government's taxes, Canadians are stretched to the limit and are tightening their belts to the last notch to survive. To give all Canadians hope, there must be real change, and that is what will happen in the future.

[*English*]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, my question is very simple. We have proposed several measures over the last couple of weeks to help with the affordability crisis and inflationary crisis that exist for Canadians, like lowering taxes.

I wonder if the member has a comment on that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Madam Speaker, it is really important that the government cancel all tax increases. It must stop increasing the carbon tax to help Canadians live because everything is more expensive. People need money to live. If people need money to live, they need to be left with more in their paycheques so they can pay their bills.

* * *

[*English*]

POINTS OF ORDER

REQUIREMENT OF ROYAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BILL C-285

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam

Speaker, I am rising on a point of order in response to the Speaker's statement on September 26 statement respecting the need for a royal recommendation for Bill C-285, an act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act, the Canada Labour Code and the Employment Insurance Act, sponsored by the member for Niagara West.

Without commenting on the merits of the bill, I suggest that the provisions in the bill to amend the Employment Insurance Act provide for an exemption for disqualification or disentitlement for employment insurance benefits. This proposed amendment to the Employment Insurance Act would seek to authorize a new and distinct charge on the consolidated revenue fund that is not authorized in statute. In instances when there is no existing statute or appropriation to cover a new and distinct charge, a royal recommendation is, in fact, required.

The provisions of the bill amending the Employment Insurance Act would provide for an exception for claimants to receive employment insurance benefits if they lost their employment for the sole reason that they made certain decisions in relation to their health. This proposed amendment to section 35.1 of the act is linked to sections 30 to 33, which provide for situations in which claimants are disqualified or disentitled from receiving employment insurance benefits. In other words, the provisions in the bill would entitle a claimant to receive employment insurance benefits in a manner and for purposes not currently authorized by the act.

The royal recommendation fixes not only the maximum charge on the consolidated revenue fund, but also the objects, purposes, conditions and qualifications of provisions subject to the royal recommendation.

Speakers have consistently ruled that bills seeking to change the qualifications or alter the conditions for employment insurance benefits need to be accompanied by a royal recommendation. Let me draw to the attention of members a few germane rulings on this matter.

On April 22, 2009, the Deputy Speaker ruled on Bill C-241, an act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (removal of waiting period). The Deputy Speaker stated:

[T]he chair is of the opinion that the provisions of Bill C-241 would authorize a new and distinct charge on the public treasury. Since such spending is not covered by the terms of any existing appropriation, I will therefore decline to put the question on third reading of this bill in its present form....

On June 3, 2009, the Speaker ruled on Bill C-280, an act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (qualification for and entitlement to benefits). In a ruling, the Deputy Speaker stated:

On March 23, 2007, in a ruling on Bill C-265, on page 7845 of the Debates, the Chair had concluded that:

It is abundantly clear to the Chair that such changes to the employment insurance program, notwithstanding the fact that workers and employers contribute to it, would have the effect of authorizing increased expenditures from the Consolidated Revenue Fund in a manner and for purposes not currently authorized.

Therefore, it appears to the Chair that those provisions of the bill which relate to increasing Employment Insurance benefits and easing the qualifications required to obtain them would require a royal recommendation.

Having heard no new compelling argument to reach a conclusion that is different than the one concerning Bill C-265, I will decline to put the question on third reading of Bill C-280 in its present form unless a royal recommendation is received.

As *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, states on page 772:

Since an amendment may not infringe upon the financial initiative of the Crown, it is inadmissible if it imposes a charge on the public treasury, or if it extends the objects or purposes or relaxes the conditions and qualifications specified in the royal recommendation.

A royal recommendation may be obtained by a minister of the Crown only on the advice of the Governor General. In the absence of a royal recommendation, Bill C-285 may proceed through the legislative process in the House up until the end of the debate at third reading. In cases in which the Speaker has ruled that a royal recommendation is required and it has not been provided before the third reading vote, the Speaker has refused to put the question at third reading and ordered the bill discharged from the Order Paper.

• (1640)

I submit that this is the case before you with respect to Bill C-285. Precedence clearly suggests that a bill that seeks to incur new and distinct expenditures from the consolidated revenue fund, in a manner and for purposes not currently authorized, requires a royal assent recommendation.

I thank you for your patience and for allowing me to speak in this forum.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I appreciate the information the hon. member has provided and will certainly take it under advisement.

• (1645)

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to advise the House that we would like to reserve our right to respond to this point of order at a later time.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order.

It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Service Canada; the hon. member for Vancouver East, Housing; the hon. member for Spadina—Fort York, Post-Secondary Education.

* * *

[*English*]

COST OF LIVING RELIEF ACT, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-30, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (temporary enhancement to

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the Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax credit), be read the third time and passed.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, not 10 days ago I spoke at second reading to Bill C-30. In fact, it was the deputy government House leader who asked me at that time to compare Canada to the rest of the world in terms of economic performance. I told him that Canada's record should be able to stand on its own and that he and his government should not continue to push up inflationary spending.

I have good news, and that is that I am not alone in my thinking. As of yesterday, an article by Diane Francis was published, and it reads, "Canada need only look to Australia to see how badly Liberals have messed up".

I am going to quote from this article. It says:

The current government is economically illiterate and the result is the country is slowly sinking in the rankings of most economic metrics among the world's developed nations who are members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development...An OECD report from October 2021 predicts, according to Business Council of British Columbia commentary, that Canada "will be the worst performing advanced economy over 2020 to 2030." It also forecasts that Canada will have the worst economic growth among advanced economies over—

Wait for it.

—2030 to 2060. "In other words, Canada will be dead last not only for the next decade, but also for the three decades after that."

Canada's former central bank chief, Stephen Poloz, at the recent Global Business Forum in Banff, said that Canada is a chronic underachiever, a condition caused by poor political decisions and the failure to address unresolved issues.

He also went on to say, "We get in our own way."

We get in our own way. What is he really saying? I believe he is saying: "Government, get out of the way."

He went on to list a few problems. He started by indicating "a political quagmire that requires a crisis to make decisions". For example, I have this article here that states that the transport minister knew in May 2021 that the "federal airport security [workforce] was short-staffed by [up to] 25%, according to a briefing note".

At the time, he blamed airport delays on Canadians who were eager to travel. The article continues:

In a May 13 briefing note titled "Airport and Flight Delays", staff told [the minister] that the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority...was [short] a quarter of its employees due to layoffs during COVID.

"The Authority retained 75 percent of its workforce during the pandemic to assist with recovery," wrote staff. "Screening contractors called back all available personnel in preparation for the summer peak."

Here was an example where we had a political quagmire that required a crisis to make a decision.

Mr. Poloz went on to cite "layers of regulation". I have here an example in which the National Capital Commission decided not to grant a permit for a lemonade stand as a result of regulation:

In 2016, those regulations were the basis for which the Crown Corporation shut down a lemonade stand operated by seven- and five-year-old sisters—

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It is unbelievable.

—on NCC property in Ottawa. Their transgression: the girls had failed to acquire a \$1,500-per-day permit from the NCC. The incident garnered Canada-wide media coverage and the NCC quickly apologized and backtracked, allowing the children to resume selling lemonade the next weekend. To avoid similar incidents, the NCC developed a special permit for the following summer that would allow kids to sell lemonade or other goods on specific NCC property during nine Sundays. The new permit had 15 requirements, including but not limited to a requirement for bilingual signage, stand size restrictions, adherence to municipal and provincial health and safety regulations, an indemnification clause, and reporting of all revenues to the NCC.

This was for a lemonade stand.

These are layers of regulation from the government that are causing problems here.

Next in the list was “permit and consultation that take ages to complete”. Well, the Trans Mountain pipeline comes to mind, and Mr. Poloz also noted that “Canada is one of the most highly taxed economies on earth, which is discouraging”.

● (1650)

I have some information on that. G20 countries with a lower tax rate than Canada include Saudi Arabia, Russia, Brazil, India and Indonesia. This is the company that the current government is keeping at this time.

As well, Mr. Poloz's final comment was on “interprovincial barriers that cost four per cent a year in GDP alone to Canada”. In fact, a study done by Deloitte indicates that, by removing current interprovincial taxes, which remain unfixed by the government, “average Canadian wages would climb by 5.5%”—if the government would address this—“resulting in a 5% increase in household income and more than \$2,100 in real GDP per person. Corporate profits”—which I know the NDP does not like—“would increase by 2%.”

All of these actions result in Canada not living up to its economic potential, but the sad thing is that this does not simply rest with numbers and the economy alone. These numbers have real effects on people, as is evidenced by the article by Alicja Siekierska on an MNP survey, which says, “Canadians are finding it more difficult to pay for food, housing and transportation and nearly half are on the brink of insolvency as rising interest rates and soaring inflation continue to weigh on household budgets.”

I hear this from my constituents in Calgary Midnapore all the time. Gregory writes:

I would like to express further concern regarding our family's electricity and gas bill. It has skyrocketed—

Perhaps it has tripled.

—while our usage has remained the same... We have no option other than to pay, as we can't let our children freeze in the winter, but we cannot afford this dramatically rising cost. Please use your influence to fight for a regulation of this industry to bring the cost down.

Thank you for your efforts on our behalf. We are growing increasingly horrified by our federal government and appreciate your efforts to stand up for us.

From Alicja Siekierska's article, the MNP survey:

also found that 45 per cent of respondents say it's becoming less affordable to pay for transportation, up nine percentage points from last year, and another 45 per cent say it is becoming more difficult to pay for clothing and other household necessities, an increase of five percentage points from last year. Paying for

housing is also a challenge for many Canadians, with 37 per cent saying it is becoming less affordable....

At the same time, Canadians are finding it more difficult to save. The survey found that 49 per cent say it's becoming less affordable to put money aside for savings, up five percentage points from last year.

Canadians, as the Conservative leader has pointed out, are putting more of their paycheques toward paying for basic necessities as the cost of living rises, which is, in turn, leaving less of a financial buffer to manage the impacts of current and potential future interest rate hikes. Again I hear from my constituents about this. Cindy wrote that she is worried about supply chains, “This is directly impacting our jobs and has been for 12+ months now.” The government has had lots of time to respond to this as well. She continues, “The impact of supply chain issues is going to become such a global tragedy very soon.”

As for the rising cost of living, she lists exactly the things we have been talking about in the House, “Heating, gas, food, housing — all four areas are of concern for our home. The increase in overall federal tax is criminal. They have misspent billions of taxpayer dollars and it is a feeling of helplessness to the average Canadian.” Regarding a “tax on sale of home”, she says, “Again, this is criminal for the federal government to even consider this as an option”—which it has flirted with doing—“due to their lack of fiscal management. Someone has to stop these decisions.”

I can say that my Conservative colleagues and I are here to stop these decisions. Along with Diane Francis, Alicja Siekierska, and my constituents Gregory and Cindy, we say to the Liberal government, “Government, get out of the way.”

● (1655)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):

Madam Speaker, I must admit that I found it very shocking to hear that somebody would be told that they have to shut down a lemonade stand. I googled it and in fact the member is right. Back in 2016, there were two 11-year-old sisters who set up a lemonade stand and made \$52 in less than two hours before a cyclist stopped to tell them they were not allowed to be doing that. Then, of course, as she said shortly thereafter, somebody from the NCR showed up and told them they had to stop. It is ludicrous that would happen. When young kids are trying to pursue an entrepreneurial spirit like that, I would agree completely.

However, is the member aware that this happened in 2016? The government was elected in the fall of 2015. Does the member think that this government, on day one, instituted rules with the National Capital Commission that prevented the ability to sell lemonade, or perhaps would there have been an opportunity in the preceding 10 years with the previous government to do something about it?

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Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Madam Speaker, first of all, I want to correct the member for Kingston and the Islands. It is the NCC, not the NCR, and they were seven and five years old, not two 11-year-olds.

On that point, I will say that this is the mentality of the Liberal government: It wants to keep the Canadian people down. It wants to control the Canadian people by taxing them to death and by taking \$1,000 and giving them two dollars back. We are not going to tolerate it. Neither I nor my Conservative colleagues are going to tolerate that, and certainly not under our new leader, the member for Carleton.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my energetic colleague what she thinks about this. The Bloc Québécois proposes to do two things to control the cost of living. First, to help seniors in particular, we want to see no reductions in the guaranteed income supplement for those who received the Canada emergency response benefit or the Canada recovery benefit during the pandemic.

Next, the Bloc Québécois would like to increase old age security to preserve seniors' purchasing power.

What does my colleague think about these two proposals?

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Madam Speaker, I think the Bloc Québécois and we Conservatives care about seniors. It is very clear that the government does not care about seniors.

I think the member has some good ideas, and I am sure we can talk more about how we can work together for seniors, because it is abundantly clear that the government has not done anything for them.

[*English*]

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I was interested to hear the member opposite's speech. She talked about comparing Canada to other countries. She read off a number of news articles, and it sparked me to think about articles I have seen recently. One was about how Liz Truss came into power with the Conservative Party in the U.K. with promises of tax cuts, and then miraculously there was this huge U-turn because it crashed the economy into a horrible descent. The next article was about how they were desperately trying to figure out how to save the U.K. economy, and the next one was about how the Labour Party was about 12 points up in the polls because of this disaster with the Conservative Party of the U.K.

In comparison, Conservatives in this country are doing the exact same thing, so I would love to hear her comparison of their plan with that of the U.K. Conservatives.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Madam Speaker, I am not concerned because, frankly, we are leading the polls. We are rocking the polls, so I think we are doing the right things that Canadians want to see. We are going to continue doing them alongside our new leader, the member for Carleton.

● (1700)

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Hamilton Centre.

It is a true pleasure for me to speak to Bill C-30 on behalf of the residents of my riding of Davenport. For those who need a reminder, Bill C-30 is the legislation that, if passed, would double the goods and services tax credit amounts by 50% for the 2022-23 benefit year and would deliver targeted relief directly to Canadians who need it. It would make life affordable for many Canadians who need this additional support.

We are here for the third reading of this bill in the House of Commons after having considered this legislation at the finance committee yesterday. I am pleased to say that Bill C-30 was passed in record time at the finance committee by all parties. It was good to see that there was unanimous approval and support for this bill, and I hope that the opposition parties will consider also supporting our other affordability measures, such as providing a targeted dental benefit and a one-time housing benefit top-up.

As members may know, our federal government has made it very clear that our first order of business for this parliamentary session is to make life more affordable for the Canadians who need it the most. We know that Canadians are feeling the rising cost of living through things like higher food prices and rent, so while inflation is a global challenge caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, Bill C-30 would help families weather its impacts by putting more money back in the pockets of the middle class and those working hard to join it.

By doubling the GST credit for six months, this key piece of legislation would deliver \$2.5 billion in additional targeted support to roughly 11 million individuals and families who already receive the tax credit, including about half of Canadian families with children and more than half of Canadian seniors. With Bill C-30, single Canadians without children would receive up to an extra \$234, and couples with two children would receive an extra \$467 this year. Seniors would receive an extra \$225 on average.

Let us take a minute to delve more deeply into some examples of what it would mean for Canadians in real terms for the 2022-23 benefit year. I like giving clear examples because it allows people, not only those in my riding of Davenport, but also Canadians right across the country, to see themselves in some of these profiles.

Under the current GST credit, a single mother with one child and a net income of \$30,000 would receive \$386.50 for the July through December 2022 period and another \$386.50 for the January through June 2023 period. However, with Bill C-30, she would receive an additional \$386.50. Therefore, in total, she would be receiving about \$1,160 this benefit year through the GST credit, and that would be super helpful for a single mother.

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Another example is that under the status quo GST credit, a single senior with \$20,000 in net income would be receiving \$233.50 for the July through December 2022 period and another \$233.50 for the January through June 2023 period. However, with Bill C-30, if it is passed, this senior would receive an additional \$233.50. In total, he or she would be receiving about \$701 this benefit year through the GST credit.

I will give one more example. Under the present system, a couple with two children and \$35,000 in net income would be receiving \$467 for the July through December 2022 period and another \$467 for the January through June 2023 period. With the temporary doubling of the GST credit amount for six months, this family would receive an additional \$467, so in total they would be receiving about \$1,401 this benefit year through the GST credit.

• (1705)

What is more, with this change the money would be coming to them through a straightforward process. That is because the extra GST credit amounts would be paid to all current recipients through the existing GST credit system as a one-time lump sum payment before the end of the year. Recipients would not need to apply for the additional payment. They only need to have filed their 2021 tax returns, if they have not already done so, to be able to receive both the current GST credit and the additional payment.

Moreover, Bill C-30 is just one out of two pieces of legislation that we have introduced already in this parliamentary session to make life more affordable for Canadians. The Minister of Health has also introduced Bill C-31, which would provide a Canada dental benefit starting this year. I was very privileged to speak on this bill in the House of Commons last week, because a national dental care benefit is so important to Davenport residents. I want to formally indicate the importance of this legislation passing in the House.

Just to remind everyone, Bill C-31, if passed, would allow families with children under 12 who do not have access to private dental insurance and who have an adjusted net income of less than \$90,000 to access direct payments totalling up to \$1,300 per child over the next two years, up to \$650 per year, to cover dental expenses for the children under 12 years old.

Bill C-31 would also provide a one-time top-up to the Canada housing benefit. This would be available to applicants with an adjusted net income below \$35,000 for families or below \$20,000 for individuals who pay at least 30% of their income on rent. This means a one-time payment of \$500 to 1.8 million Canadian renters who are struggling with the cost of housing.

The bills that we are discussing today, both Bill C-30, very specifically, and, as an aside, Bill C-31, will not solve everything. While they will not solve everything, as our Minister of Finance said yesterday at finance committee, they would provide real support for 11 million Canadian households, for people who really need the help.

It is important to remind the House that there are many other measures that would build on Bill C-30 and Bill C-31, which we have been speaking about today. These include measures like enhancing the Canada workers benefit. This would deliver \$1.7 bil-

lion in new support to an estimated three million low-income workers this year, with a couple receiving up to \$2,400 more and single workers receiving up to \$1,200 more. Most recipients have already received this additional support through their 2021 tax refund.

Second, as a result of agreements reached with all 13 provinces and territories, we are also effectively cutting regulated child care fees in half, on average, for families in Canada by the end of this year. This Canada-wide plan means savings for families from \$2,610 in Manitoba to \$6,000 in British Columbia in 2022, and an average child care fee of just \$10 a day for all regulated child care spaces across Canada by 2025-26.

We have also introduced a 10% increase to the old age security pension for seniors 75 years and older, which began in July 2022 and which would provide more than \$800 in new support to full pensioners over the first year and increase benefits for more than three million seniors.

We are also providing support for students by doubling the Canada student grant amount until July 2023 and by waiving interest on Canada student loans through to March 2023.

Taken together, our federal government's affordability plan is delivering targeted and fiscally responsible financial support to Canadians who need it the most with particular emphasis on addressing the needs of low-income Canadians who are most exposed to inflation.

We will continue to strike a balance between delivering support, where and when it is needed the most, and maintaining the discipline that has given Canada the strongest fiscal position in the G7.

In conclusion, I know that Canadians are counting on parliamentarians to make the support of Bill C-30 a reality, and I would encourage my colleagues on all sides to support the immediate adoption of Bill C-30, the cost of living relief act, no. 1, so that we could continue to make life more affordable for Canadians who need it the most.

• (1710)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives support the tax relief found in Bill C-30 and have been doing our part to be helpful to those Canadians. Our leader has gone throughout this great country and has heard the personal stories from so many people who are suffering right now under incredible taxation and inflation under the current government. I would hope the member would recognize that the same family of four might get \$467 from this bill, but they are facing \$1,200 in extra food costs alone.

The member's government plans on tripling the carbon tax next year. Does she support the tripling of the carbon tax, which will increase the cost of groceries, gas and home heating, yes or no?

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Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, I want to repeat something that a colleague of mine, the hon. member for Burnaby North—Seymour, said in the House of Commons with respect to taxes. When our government lowered the taxes for the middle class twice, the Conservatives voted against it. When we tried to lower the taxes for small businesses, they also voted against it.

He also indicated, and I believe this to be true, that the Conservatives are not friends of the Canadian taxpayer because, when they were in government, they raised taxes on Canadians more than 50 times.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Davenport for her speech on this bill, which seeks to help people.

The government likes to boast about things like helping seniors. I will come back to this, because I was talking about it just this morning with a food bank representative who reminded me how difficult the situation is for seniors. Do we really want to force seniors to line up at food banks?

This bill is only partially helpful at this point. The government boasts about providing help, but it is only helping seniors aged 75 and over. This means that half of seniors are being left behind by this government. Those aged 65 to 74 are being forced to line up at food banks. Is that fair?

This is just the tip of the iceberg, since we know that many seniors are too proud to ask for help. They are at home and suffering. What does the government have to offer people aged 65 to 74?

[*English*]

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question and I truly believe that her concern is genuine.

We very much care about seniors. I believe the doubling of the GST credit will continue to support many seniors. I think if we manage to pass Bill C-31 it will also support seniors through the Canada housing benefit one-time top-up. I think that will be very beneficial for them.

The seniors in my riding of Davenport have already told me that they are excited about a national dental care plan. They know it will not go into effect for them until the end of next year, but they are already excited and very much looking forward to its implementation.

[*Translation*]

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

There is good news in this bill: the GST credit, the housing benefit and dental care for children this year and for seniors next year. The good thing is that this all came about because the government listened to the NDP's good ideas.

The work of the NDP caucus is what got us to this point. Why stop now when we could go even further and tax the excessive profits that big grocery chains, big oil companies and banks are raking in and use that money to make social programs even better? We could improve health care by creating real universal pharmacare.

[*English*]

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, I agree with the hon. member. I think we work best in this House when we take the best ideas and work together to implement them.

We are absolutely raising corporate income tax by 1.5% on Canada's largest, most profitable banks and insurance companies. We have also introduced a recovery dividend of 15% on the excess profits of those institutions during the COVID pandemic. There are a number of other measures that we are putting in place as well.

● (1715)

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, while I rise in the House as a New Democrat in support of Bill C-30, I should state from the outset that, even with the emergency cost of living economic supports for Canadians made vulnerable in this economy, what people need most is stable social and economic supports that meaningfully improve their material living conditions, funded by a fair taxation that does not place the burden on a consumer tax that disproportionately impacts low-income and working-class people most. What Canada needs is a fair taxation system that would close corporate loopholes in order to recover the reported \$30 billion lost due to corporate tax avoidance.

I should begin, in fairness, by highlighting, for those who are watching this debate tonight, that this bill would double the GST credit and provide \$2.5 billion in additional targeted support to roughly 11 million individuals and families who already received the tax credit, including about half of Canadian families with children and more than half of seniors.

I believe this debate on Bill C-30 has made clear that most members, despite their partisan rhetoric, agree this bill offers a temporary reprieve from this greed-filled inflation and its inevitable recession, which will likely be associated with further unemployment. That is what keeps me up at night. It is the insecurity of the precarious workers that is built into this cyclical system and reproduced through these cycles to suppress wages and to force people back into exploitative low-paying jobs.

These attacks on workers are simply explained as profit-maximizing measures by shrewd corporate managers. This is why I believe that while contemplating this bill I should spend some time expanding on the preconditions of the economic system that drove us here.

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People in Hamilton Centre are suffering. The vast majority of everyday people are unable to keep up with their monthly bills. Soaring inflation has pushed housing, food and energy costs way out of reach for people, and the feeling of insecurity is setting in across the country. Precarious employment is further punishing workers by threatening their ability to survive through this devastating economy, and wages simply are not keeping pace by being kept at and pushed down to devastatingly low rates. In short, workers' wages are being stolen by the record profits of big corporations and the payouts to their CEOs and shareholders.

Every aspect of our lives has been commodified by big banks and Bay Street. Our very existence is valued down to the decimal to be bought and sold by hedge funds and real estate income trusts so that those who have never lifted a finger in hard work in the creation of the means of production are grossly rewarded by the spoils of these dividends and payouts.

There is a class war happening in this country. There has always been a class war happening in this country, and it is being waged by the ultrarich in this country versus everybody else. Over the past 40 years the Canadian economy, both under Liberal and Conservative governments, has generated obscene amounts of concentrated wealth for the rich, while everybody else has been left behind. How can anyone in the House justify the enormous concentration of wealth by so few, while so many continue to suffer?

These everyday Canadian workers are facing down the barrel of another devastating recession, one that we know will be felt most by the rise of unemployment and the overnight hikes of interest rates, making people's payments on mortgages and personal lines of credit explode overnight. The adage of "the rich get richer, while the workers continue to get exploited" is happening now more than ever.

The people of Hamilton Centre are struggling, left to survive the misery of the daily grind of low wages and legislated poverty, should they be living with disabilities, while also facing greed-driven rocket-high costs of living.

• (1720)

The Liberals, with their constant talk about the middle class and those working hard to join it, which is so insulting, would have Canadian workers believe that it is their own fault if they are not getting well-paying jobs or, more accurately, if they are not born into wealth to begin with and that they should blame themselves.

The leader of the official opposition will continue to put big corporations and billionaires first. The Conservatives will blame government for any meagre supports delivered to people living with disabilities, low-wage workers, migrant workers and anybody else left out of this economy. They speak of inflation and the money that was directed to working-class people, yet they never have a critique on the \$750-billion bailout of big banks and Bay Street. The Conservatives attack Canada's social safety net of the copay contributions of employment insurance and the Canada pension plan, and not because they care about the contribution of the workers, but because they are fighting to save the contribution copayments by big business corporate employers.

This is at a time when Canadians need this economic support and stability the most. We should be delivering more support to Canadians and not less, particularly those who are left unemployed and our seniors, who are struggling to get by on their meagre CPP. They should be getting more and not less. We should not be attacking their pensions in this House. We should be ensuring that CPP and EI dollars are protected in separate accounts so that successive Liberal and Conservative governments will not have the tendency to raid these funds to balance their books.

While the Conservatives have callously attacked this bill throughout the debate on one hand, we already know that they are going to be supporting it. They are forced to ultimately support it because it is literally the least the government can do in the face of the astronomical costs of living. In their so-called free market fantasy, they never admit that corporations make off like bandits, pilfering government support by exploiting loopholes that have allowed them to take taxpayer dollars while paying out record dividends to their shareholders.

I am often in this House, and when I hear Conservative Party members clapping about the record profits of oil and gas, I ask myself how many MPs are receiving dividends on the profits of the same corporations that took wage subsidies and supports. These companies were not reinvesting in the economy. They were not improving the material working conditions of their employees by raising their wages to keep pace with the basic levels of economic survival. They were lining their own pockets and those of their shareholders.

This capitalist system creates enormous wealth, but it also creates great misery for the majority of people. This entire system is predicated on corporations spending as little as they can while getting the most out of every dollar they spend. It is not that they do not want to pay low wages; they are also pressuring people to get the most output from their workers at this low wage. When we hear about job creation, long gone is the day when a family can have one or two income earners who work nine to five and have enough to pay their bills. Families and workers across the country are forced to participate in two, three or four low-wage exploitative jobs. The rewards in this economy when this wealth is generated always go to the employers while workers continue to be punished.

In this regard and in many other ways, it is the capitalism of the system that generates the inequality. If we can, in a very small tokenistic way, return some money back to the pockets of Canadians, we support that. However, we call on the government to do more by workers, do more by seniors and do more by people who are living with a disability and precarious people who have been exploited by this economy.

Government Orders

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the government, over the last number of years, has been working in different communities and has done a great deal to support people from all different spectrums. We can talk about the hundreds of thousands of children lifted out of poverty and the hundreds of thousands of seniors lifted out of poverty by this government. We can talk about one-time payments during the pandemic for people with disabilities and, again, for our seniors.

I do not know if the member is being accurate in his portrayal that this government is not sensitive to the individuals who are in need. In our policy, whether that is legislation from the Minister of Disability Inclusion or other financial matters such as budgets, we have been there. I wonder if the member might want to reflect on some of the commitments that have actually materialized.

• (1725)

Mr. Matthew Green: Madam Speaker, I will reflect on it. While I am doing that, I ask the hon. member to reflect on the fact that we have a system right now where we have people living in deep, legislated poverty, people living with disabilities and seniors living in absolute squalor conditions in long-term care facilities who are actually contemplating medical assistance in dying because the government refused to provide, without delay, supports to people with disabilities. It refused our motion to provide a guaranteed basic livable income to people living with disabilities and to seniors. That is what it should be reflecting on, and it is to this country's shame.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to correct the record a bit. The Conservative Party has been opposed to the corporate welfare that the Liberal government has been handing out for a very long time.

Why does the member's party continue to support the government when the member is obviously very opposed to what the government is up to?

Mr. Matthew Green: Madam Speaker, when I took on this job, I did it with the commitment to improve the material conditions of low-income and working-class people and of everyday Canadians in my constituency. When the Conservative Party talks about inflation and talks about the dumpster fire that is this economy, it never talks about the arsonist. It never talks about going after big banks and Bay Street. We are the only party in this House, quite frankly, that has the stomach to take on big business interests. The truth is that both the Liberals and the Conservatives are at the table dining with them.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, one thing we know for sure about my colleague from Hamilton Centre is that he is passionate about advocating for social rights and representing his constituents.

I think my colleague would be sympathetic to the Bloc Québécois proposal to build more social and community housing. The Bloc Québécois wants the federal government to transfer 1% of its revenue to Quebec and the provinces to build new social and community housing units. This funding should be stable and permanent.

I would like to hear what my colleague from Hamilton Centre thinks about that. Does he support this idea, and does he think it is enough?

[*English*]

Mr. Matthew Green: Madam Speaker, I enjoy opportunities where I can find common ground with members of other parties. In particular, the Bloc brings some progressive policies to this House, including the statement we just heard about the need to decommodify the real estate market. We need to wrest control of the housing market from big banks, Bay Street and real estate income trusts, and do what the government did with the creation of CMHC, which is to be bold with a federal intervention and the creation of millions of decommodified houses.

On this talk about affordability and the Liberal government, I would say affordable for whom. It talks about affordability that is at 125% of market value, but what we know to be true is that affordability must be tied to people's ability to pay, not left up to the so-called free market of both the Liberals and the Conservatives.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Pickering—Uxbridge.

I rise today in support of Bill C-30, the cost of living relief act, no. 1, which would double the goods and services tax, or GST, credit for six months. It is one of the new measures we are proposing to provide targeted support to Canadians who need it the most so we can help them adapt to the rising cost of living without, however, exacerbating inflation.

Our government is fully aware that Canadians are feeling the effects of inflation, especially when they fill up at the pumps or buy groceries, for example. Inflation is a worldwide phenomenon largely driven by the effects of the pandemic, amplified by the zero-COVID policy in China and Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

Although inflation is not as high here as in several other countries and it has come down from its peak in June, we know that Canadians are worried. No single country alone can solve the problem of high global inflation. However, what we can do is help Canadians by taking tangible action to make life more affordable here at home. This brings me to Bill C-30, which seeks to double the GST credit for six months.

Our proposal to double the GST credit for a six-month period would provide an additional \$2.5 billion in targeted support for about nine million people living alone and nearly two million couples. In total, 11 million individuals and families who are already entitled to the tax credit would receive it, including roughly half of Canadian families with children and more than half of all seniors in Canada.

Government Orders

The GST credit is a tax-free benefit paid out every three months. It helps low- and modest-income individuals and families recoup the GST they pay. Canadians are automatically considered for this credit when they file their income tax returns and are eligible for it if their income is below a certain threshold. The measure we are proposing would benefit those who already qualify for the credit, and the help would be tangible.

In practical terms, single Canadians without children and single seniors, for example, would receive up to \$234 more than they do now. Couples with two children, for example, would receive up to \$467 more. A single parent with one child would receive up to \$397 more than expected.

These additional amounts would be paid before the end of the year as one-time lump sum payments to current recipients through the system already in place. Recipients would not have to apply for the additional payments. All they have to do is file their 2021 tax return.

Bill C-30 is part of the new suite of measures we are proposing to help Canadians. Another part is found in Bill C-31, which I hope we will soon have the opportunity to debate.

This other bill proposes, for example, to create a Canadian dental benefit. This temporary measure would be offered as early as this year to children under 12 who are not covered by private dental insurance. Families could receive direct payments of up to \$1,300 per child over the next two years, or \$650 a year, to cover the cost of dental care. This benefit is the first step in the government's plan to offer dental care to families with an adjusted net income of less than \$90,000 a year.

Bill C-31 also proposes a one-time top-up to the Canada housing benefit. This would allow 1.8 million renters who are struggling to pay their rent to receive \$500. It is another measure that I hope we will soon have the opportunity to approve.

● (1730)

Our government supports Canadians who are most vulnerable to an increase in the cost of living in a way that does not needlessly fan the flames of inflation. That is the danger in an inflationary crisis.

The incremental cost of new measures included in Bills C-30 and C-31 is \$3.1 billion. That is only 0.1% of our gross domestic product. Therefore, we are proposing to strike a balance between fiscal and financial responsibility and compassion for those who truly need help.

In conclusion, what Bill C-30 proposes is in addition to measures we have already announced as part of our plan to make life more affordable for Canadians.

First, the enhanced Canada worker benefit will provide three million Canadians with more support. For example, a couple could receive up to \$2,400 more this year, while a single person could receive up to \$1,200 more.

Second, agreements have been signed with the ten provinces and three territories. This will cut in half the cost of day care for Canadian families by the end of the year. This pan-Canadian initiative

will result, for example, in savings ranging from \$2,610 in Manitoba to \$6,000 in British Columbia. For 2022, in the province of Quebec, which already has its own day care system, the government's plan will help create approximately 37,000 new day care spaces.

Third, we increased old age security for seniors aged 75 and over by 10%. This measure benefits more than three million Canadians and provides additional benefits of \$766 for full pensioners in the first year.

Fourth, all major government benefits are indexed to inflation, including old age security, the guaranteed income supplement, the Canada pension plan, the Canada child benefit and the GST/HST credit. This means they are adjusted for increases in the cost of living.

Fifth and sixth, providing dental care to Canadians and making a one-time payment to renters who are struggling to pay for housing are two of the measures included in Bill C-31, which we will be debating soon; I hope all members of the House will support it.

This is all in addition to other investments our government has made since 2015. I strongly believe in making life more affordable for Canadians, and especially in helping those who are most in need. That is exactly what Bill C-30 does, and I urge all members to vote in favour.

● (1735)

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is good to see that the government is moving forward with certain measures, including the GST credit. We know that when the Liberals send out a cheque, it is usually because an election is on the horizon. I hope that is not the case here.

My colleague talked about increasing old age security by 10% for people aged 75 and over. The Bloc Québécois has long been a voice for Quebec seniors, who are saying that they do not want two classes of seniors and that they want this benefit to be similarly increased for people aged 65 to 74.

I have the following question for my colleague. When it comes to the rising cost of living, what is the difference between someone who is 74 and someone who is 75? Why would the Liberals deprive a 74-year-old of the old age security increase?

Mr. René Arseneault: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. The difference is that there have always been age limits in Canada in every segment of society. For example, one must be 16 to get a driver's licence.

This measure is for people 75 and up. The increase was set out clearly in our election platform.

What we would like to help people understand is that, statistically, the cost of care is much higher for people over 75 than for those under 75. Many more people live alone at 75, twice as many. At 80, there are three times more widows and widowers. That is the rationale behind the age limit.

However, the measures we are now considering in Bill C-30 and Bill C-31 target the hardest-hit Canadians and will help them deal with inflation rates.

[English]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives will always support lower taxes and putting more money back into the pockets of Canadians, but I wonder why the government brought forward the idea in Bill C-30 that with one hand it is going to give some money back to Canadians, but with other hand it is going increase payroll taxes and the carbon tax and take that money back. Would the member please explain why the government is doing that?

• (1740)

[Translation]

Mr. René Arseneault: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her interesting question. I think countries are asking themselves very important questions about the climate crisis.

The official opposition keeps harping on about the carbon tax. Our goal here, in the midst of the global inflationary crisis, is to focus on helping those hardest hit.

With respect to the carbon tax, the provinces have the power to give it back to people, and we hope they will work together to do that. Nevertheless, Bill C-30 and Bill C-31 are a balanced approach to helping people in a way that does not exacerbate inflation. I hope all members will support this bill.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, but I just want to point out that dental care for children, the higher GST tax credit and the housing benefit top-up all came about because the NDP forced the Liberals to introduce them. This is a minority government, and we used our position of strength to get results for people.

The rising cost of living is hurting people, so why stop there? Oil companies and big grocery chains are making record profits, so why not tax those excessive profits, take that money back and create a real universal pharmacare program, for example?

Mr. René Arseneault: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

All good ideas and good debates that aim to help our society are welcome in the House. I must give credit to all the members who support this bill, whether it is that or dental care, as he explained.

The problem we have on a global scale right now is an inflationary crisis, and the basic rules of macroeconomics dictate that we target as much as possible the people we want to help, so as not to exacerbate the crisis. That is what the bill does. We need to focus on that, specifically, helping Canadians and targeting those who need it the most and who are struggling the most. Those are the people Bill C-30 will help.

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I am counting on all members to support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 5:43 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

FOOD DAY IN CANADA ACT

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): moved that Bill S-227, An Act to establish Food Day in Canada, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House today to begin debate at second reading of Bill S-227, the food day in Canada act. I am especially pleased to begin debate on this bill on what in Ontario is agriculture week. Agriculture week in Ontario is an opportunity to celebrate the amazing farmers and farm families that quite literally grow the food that not only feeds our country but helps to feed the world. In fact, in Ontario, agriculture week was created by one of my constituents and the former local member of provincial parliament for what was then the riding of Perth, Mr. Bert Johnson, so I am especially pleased to begin debate on food day in Canada during agriculture week.

This Senate public bill was first introduced in the other place by the Hon. Rob Black, senator for Wellington County. This bill proposes to establish, each and every year, the Saturday before the first Monday in August as food day in Canada. This day would formally establish food day in Canada. I say “formally” because food day in Canada has been informally celebrated and recognized in Wellington County, in southern Ontario and in some parts across Canada for nearly 20 years. In fact, on this past food day in Canada, on July 30, landmarks across Canada were lit in red and white to celebrate food day in Canada. From the Confederation Building in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, to Vancouver's city hall, and from the Calgary Tower in Calgary, Alberta, to the CN Tower in Toronto, Ontario, these landmarks were lit in red and white to celebrate food in Canada, from the farmer's field to the fork.

I am especially pleased that food day in Canada is being celebrated and championed by all four federal representatives for Wellington County. In addition to being sponsored by me, the House of Commons' sponsor of the bill, and the Hon. Senator Rob Black, representative for Wellington County in the Senate, the bill is supported by the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and the member for Guelph. It is obviously not a partisan bill, but one we can all unite behind to celebrate food day in Canada.

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I want to step back a bit and reflect on the origins of food day in Canada.

Some members will recall the summer of 2003. It was a difficult summer for many Canadians, especially those living in rural Ontario. There was a surge in the West Nile virus, the SARS virus had reached Ontario and there was a massive power blackout that summer. However, in the agriculture sector specifically, it was a summer known for the spread of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, better known as BSE or by the colloquial term “mad cow disease”.

This crisis quite literally devastated the beef industry overnight. In moments, the cattle industry was in fear and panic, and Canada's trading partners slammed the door shut on Canadian exports of beef to the United States and to dozens of other countries around the globe. With these border closures, the livelihoods of thousands of hard-working farmers and farm families in the beef industry were decimated quite literally overnight.

A report from Statistics Canada at the time said this of the BSE crisis:

Prior to May 2003, Canada was the third largest exporter of beef in the world. In 2002, Canada's export market for beef amounted to about \$4.1 billion.

On May 20, 2003, however, the nation's beef industry was rocked by a totally unexpected development: a single breeder cow in northern Alberta had tested positive for...BSE, more commonly known as mad cow disease. Within hours, most nations had imposed a ban on Canadian beef products.

By June 2003, Canadian beef producers had seen their exports to the United States drop from \$288 million a month to zero.

• (1745)

However, while our farmers were working through this crisis, a passionate defender of Canadian agriculture from Wellington County named Anita Stewart stood up and started a movement to grow and inspire trust that our farmers would pull through this difficult time. It was in those dark days, in the sunny summer of 2003, that Anita Stewart began the first Food Day in Canada.

As the current coordinator for Food Day Canada, Crystal Mackay, describes it:

Anita Stewart was a food activist and pioneer who had the vision for ‘shop local food’ before it was a trend. The BSE crisis in 2003 was a turning point for her when she saw restaurants and Canadians buying beef from other countries at a time when our own Canadian beef farmers and ranchers were suffering huge financial losses and stress. She turned that tragedy into a tremendous opportunity to have a conversation with our country about the value of supporting our own incredible food system.

Canadians are humble people. Food Day Canada breaks us out of that for a day to truly celebrate the incredible people in our food system and the world class food we have here grown close to home.

That first Food Day in 2003 was known as the world's longest barbecue. From that one event that Anita Stewart created to bring people together to pull through those challenging days, it has grown into so much more. In fact, in recognition of Anita Stewart's commitment to the food system in Canada, she was awarded membership in the Order of Canada. The Governor General's citation for that achievement says:

Anita Stewart is an enthusiastic and dedicated promoter of Canadian cuisine. Called a culinary activist, she has spent the last 30 years exploring Canada, sometimes even by dog sled and on Canadian Coast Guard icebreakers, discovering and chronicling the stories of the essential foods of our nation and the talented people

who serve them.... She is...a passionate volunteer and the founder of Cuisine Canada and Food Day Canada.

Sadly, nearly two years ago, Anita Stewart passed away at the age of 73. She had done so much in her lifetime, and her loss has been felt not only by those close to her, but by the entire food and agriculture community.

As Dr. Charlotte Yates, president of the University of Guelph, said at an event this summer to honour Food Day, “Food Day Canada is a grassroots movement that brings thousands of individuals and partners together.” She said, “in many ways we are here today in celebration of being able to carry on Anita's legacy. Anita believed more than anything in the power of food to bring people together.”

In addition to being the first food laureate at the University of Guelph, the university's food lab is also named in Anita Stewart's honour. At that same event I just referenced at the University of Guelph in July, I had the pleasure of meeting one of Anita's four sons, Jeff Stewart. He told me about his late mother's lifetime of dedicated work and her passion for Canadian food, and it lives both through her family and also through Food Day in Canada.

Last week, Jeff and his three brothers, Brad, Mark and Paul, sent me a message about their late mother and what Food Day means to them. They wrote:

Since the 1970's, our mother, Anita Stewart, has been uniting Canadians through food. 20 years ago, she created Food Day Canada...a national celebration of Canada's unique, rich and diverse food culture.

Over the past 20 years, Food Day Canada has evolved into a national community, celebrating Canadian food and those who bring it to us. The goal of the associated Food Day Canada organization is to educate the public about Canada's food system and culture, while elevating thinking about Canadian food sovereignty and food security. The organization and its members fully support Bill S-227, and will provide leadership, guidance and resources, to ensure that an Official Food Day in Canada lives up to its potential as a positive, spirited, diverse celebration for all Canadians.

By supporting this Bill, the honourable Members will take an historic step towards putting Canada on the map as a proud food leader, while also giving Canadians an opportunity to shop, cook, dine and celebrate Canada's rich food culture.

We sincerely believe that an official Food Day in Canada will offer significant cultural benefits to Canadians and their families, with economic benefits for communities and businesses, as we echo our dear mother's favourite credo together: “Canada IS food and the world is richer for it.”

Those were comments from Anita Stewart's four children.

• (1750)

Since that first Food Day in 2003, it has indeed grown into a wonderful celebration of the food our farmers grow and the food that all Canadians enjoy every single day, whether at their kitchen tables or at restaurant tables across the country. It is celebrated on the Saturday before the first Monday in August, making it land in many provinces, including my own, on the Saturday of the August long weekend.

I know people might ask why this should be an official day. It is because, out of the darkness of the 2003 BSE crisis, something wonderful emerged and we as Canadians have the opportunity now to recognize that positive outcome of a negative situation. Over these past two decades, Food Day Canada has grown to encompass not only our farmers but everyone along all the parts of our national food supply chain: those who work hard getting the seeds into the fields, those who harvest the crops, those who process the food and those who prepare and serve the wonderful and delicious meals on Canadian plates.

All of us have great things that we can celebrate in our ridings related to Canadian agriculture and Canadian food. Whether it is the fishermen in West Nova or the dairy farmer in Abbotsford or the farmer in Sarnia—Lambton, we all have things to celebrate.

Because I am the sponsor of this bill, I can brag a bit about the great riding of Perth—Wellington, where we have more dairy farmers and chicken farmers than any other electoral district in this country, and where chicken alone is produced at a rate of 103 million kilograms every year. In Perth—Wellington, we have 395 pig farms, 538 beef farms and 242,954 dairy or beef cattle. Collectively across this country, agriculture and agri-food accounts for \$134.9 billion in GDP activity each and every year.

That is just talking about one aspect of all there is to celebrate. Given the long history that agriculture has had in the growth of our great nation and the meaning of food to our distinct cultural and multicultural heritage, surely Food Day in Canada is worthy of recognition nationwide on the last Saturday before the first Monday in August each year.

Canadians are hard-working and we are supportive of one another. That is the legacy of Anita Stewart and a point of pride in our agriculture and agri-food communities. Let us work together to pass Bill S-227 and give Food Day Canada the official recognition it deserves.

• (1755)

The Deputy Speaker: I do want to thank the member for his walk down memory lane of 2003 in August when I was first elected as a provincial member and became a minister of agriculture. What he is talking about, I actually got to live.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Guelph.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Perth—Wellington for bringing this bill into this place after Senator Black put it on the floor of the other place.

We met this summer on the lawn of the University of Guelph and Anita Stewart continues to bring us together across party lines, across levels of government and really across cultures. Could the

Private Members' Business

hon. member maybe expand on how Anita's vision and humour brought people together, regardless of the differences they might have in other areas, so that we could all share a meal together?

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, the member for Guelph is absolutely right. The ability to share a meal among friends, among colleagues and sometimes among people whom you may not entirely agree with is so important to finding common ground. That is one of the great legacies of Anita Stewart. The member made a comment about an event we were at together at the University of Guelph. The comments from Dr. Yates, president of Guelph university, talked about those examples of where Anita was able to bring happiness and bring cheer to a room by sharing food. Whether on a university campus or in homes across the country, the ability to share those opportunities among all Canadians is so important.

Therefore, I thank the member for Guelph and I do believe he will be supporting this bill. I appreciate his support on this important matter.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I offer my personal congratulations and thanks to the member for Perth—Wellington for bringing this bill forward. This bill is no stranger to Parliament. Several parliaments have seen some version of it or another, and it is nice to see that we might have enough runway to get this passed into law.

As the agriculture critic for the last four and a half years, I have really been consumed by the theme of resiliency and how we build resiliency into our local food systems and communities. I am wondering if the member can share some thoughts about how this bill may further that conversation in building local resiliency in our communities.

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, I share the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford's optimism that, with enough runway, we will be able to get this bill through.

He talked about resiliency in the agriculture community and probably the defining word for farming and farm families across Canada is "resiliency" through difficult times. I want to pick on one specific aspect of resiliency, and that is the mental health aspect.

Farmers and farm families face challenges that are beyond the scope of so many other different industries, such as the unpredictability of the weather and of the markets. The challenge that farmers often face with mental health is not felt in other industries, so there is much more than we can do as parliamentarians to make that change.

• (1800)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to have to interrupt the member. The interpretation does not seem to be working.

[*English*]

It is now working.

Private Members' Business

I will ask the member for Perth—Wellington to answer the question again.

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, I will again say that I hope, with the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, we will be able to get this bill passed in this Parliament to formally recognize it.

On the subject of resiliency, the member is absolutely right. Farmers and farm families are the most resilient people in the country. They face unknown challenges, whether it be weather, world markets or foreign markets that have an impact. Recognizing the challenges of mental health in agriculture is one of the aspects that we need to do more on. We need to be there to support farmers and farm families as they face those challenges that are unknown, unpredictable and affect not only their livelihoods but their families as well.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to thank my hon. colleague and congratulate him on introducing this bill in the House.

Mirabel is home to many farmers of all kinds of crops as well as dairy farmers and, of course, some wonderful maple syrup producers. I promised my constituents, including the farmers, that I would move a motion in the House to declare Mirabel the maple capital of the world.

I would like to know if my colleague will support my proposal or if he will side with his colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable.

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and his great proposal.

Yes, I know that a lot of maple syrup is produced in Quebec and in his riding. We also have great maple syrup producers in Perth—Wellington. Their product is very good. This bill also presents an opportunity to celebrate those who produce these very important products.

[*English*]

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am so proud to stand up for the opportunity to discuss Bill S-227 to establish a national food day in Canada on the Saturday before the first Monday in August. In Ontario, that always represents a long weekend.

I want to thank Senator Black and the member for Perth—Wellington for sponsoring this particular bill. I know they live in a beautiful region. For me, there would be no reason to be in that region other than love. My in-laws are from there, from Hensall in particular, but I drive through Perth to get to Huron—Bruce. There is always a great opportunity for me to go there for occasions. Obviously food is always part of that discussion.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank my father-in-law, Bob Forrest, who has always educated me on food. He is a farmer and taught with Senator Black at a local community college in the Hensall area. He always has great advice on particular food policies, so I want to thank him.

I want to thank Senator Black as well for having the audacity to present such an important bill. I think the member for Perth—

Wellington did such an amazing job at describing what Dr. Anita Stewart put forward and the reasons she did that. I do not think I need to go back to that, because the member for Perth—Wellington did an excellent job with it.

I want to talk about what this bill will mean for Canadians. It has been raised in the House that food brings people together from all walks of life and from all political backgrounds, and we are able to have great conversations. Some of us will have beer and some will have a glass of wine, and we may be prone to sharing more ideas, but the idea here is to celebrate food and celebrate the people who work in the food industry, including farmers.

At home, I love to cook. I am the cook at home because I love food. I love to please my family when I get to make a good home-cooked meal, but it also relaxes me. I get to learn recipes and get to learn from what other chefs are publishing online. I try to mimic what they are doing. I do not know if I am successful or not. Nobody here can attest to whether I am successful or not since the witnesses are not here, but it is a great occasion for me and such a great opportunity to taste food, especially local food.

That is what food day will be all about. It will be about celebrating what our local farmers are doing and what our local chefs are doing. I love the fact that it is not just about the franchisees across Canada that are doing this. We are also seeing a rural renaissance of local chefs who are using locally grown food. I want to thank them for thinking about that.

• (1805)

[*Translation*]

When I talk about agriculture or the bill to establish the Saturday before the first Monday in August as food day in Canada, I think about the Poirier berry farm back home, which grows raspberries. They are not necessarily the red raspberries that we find in supermarkets or grocery stores. They are special raspberries.

I want to thank Claude for his considerable efforts to promote local agriculture and create events on his farm that bring together people who work in the agri-food industry locally. I am thinking about the Eastern Ontario Agri-Food Network, which also promotes local food. I am also thinking about other stakeholders in our community.

I could not talk about agriculture and food without mentioning St. Albert cheese, a co-operative that supports our local farmers and dairy producers. The member for Perth—Wellington mentioned that he too has the opportunity to represent them, since his riding has the largest number of dairy, egg and poultry producers.

I too have this opportunity in my riding. I am very proud of it, and I am very aware that our dairy farmers get up every morning to milk the cows. They do it again every evening.

Private Members' Business

We have talked about mental health and I think it is important to raise this issue. When our farmers have a medical certificate indicating they have to stay home, they are still staying in their place of work. That must be said. Therefore, on the first Saturday of August, it is important to celebrate the entire Canadian agri-food sector, but it is also important to think about our farmers and their mental health. I do not believe this aspect gets the attention it should.

Furthermore, the media do not talk about our farmers often enough. This day would be an occasion to showcase our farmers in the media. We have to talk more often of the excellent work done by farmers.

Today, in the House, we talked about resilience. Our farmers were resilient during COVID-19. I am thinking, among other things, about all the supply chains that were repositioned. When I went to the food banks during COVID-19, I could tell people that the egg producers had the generosity to make massive donations to food banks across Canada. Average eggs are usually sent to the restaurant sector, but since the restaurants were closed, the producers could no longer give them their eggs. I want to thank Canada's egg producers who worked very hard to ensure that these eggs were not wasted.

Our government brought in a food policy a few years ago. I think that more than \$125 million has been invested to create a more resilient local infrastructure and to create local gardens. People mentioned Dr. Yates, from the University of Guelph, and I know that if the member for Guelph had the opportunity, she would mention her as well.

How do we attract talent to the agri-food industry? We often talk about using food to attract that talent. I also want to thank Dr. Evan Fraser, an incredible thinker who is also from the University of Guelph. I have had conversations with him, and we could talk for days on end. He is intelligent, forward-thinking and very passionate about agriculture. Dr. Fraser thinks about what agriculture will look like in five, 10 or 15 years, but also in 20 or 30 years. We need these kinds of thinkers to support our farmers in Canada.

I will conclude my speech by once again thanking my colleague from Perth—Wellington and expressing my full support for his bill.

I also want to thank Senator Black, who has worked in the agri-food industry for years. We need more people talking about agriculture and agri-food in the House. It is important. There is not a single Canadian today who can survive without food. We need to thank all Canadian farmers; they feed Canadians and they feed whole cities.

• (1810)

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before I begin my remarks, I want to acknowledge and thank my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois, who switched their spot with me so that I would be able to make committee tonight at 6:30 p.m.

I am very proud to be speaking to Bill S-227, and I want to acknowledge the member for Perth—Wellington for sponsoring it here in the House of Commons, but also Senator Rob Black. I have

known Senator Black for a little while now, and he and I share a definite passion for farming and soil health. It is nice to see that we have those kinds of champions not only for our agricultural sector, but for the key role that it plays in establishing food security in Canada. They recognize that farmers are going to be one of our greatest tools in effectively combatting climate change.

As I mentioned in my intervention with the member for Perth—Wellington, this bill is no stranger to Parliament. We have seen several versions of it over several Parliaments. I also want to acknowledge the former member for Kootenay—Columbia, Wayne Stetski, who was a colleague of mine for four years in this place during the 42nd Parliament. He introduced what I believe was Bill C-281. That bill actually passed through the House of Commons before arriving at the Senate, but unfortunately did not go further. I am pleased to see that with this version of the bill, I think we may have enough runway to pass it into law.

I am very proud to be standing here, not only as a proud member representing the great riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, but also as the NDP's agriculture critic. I have been privileged to hold that position for four and a half years now, and for me, agriculture is not work. It is a passion of mine, and I have been incredibly blessed in this role over four and a half years to have spoken with farm organizations from coast to coast to coast. To represent the farmers in my riding, take their feedback and be a part of the national policy discussion on food, food security, agriculture and how well our farmers are doing has been a real privilege.

I am also the owner of a small-scale farming property. It is nowhere near a commercial operation, but even the work on that property has given me a small insight into how hard our farmers actually work. I raise livestock. I have a small flock of chickens and raise ducks. I also have pigs and three elderly sheep. This teaches me a certain level of responsibility. It makes me appreciate that care for animals and the land is something we should all aspire to.

I think this is something that, through the enactment of this bill, will become part of our national discourse. It is an appreciation for what farmers do for our communities, big and small, because sometimes in our large urban centres, there can be a bit of a disconnect from where our food actually comes from. If this bill helps further the conversation, strengthening those links between our urban centres and our rural centres, I think it is doing nothing but good for our national unity.

In Canada, we already have Agriculture Day, which we celebrate in February of every year, but I like the fact that Bill S-227 is going to establish the Saturday before the first Monday in August as food day in Canada. That is important because Agriculture Day is, of course, a very broad topic. There are multiple different kinds of agriculture, but this bill is making it more specific and is centring, really, on the concept of food.

Private Members' Business

I think every member of Parliament realizes that food is not just a commodity. It is important. The thing that makes all humans equal is that we all have to eat to survive. It is very much a social determinant of health too. We know that there are far too many people in Canada who suffer from food insecurity. Food security and food sovereignty have been key issues for me personally.

We are a country, of course, that is very blessed with the amount of arable land we have. We produce far more food than our population consumes, so we are net exporters of food. We are actually one of the top agricultural producers in the world, and that is something we should definitely carry around with pride.

What I love about the country is the huge variety of growing regions we have from coast to coast. It truly is a learning experience, no matter what province we are visiting. I think we should have a country where we have the ability to produce food locally for everyone who needs it, not only to give the bare minimum amount but to achieve the good, high-quality food we all need. We need that high level of nutrition. It is a very strong factor in the social determinants of health.

• (1815)

As New Democrats, this has been a central issue for us in many parliaments for many years. Back in 2011, we ran on a commitment to introduce a Canadian food strategy that would combine health and environmental goals and food quality objectives. We have had incredible MPs, like Alex Atamanenko and Malcolm Allen, who in the past really set the stage for the debates we are able to have today. We have to recognize those members of Parliament who did that heavy lifting in previous parliaments to establish the building blocks we truly have today to get to where we are.

We created a strategy called “Everybody Eats: Our Vision for a pan-Canadian Food Strategy”, which really focused on how food travels from the farm to the factory to the fork. It was very comprehensive and I think played no small part in forcing the Liberals to come up with their own strategy in the 42nd Parliament, when they last had a majority government.

I stay in close contact with the farmers in my region. I depend very much on their feedback, and I try to be as true as I can, as their representative in this place, to ensure their voices are being heard.

The other thing is looking at how food is produced in Canada. I think this bill is also going to force us to look at the concept of food miles. I can remember going to grocery stores when we could see oranges from New Zealand and apples from South Africa and the amazing distances those foods had to travel to make it to our plates. I know in British Columbia we have the ability to grow a lot of seasonal produce, and I think we need to establish those stronger links. I hope this bill will help achieve that.

I am also incredibly proud to come from a province that I think arguably has the most diversified agricultural sector in the country. British Columbia has a variety of different climates, given our mountainous province, and we are able to grow a lot of different things in many different regions. Depending on which valley and which part of the province we are in, we will always find a little niche market somewhere.

Bringing it home to Vancouver Island, to my riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, we have some fantastic farmers' markets where we can go and see where our food is coming from locally and the incredible diversity that is being grown right in our backyard. I appreciate the efforts that the locals are going to in order to highlight that incredible work that is going on our backyard.

The Cowichan region, believe it or not, is Canada's only maritime Mediterranean climatic zone. We have the highest mean average temperature in all of Canada, and this allows our farmers to get a head start on growing some amazing food. In fact, in the local Halkomelem language, Cowichan, which is the anglicized version of the word, means “the warm land”. We are blessed with incredibly warm, hot summers and get an incredible amount of rainfall in the winter. That allows us to produce an amazing agricultural bounty. It is on display everywhere we go. We can get organic fruits and vegetables; local honey, cheese, eggs and sustainably harvested seafood; meat from grass-fed and ethically raised animals; homemade jams, jellies, chutneys and sauces; artisan breads, pies, pastries and cookies; locally grown and produced wines and spirits; and even gourmet treats for our pets.

To cap it off, because I know I have only a minute left, I am incredibly proud to stand here to support this bill. It sounds like we are going to have a lot of agreement in the House. I hope that when it finds passage, reaches royal assent and becomes law, it will be yet one more tool we have in our tool basket of policy to remind Canadians of how important local food is, to celebrate the farmers who produce it for us, and to start a conversation on how we, as parliamentarians, can better support food security so that everybody in every region has the ability to access good, high-quality food with no barriers whatsoever.

• (1820)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill S-227, an act to establish food day in Canada.

The purpose of this bill is to establish the Saturday before the first Monday in August across the country as food day in Canada.

I will say right away that the Bloc Québécois will be voting in favour of this bill as it addresses and highlights important issues in the lives of all Canadians and Quebecers, issues that are ignored all too often.

The wealth of the Canadian and Quebec nations makes us take for granted the agricultural and agri-food sector. The Bloc Québécois has made the agriculture and agri-food sector a priority. We speak constantly of food sovereignty, in particular by promoting the supply management system, which is a good example.

Food sovereignty is a relatively new concept. It was first introduced by the movement known as *La Via Campesina*, which introduced the idea and presented it for the first time at the World Food Summit of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome in 1964. Since then, it has been championed by various movements, which have adapted it to reflect the concerns and values of their own organizations and the socio-economic situation in their country.

Over time, the Bloc has raised several issues to promote food sovereignty in Quebec and Canada. Specifically, we should be securing our food chains by giving a boost to the temporary foreign worker program; fostering the next generation of farmers by passing Bill C-208 on the taxation of the intergenerational transfer of businesses; promoting local agriculture and processing, particularly by increasing slaughtering capacity; helping farmers and processors innovate, especially when it comes to building resilience to climate change; protecting critical resources and agriculture and processing facilities from foreign investments, including under the Investment Canada Act; and promoting human-scale farms by encouraging buying organic and buying local.

The pandemic has opened our eyes to the cracks in our production chains and, especially, to our over-dependence on foreign imports for many aspects of these critical industries.

In November 2021, Quebec's agriculture minister, André Lamontagne, launched the \$12 challenge, which encourages Quebec consumers to replace \$12 worth of foreign products with local food during their weekly trip to the grocery store. If every Quebec household replaced \$12 worth of foreign products with \$12 worth of Quebec products each week, Quebec's bio-food industry could grow by \$1 billion a year, and there would be an estimated \$2.3 billion in annual economic benefits for the province. I encourage every Quebec family to take up the challenge.

We are spoiled. Our cuisine offers a wide variety of possibilities. It is regional and seasonal, with a touch of our multicultural history thrown in for good measure. There are blueberries from Lac-Saint-Jean, tourtière, maple syrup, shrimp from Matane, not to mention fruits and vegetables from Abitibi-Jamésie. Those are all good local products.

Buying local is everyone's business: retail stores, restaurants, caterers, canteens and food trucks, establishments that serve alcohol, food services for the health care system, schools, correctional services, municipal services, factories and businesses, day cares, hotels and other tourist sites.

It is also important to have purchasing policies that integrate the origin of products in their food supply selection criteria. Broccoli from abroad travels a long way between the field and our plate. Imagine the thousands of kilometres apples from South Africa or raspberries from Mexico have to travel before arriving in Quebec. What about all the pollution generated by the transportation of these foods, from their production to our plate?

• (1825)

According to a study published in 2021 in the scientific journal *Nature*, one-third of all greenhouse gases come from food production, especially food transportation.

Private Members' Business

Choosing to consume local products when they are available is an easy way to reduce one's ecological footprint. Buying local helps support the nation's economy and regional vitality. Everyone wins. This summer, I visited farmers' markets in Val-d'Or, Malartic and Senneterre, where people can buy foods produced close to home.

According to Statistics Canada, when the second COVID-19 wave hit in the fall of 2020, approximately one in 10 Canadians aged 12 or older said their household had experienced food insecurity in the previous 12 months. That is unacceptable in a country like Canada.

Fortunately, Quebec is one of the provinces where the number of families experiencing food insecurity has dropped significantly. It seems likely that Quebec's progressive social safety net—its child care centres, parental leave, education system and so on—has something to do with that.

With respect to the regions, I want to talk about the riding of Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, which I proudly represent, and, more specifically, Nunavik.

Despite several decades of government efforts, food insecurity remains a significant and complex problem in the north. This insecurity has to do with both the quantity and quality of food consumed and is caused by different factors such as the very high cost of living, the increasingly limited access to products from traditional subsistence activities such as fishing, hunting and gathering, a lack of knowledge of the harm and benefits of market foods, as well as the repercussions of climate change and environment pollution on the traditional food systems.

To deal with the major challenges of food insecurity in the villages in Nunavik, the development of a nordic agriculture is considered an innovative solution. Focusing also on the health and well-being of the Inuit communities, the installation of community greenhouses helps enhance the supply of local fresh produce and improves the quality of food in a sustainable way, while taking into consideration the cultural dimension of food insecurity.

The approach used in this interdisciplinary project allows a local and sustainable supply system to be built with the community and to include the contribution of a horticultural project for improving the quality of life and health of the people.

These community greenhouses also help to slightly lower the price of groceries, which cost far too much in Nunavik. For example, the people in Nunavik pay 48% more for their groceries than people in the southernmost regions of Quebec.

Private Members' Business

Some 84% of Inuit living in the Hudson Bay region of Nunavik are food insecure. Inuit people experience the highest prevalence of food insecurity of any indigenous people in Canada. It is vital to find effective ways to ensure their food security.

The bio-food industry is helping to shape Quebec's identity and contributes to its wealth. It helps feed Quebecers with food of the highest quality. It enjoys a good reputation on international markets thanks to the uniqueness of its products. This sector is more than just an essential activity for Quebec's economic prosperity. It is intimately linked to how the land is occupied and how each region is developed.

Quebeckers are privileged to be able to count on a dynamic bio-food sector that responds to their expectations and does everything possible to meet their extremely diverse needs. This industry is well established within our territory and has a presence in markets beyond our borders. It also supplies fresh agricultural products and original, high-quality processed foods.

A food day, as proposed in Bill S-227, would showcase farmers, fishers, processors, distributors, retailers, restaurateurs and, ultimately, Quebecers, who are growing more and more fond of Quebec products.

I know I said this before, but that is why the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of this bill.

• (1830)

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, food unites us. Food brings us together. It is particularly important during these times of division and strife around the world.

[*Translation*]

Everyone loves food, including things like poutine, tourtière and Lac-Saint-Jean blueberries.

[*English*]

Everyone loves food and we all love Canadian food, like tourtière, poutine, Malpeque oysters or maple syrup with pancakes and peameal bacon. We all love butter tarts, although I am treading on dangerous water because we can get into a debate about whether they should be with raisins or without and who exactly makes the best butter tarts. However, we all love Canadian food, whether it is Alberta barley-fed steak or Ontario corn-fed roast beef shared over a glass of Ontario or British Columbia wine.

I would like to add my support for this bill in the House. I would like to thank the hon. member for Perth—Wellington for sponsoring the bill in the House. It has been passed in the Senate, and I encourage all of my colleagues in the House to support this bill.

Food Day Canada started in 2003. Since then, it has been taking place on the Saturday of the August long weekend. This is the time of year when farmers markets are brimming with the many locally produced agricultural products that are freshly available, patios and restaurants are full of patrons and barbecues are in high season. Food Day Canada is a celebration in praise of Canadian farmers and fishers, chefs and researchers, and home cooks. On this day,

everyone is encouraged to celebrate, to shop, to cook and to dine Canadian.

Food Day Canada's website contains numerous Canadian recipes that can be created using local Canadian ingredients, such as Saskatoon oat and seed bread, red lentil crusted albacore tuna with Beluga lentil and cherry tomato vinaigrette, and apple and cider cobbler. Our country has so much to offer when it comes to authentic Canadian cuisine and each Canadian recipe tells a story about who we are.

On Food Day Canada, events take place across the country at various restaurants and locations. Buildings are also lit up red and white in celebration, including at Charlottetown City Hall, the Montreal Tower, Toronto's CN Tower, the Alberta Legislature Building and the Vancouver Convention Centre. It is a true coming together of agriculture, aquaculture and the culinary communities of Canada. It is a day to shine a light on Canadian cuisine. Despite all this, though, Food Day Canada has not yet been designated a commemorative day in Canada and passing the bill in the House today will formally recognize this day and the importance of Canadian cuisine to our culture, our identity and our heritage.

Food Day Canada was founded by the late Anita Stewart. I got to know Anita not only as a constituent in Elora and before that, as the mother of sons I went to high school with at Centre Wellington District High School in Fergus, Ontario. I later got to know her as a passionate advocate for Canadian food. It is due to her vision, dedication and perseverance that Food Day Canada has become the national event that it is. Passing this bill honours the legacy of Anita Stewart and her contributions to Canadian cuisine.

Anita Stewart founded Food Day Canada nearly 20 years ago. A member of the Order of Canada, founder of Cuisine Canada and the University of Guelph's food laureate, she was an incredible advocate for Canadian food and farmers. Sadly, Anita was diagnosed with cancer and passed away in October of 2020. She was a food writer, a food journalist and a self-described food activist. She was tireless in championing Canadian food, Canadian farmers and Canadian cuisine and was always looking for a new recipe and connecting that to the farmers who produced the ingredients.

• (1835)

She grew up in rural Wellington County and from those rural roots, she went everywhere across this country. Anita went over the side of icebreakers into work boats in the north Pacific to visit every manned light station on that coast and meet their keepers. She travelled by dogsled and snowmobile to Cree hunt camps in northern Quebec. She went to Hibernia, which she called the most easterly bastion of Canadian cuisine on this continent. She scuba dived for sea cucumbers and urchin in the Strait of Juan de Fuca and bucktail fly-fished for salmon in Discovery Passage.

She was an amazing storyteller about Canadian food, producing over a dozen Canadian cookbooks. One of her early works was co-written with Jo Marie Powers, titled *The Farmers' Market Cookbook*. It featured recipes collected from vendors at farmers' markets. Each recipe identified the market and the vendor where the recipe came from.

In her book, *The Lighthouse Cookbook*, Anita presented recipes from the keepers of British Columbia's lighthouses, including traditional clam chowder and mussels in wild mushrooms. Some other works by Anita include *Country Inn Cookbook*, *The St. Lawrence Market Cookbook*, and *Northern Bounty: A Celebration of Canadian Cuisine*.

It was through her cookbooks that my wife, Carrie, and I further got to know Anita. When we were first planning our wedding, 20 years ago this month, we came across a cookbook, titled *Great Canadian Cuisine: The contemporary flavours of Canadian Pacific Hotels* by Anita Stewart, on Carrie's grandmother's coffee table. One thing led to another. We met up with Anita, and her son, using that cookbook, prepared the most amazing wedding meal for all of the guests.

Through her written works, Anita did more than share recipes, she brought to life the story of Canadian food and the people behind it. She was the first, as many have mentioned, University of Guelph food laureate, believed to be the first at any university in Canada. As food laureate, she continued to champion Canadian cuisine, providing advocacy and leadership across academic and administrative departments.

She had a profound impact on the University of Guelph and on Wellington County. The Anita Stewart Memorial Food Laboratory at the university continues to “actively promote the growth and study of our Canadian food systems and cultures.” In deep recognition of her contributions to Canadian cuisine and culture, she was invested into the Order of Canada in 2012, one of our country's highest honours.

Just as Anita was passionate about Canadian cuisine, so too are her sons. She passed along that passion to her sons, Jeff, Mark, Brad and Paul. All four have had a great impact on Canadian cuisine and co-founded Food Day Canada with her. They also continue serve on Food Day Canada's board of directors. Jeff, who is Red Seal certified as a chef and sommelier, previously stated the following about his mom:

My mother was a real force in Canada, but also a real force in our family... The amazing thing is the legacy she left behind and all the amazing connections of people who are supporting what she started.

Private Members' Business

Following her all too early passing, Niagara Falls was lit up in red and white to honour her and her life's work. There is no doubt that Canada is better for her contributions to Canadian cuisine.

This bill in front of us honours the legacy Anita Stewart left behind. It would also ensure that Canadian cuisine from coast to coast is honoured and celebrated each and every year. I encourage all of my colleagues here in the House to support this bill.

• (1840)

The Deputy Speaker: We only have about two minutes left for debate.

I will go to the hon. member for Guelph to begin his comments.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. members across the way and the whole House, which is honouring Anita Stewart and Food Day Canada through this motion that is in front of us. Again, I thank Senator Black for being the champion in the other place to bring it forward to us.

To build on what the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills said, how does one become a food laureate at a university and how does one get the Order of Canada around food? She called herself a culinary activist. Anita had an energy about her that really brought people together, and then she talked about the food.

I can remember that I was chairing the Institute for Canadian Citizenship in Guelph and we were looking for somebody who could help officiate. The judge who normally came from Kitchener was not available and, because she has the Order of Canada, Anita Stewart came and officiated the ceremony. She said to the newcomers coming to Canada, “I hope you brought your cookbooks because when you come to Canada we want to know what your food is and incorporate it into the food of the country.” Therefore, she looked at food as the great uniter and that has been mentioned also.

I met with her son Jeff at the University of Guelph this past summer. He said that on that day when she had to prepare for the citizenship award she was up the night before, trying to think about what she was going to say and how she was going to bring enough gravitas to the ceremony but at the same time honour her life's work around food and bring that forward.

Food Day Canada was started at the end of SARS to help restaurateurs who were suffering. Anita Stewart passed away in October during another pandemic, so there is something poetic that I would love to explore in the next seven minutes of my speech on why this is such an important event for Canada to celebrate every year.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the members for their interventions tonight.

The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

The order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HEALTH

The House resumed from May 16 consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6:43 p.m., pursuant to an order made earlier today, the House will now resume debate on the motion to concur in the third report of the Standing Committee on Health.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak today about a subject very close to my heart, which is the contribution that Taiwan could make to global discussions around health.

The report we are debating and seeking to concur in reflects a motion proposed by my colleague from Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes. I want to congratulate him for his excellent work on the health file and in supporting Taiwan's contributions when it comes to global health conversations. I know he is a strong advocate in the House and a great friend of Taiwan.

I want to focus my comments today on two specific points. First, I want to speak to Taiwan's own success in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and how Canada and other countries could have benefited from engaging with and listening to Taiwan more.

I recognize that our engagement with Taiwan, and pushing for its inclusion in these kinds of COVID discussions is, in part, out of a commitment to support Taiwan and its democracy. It is also in our own self-interest when we engage with and learn from Taiwan. If we hear its experiences and perspectives, we are better off. When we trade more with Taiwan, it helps to create jobs and opportunities here in Canada. There are various other examples.

I am going to speak first to Taiwan's success with COVID-19 and how we could all benefit, but I want to spend some time as well addressing some of the current issue of escalating threats from the mainland government towards Taiwan. We can learn from our failure to deter the Russian invasion of Ukraine to talk about the steps we need to take now to respond to the threats that are being made toward Taiwan.

Let me talk about Taiwan's success in response to COVID-19. Right when the COVID-19 pandemic started to be a major issue here in Canada, all of us as politicians were trying to grapple with what we should do about it. We were wondering what things we should have been proposing and what things we should be have been talking about.

The discussion quickly shifted to support measures to support Canadians and businesses through those circumstances. Those were

important conversations, but in a way, a prior conversation was about how we minimize the impact of the virus. How do we manage the public health side of it so that more people can continue to work, and be out and about if possible?

My approach was to look around the world at the data from different countries on the impact of COVID-19 on those countries and to ask which countries are doing the best in the world when it comes to responding to the pandemic, then bringing those insights to the House and saying to the government that we are able to observe that infection rates and death rates are lower in certain places than others and asking if we could we try to emulate the approach being taken by countries which have been more successful at responding to this pandemic.

Looking at the numbers at the time and since, it was very clear that, in particular, it was some of those East Asian democracies, particularly Taiwan and South Korea, that had been extremely successful in their response to COVID-19, both in the early days and since. Notably, these East Asian democracies are much more densely populated than Canada, and they are much closer to the epicentre of the outbreak of the pandemic. Just considering those factors, one might assume that they would be more vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19. However, these places had very effective strategies in their responses.

At the time, I asked the then health minister, and I think members of my side have repeated it, recognizing how successful these East Asian democracies had been in responding to the pandemic, if we could learn from their experience. Of course, they were learning from past experience. These countries had dealt with, to a much great extent than we did, previous SARS outbreaks.

● (1845)

It was clear from the data that Taiwan was succeeding. The government of Taiwan was pushing the message internationally that Taiwan could help if we were to recognize Taiwan's participation in international conversations around health. It was about including Taiwan and giving it the opportunity to participate on an equal basis, as it should. It was also about recognizing that Taiwan had been so successful in its response to COVID that it could contribute and share its insights. If we had been more prepared to push for the inclusion of Taiwan, and if the global community had included Taiwan in more of these conversations and listened to them, many people would be alive today who are tragically not. The concrete benefits of Taiwanese inclusion, I think, were very clear.

Routine Proceedings

What were the strategies that Taiwan deployed? Right from the beginning, the Government of Taiwan was encouraging masking as a tool for responding to the pandemic. Right from the beginning, Taiwan had in place strong border measures. There were mandatory quarantines for those who were coming from elsewhere. Taiwan did not take the information that was coming from the Government of China at face value. Taiwan had enough experience to realize that there was a high risk of misinformation from a Communist government. That should not be a particularly novel insight. It should be fairly obvious that authoritarian Communist regimes pushing misinformation and disinformation is part of what they do, but I think when it came to issues of health, we were a bit too naive on that. Taiwan had strong masking and strong border measures.

Also, for our East Asian democratic partners, moving quickly on putting in place testing protocols and tracing were parts of a successful toolkit, which included being critical of information that was coming out of the mainland, masking, border measures, and testing and tracing. It is easy to forget perhaps, but right at the beginning those insights were very different from what was being pushed by members of the government. A representative of the government, the chief public health officer, had implied at committee that it would be bigoted to impose border restrictions in response to the pandemic. That led to a slowed-down response.

Of course, the irony with the government is that it put in place the wrong measures at the wrong time. We should have had strong border measures at the beginning. We did not have those strong border measures, and then the government persisted in having ineffective border restrictions much later, even after the point when the virus was already in different parts of the world and most Canadians were vaccinated. The border measures were particularly important at the beginning to try to keep the virus from getting here, to try to delay its arrival on our shores, but once the virus was actively very present in all countries, border measures obviously had less utility.

If we had listened to Taiwan, and if we had learned from Taiwan's insights, we would have been able to respond earlier and respond faster. It is also easy to forget that public health authorities in Canada and the United States were discouraging mask use at the beginning of this pandemic at a time when, of course, the science was there about the value of masks at that time because, again, Taiwan and other East Asian democracies were using masks and supporting the use of masks.

It was perplexing to a lot of people when we were told by the government to trust what public health authorities were saying, yet public health authorities of similar stature in other countries were saying different things. The science on the pandemic should not have been different from country to country. What I and other members of our caucus suggested at the time was to look at what the public health authorities are saying in those countries that had been the most successful and effective in their response to the pandemic.

We should have been listening to Taiwan. We should have been moving quickly to have those testing and tracing border measures in place early. Had we done that, I think we would have been able to avoid devastating lockdowns that significantly exacerbated men-

tal health challenges for many Canadians and caused many businesses to go under.

● (1850)

If we had taken that strategic approach, learning from Taiwan, South Korea and other partners in East Asia, we could have done so much better, which speaks to the value of including Taiwan and the benefits to Canada for including its perspective on public health.

Let us recognize that Taiwan donated a significant number of masks to Canada and other countries in that early phase, but I think, unfortunately, some of the initial incorrect information alleging the masks did not work from the government may have reflected the fact that it did not have enough masks available for those who needed them. At the time, when there was a shortage of masks, Taiwan really stepped up to try to support other countries around the world.

As well, broadening the conversation a bit, there are so many benefits for Canada associated with the inclusion of Taiwan and more international organizations and active engagement with Taiwan on the trade front. I am proud to represent an energy-producing riding in western Canada. Many of our partners in East Asia, and Japan is another example, do not have the same steady, certain access to energy from like-minded countries that we take for granted here in Canada. We should be working to export more of our energy resources and build partnerships where we can sell our natural resources to Taiwan, Japan, South Korea and other East Asian democratic partners. I think there is an immense opportunity to expand our trading relationship with Taiwan. Energy is one example, but I think there are many other examples as well.

Of course, we could talk about the positives, about how Taiwan can help with the global response to future pandemics and other health conversations that may come up about how increasing trade between Taiwan and Canada would be very beneficial for our economy. We need to recognize, alongside those positive opportunities, the storm clouds that are on the horizon as well. We have seen escalating threats and very menacing behaviour from the Government of China toward Taiwan, and this comes in the wake of the illegal genocidal invasion of Ukraine by Vladimir Putin's regime.

I very much think that the Government of China has been watching the Russian invasion of Ukraine and contemplating its own actions with respect to Taiwan, and we can see the close partnership between Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin as well as how some of the same kinds of rhetoric are being used toward Taiwan that was and continues to be used toward Ukraine. If Xi Jinping is observing and learning, we should also note what has happened with the Russian invasion of Ukraine and do all we can to prevent a repeat situation, where authoritarian power invades a neighbouring democracy and denies it its right to exist and the right of its people to self-determination.

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What are the lessons we can learn? One is that we need to be clearer and firmer upfront in trying to deter that invasion. I think a big part of why Putin chose the path he did was because we were not effective enough at deterring that invasion. Signals were sent from certain western powers that suggested to Putin that Ukraine would be on its own if it was invaded. Many countries have stepped up to supply weapons and apply debilitating sanctions and the Ukrainian army has been very successful thus far, so the war did not go the way Putin expected it to go, fortunately. However, if we had been able to send stronger signals earlier about the supports that would be there, then we might have been able to deter this aggression in the first place.

● (1855)

We need to be willing to pursue peace through strength. That is, in the case of a prospective invasion of Taiwan by China, we need to send clear meaningful signals about what we would do to support Taiwan. The goal of sending those signals is, of course, to prevent the invasion in the first place. If we want peace, we have to be strong and firm in deterring aggression.

The risk is that Putin's invasion of Ukraine kind of sets a precedent. It changes norms in the world, such that other countries start to think they can get away with using force to take territory within what they consider their historical sphere of influence. Therefore, defeating Putin in Ukraine is important for Ukraine's sake and for Russia's sake, as we hope for a free and democratic Russia to replace the Putin regime, but it is also important in terms of the precedent it sets for the world.

I hope that, in the context of the bellicose rhetoric toward Taiwan that we have seen, we would be clear and firm in standing with Taiwan in terms of our preparation for the possibility of aggression, but also be clear in standing with Taiwan in terms of the everyday opportunities to include Taiwan in international conversations, in the World Health Assembly, in ICAO and in international conversations around a broad range of issues, and by recognizing the contributions Taiwan can make in terms of trade with Canada. There are many different ways we can collaborate with Taiwan, and we should pursue that collaboration to a much greater extent. The Canadian government needs to step up more and do more to support our friends and allies in Taiwan.

If I can make a couple more points going back on the issue of Taiwan's COVID response, some of the commentary coming out of COVID recognized a bit of a scattered response in certain western countries, and certainly in Canada, and the lack of preparedness from the government for this crisis. Some people said maybe China handled this better than democratic countries and asked if this was another case where supposedly the authoritarian model was more effective. Then, we look at the success of Taiwan, South Korea and other East Asian democracies, and it becomes very clear that democracies actually handled the pandemic better. If we look at comparable areas, in terms of experience with pandemics, geography and other factors, it was democratic countries that were more effective in their response.

We continue to see that today, where Taiwan, and I think this is characteristic of democracies, is adapting its approach. It has moved away from a COVID-zero approach and now it is adapting

to more of a "living with the virus" type of approach. It has been appropriately able to respond to the virus and also adapt in response to new information, whereas the Government of China has been really calcified in its response, and we are seeing a very brutal application of a COVID-zero policy on the mainland.

I think it is an important point to reflect on how Taiwan's adaptability and success really outshines the response on the mainland and it outshines many other countries. This underlines the importance of engagement with Taiwan, of strong relations, of learning from Taiwan and also of supporting fellow democracies by building partnerships with Taiwan and with other democracies all over the world.

● (1900)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I find interesting is how much the member and the Conservative Party advocate for following the lead of Taiwan. When it comes to the pandemic, this government, from the very beginning, has been following the advice of experts and health professionals here in Canada. There has been very much a made-in-Canada approach to dealing with the pandemic.

The Conservatives were out encouraging the convoy in different ways. They were opposing mandates when we still had provincial mandates in place. They have been all over the map on the issue.

Why do the Conservatives have more confidence and faith in Taiwan and its policies in dealing with the pandemic than they do in Health Canada and the health experts and science we have here in Canada? Why is there so much confidence over there and not in the people of Canada?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, a member of the government wants to know why I have more confidence in the response of Taiwan's public health authorities than in his government's response. Very simply, it is because Taiwan had fewer deaths per capita and had fewer cases per capita. Why would I take a parochial approach to this and say that my country's way is right when the data shows that Taiwan's approach clearly worked better at saving lives and minimizing cases? The made-by and made-in-this-government approach was not as effective as the Taiwanese approach when it came to saving lives.

The member alluded, in his comment, to the convoy and to the fact that many Canadians were deeply hurt by some of the arbitrary restrictions that were put in place. They were deeply affected by the lockdowns and other policies that the government put in place, which had other devastating implications. Again, many of these things were avoided by our East Asian democratic partners, who saw the value of border measures, testing and tracing and recognized the value of masking earlier. We should have learned from their experience.

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• (1905)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's answer shows us just how important it is to speak about the experiences of different public health authorities so we can improve our response to the pandemic. That is why it is important for Taiwan to be a member of the WHO.

At present, China is exploiting public health risks for political gain. It is using public health risks for political gain. I am wondering what my colleague thinks of these politicians, political parties and governments that exploit public health and the misery of people for political gain.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with my colleague.

The Chinese government focuses more on its political interests than on the lives of its own citizens and those of other countries. It is now obvious that this government is committing genocide against a minority group and that it has no respect for human rights.

We must be clear and realistic. We must try to work more with the other democratic countries such as Taiwan.

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan for how clearly he indicated all the great steps that Taiwan took when the pandemic happened and the tremendous steps they took from a scientific point of view.

They had scientists. They stepped up in many avenues, protecting the public with restrictions on coming in and out of Taiwan, and did things we did not do in this country. We have had the opportunity to learn from them, and learn not only from the scientific knowledge they brought to us, but from the steps they took in helping assist this country. For example, as my colleague mentioned, there was the donation of millions of dollars of equipment, whether it was the masks or gowns they sent to Canada to help us during our time of crisis while we were trying to get caught up on things.

It is interesting. I know the issue here is these great scientists in Taiwan, but having scientists get together and talk to each other is how we learn. Having Taiwanese scientists and medical practitioners at the WHO and the WHA to provide their expertise means we can learn from their expertise and continue to do that.

I am interested to hear from my colleague, in particular on what the Liberal government has done on issues dealing with Iran and the steps taken. It is saying that it is going to do things, yet it is not doing anything. I am wondering if the member might comment on that.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for what is clearly a passion for our relationship with Taiwan.

Just to pick up on the last point he made, I think we see something like a global competition emerging between democratic countries with a belief in pluralism and inclusion and, on the other hand, those with a rigid authoritarianism. Of course, there are different kinds of regimes in Russia, Iran and China, but there is the common

belief, in a way, that centralized control instead of individual freedom is the best way to govern a society.

As we recognize that competition, we need to work to deepen partnerships and collaboration in research, trade and all kinds of other areas with other like-minded democracies. We should not fail to co-operate with a democratic partner to supposedly appease an authoritarian country. That would be nonsensical and would mean missing an opportunity to work with a country like Taiwan, which can be and is a true friend to Canada. It is a friendship that is rooted in shared values, not just in a narrow, short-term identification of interest but in deeply shared democratic values. We should grab those opportunities to collaborate while being clear-eyed and realistic about the emerging authoritarianism and the threat it presents to our democratic values.

• (1910)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think the Chair is in exceptionally good spirits tonight and I think that is wonderful.

I would like to begin by saying that my colleague is an extraordinary orator. I will give him that. That is wonderful. I am happy to see how seriously he defends the sovereignty of Taiwan against Chinese rule. I like that, and I think that we are all in agreement tonight.

My question is the following. On the day Quebec gains independence, will my colleague fight just as hard to bring us into the World Health Organization?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I am all for the right of peoples to decide for themselves about their future. I think that Quebecers had the opportunity to make a choice and they chose to stay in Canada.

In my opinion, it was a good choice.

[*English*]

Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Whitby.

I am pleased to speak today on the health portfolio's critical work with the World Health Organization and other international organizations. The importance of international collaboration and co-operation has never been more clear. No single country, including Canada, is able to solve complex health challenges alone.

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As we know all too well, COVID-19 and other viruses and health issues do not respect borders. That is why the health portfolio engages, co-operates and collaborates with international and global partners. This happens multilaterally through the World Health Organization, the G7, the G20 and other organizations.

We also engage directly with our international partners to strengthen our domestic response. As a founding member, Canada is a strong supporter of the WHO and engages with the organization to advance domestic and international health priorities, share health expertise and protect the health of Canadians and people around the world. This includes contributing support and expertise to health emergency response efforts, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, developing a vaccine for Ebola, championing polio eradication and advancing global health security.

Canada also collaborates with WHO on issues important to Canadians, such as climate change and environmental health, healthy aging, mental health and non-communicable diseases.

Canada is strongly committed to advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. WHO is an important partner in advancing these objectives, including equity-based approaches to health systems, strengthening primary health care and closing gaps in sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Canada is a strong champion of gender equality and equity issues, and we bring this leadership to our engagement with the WHO. Canada values the WHO's leadership and coordination role in the COVID-19 response. The WHO has an important role in overseeing the international health regulations, driving global research efforts towards new vaccines and treatments, addressing shortages of critical medical supplies and personal protective equipment, helping global vaccination efforts and supporting vulnerable countries in their preparedness and response efforts.

We recognize the opportunity to learn from the COVID-19 experience and strengthen the WHO and global pandemic prevention preparedness and response efforts. That is why we supported the decision to develop a new instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response at the special session of the WHO's World Health Assembly last December. Canada will work to ensure that this new instrument enhances international co-operation so we are all better prepared should there be another pandemic, while protecting Canadian interests. We also strongly believe we need to improve the tools and mechanisms that we already have, including the international health regulations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that member state expectations for the WHO outweigh its resources and capacities. There are important global discussions taking place right now on improving WHO sustainable financing and governance. Canada is engaging with other member states to address these issues and will continue to actively advocate for oversight of the organization and implementation of key findings and recommendations from the global COVID-19 reviews.

WHO also has an important role in crises, including the armed conflict in Ukraine, which has significantly disrupted health services and is having a disproportionate impact on women and children. Canada is contributing to the WHO's overall health response

in Ukraine, which is focused on saving lives and ensuring access to basic health services for those affected by the armed conflict. Canada has allocated more than \$7.5 million to the WHO to improve essential health services in Ukraine, including emergency care for injured patients and continued COVID-19 care.

These were important topics at the 75th World Health Assembly that took place this past May. Canada has a strong presence at the assembly to advance the priorities we share with the WHO and other partners. This includes strengthening the WHO through enhanced leadership and governance, mobilization of global action to better prevent, prepare for and respond to health emergencies, and accelerating progress on health equity and the determinants of health.

I want to reiterate that Canada believes the world needs a strong WHO, and that a strong WHO should reflect a global health community where everyone is included and can participate.

● (1915)

There are many actors contributing to better public health outcomes around the world, including Taiwan. They have been a good bilateral partner to Canada on health, which we saw when they donated personal protective equipment to us early in the pandemic. We continue to support Taiwan's full participation in organizations such as the World Trade Organization and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, where it is a full member. We also support its meaningful participation in international fora where there is a practical imperative and where Taiwan's absence would be detrimental to global interests.

Accordingly, and consistent with Canada's long-standing One China policy, we support Taiwan's inclusion as an observer in the World Health Assembly. The Minister of Health called for Taiwan's meaningful participation in the assembly during his plenary statement this year.

Canada also continues to work closely with its G7 partners on both the pandemic and other priority health issues. Canada has participated in numerous G7 health ministers' meetings, where it has underlined the need for collaboration to end the acute phase of this pandemic. G7 deputy health ministers are meeting in a week in Berlin, where they will discuss critical issues such as ending the COVID-19 pandemic and implementing lessons learned, tackling the connection of climate change and health, and combatting antimicrobial resistance.

Engaging through the G20 has also been important for global cooperation on the pandemic. Under Indonesia's presidency, G20 health ministers met this past June and will meet again at the end of October. Canada looks forward to working with its G20 partners to help build resilience for the global health system, including sustainable financing, harmonizing global health protocol standards, and expanding global manufacturing and knowledge hubs for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.

Health ministers also met with G20 finance ministers this past June, with a second meeting planned for November, to address the critical funding gap for global pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.

The health portfolio is working closely with G7 and G20 partners, as well as with international bodies and organizations, including the WHO, to address important global health challenges including and beyond COVID-19, such as antimicrobial resistance, climate change and mental health.

The threat of antimicrobial resistance has the potential to be the next global health crisis, as our antimicrobial medications, especially antibiotics, become less effective due to pathogens developing the ability to resist these drugs. This is increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness and death. A truly global challenge, this is an issue on which Canada needs to collaborate closely with its international partners and international organizations, including the WHO.

The impact of climate change on health has become a global health priority. It is important that the connection between health and the environment remain at the centre of international discussions and actions to address climate change. At the 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Canada supported the commitments for building and developing climate-resilient and low-carbon sustainable health systems, which was recognized by the WHO.

This is a transformational time for global mental health. The pandemic has had a tremendous impact on mental health and well-being, underscoring both the gaps and opportunities in our mental health systems. We need to translate this momentum into action and work together with the WHO and our international partners to ensure that we achieve the goals and targets we have set, with the vision of creating a world in which mental health is valued, promoted and protected, and mental illness is prevented and cared for equitably and respectfully.

Canada has helped foster strong international relationships and the resilient global community needed to successfully face the challenges of COVID-19, to build back better as we emerge from the

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pandemic, and to continue to make progress on other important health issues that know no borders.

Moving forward, we will redouble our efforts to ensure that the WHO is an effective, efficient, relevant, transparent, accountable and well-governed institution whose actions and recommendations are guided by member states and by the best available science and evidence.

The world needs a strong, transparent and inclusive WHO. Canada stands ready to work with others to make this a reality.

• (1920)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in her speech, the member focused in particular on the need to improve governance at the World Health Organization. I agree that there is a desperate need to improve aspects of the WHO's governance and behaviour.

One of the most scandalizing things for many people who have followed these issues in the last few years was this massive sexual abuse scandal in Congo. Many women were coming forward who faced sexual abuse during the Ebola crisis, and it was at the hands of WHO employees. There has been a lack of effective response. Canada needs to do more to respond to that.

We also saw the way that the World Health Organization was not willing to engage with Taiwan, and some of the comments that were made dismissing Taiwan's distinctiveness in any way.

Would the member agree with me that these were significant scandals, that the WHO has a lot of work to do and that her government needs to do more to be willing to hold international organizations like the World Health Organization accountable?

Mrs. Rechie Valdez: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, Canada is a strong supporter of the WHO and engages with organizations to advance domestic and international priorities. By collaborating with the WHO we can address issues like the ones he mentioned that are important to Canadians. We will continue to work with the WHO to promote gender equality and will address the equity issues that exist today.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am personally very happy that the Liberal Party is very much in favour of Taiwan joining the WHO.

I am pleasantly surprised, but I also remain cautious about the Liberal government's position, because, in other areas, it has been so fearful of offending the Chinese because of its attitude towards Taiwan. The government therefore has been reluctant to act and has not behaved as we would have liked.

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What are my colleague's thoughts on that? On this matter relating to the WHO, why should we be so quick to accept this position?

[English]

Mrs. Rechie Valdez: Mr. Speaker, the main purpose and reason for standing up with this speech was to say that Taiwan has remarkable experience in the field of health care as well as preventing the spread of various contagious diseases. We are going to continue to work with our colleagues in Taiwan and with the WHO, and we are going to take what we have learned from the COVID-19 virus and emerge from that point to ensure we are able to address all these issues going forward and prevent disease from spreading going forward.

• (1925)

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague has done an admirable job of outlining and explaining the importance of multilateral forums and institutions in dealing with global health threats.

Is there anything about Canada's leadership on these forums that really stands out to my hon. colleague as she has looked at Canada's role for example in co-operating with Taiwan and Canada's role on the WHO itself?

Mrs. Rechie Valdez: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, we will continue to support Taiwan's participation in the global health network to enable Taiwan to contribute even more in the postpandemic era. Taiwan is a widely acclaimed leader in health and development, and it has a lot to offer the WHO and the world.

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member spoke many times and very eloquently about how Taiwan has so much to offer to the world and, in particular, when we talk about antimicrobials, etc. However, as a doctor in my previous career, the reality is that being an observer at a meeting gives Taiwan no opportunity to interact and get that onto the table. I am wondering why the member is okay with Taiwan being an observer as opposed to being a full participant so it can get their information to the table to help the world.

Mrs. Rechie Valdez: Mr. Speaker, we fully support Taiwan's full participation in the global health network, and we will continue to have Taiwan engaged at the table when we are making decisions, especially with respect to addressing COVID-19 and how we are going to go forward from that disease.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak about Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations.

My views on this matter are straightforward. Taiwan should participate meaningfully in international organizations whenever there is a practical imperative to do so and whenever its absence is detrimental to global interests.

Consider, for instance, the question of Taiwan's ongoing exclusion from the World Health Assembly, the WHA. The exclusion of Taiwan from the WHA has been detrimental to the global efforts to track and combat COVID-19. The responses to the pandemic, future pandemics and global public health concerns in general provide a practical imperative, I think we can all agree, for Taiwan's

inclusion as an observer. This position aligns fully with Canada's one China policy. Under this policy, Canada recognizes the People's Republic of China as the sole legitimate government of China, while taking note of neither challenging nor endorsing the Government of China's position on Taiwan. Canada maintains diplomatic relations with the PRC, while continuing to develop and maintain unofficial economic people-to-people and cultural ties with Taiwan.

The connections between Canada and Taiwan are very deep and strong. Our two societies share a commitment to democratic values, a respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law. Our people-to-people ties are also very strong. The approximately 50,000 Canadians who live in Taiwan today comprise the fourth-largest Canadian diaspora community in the world. Daily direct flights between Vancouver and Taipei have helped to deepen these people-to-people ties. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, Taiwan was among the first to donate masks to Canada.

The economic relationship between Canada and Taiwan is also thriving. Canada's two-way merchandise trade with Taiwan totalled \$10.2 billion in 2021, up 38.1% from \$7.4 billion in the year 2020. In 2021, Taiwan was Canada's 11th-largest merchandise trading partner and fifth-largest trading partner in Asia.

Taiwan is a critical link in global supply chains, particularly for chip manufacturing and international shipping. To strengthen trade, Canada and Taiwan co-operate through select multilateral organizations, including the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the WTO.

To advance economic people-to-people and cultural co-operation, senior representatives from both sides participate in the annual Canada-Taiwan economic consultations. During the most-recent meeting, held virtually in December, our representatives discussed a broad range of topics related to trade and investments, such as the green economy, supply chain security, intellectual property, access to agricultural markets and greater collaboration on science, technology and innovation.

Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Taiwan recently negotiated the Indigenous Peoples Economic and Trade Cooperation Arrangement. The arrangement establishes a framework to identify and remove barriers that hinder the economic empowerment of indigenous peoples.

Earlier this year, Canada and Taiwan announced their intention to hold an exploratory discussion toward a possible foreign investment promotion and protection arrangement, FIPA, to use the acronym. A FIPA aims to protect and promote foreign investment by negotiating a common framework that provides a stable, rules-based investment environment for Canadian businesses investing abroad and for foreign businesses investing in Canada. Canada is keen to pursue trade in innovation and investment relations with Taiwan, consistent with our long-standing policy.

When it comes to Taiwan's meaningful participation in global discussions, perhaps the best way to summarize my position on this is to rework an old maxim. It is good for Taiwan, good for Canada and good for the rest of the world.

Taiwan's rise during the preceding decades is widely recognized as a democratic and economic success story. Many refer to it as the "Taiwan miracle". Starting about 40 years ago, the island transitioned from a one-party authoritarian system to a multi-party democracy. Today, Taiwan's export-oriented industrial economy ranks 21st in the world by nominal GDP and 15th by GDP per capita.

• (1930)

The island also ranks highly in measures of political and civil liberties, education, health care and human development. Over the past two decades, Taiwan was able to participate in select UN specialized agencies as an observer or as a guest.

More recently, however, Taiwan has been actively excluded from key international agencies and events. This exclusion has negative impacts, not only on the 24 million people of Taiwan, but also on the global community. For instance, Taiwan continues to be excluded from the World Health Assembly, even though the island has much to contribute to global pandemic efforts.

Indeed, the international community faces an unprecedented number of complex issues, from climate change to public health to environmental degradation and more. Collaboration among all partners offers our best hope for resolving these issues. Where a technical imperative exists, we must enable meaningful contributions from all stakeholders. It is on this basis that Canada supports Taiwan's meaningful participation in relevant global discussions.

There are a lot of lessons we can learn from the pandemic. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, international collaboration has been front and centre. The most effective way, in fact the only way to end the pandemic is to engage as many stakeholders as possible in order to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus. International organizations such as the World Health Organization facilitate these efforts.

Throughout the pandemic, the WHO has served as a trusted conduit of authoritative information about everything from infection rates and transmission patterns to the effectiveness of vaccines and vaccination campaigns. Although each jurisdiction is and must be responsible for the health of its population, the WHO enables a coherent global response to the pandemic. Now more than ever, the world needs a transparent, inclusive and accountable World Health Organization. Canada continues to work alongside other international partners to realize this goal.

An illustration of Canada's support for the WHO is the government's investment of \$865 million in the access to COVID-19 tools accelerator. The accelerator is a global collaboration that aims to speed up the development, production and equitable availability of effective diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines. Part of the accelerator is the health systems and response connector, the HSRC for short, which is a partnership of diverse organizations. It is co-led by the WHO, UNICEF, the Global Fund and the World Bank, with support from the Global Financing Facility. HSRC coordinates the

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efforts of individual countries in three working streams: financing, planning and tracking; technical and operational support; and health system and workforce protection. This coordination helps countries to identify and address health system bottlenecks and ensures that COVID-19 tools are deployed most effectively.

Taiwan is a progressive democracy. As a society, it has championed the protection of individual rights and freedoms, including those of women, the LGBTQ2+ community and indigenous people. The island has much to contribute on the world stage. At the same time, Taiwan's strengths in semiconductors, biotechnology and information technology have supported its dynamic, export-driven economy and contributed to global growth.

Taiwan will continue to be the forefront of semiconductor innovation well into the future, and will continue to play a central role in global technology supply chains. Taiwan's better integration into the global economy supports global growth and development.

There is a strength in an inclusive architecture that is supportive of the participation of all stakeholders, which is why Canada will continue to pursue Taiwan's meaningful participation where its presence provides important contributions to the public good.

• (1935)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his fine speech.

He talked about the need for Taiwan to participate in international organizations and its observer status. He mentioned the need to strengthen commercial ties between Canada and Taiwan, including within the World Trade Organization. He also talked about the work that has been done with respect to indigenous self-government. It is an excellent model that could be used in Canada.

I have a question for my colleague. We know that Taiwan was a role model in the fight against COVID-19. What models would the government follow if another pandemic hit Canada?

[*English*]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Mr. Speaker, what model we should use for future pandemics is a great question to reflect on. I certainly see learnings that could be integrated into Canada's future pandemic preparedness. We can take lessons from many countries around the world. Taiwan is one of many that have done well. I am sure there are some we can take lessons from on what not to do as well, and there are many examples.

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The point here is that Taiwan needs to have meaningful input and have an opportunity to participate in discussions to share the lessons it has learned. As an observer or a guest in some of these international organizations, it is able to do that, which achieves the objective we are looking for.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the midst of this important discussion about including Taiwan in international organizations, we are seeing an increasing belligerence and aggression from the Xi Jinping regime. Many observers have noted that there is some risk of an outright invasion attempt by the Xi Jinping regime, and it is my view that Canada needs to contemplate that possibility, be prepared with a strong response and work with the community of democratic nations to send strong deterrent messages to try to avoid that from happening.

I would appreciate the member's comment on what Canada should be doing to, in particular, support Taiwan and deter an invasion.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Mr. Speaker, the member is right that Canada needs to be prepared to respond strongly to whatever eventuality manifests. That is not to say that we can predict the future, but it is to say that we need to be prepared. Whether it is pandemic preparedness or a response to the potential aggression the member suggested from China in the future, we need to prepare for all eventualities.

• (1940)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It being 7:40 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, the question is deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Wednesday, October 5, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

SERVICE CANADA

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many of our constituency offices were inundated over the summer and in fact we are still dealing with the impacts of an overwhelming volume of complaints about the government's mishandling of passport applications.

It is ironic that the government, which wants to expand its influence in more areas of Canadians' lives, has shown itself completely unable to manage its basic responsibilities when it comes to providing Canadians with timely access to passports, something that clearly falls squarely within the responsibility of the federal government. Again, it is typical for these Liberals. They are unable to manage the basic responsibilities of the federal government and at the same time they are telling us how the federal government should be doing more and more to limit people's freedoms and interfere in their lives.

Every member of the House knows, and I am sure the parliamentary secretary charged with parroting the government line tonight is fully aware as well of the problems in his own constituency and has heard the frustration, has seen the tears and has dealt with cases of people needing to cancel vacations and of people missing important family events as a result of their being unable to access passports.

The challenges continue to come into my office from constituents. We continue to get, in my office, over a dozen passport cases every week for those who are travelling and are not able to get their passports. We are dealing with an inquiry right now from a constituent who applied in February and who has still not gotten her passport. What a ridiculous processing time for such a simple and basic government service.

The inability of Service Canada to perform its basic functions is simply unacceptable. The excuse that we have gotten from the minister was to say that there is a large volume post-COVID, as if the government could not have contemplated that travel was going to, in some proportion, come back, at some point, as the pandemic tapered off.

We have heard from many constituents who have had to cancel trips and who have waited in long lines, at times in lines that they felt were unsafe. We are still hearing from constituents who are making status requests online and being told by Service Canada that they are aiming to respond within three days, and then not hearing back for weeks and weeks. Again, this is fundamentally unacceptable.

The federal government, rather than trying to expand itself into all other areas of people's lives, should focus on doing its core job and providing the basic services to Canadians that it clearly has the responsibility to provide.

I would invite the parliamentary secretary, in his response to me tonight, to acknowledge the reality that his government has failed on passports, and rather than trying to bury the conversation in fog and bureaucratic talking points, to acknowledge the pain of my constituents and his, to acknowledge their frustration and to recognize that the government desperately needs to do better, better than it did this summer and better than it is doing now at providing Canadians with this basic service of access to their passports.

• (1945)

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan for his advocacy on behalf of his constituents.

I think everyone in this place can agree that a passport is an important and critical document. We know that Canadians are enthusiastic about travelling again, whether for business or personal reasons, and that passports are critical, so we can imagine the demand. Let me just say that it has been exponential. I will share some numbers for some important context.

Service Canada has been issuing passports as quickly as possible, and since April 1, over one million passports have been issued. As of September 25, 94% of passports applied for at specialized passport offices have been issued within 10 business days. The wait time at the passport call centre went from a peak of 108 minutes in April to 30 minutes last week. Service Canada has been working throughout the summer to meet this demand.

Staff at Service Canada have been working overtime and on weekends, and here are some of the steps that we have taken. We have hired more than 800 new employees since July 2021, specifically to support the processing of passport applications, and we are continuing to scale-up. We have an online appointment booking tool. We are serving priority clients on Saturdays and extending service hours. We improved client experience in our offices by thoroughly assessing client needs while in line, providing clients with appointments at a nearby location and expanding hours and weekend availability in some locations. As a result, lineups at specialized passport offices are now more manageable and more predictable.

Canadians can visit any of over 300 Service Canada centres to request the transfer of their passport applications if they need it for urgent and upcoming travel. This summer, Service Canada has implemented a triage system in 17 of our passport offices. The 10-day passport pickup service is also available in 12 Service Canada centres across the country. We have expanded the simplified renewal process. Canadians can now renew an expired passport as long as it was issued in the last 15 years, even if it was lost, stolen or damaged. We are continuing to hire employees and add processing capacity.

This remains a challenging period with high demand, but we continue to work hard to give Canadians the high-quality service they deserve.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, rather than acknowledge the significant and ongoing failures, the member is trying to congratulate his government for maybe now doing marginally better than the disastrous situation we dealt with in the summer and the spring.

I may have low expectations of the government when it comes to delivering basic services, but Canadians should be able to expect more in terms of the response. We continue to deal with a reality in our office, for instance, where we are not able to do basic status checks and get information unless people have travel booked. The response times continue to be unacceptable.

Again, as I mentioned, I continue to have a constituent with an outstanding passport issue who made their application back in February. I heard this summer from Canadians who had to cancel trips and miss important family events and who experienced a huge amount of stress and anxiety as a result.

Rather than congratulating themselves, are the Liberals prepared to apologize to the Canadians who were hurt by their failures?

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for Service Canada has been travelling throughout the country visiting passport centres and talking with staff. The Government of Canada is taking this situation very seriously and we are taking the necessary steps to remedy it.

Adjournment Proceedings

The hard work of Service Canada employees is paying off. Almost everyone who applies in person at a specialized passport office will get their passport in under 10 business days.

I would like to again thank the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan for his advocacy.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, in 2021 the Liberals promised to permanently eliminate interest on federal student loans. Let us be clear. On page 17 of the Liberal Party's 2021 election platform document, entitled "Forward. For Everyone", it states that a re-elected Liberal government will:

Permanently eliminate the federal interest on Canada Student Loans and Canada Apprentice Loans to support young Canadians who choose to invest in post-secondary education. This will benefit over 1 million student loan borrowers and save an average borrower more than \$3,000 over the lifetime of their loan.

This promise seems fairly straightforward. However, it now seems that Forward. For Everyone" should read "Backward. For Students".

On February 17, I asked the minister responsible whether the re-elected governing party would keep its election campaign promise to students. Of course, amnesia had clearly set in, even though the government claimed to have the backs of Canada's students. Yes, it was roll out the smoke-and-mirrors approach again, and no pesky election promise was going to be allowed to get in the way.

On September 17, an assistant deputy minister at the Department of Employment and Social Development gave notice in the Canada Gazette that the interest moratorium on Canada student loans and Canada apprentice loans would expire on March 31, 2023. Clearly, this must have been a mistake, so one week later, on September 23, I asked whether the Liberals would honour their promise. Again, the House was treated to obfuscation and platitudes. At a time when Canadians are struggling to make ends meet and students are taking on debt to afford an education, broken promises and empty platitudes will not cut it.

The average federal student debt held by someone with a bachelor's degree is \$23,000. I myself graduated with \$25,000 in student debt. Moreover, to combat rampant inflation eating away at Canadians' paycheques, interest rates have nearly doubled to 4.7%. Are we to understand now that on April 1, 2023, the government will hand young Canadians and their parents a very cruel April fool's joke of a nearly \$600 increase to student loan payments? Should that occur, I cannot fathom the backtracking on this campaign promise, because there are few better investments than to invest in education.

Adjournment Proceedings

On average, someone with a bachelor's degree will pay almost \$15,000 a year in annual taxes, nearly double what someone with a high school diploma pays. This is annually, not just one time. It is a recurring benefit to our country, not only in the tax dollars that fund the services that Canadians rely on, but also in a more educated and upskilled workforce. The societal and fiscal benefits are clear. There is also, however, the honouring of a promise to students, along with the business case for investing in our country's next generation.

In conclusion, can the government educate students and Canadians on what will happen on April 1? Can it shed light on the path forward for all by letting us know on what date interest rates will be permanently eliminated from Canada student and apprentice loans?

• (1950)

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said in the House many times, young Canadians and students are the future of Canada. More than 673,000 students each year rely on federal grants and loans to help them cover the cost of their tuition, school supplies and living expenses. That is why we are making historic investments to ensure that students continue to have the supports and opportunities they need to build a better future for themselves and their families.

With budget 2022, we are helping doctors and nurses in rural and remote communities who have student loans. We are investing \$26 million over four years so that nurses in these communities will have up to \$30,000 in loan forgiveness and doctors will have up to \$60,000, respectively.

We are also enhancing the repayment assistance plan as of November 1, and that means people with an income of \$40,000 or less will not have to make payments on their students loans. This measure is expected to help an additional 121,000 Canadians each year who have student and apprentice loan debt. Additionally, the cap on what is considered the monthly affordable payment is being lowered from 20% to 10% of a borrower's household income. What is more is that these new thresholds will be indexed to inflation to ensure that people's eligibility for repayment assistance keeps pace with the cost of living.

There is more. With budget 2021, we provided \$4.5 billion in funding to support expanded access to post-secondary education. Thanks to the Canada student financial assistance program, students and recent graduates will have more access to direct financial

support, making it easier for them to pay off their student debt. In the summer of 2021, we extended the doubling of Canada student grants for an additional two years. We also changed the requirement so that students can use their current income when applying for a grant. That means people in financial need will not have their previous workforce experience count against them.

New measures under the Canada student financial assistance program ensure that post-secondary financial supports are more accessible. Through these remarkable initiatives, I hope it is clear that we are committed to supporting Canada's students and recent graduates, and that we are committed to building the workforce of tomorrow.

• (1955)

Mr. Kevin Vuong: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the parliamentary secretary is not getting. People are struggling to make ends meet. Is the government backtracking on its promise or is it because the government has overspent and now needs to recoup as much money as possible off the backs of students and parents?

The parliamentary secretary has refused to answer when Liberals will honour their promise to permanently eliminate interest on federal student loans. That is fine. I will make it simpler. Will the government honour its promise and eliminate interest on federal student loans, yes or no?

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Mr. Speaker, by investing in our young people today, we are securing Canada's growth and economic prosperity for future generations. We remain committed to permanently eliminating the federal interest on Canada student loans and Canada apprentice loans. In the meantime, the waiver of interest accrual on student apprentice loans has been extended to March 31, 2023. This will mean savings for approximately 1.2 million Canadians repaying student and apprentice loans, the majority of whom are women.

We will help young Canadians transition into the workforce. This is our commitment.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver East is not present to raise the matter for which notice was given. Accordingly, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

[*Translation*]

It being 7:57 p.m., the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:57 p.m.)

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