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Tuesday, May 25, 2021

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, May 25, 2021

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*English*]

INFORMATION COMMISSIONER

The Speaker: It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsection 40(1) of the Access to Information Act, a report from the Information Commissioner entitled “Access at Issue: Challenging the Status Quo”.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(h), this report is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

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[*English*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-China Legislative Association and the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group respecting their participation at the 28th annual meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum in Australia from January 13 to 16, 2020, as well as the report of the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group respecting its participation at the co-chairs' annual visit to Japan, in Hiroshima and Tokyo, Japan from February 11 to 15, 2020.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, entitled “Economic Recovery in Canada's Forestry Sector: Green and Inclusive”.

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

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today of presenting to this House the dissenting report from the Conservative Party, the official opposition, on the forestry study that was undertaken by the natural resources committee.

I am proud to point out the importance of making sure we have a forestry strategy going forward that does take advantage of Canada's position in the world to actually mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and put forward an actual plan for planting two billion trees, which has been long on talk and short on action or planning at this point in time.

We also want to make sure that this report takes notice of all the communities and other parties that benefit from the forestry sector and puts an emphasis on their needs, including the need for the government to negotiate a softwood lumber agreement with our largest trading partner, the United States, which has not happened at this point in time. We need to put more focus on that in order for this industry to prosper.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the following two reports of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts: the 17th report, entitled “Canada Emergency Response Benefit”, and the 18th report, entitled “Pandemic Preparedness, Surveillance, and Border Control Measures”.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to each of these two reports.

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, regarding the main estimates 2021-22.

The committee has considered the estimates referred by the House and reports the same back without amendment.

*Routine Proceedings***BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, during the debates on Wednesday, May 26 and Monday, May 31, 2021, on the business of supply pursuant to Standing Order 81(4), no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair and, within each 15-minute period, each party may allocate time to one or more of its members for speeches or for questions and answers, provided that, in the case of questions and answers, the minister's answer approximately reflect the time taken by the question, and provided that, in the case of speeches, members of the party to which the period is allocated may speak one after the other.

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

Hearing none, it is agreed.

[*Translation*]

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

Hearing no dissenting voice, I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

• (1010)

[*English*]

PETITIONS**OPIOIDS**

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, illicit drug production, distribution and use is occurring within the village of Cache Creek. The COVID-19 pandemic has been overshadowed by the opioid crisis in British Columbia, with more than 1,500 overdose deaths reported in 2020. Residents' calls, messages and pleas to municipal authorities and local law enforcement are regularly met with indifference or incapacity due to jurisdictional issues.

Residents are fearful of retaliation from criminal organizations. They are fearful that they or their children could be exposed to drugs or other noxious substances. They are fearful for the future cohesion of their communities. Residents want to feel safe and secure in their own homes.

Therefore, the citizens of Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon who signed this petition call upon the Government of Canada to collaborate constructively, measurably and tangibly with municipalities, local law enforcement agencies and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to root out and shut down illegal drug production in Cache Creek.

FALUN GONG

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to present today, in both official languages, a petition to sanction corrupt Chinese officials from using Canada as a safe haven.

This petition I present to the House today has been signed by constituents of Calgary Midnapore who are calling for the govern-

ment to implement the Magnitsky Law against individuals in China's Communist Party who have orchestrated the torture and killing of Falun Gong practitioners.

CONVERSION THERAPY

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting three petitions to the House today.

The first petition is with respect to Bill C-6. The petitioners note that conversion therapy has historically referred to the degrading action of changing a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. They say these practices are wrong and should be banned.

The petitioners note further that Bill C-6 defines "conversion therapy" as:

...a practice, treatment or service designed to change a person's sexual orientation to heterosexual, to change a person's gender identity or gender expression to cisgender or to repress or reduce non-heterosexual attraction or sexual behaviour or non-cisgender gender expression.

The petitioners note that this definition is very broad and would apply the label "conversion therapy" to a broad range of practices, including counselling or advice from parents, teachers and counsellors that seeks to encourage an individual to reduce sexual behaviour in a particular context.

Therefore, the petitioners are calling on the government to amend Bill C-6 to address concerns about the definition and ensure that the bill bans conversion therapy and does not ban conversations that have nothing to do with conversion therapy.

FALUN GONG

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I am presenting is similar to the one just presented by my colleague from Calgary Midnapore.

The petition highlights the human rights abuses taking place in China, particularly targeting Falun Gong practitioners. It calls on the Government of Canada to respond more forcefully to these and other human rights abuses taking place in China, including using the Magnitsky act and holding individual human rights abusers accountable with Magnitsky sanctions that freeze assets and would bar entry into Canada.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third and final petition I am presenting this morning is in support of Bill S-204, a bill that has been unanimously adopted by the Senate and is now before this House. The bill would make it a criminal offence for a person to go abroad and receive an organ without consent. It would also create a mechanism by which people could be deemed inadmissible to Canada if they are involved in forced organ harvesting and trafficking.

Bill S-204 is the same bill, in an identical form, as Bill S-240, which passed in this House unanimously in the last Parliament. Bill S-204 has unanimously passed in the Senate twice. It has unanimously passed in the House. It has passed in both chambers in identical form.

The only remaining step is for this House, in this Parliament, to again pass the bill in the same form it was passed in the last Parliament so we can finally take this vitally necessary step for Canada to fight back against the horrific practice of forced organ harvesting and trafficking.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[Translation]

POINTS OF ORDER

EXPRESSION USED DURING ORAL QUESTIONS—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I would like to make a statement concerning an expression used recently during Oral Questions, which has become the subject of multiple points of order.

As members know, points of order cannot be raised during Oral Questions, but are instead brought up at the end of question period. While it can be challenging for the Chair to make on-the-spot decisions regarding language during the quick exchanges, the Speaker can intervene when appropriate, particularly in cases of disorder or when unparliamentary language is used.

After the point of order raised on May 12 by the opposition House leader, I undertook to review the transcripts and return to the House.

● (1015)

[English]

The opposition House leader argued that it was unparliamentary for the Prime Minister to use the phrase “deliberately misleading Canadians” in describing the position of the official opposition caucus. He noted that the use of words such as these has been found unparliamentary in the past. Indeed, similar language has given rise to objections before.

[Translation]

House of Commons Procedure and Practice, third edition, states at page 624, and I quote:

In dealing with unparliamentary language, the Speaker takes into account the tone, manner and intention of the Member speaking, the person to whom the words at issue were directed, the degree of provocation, and most important, whether or not the remarks created disorder in the Chamber.... Although an expression may be found to be acceptable, the Speaker has cautioned that any language which leads to disorder in the House should not be used.

Of particular importance in this case, it also states, on the same page, and I quote:

Speaker's Ruling

Expressions which are considered unparliamentary when applied to an individual Member have not always been considered so when applied “in a generic sense” or to a party.

[English]

That being said, the comments made on May 12 were not directed at a particular individual. However, it is not helpful for members to make accusations using inflammatory language. It only invites a response in kind, leading to an overall lowering of the tone of our proceedings. The Chair has often reminded members of the need to be respectful in their exchanges and to maintain a certain degree of civility. It is possible to disagree, even forcefully, on matters of public policy without resorting to accusations of dishonesty or insults.

As we get closer to the summer adjournment, I would strongly encourage all members to find more judicious ways of expressing their disagreements and not resort to rhetoric.

I thank the hon. members for their co-operation in this regard.

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I do appreciate your ruling. I do note, however, that in cases where things like this are raised, often members will choose to stand and apologize for what they have done to avoid the Speaker having to make a ruling like this.

The Prime Minister obviously chose not to do that. Are you going to require or request that the Prime Minister make such an apology to the House prior to being able to participate again in the proceedings of this House?

The Speaker: Not at this time.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, you seem to have already ruled on that.

The Speaker: Again, I want to remind hon. members that in debate, emotions do run wild sometimes and words come out. This is a very fine line, naming a group or a person. Even then, and I think I have brought this up before, in the chamber, when members throw something out, they can expect something back. It is not always easy in the chamber to hold back, and sometimes things slip out. I implore all members to please be careful with what they are saying.

● (1020)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I want to thank you for keeping everything calm. This has been a very tense session. I think you have done an excellent job so far. I am sure you will give me some leeway in the future if I stray off the beaten track that I try to stay on every day.

The Speaker: The Chair occupants do use their judicious judgment on checking out what is going on. I have full confidence in their abilities and I hope the hon. members have faith in mine.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[Translation]***BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2021, NO. 1**

The House resumed from May 11 consideration of the motion that Bill C-30, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 19, 2021 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-30, which implements certain provisions of budget 2021.

As everyone knows, it is a mammoth and extremely dense bill that contains a wide range of measures. We unreservedly support some of these measures, which we would like to see implemented even if we vote against the budget.

This part of the bill seeks to extend COVID-19 assistance programs, which although not perfect are nevertheless essential, until September. These include the Canada emergency wage subsidy and the Canada emergency rent subsidy. Many businesses that have suffered badly over the past year rely on those programs. Considering how important predictability is in business, of course we are pleased that entrepreneurs will have a clear idea of the programs available to them over the coming months. However, the amounts allocated will decrease gradually throughout the extension period.

However, there is one little thing worth noting. The bill gives the Minister of Finance the power to extend the programs until November 30, 2021, through regulation, without having to go through the legislative process. I believe I am right in thinking and safe in saying that this measure is an insurance policy in case the House is dissolved for a fall election, which would prevent it from enacting a law that would extend the wage subsidy beyond September 27, 2021. I will let my colleagues read between the lines to determine when the government expects the House to resume.

We are particularly pleased that, instead of paying taxes in the year that they received a government assistance cheque and getting a credit in the year that they reimburse the amount, as is currently the case, under Bill C-30, taxpayers will not have to pay taxes on any government assistance that they reimbursed. Those who have just completed their 2020 income tax return could end up paying taxes on the amounts they received through the Canada emergency response benefit. However, even if the government asked them to pay back those amounts, under Bill C-30, any reimbursements made this year make the cheques received last year tax-free.

Another piece of good news is the creation of a hiring subsidy program, which will be in effect from June 6 to November 20, 2021. That program is offered to businesses restarting their activities and hiring or rehiring employees. I am also pleased that taxes will finally be imposed on Internet products and services and Airbnb rentals, which will put an end to the unfair competition that we have strongly criticized.

I would also note the new Canada-wide child care program, even though it is part of a general trend of interference and federal centralization. Fortunately, there is mention of a possible asymmetrical agreement with Quebec and the federal budget statement repeatedly

touts the child care system. However, there needs to be assurances that this agreement will translate into full compensation with no strings attached for Quebec for its share of the total cost of the program. Since this federal government likes to interfere in matters that are not under its jurisdiction, I would like to note that family policy and related programs are exclusively under Quebec's jurisdiction.

Bill C-30 provides for a one-time payment of just over \$130 million to the Government of Quebec to harmonize the Quebec parental insurance plan with the Employment Insurance Act. Since the eligibility criteria and benefit period for EI have been temporarily modified and increased, Quebec has the right to opt out with financial compensation with respect to the maternity and parental benefits program.

However, Bill C-30 also lays the foundation for a Canadian securities regulation regime, which the Bloc Québécois and Quebec strongly oppose. This bill provides for a significant increase to the budget of the Canadian Securities Regulation Regime Transition Office, so it is not a stretch to conclude that Ottawa wants to strip Quebec of its financial sector. I remind members that the office was created in 2009, and its purpose is to create a single pan-Canadian securities regulator in Toronto. Bill C-30 authorizes the government to make payments to the transition office in an aggregate amount not exceeding \$119.5 million, or any greater amount that may be specified in an appropriation act.

• (1025)

Although the Supreme Court ruled on a number of occasions that securities were not under federal jurisdiction, Ottawa finally got the green light in 2018 to interfere in this jurisdiction provided that it co-operate with the provinces and not act unilaterally. History has taught us to be cautious in such situations.

This plan to create a national securities regulator in Toronto is bound to result in regulatory activities transitioning out of Quebec. I will note that the unanimity we have seen in opposition to this bill in Quebec is rather remarkable. All political parties in the Quebec National Assembly, business communities, the financial sector and labour-sponsored funds are against this bill. The list of those who have vehemently expressed their opposition to this initiative includes the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec, the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal, Finance Montréal, the International Financial Center, the Desjardins Group and Fonds de solidarité FTQ, as well as most Quebec businesses such as Air Transat, Transcontinental, Québecor, Metro, La Capitale and Molson.

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This plan is just bad and must never see the light of day. Contrary to what members opposite are saying, this is more than just a dispute over jurisdictions or a new conflict between the federal government and the provinces. This is quite simply a battle between Bay Street and Quebec. It is an attack on our efforts to keep head offices in the province and preserve our businesses.

Keeping the sector's regulator in Quebec ensures that decision-makers are nearby, which in turn enables access to capital markets for businesses. A strong Quebec securities regulator is essential for the development and vitality of the financial sector. In Quebec, the financial sector accounts for 150,000 jobs and contributes \$20 billion to the GDP. That is equivalent to 6.3%. Montreal is the 13th largest financial centre in the world.

A strong financial hub is vital to the functioning of our head offices and the preservation of our businesses. It is a well-known fact that businesses concentrate their strategic activities, in particular research and development, where their head offices are located. This new attack on Quebec's jurisdictions risks having us go the route of the branch plant economy, to the detriment of Ontario.

This potential exodus of head offices could have serious consequences on every level of our economy, since Quebec companies tend to favour Quebec suppliers, while foreign companies in Quebec rely more on globalized supply chains. Just imagine the impact that can have on our network of SMEs, particularly in the regions. As we have seen during the pandemic, globalized supply chains are fragile and make us very dependent on other countries. We will not stop fighting against this plan to centralize the financial sector in Toronto.

We will also keep calling out the government for ignoring the demands of the Quebec National Assembly and the provinces and refusing to increase health transfers from 22% to 35%. As we know, the government is ignoring the will of the House of Commons, since a Bloc Québécois motion calling on the government to substantially and permanently increase federal transfers to the provinces was adopted in December 2020.

The government could well have taken advantage of the fact that the deficit announced in budget 2021 was lower than expected, by \$28 billion, which is exactly how much Quebec and the provinces are asking for. With massive spending on the horizon, it is clear that by refusing to increase transfers, the government is making a political choice, not a budgetary choice, to the detriment of everyone's health.

It was a long time coming, but Bill C-30 finally includes the increase to old age security that this government promised during the 2019 election campaign. However, the increase will amount to only \$766 per year, or \$63.80 per month, and will apply only to seniors aged 75 and over. The increase will not begin until 2022 and is insufficient for seniors and for the Bloc Québécois.

In closing, we will vote in favour of the bill, because we do not want to deprive seniors aged 75 and over of this cheque. We do not want to deprive businesses and workers of the assistance programs they are counting on, but we will continue to fight to ensure that all sectors of Quebec society receive their fair share in a fairer budget in the future.

• (1030)

[*English*]

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Consumer Price Index for last month was 3.4%, which is outside the historical targets of 0% to 2% and, in fact, outside the 3% transitory target.

In my hon. colleague's opinion, does the budget contribute to further inflation or will it decrease inflation, and are further higher inflation numbers, which I believe will happen, good for his constituents?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I must admit I did not detect a specific question. Generally, he asked me if the current spending will contribute to inflation or encourage consumption, in other words, if this is a stimulus budget. I gather that is the gist of his question.

Public spending is generally key to a sound economic recovery. Of course, we must not invest indiscriminately, but historically, in times of crisis and turmoil, we have relied on an ambitious public spending agenda. We do not like all the public expenditures laid out in the budget, but we are not opposed in principle to public spending.

We also know that most of these support programs will disappear in the near future as the crisis subsides, so we will not have to rack our brains about where to make cuts, because many of the programs will automatically come to an end.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, with the budget implementation bill, the government has recognized the true value of investing in Canadians throughout very difficult times. Ultimately, what we would like to see is a road to a stronger and healthier economy by having invested in Canadians from coast to coast to coast over the last number of months during the pandemic.

I wonder if my colleague could provide his thoughts on how important it was for the Government of Canada to work with other levels of government to ensure we could maximize the return of the economy in a better fashion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Speaker, I certainly cannot be against the idea of the federal government working with other levels of government, far from it.

The problem is that we are talking about a plethora of centralizing programs that are structural in nature. The government is laying the groundwork to majorly encroach on provincial jurisdictions, but its refusal to increase health transfers will soon make things quite frankly unworkable for Quebec and other provinces.

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I do not call that working with other levels of government.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

I want to ask a more general question about Quebec's jurisdiction. Quebec is ahead of the rest of Canada. Thirteen years ago, we had the opportunity to pass a law to ban the use of carcinogenic pesticides across Canada.

The Bloc Québécois blocked this bill in a minority Parliament, saying that it intruded on provincial responsibilities. There are a number of issues like that where jurisdictions are shared.

I therefore want to ask my colleague this: Would it not be better to have bills that seek to improve people's health and protect the environment?

● (1035)

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question, which she kind of answered herself.

I was not here 13 years ago, but as she pointed out, an intrusion is an intrusion, and any intrusion must be rejected unequivocally.

In many, many ways, Quebec's laws are extremely advanced, much more so than those in the rest of Canada. Quebec is a leader on environmental matters, although there is always room for improvement.

That is why all new programs and legislation must include the right to opt out. Since Quebec is already ahead on most of these issues, it must be able to get its fair share so it can use that money to make even more progress on other fronts instead of paying for something that is not as good as what it already has.

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to contribute to the debate on Bill C-30, budget implementation act, 2021, no. 1. The budget reflects the unprecedented times we are living in.

My constituents in Vaudreuil—Soulanges, all Canadians and billions of people around the world have had their lives turned upside down for more than a year by COVID-19. Many people have lost loved ones. Schools, day cares and businesses have had to close. Families have been affected by temporary and long-term layoffs.

The magnitude of this situation cannot be underestimated. This is the worst health and economic crisis that Canada and all of humanity have experienced in generations. Our Liberal government had to present a budget that reflected this reality, and budget 2021 does just that.

This is an important budget focused on three key goals: finishing the fight against COVID-19 and continuing to support families and businesses during the pandemic; investing in the economic recovery and in economic growth in the short and long terms; and, lastly, looking ahead by investing in building a cleaner, safer, stronger and more prosperous Canada for our children and grandchildren.

With respect to our investments to finish the fight against COVID-19, I will start by speaking about investments in vaccines,

more specifically our domestic vaccine production capacity in the future.

COVID-19 highlighted the importance of rebuilding Canada's vaccine production capacity, which was lost over the past 40 years. Budget 2021 provides a total of \$2.2 billion over seven years to re-establish a vibrant domestic life sciences sector. This amount includes a previously announced investment of \$170 million for the expansion of a vaccine production facility in Montreal. These and upcoming investments will equip Canada to produce COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines that Canadians may need to combat future biological threats.

[English]

As we continue to navigate through the highs and lows of this pandemic, many sectors of our economy are still closed or operating at reduced capacity due to provincial health measures. As a result, many of my constituents in Vaudreuil—Soulanges are either out of work or are facing a reduction in income.

To ensure that they continue to put food on the table and support themselves and their families, budget 2021 extends the COVID-19 economic response support measures for individuals by another 12 weeks to September 2021. This includes the Canada recovery benefit, which will reduce gradually over time; the Canada recovery caregiving benefit; the Canada recovery sickness benefit; and it allows for more flexible access to EI benefits for another year, into the fall of 2022. This ensures that those in my riding of Vaudreuil—Soulanges, who are still heavily impacted by this pandemic, including our artists, restaurant owners, tourism operators, those working in the aviation sector and many more, will have the support they need to see it through.

● (1040)

[Translation]

We have also extended benefits for small business owners. Budget 2021 ensures that the Canada emergency wage subsidy, which has helped more than 5.3 million Canadians, will be extended until September 25, 2021.

The Canada emergency rent subsidy, which has already helped more than 154,000 organizations, will be extended from June to September 25, 2021.

Canada emergency business account loans, which have helped more than 850,000 Canadian small businesses, are still repayable by December 31, 2022, but the application deadline has been extended to June 30, 2021.

To help businesses reopen, budget 2021 includes several new programs, such as the Canada recovery hiring program, which offsets a portion of the extra costs employers take on as they reopen.

The objective is to help employers that continue to experience declines in revenues relative to before the pandemic. The program will be available for employees from June 6 to November 20, 2021.

[English]

Budget 2021 also includes an expansion of a worker support program that I know will have positive impacts on the lives of hundreds of thousands of Canadians in the years ahead who may find themselves diagnosed with an illness that will require them to take time off work, and that is the extension of employment insurance sickness benefits from 15 weeks to 26 weeks. During my personal battle with cancer, I know how important it is during and after chemotherapy to focus on one's well-being, on one's mental health and on healing.

Budget 2021 proposes funding of \$3 billion over five years to deliver on our promise in 2019 to extend these benefits by almost three months. This extension would provide approximately 169,000 Canadians every year with additional time and flexibility to recover and return to work.

[Translation]

The extension of the support programs for families, workers and business owners to September 2021 is vital to the health and safety of many families and businesses in Vaudreuil—Soulanges.

We promised all Canadians that we would be there for them during the pandemic, and that is what we are doing with budget 2021.

We also promised seniors that we would be there to help them. Since 2016, our government has worked hard to do just that. We have already increased support for 900,000 of the most vulnerable seniors across Canada, made historic investments in affordable housing, and invested billions of dollars in mental health care.

In budget 2021, we are continuing on that track by offering a one-time payment of \$500 for seniors aged 75 and over in August 2021, as well as a 10% increase in old age security payments starting in July 2022 for seniors aged 75 and over.

We also invested over \$3 billion to improve long-term care and \$3.8 billion to build an additional 35,000 affordable housing units for Canadian seniors.

[English]

For young Canadians who are anxious about their future job prospects in the coming months and years, budget 2021 provides the support they need to build skills, get on-the-job training and start their careers. This includes \$721 million to connect Canadian youth with employers that will provide them with over 100,000 new quality job opportunities and a historic \$4 billion in a digital adoption program to help 160,000 businesses make the shift to e-commerce, which will create 28,000 new jobs for young Canadians.

It provides \$708 million over five years to ensure that we have 85,000 work-integrated learning placements and \$470 million to establish a new apprentice service that would help over 55,000 first-

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year apprentices in construction and manufacturing Red Seal trades.

Finally, it provides an additional \$371 million in new funding for the Canada summer jobs program in 2022 and 2023 to support approximately 75,000 new placements in the summer of 2022 alone.

Further, to respond to the mental health impacts of this pandemic, as part of an overall investment of \$1 billion in the mental health of Canadians, budget 2021 proposes to provide \$100 million over three years to support innovative mental health programs for populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, including health care workers, front-line workers, youth, seniors, indigenous Canadians and racialized Black Canadians.

Finally, budget 2021 includes unprecedented investments in the protection and preservation of nature and action against climate change. To enable Canada to reach the ambitious goal of protecting 25% of our nature by 2025, budget 2021 invests \$4 billion for small and large-scale conservation projects and \$3.16 billion to plant two billion trees across Canada by 2030. To help Canada not only meet but exceed our Paris Agreement targets, budget 2021 invests \$8 billion in the net-zero accelerator supporting green technology and renewable energy and creating well-paying jobs in the process.

It also invests \$1.5 billion to purchase 5,000 electric public transit and school buses, helping to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, provide cleaner air and reduce noise pollution in our communities. In addition, to help communities like mine in Vaudreuil—Soulanges that have already begun to experience the impacts of climate change with two record floods in just the last four years, budget 2021 will strengthen climate resiliency by allocating \$640 million to the disaster mitigation and adaptation fund for small-scale projects between \$1 million and \$20 million in eligible infrastructure costs. For communities like mine, with smaller municipalities, this change is going to make all the difference.

• (1045)

[Translation]

With that, I strongly encourage every member of the House to support the measures proposed in budget 2021 and in Bill C-30. These measures will allow us to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member's time has expired.

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[English]

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Cloverdale—Langley City.

Mrs. Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Madam Speaker, this past week, Restaurants Canada came to the Standing Committee on Finance and stated that half of restaurants face risk of closure if subsidies are scaled back too soon.

The vast majority of food services businesses have been operating at a loss or barely breaking even throughout the entire pandemic, with nearly half consistently losing money for more than a year. They have been counting on the rent and wage subsidies to be the bridge they need to stay alive until dining restrictions are lifted and they can truly start to recover without the help of emergency support. Why has this Liberal budget still not designed a targeted program for the vital restaurant sector?

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Madam Speaker, in fact, all of the restaurant owners I have spoken to have been incredibly grateful for the wage subsidy and the rent subsidy that were put forward. They told me that without those support measures, they would no longer be around.

I am very glad to see in budget 2021 these programs are going to continue throughout the summer. This provides the opportunity for the Minister of Finance to re-evaluate in September whether they need to be extended for a longer period of time, until November. It delivers for restaurant owners and other small businesses in my community of Vaudreuil—Soulanges and all across the country.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague for his speech.

I had to chuckle when he spoke about the two billion trees that his government promised to plant by 2030. Two years have gone by and, as far as I know, the government has yet to plant a single one of those trees.

First, I would like to ask my colleague if there are any studies on the species of trees his government intends to plant, because if it is going to plant two billion of them, it needs to plan ahead a little.

Second, I would like to know if my colleague agrees with promoting the forestry industry, which was the subject of an extremely detailed and interesting report tabled by the members for Jonquière and Lac-Saint-Jean. It might be more cost-effective and even better for the environment to read that report, rather than planting two billion trees over the next eight years.

Essentially, I would like my colleague to comment on his government's nebulous plan.

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

I completely agree that we need a multi-faceted plan to fight climate change. That is what we are implementing.

Our historic \$3.16-billion plan includes planting two billion trees, which will help us meet and also exceed our Paris Agreement targets, while ensuring that we leave a healthier Canada for our children and a positive legacy for future generations.

• (1050)

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, budget 2021 does nothing for dental care. It does nothing in terms of going after offshore tax havens. The member talks about the climate emergency, but the budget does nothing to end fossil fuel subsidies. This is concerning, because who is going to pay for it? It is certainly not big oil or big corporations. It is people.

Why is the burden of this debt going to be placed on people rather than big corporations and big oil?

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Madam Speaker, there are a couple of points I would like to clarify. Firstly, we are still dedicated to phasing out fossil fuel subsidies by 2025 and we have already been able to remove eight fossil fuel subsidies. This budget delivers in so many ways with regard to climate change. In fact, it is the largest investment ever made by any government in history in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The plan that was released by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change in December shows very clearly how, through these investments and by working with provinces and territories, we are not only going to meet but exceed our Paris Agreement targets. It is something that makes me very proud for my children, my children's children and all future generations of Canadians.

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Madam Speaker, over the course of the debate on Bill C-30, there have been many points of view shared. Many of my colleagues on this side of the House have justifiably raised concerns about the deficits and levels of debt the current government is accumulating, and the impact this debt will have on Canadians for generations to come. They have skilfully illustrated that, despite the Minister of Finance's description of her budget as a plan for jobs, growth and resilience, it falls dreadfully short of a real plan for economic growth that will create jobs for Canadians.

One of my colleagues has sounded the alarm about the impact of the government's inflation-inducing borrowing and spending plan and the real impacts this has on the daily lives of Canadians, whether they are trying to buy a home or pay for groceries. Of course, we cannot ignore the vast body of evidence confirming that the current government has proven itself very skilled at convincing Canadians of their grand promises of action on priorities like rural Internet, infrastructure spending and housing. The lack of meaningful results is, at worst, a betrayal of the Canadians who trusted this Prime Minister; or, at best, the vacuous panderings of an individual whose life experiences prepared him only for being famous.

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While all of these issues are important and have yet to be addressed by the government, I intend to focus my comments particularly on what would appear to be the centrepiece of this budget for the Minister of Finance: a national child care program. There can be no doubt that access to affordable child care and early childhood education is a wise investment in our economy and can help ensure all Canadians are able to realize their full potential in the workforce. Personally, I believe a system designed to respect the choices of parents in the best child care options for them makes more sense than a massive government program, which, by the way, would cost \$30 billion over the next five years, then roughly \$9 billion annually thereafter. This proposal highlights yet another example of the federal government making a commitment in an area of provincial jurisdiction without the corresponding commitment of dollars needed to fund a program that most provinces simply cannot afford.

Here is a brief history, that I am sure all of us know. One of the primary reasons for Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick federating to form the Dominion of Canada in 1867 was the desire to fund the transcontinental rail link and to build a common market that would spur economic opportunities for the provinces and lessen the impact of any adverse economic policies of the United States. The new federal government was also designed to stabilize public credit. That was one of the first items of business in 1867 when the new Dominion of Canada assumed \$72.1 million of the \$88.6 million of existing provincial debt.

The British North America Act assigned the big expenses of settling, building and defending this new country to the federal government, and the provincial governments were responsible for, at the time, the less expensive services like education, hospitals and municipal institutions. Despite this original design, immediately after Confederation, the provinces had spending commitments higher than their revenue. This led to the creation of the dominion subsidy from the federal government, which was calculated at 80¢ per capita and, including other transfers in support of specific legislation, cost the federal treasury about \$2.8 million or over 16% of total federal spending. This country was born into debt and the national government was established, in part, to manage that debt.

Now, fast-forward through those early nation-building years of World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, all eras where the federal government borrowed heavily to grow the economy, win a war, save the economy and win another war. Following the end of World War II, the economy expanded exponentially as did the level of government intervention in the daily lives of Canadians. New programs were introduced by the federal government, including unemployment insurance in 1940, the family allowance in 1945, old age security in 1952, the Canada pension plan in 1965 and the guaranteed income supplement in 1967. During this period, the dominion subsidy program evolved into the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act in 1957, which was due in part to the federal government's desire to promise nationwide health and social programs, all made possible because of a 50% cost-sharing commitment from the federal government.

By the 1970s, the federal government had established an outrageously complex cost-sharing system with the provinces to partner in the costs for expanded health services, education and income se-

curity programs. All of this and a program of equalization payments to poorer provinces was funded by debt, which was funded by an exponentially growing economy. Then, 1973 hit and an already-slowing economy and increasing inflation were compounded by a quadrupling of oil prices. Government debt grew faster than ever, without the corresponding economic growth to pay for it.

• (1055)

Interest rates skyrocketed, unemployment soared and Canada was in trouble. While tax reform in the eighties, the Canada-U.S. free trade agreement and significant deregulation of key sectors of the economy certainly helped spur economic growth, by the 1990s Canada was in a fiscal crisis with growing debt-servicing costs and an economy not growing fast enough to pay for it. Between 1995 and 1997, the Chrétien government was forced to cut spending to save Canada's finances. In that time period, the government cut direct program spending by almost 10%, but it cut provincial transfers by 22%.

While the fiscal imbalance in our Confederation existed from the very beginning, federal expansion and intervention in provincial jurisdictions exacerbated that imbalance. While the federal government failed to ever really fully meet those original commitments made to provinces, the debt crisis culminated in the 1990s with the federal government solving its debt problems by abandoning the provinces and also the municipalities. By 2007, with federal finances back under control, a new formula for provincial transfers was established that increased transfers, but not nearly enough to meet the demands on provincial services that the federal government helped create and agreed to pay half the cost of.

In the Parliamentary Budget Officer's most recent fiscal sustainability report, he noted, "subnational governments will face ever-increasing health care costs". He also continued to say, "For the subnational government sector as a whole, current fiscal policy is not sustainable over the long term. We estimate that permanent tax increases or spending reductions amounting to 0.8 per cent of GDP...would be required to stabilize the consolidated subnational...net debt-to-GDP ratio at its current level of 25.7 per cent of GDP".

In his report on budget 2021, the Parliamentary Budget Officer cautioned that the government's \$100-billion stimulus spending could be miscalibrated, meaning that based on the current recovery it is not likely necessary, while he cautioned that the government's plan to continue borrowing could exhaust its fiscal flexibility in the medium to long term.

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We have provincial governments, many of which are drowning in debt and a federal government borrowing and spending wastefully, all while advocating its responsibility to fully fund its share of provincial programs like health care, and now the federal government offers to add a new child care program to the provincial balance sheets with a promise to cover half the costs.

How could the premiers ever trust the government to live up to this latest promise, when the broken promises of the past are threatening the financial future of almost every province in the country? Clearly, German philosopher Georg Hegel was correct when he wrote, “What experience and history teaches us is that people and governments have never learned anything from history, or acted on principles deduced from it.”

This budget is a buffet of spending, paid for with massive debts and designed to perpetuate the government's promises of being all things to all people. The government is not only ignoring the financial struggles of the provinces, struggles created in part by federal interference; budget 2021 seeks to push the provinces even further into debt.

We need a real plan that manages public debt and invests strategically to stimulate real economic growth that will create jobs. We need a plan that will restore fiscal balance to our Confederation. Restoring that balance will better prepare the federal treasury to manage the impending fiscal problems, grow our economy and build a stronger and more prosperous Canada.

• (1100)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I find it fascinating that the Conservatives are willing to hedge their bets on inflation, when, although it is indeed something we have to be concerned about and pay attention to, it is also something that economists seem to be split on. Indeed, the most recent Harper appointee to the Bank of Canada has indicated that the moves that have been made by this government are important and should be able to be done in a responsible way. If only Conservatives gave that kind of attention to and believed 97% of scientists when they talk about climate change, but I digress.

I wonder if the member could comment as to how he is so certain that inflation is going to be a massive issue, given that the economists right now seem to be split on the issue, and that there is some evidence to suggest that we might have a temporary blip, but it will not necessarily last that long.

Mr. Scott Aitchison: Madam Speaker, it seems as though the member for Kingston and the Islands is constantly digressing.

I would note that inflation is already rising. It is a threat that we have been warned about, and the government needs to think about it cautiously. Instead, we have people like the member for Kingston and the Islands standing and saying, “Just don't worry. Everybody be happy.” I do not think that is really a wise or strategic plan at all.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. The member said that I said, “Don't worry. Be happy.” I never said that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is a point of debate at this point. The hon. member can raise it under questions and comments, if he wishes.

[*Translation*]

Questions and comments.

The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, the rhetoric from our Conservative friends tends to focus on deficits. Nevertheless, it is a bit disturbing to note that many important and serious issues related to the crisis are not addressed in this budget.

For instance, during the break last week, I spoke with a number of seniors who are quite angry because the government has turned its back on seniors under 75.

There is also a housing crisis in Quebec right now. The budget does allocate a bit of money here and there, but the Federation of Canadian Municipalities was asking for a \$7-billion reinvestment in a housing program.

On top of that, we are in the midst of a health crisis, and yet there have been no health transfers. The Quebec National Assembly and all the provincial premiers have unanimously called for a massive investment in health care, but it is not in the budget.

How would my colleague deal with this crisis?

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Aitchison: Madam Speaker, the member raises very good points. I agree with him completely that the federal government has been absent on solving health care transfers, particularly. They have been an issue since the creation of universal health care.

The best way to deal with the situation is to elect a Conservative government that would clean up the mess the Liberals are perpetuating.

• (1105)

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, 58% of young people have felt the negative impacts of the pandemic. That is why the NDP has called for the elimination of federal student debt: up to \$20,000 per student.

Could the member tell us if he supports reducing federal student debt, or would he rather the federal government make a profit on the backs of young people?

Mr. Scott Aitchison: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for the loaded question.

It is another classic example, frankly, of where the federal government has made commitments to provinces for post-secondary education and never truly lived up to them. An investment in young people is wise but, again, the federal government interfering and not living up to its commitments to the provinces is where the real problem lies.

The best way to fix this, and it may not be all that flashy and it may not buy votes, is to fix the fiscal and structural imbalances that exist in our Confederation. That is the way to solve that problem and all the others.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to join all of my colleagues in the House, albeit virtually from my riding in Edmonton Strathcona.

Today, we are talking about Bill C-30 and the budget that the Liberal government has brought forward. I will begin by talking about the things that I support and was happy to see within the budget.

I was delighted to see that child care was included in the budget. The NDP has been calling for a national child care strategy for decades. It was wonderful to see that the Liberals have finally listened to us. They did not just listen to us: People within the Royal Bank, chambers of commerce across the country, child care advocates and representatives from provincial governments have called for a national child care plan. They recognized that if we did not have child care put in place, and if we did not deal with child care in a meaningful way there would be no recovery for so many working families across the country, and there would be a very stunted recovery, particularly impacting women, leading to what has been dubbed the “she-cession”. We were happy to see child care included.

Of course, I have concerns that this may be a promise and may not be something that is actually done. We have seen the government make promises before and not follow through with actions, so my colleagues within the NDP and I will be keeping a close eye on this to make sure that it is not just a campaign promise for the Liberal government but actually something it will implement.

I am also a little worried that the government has not done the work that needs to be done in terms of making sure that the provincial governments are going to take the need for child care seriously and implement it. As members know, I come from Alberta. In Alberta right now, Jason Kenney has already said that he has concerns about implementing a child care program. I know that women and working families in my province desperately need that support. This is something I will certainly be keeping my eye on as we go forward.

Obviously, we were also very happy to see the establishment of a federal minimum wage of \$15 per hour. We heard, in 2015, Justin Trudeau openly criticize a proposal that the NDP had put forward, so it is good to see that this is a part of the budget, and we were very happy about that.

However, I will also talk a little about some of the shortcomings of Bill C-30 and the budget. I will focus my comments today on the impacts that Bill C-30 and the federal 2021 budget have had on my riding of Edmonton Strathcona.

As members may know, Edmonton Strathcona is an incredible riding. It is the heart of Edmonton. Downtown may be the brain of our city, but Edmonton Strathcona is the heart. It is the heart of the arts community, and is where so many of the small businesses and restaurants in Edmonton operate. It is home to all of the best festivals: the Edmonton Folk Music Festival, the Fringe Festival, Her-

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itage Day and a number of other wonderful events. It is also where many of the post-secondary institutions in Alberta are located. The University of Alberta's Campus Saint-Jean, King's University and the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology Souch Campus are all located in my riding of Edmonton Strathcona.

When I look at this budget, I am looking at what some of it looks like for my constituents, and I will start with post-secondary education.

As I mentioned, Edmonton Strathcona is home to many post-secondary institutions, and many students, professors and parents live in the riding. They are very concerned that post-secondary education is becoming inaccessible. It is too expensive and becoming something that only the elite and wealthy can access.

I spoke with students from the University of Alberta Faculty of Law, Mia and Suzanne, who are deeply worried about post-secondary education in Alberta. They are worried about whether students will be able to afford to attend university and what it means when only the wealthy can attend. They are deeply concerned that students will graduate with mountains of debt that will impact their ability to buy a home, start a family or begin their career.

• (1110)

In November 2020, I brought forward a motion calling on the government to immediately implement a moratorium on student loan repayments. The House voted unanimously in support of that motion, yet nothing happened. There was no moratorium put in place. Students were still expected to pay back their student loans in the middle of the pandemic and in the middle of what we know has been a devastating time for young students and recent graduates.

We know that 58% of young people have felt the negative impacts of the pandemic on their fiscal situations. Instead of letting students fall into debt, we have called on the government to help by reducing their debt. We have called on the government to eliminate up to \$20,000 per student. The Don't Forget Students group and the Canadian Federation of Students called on the government to do more for students. The fact that this budget has not done enough for post-secondary students and for recent post-secondary graduates is a big problem for me. It is a big problem for my constituency and for students across the country.

There is another thing that we really wanted to see within this bill and I am very disappointed that we do not see it, particularly as we are in the middle of a global pandemic. This bill does nothing to give us any of the supports that we need during a global pandemic. There is nothing here for pharmacare, dental care or additional support for mental health care.

Canadians have been waiting for pharmacare for over 60 years. It would make sure that the medications they need would be included in our health care system. Twenty-three years ago, the Liberals first promised Canadians a national pharmacare program. They have repeated that promise over and over again, yet we still have not seen it. In fact, recently the Liberal Party voted against the NDP's proposal for a pharmacare bill and, of course, there is nothing in this budget that makes us feel like it is coming.

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We have had five public commissions on pharmacare. We have had study after study, including the Liberals' own Hoskins report in 2019, say that Canadians needed pharmacare, that pharmacare would save money and that we have that obligation, particularly during a global pandemic. Unfortunately, that is not part of what we saw in this bill.

While we were happy to see that there was a small increase in the amount of OAS for seniors over 75, it was deeply concerning that it would not help all seniors. It is a pittance, and not enough for seniors to get out of poverty and survive this pandemic. We saw massive amounts of money go to support for-profit long-term care centres. Instead of giving the money to our seniors to help them, we have seen the money go to the wealthy.

I said that I would be speaking about what the impacts have been on my riding of Edmonton Strathcona, but I want to very quickly talk about international development, humanitarian assistance and where this budget falls on that front.

A report prepared by Cooperation Canada, which is a leader in civil society work on international development, stated:

COVID-19 is not a fleeting crisis. It calls for political leadership and strategic investments to make up for the 25 years of human development progress lost in the first 25 weeks of the global pandemic.

It also says this budget missed that opportunity. Groups that provide humanitarian aid around the world asked for 1% within this budget, and they did not get that support.

Members may say that pharmacare, child care, support for seniors, artistic communities and our international communities all cost money, and wonder where it is going to come from. That is the biggest problem with this bill in my mind. We did not take the opportunity to make sure that the wealthy paid their fair share. We did not take the opportunity with this budget to make sure that the ultrarich would be contributing to our communities and our Canadian priorities. We have seen CEOs use the wage subsidy program to lock out their workers in my riding of Edmonton Strathcona. We have seen the ultrarich make \$78 billion over the course of this pandemic, yet there is no wealth tax. There is nothing that will make the wealthy pay their share and help us as we go forward.

While I am happy to see that the Liberal government is finally taking some steps on a national child care program, and while I am happy to see minimum wage raised to \$15 I am disappointed, once again, that the wealthy are given a free ticket while regular Canadians are expected to pick up the tab.

• (1115)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I go to questions and comments, I would like to remind the member that, earlier in her intervention, she mentioned the Prime Minister by name. I would ask her, when referring to the Prime Minister or other members of the House, that she refer to them by either their riding name or their ministerial name.

For questions and comments, we will go to the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Govern-

ment in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, a couple of members have made reference to the issue of age 75 and what the government committed to. In the 2019 federal election, the leader of the Liberal Party, now Canada's Prime Minister, made a commitment to increase the benefit by 10% for all those who are age 75 and older. We are now fulfilling that commitment. We are fulfilling a promise that was made in the last federal election.

Am I now to assume that the NDP not only supports our commitment, but would also like to see that commitment of a 10% increase made to everyone who is over age 65, or possibly even younger than that? In Manitoba, for many years, seniors were recognized as 65-plus. What is the actual position of the NDP? If the member could provide a percentage, that would be helpful.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, first of all, I have to apologize to you. I do seem to struggle to remember that the Prime Minister shall not be referred to by name.

The question that the member brought up today is problematic for me because it talks a lot about the commitments that the government has made. What about the commitments the government has not made? What about the commitments to supporting all seniors aged 65 years and older? What about students? What about the commitments that the government made for electoral reform? What about the commitments the government made to plant two billion trees, none of which have been seen?

To set a low bar and then jump over it does not seem all that ambitious. It does not seem all that motivated, to be perfectly honest.

Mrs. Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals' national \$10-a-day daycare is not income tested, which ensures we would be delivering huge benefits to high-income parents, as opposed to targeting those who need it most. Is the member disappointed that we are not looking to the needs of low-income working moms?

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, the best strategy for a national plan is that it be universally accessible. We saw our previous premier Rachel Notley put a plan in place in Alberta for \$25-a-day daycare. It was a massive success, and it contributed to cutting child poverty in half in the province. When we make child care universal, and when we make child care available to all working families, it becomes something that lifts all. All boats rise.

It is important that we have a universal plan. I do not think we should only be targeting certain populations. We should be making sure that this is a national plan, and that children, whether they are in Quebec, Alberta or British Columbia, all have access to good, strong, quality child care.

• (1120)

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech given by my colleague, who bragged about the merits of a very significant financial commitment the federal government has made for child care. However, I am quite surprised that she was not speaking out instead against this federal interference in an area of provincial jurisdiction.

We have had this type of program in Quebec for a long time, and if the federal government wants to copy our model, so much the better, but why does this program have to come from Ottawa and not the provinces?

I would like to hear what you have to say about the issue of workers, which you may not have had time to talk about. The government did not commit to permanently reforming the employment insurance system. It is just implementing temporary measures.

What do you think about that?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would like to remind the hon. member to address her remarks to the Chair and not directly to members.

[English]

We have time for a brief answer from the member for Edmonton Strathcona.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, if I had had two or three hours, I certainly would have been able to address more within the budget. Time constraints limited me. I can tell members that I have many more notes I would have liked to have spoken to in terms of things we would have liked to have seen with EI and sick leave. There are a number of different things.

In terms of the member's first question on child care and provincial jurisdiction, she may know that, in my province of Alberta, our premier has not done a very good job during this pandemic. He has not done a strong job in ensuring we are well poised for recovery.

I feel the federal government needs to take a step and assist provinces when they are not being very positive in implementing things such as child care, when they have cut child care programs that we had in the past and when they are not implementing or putting in place new programs to help new families.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-30, the budget implementation act.

The problem with budget 2021 is that it is focused more on the political fortunes of the Liberal Party than on rebuilding the economy post-pandemic. That is not just me, the Conservative member for Langley—Aldergrove, speaking. The former clerk of the Privy Council Kevin Lynch is quoted as saying that budget 2021 is an “intergenerational transfer of debt and risk [that] is unprecedented.”

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Mr. Lynch continues:

As a political statement, it should yield electoral dividends. As an economic statement, it favours short-term consumption over private-sector investment, sprinkles...[dividends] initiatives far and wide, adds heavily to the federal debt, and misses an urgent opportunity to rebuild our longer-term growth post-pandemic.

He is not happy with it, but look who is smiling. The left-leaning Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives is smiling. Its senior economist, David Macdonald, advised the Minister of Finance to ignore “ongoing and needless concern about federal interest payments.”

Those pesky debt servicing costs take all the fun out of the party. Let us all just agree the budget will balance itself. That it is modern monetary theory at work, and we should not be surprised this is coming from the left-leaning Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Modern monetary theory says the following: Debt and the deficit do not matter. Why do we even keep track of them because they do not matter? The only thing that matters is inflation, and as long as we keep inflation under control, everything is going to be good and fine. The proponents of modern monetary theory will tell us that inflation is under control, that it is more or less within the Bank of Canada's target range of 2%. Just recently it has gone up a bit, and I am happy to hear the member opposite acknowledging that at least there is a difference of opinion on whether inflation is just a blip or it is long-term and deeply embedded.

Let us hear what ordinary Canadians say about inflation. Talking to many small businesses in my riding of Langley—Aldergrove, I am hearing that they are having to compete to get good workers to come back to work. They are competing with each other, which of course is a good thing, but they feel they are also competing with the federal government. They are being told that maybe they need to pay their employees more if they want them to come back to work. That to them sounds like wage inflation.

I have talked to young families, and there are many of them in my riding of Langley—Aldergrove, who are struggling to buy a house. There is a housing affordability crisis going on. That is not unique to my riding of Langley—Aldergrove, although British Columbia's Lower Mainland seems to be ground zero for this housing affordability crisis.

I ask members to consider a hypothetical family that 15 months ago, at the start of the pandemic, decided it would take one more year to save up for a down payment to buy a first home. Today, that family is somewhere between \$100,000 and \$150,000 further behind. The goalposts have just been moved further. No matter how hard families kick the ball, and no matter how well they play the game, they are not keeping up. They are losing ground. If we tell them there is no inflation, they are not going to believe us.

I have talked to contractors who are working in construction in the housing industry. If we tell them there is no inflation, they will tell us about increased prices for lumber, plywood, steel, concrete and any products related to construction. The prices are going up. If we tell them there is no inflation, they are not going to believe us.

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I believe there is one thing we can agree on with the Liberals, and with the other people in this House, and that is that the solution to fight inflation is to grow the economy and to make sure the economy is producing goods and services in sufficient quantities to meet the demand of the buying public. That is the solution. Unfortunately, this budget does not do that. It misses the mark.

• (1125)

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has noted that a significant amount of the Liberal spending in this budget will not stimulate jobs. Nor will it create economic growth. This is a budget that focuses on redistribution of wealth, borrowing money and quantitative easing, but does not encourage private investment.

We have heard on numerous occasions from members opposite that even during the Harper years, Conservative governments engaged in deficit spending. Of course, in a time of crisis, that is exactly what a central government needs to do. It has tools available to it. Debt financing, quantitative easing, tax incentives to encourage further investment and even printing money are all tools available to and must be employed by a central government during a time of economic crisis to ensure there is liquidity in the marketplace. We all agree on that. Where we disagree is when the central government needs to step on the gas and when to ease up, when to pump liquidity into the marketplace and when to step aside to let private enterprise take over.

Do not forget that the Liberal government, even during good times, the first four years of its mandate, did not balance the budget. There was full employment, good government revenues and economic growth, yet there was one deficit budget after the other. I do not think Canadians have confidence in the government to see us through this crisis. The Conservatives, on the other hand, have a great track record of managing Canada's economy during a time of economic crisis, the most recent being the global financial crisis of 2008 and 2009 when Canada came out stronger than any other G7 country.

Today's Conservatives stand ready, willing and able to take the lead again to do the hard work to get our economy back on track. The Liberals focus on Ottawa-centric policies; we focus on private investment.

Talking about government-centred programs, I will focus briefly on the latest iteration of the \$10-a-day universal child care proposal that has been put forward in the budget once again, as it has been put forward many times over many years. I will quote from a recent study report by Cardus, a think tank. This is what it says about the national child care proposal, "The norms of modern work, particularly that of modern working mothers, will be poorly addressed by a nation-wide system, rooted as it is in proposals that were first advanced in the 1970s."

If there is one thing we learned about Canada and Canadians during this COVID crisis, it is that they are resilient, creative, inventive and engage in entrepreneurial problem-solving. A lot of Canadian families have taken the opportunity during this COVID crisis to move out of urban centres into more suburban centres to get a bigger house for the kids, a bigger home office, maybe two home offices, one for mom, one for dad and maybe even a third one for the kids if they do their school work from home. We should ask

these families what they think about a centralized Ottawa-knows-best national child care policy. We should ask them what they want.

I have a few suggestions, three good ideas, that I hope the Liberals will accept. First, they should take the billions of dollars that they are planning to spend on national child care and give it directly to families and allow them to do what they feel is best. Second, let us create more housing by encouraging provincial governments and municipalities to increase supply. Rather than tinker with demand, let us increase supply. Finally, they should do something about rural broadband so we can all work efficiently from home.

• (1130)

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I could have had my screen off and still would have known that the individual speaking was a Conservative from his thought process.

I have to wonder what the Conservatives would have done for the thousands and thousands of people who would have ended up unemployed, or are unemployed, as a result of this pandemic. As for child care and women, we have a huge labour shortage in Canada and thousands of women would love to go to work, but do not have adequate child care.

What would my colleague propose if the Conservatives were in charge during this pandemic?

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, I pointed out in my earlier talking points that the Conservative Party agrees that a federal government needs to step in during a time of crisis with deficit spending, quantitative easing and pumping liquidity into the marketplace to keep the economy going and to support families, workers and businesses. We voted in favour of those programs when they were presented by the Liberal government. We worked on improving them. They are better because of the work we have done.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, the pandemic has exposed the flaws in our health care system, whether it is in vaccine supply or quantity or the quality of our long-term care facilities. Health care workers and seniors particularly have suffered direct consequences of years of underfunding to health care services under consecutive Liberal and Conservative governments, yet the budget announces no increased health care transfers.

Could the member tell us about the impact of health care underfunding on worsening the current pandemic?

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• (1135)

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, the Conservative Party agrees that the federal government has a very important role to play in helping Canadian citizens who are most in need, such as seniors and people who are not benefiting from the wealth of the nation. We recognize and appreciate that. I would stand with her in criticizing the current government for not having done a sufficient job in that during this pandemic.

Mrs. Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Madam Speaker, last week, representatives of Restaurants Canada came to the Standing Committee on Finance. They mentioned that half of restaurants faced the risk of closure if subsidies were scaled back too soon. They are calling on the government to immediately introduce a sector-specific restaurant survival support package, with one of the things being an exemption from the scheduled scale back of the rent and wage subsidies for the food sector.

Could you tell me your thoughts are on this?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I remind the member to address all questions and comments through the Chair and not to the individual member.

The hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove has just a little under a minute to respond.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague that what we should be looking at now at this stage of the economic recovery post-pandemic is sector-specific aid.

I talked about small businesses in my riding that were having trouble finding employees. These are generally construction companies, landscaping companies and agricultural businesses where it is safe to go back to work. They are having trouble getting workers. I recognize as well that restaurants in my colleague's riding are struggling. They continue to need help and I support that.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise in the House today. It is always an honour to speak in the House, especially in a time where we remain virtual. It is much better to be in the House to speak.

I would like to thank my colleagues, the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka and the member for Langley—Aldergrove, for their presentations today about what we believe is important when talking about the budget implementation bill.

Governments have historically had three sources of revenue: tax, borrow or print money. This process has been around for governments for a long time. The Egyptians, 3,000 years ago, had an extensive twice-yearly collection of grains that they could then distribute in less productive times, for government workers or lesser classes. The Incas has a similar system in the Americas.

Over time, forms of governments that have been ruling have taxed those they are in control of with some form of payment, be it commodity, currency or even servitude. The ruling authority would decide on the use of the collected tax. In my family history, going back to Scotland in 1207, there was a tax collector. He is part of my family history. The collection of taxes has been going on for thousands of years.

When it comes to taxes, people can pay, resist or be non-compliant. Penalties for non-compliance varied over time. Many of us remember the Boston Tea Party and how the American colonies resisted paying taxes.

Since 1867, in Canada, taxes have been based on trade. It was a trade-based type of tax. In 1916, there was a corporate tax. There was a world activity going on called World War I. In 1917, there was a temporary Income Tax War Act, combining corporate and a new individual tax to be reviewed after the war, after World War I.

After World War II, in 1948, the temporary act was replaced by the Income Tax Act, the basis for what we have today, which should be totally thrown out and redone, as it has only been tinkered with for the last 60 or 70 years.

Different levels of government in Canada have taxation. The federal and provincial governments can rack up debt, but municipalities cannot. We have huge debt in both federal and provincial governments, but the municipalities have figured out how to do it without creating that long-term debt.

Over two calendar years, we have had an economic snapshot, a fall economic update, but no budget. Finally, Canadians will be able to understand, maybe, for themselves what their tax dollars will pay for.

When phone books were still being printed some years ago, there were times they were used as substitute booster seats for children to reach the top of the table at dinnertime. Phone books are not printed too often these days, but at 724 pages, this budget could be a fitting substitute. There are 724 pages jammed with Liberal promises, promises that will add to the federal debt of more than \$1.2 trillion. It is a great tactic to make certain Canadians never read it; it is so long and complicated.

In fact, we heard before that the current Prime Minister added more debt than all the other prime ministers before him combined. That is quite an infamous accomplishment. I have listened to Liberals extolling accomplishments, and it almost sounds like they are making acceptance speeches for an Oscar. It may not be the award that many of my constituents would like to give them for this budget, one with \$100 billion, not million, unaccounted for. However, what is a few billion between friends.

This is taxpayer money. I often hear the Prime Minister say, "We will take this debt on our shoulders." It is the taxpayer money and taxpayer debt, and it is their children and their grandchildren's debt. Is it printed money by the billions on a weekly basis on which the government has depended? This modern monetary theory is interesting: print all the money it wants and do not worry about the debt. That does not work at the municipal government level or at the personal level, so how can it work at the federal level.

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This is not a new idea. Government spending based on a backed commodity, like the holding of gold, is many centuries old. However, it was disrupted a few times in those days, too, when there was an oversupply of gold at certain times.

• (1140)

Paper began to appear as a writ of value for governments to replace rare metals currency, but it was backed by rare metals—not now. When governments produce volumes of paper currency with no backing or faith in the currency, what happens?

Many of us have heard the stories of Germany in the 1920s. There was hyperinflation, spending rapidly as the value dropped. A wheelbarrow full of money could buy a loaf of bread one day, but not the next day. The Great Depression brought stock market paper with no value. More recently, there was the 2008 bank depression. Greece, Venezuela and other countries just printed bigger numbers on their bills and there was still no value.

What is the Liberal government doing with this budget? If the government continues this trajectory, by 2026 Canada will have spent \$39 billion on debt interest payments alone. That is more than child care at \$8.3 billion, more than EI benefits at \$25.6 billion and more than the Canada child benefit at \$27 billion, all of which are programs in this budget.

We must look introspectively and ask ourselves where this money is coming from. It is being generated as numbers on a screen and then printed on expensive paper, or plastic bills these days, which is another resource sector product. The government will be printing more money than it earns from Canadian taxpayers. Is this a recipe for disaster? I know what my constituents think, and it is not a pretty picture.

What is the government promising for Canadians? I have heard about many government programs, but what drives the economy despite this incredible spending on government programs and increase of government employees? Does the private sector not build the economy by producing services and products of value? It employs people to do this. The companies and the employees then pay taxes that support the needs of society.

Do government programs build the economy based on printed money? This has not worked in other countries or historically. Each person in Canada now owes an average of \$33,000 in federal debt. Does the Liberal government want people to depend on it instead of gainful employment? I would hope not, but does this budget do that?

Canadians and future generations will be saddled with the burden of the government doubling the national debt, and for what? I cannot wait for members to ask me about government programs. What about the \$100-billion recovery line in the budget? Is that more government jobs?

I speak with my constituents in mind. They are hard-working, no-nonsense, results-driven people. Do they want a budget with handouts? No, they do not. We have incredibly intelligent, innovative, hard-working people in my constituency and across this great country who are willing to invest in businesses and hire productive people to produce services or products that are valued. Is the gov-

ernment interested in doing that with this budget? My constituents question that. If the government was as focused on getting Canadians back to work as it is on marketing and slogans, my constituents would be better off.

In this House, parliamentarians must follow certain standards of House procedure and conduct. It would be impossible for me to accurately convey the feelings my constituents have, using the words they have spoken to me. I would be subject to reprimand and would certainly be compelled to retract my comments.

All parties agreed to temporary measures to address the difficulties in conducting House business going forward, but since then, even though we have adapted new methods of representing Canadians in this House, we have been more dysfunctional than ever. Though this new online method has been streamlined, it took many months of tedious technical tinkering. Nothing will be a viable substitute for the ability to look a colleague in the eye and have a conversation about our constituents.

The spending promises are at an all-time high and there is no plan to balance the budget in the future. Generations of Canadians will be paying for the Liberal government's promises. The snowball effect of this pandemic on every sector of the economy, on every moment of our lives going forward will not be easily forgotten. I remember the 20% interest rates on my mortgage, and that was a response to inflation in the 1970s. Can members imagine what that would do to my constituents' mortgages today?

Canada's future does not rest in a slogan, a campaign or even a single political party, but in the determination of our people to work, to innovate and to flourish.

• (1145)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie on a point of order.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. At one point, I noticed that, contrary to the standing order that allows members to wear flowers or small pins to recognize special days in our country, my colleague was wearing a button with a slogan on it.

I would like to know whether the Standing Orders of the House of Commons have changed because I, too, have some buttons that I could wear from time to time.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I thank the member for his point of order.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Bow River is well aware, and it has been raised on a number of occasions, that buttons are not to be worn in the House of Commons. I would ask him to remove the button, so that we can proceed to questions and comments.

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The hon. member wants to speak to the point of order.

Mr. Martin Shields: Madam Speaker, if there is a question, I would respond to the question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There was a point of order raised regarding the hon. member's button that he is wearing, which has a message on it. I am respectfully asking that member to remove the button, because, as he is well aware, that is against the protocols in the House. I would ask the hon. member to remove his button, and we will go to questions and comments.

Mr. Martin Shields: Madam Speaker, in response, would that apply to anything people might wear in the House that is not their—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): As the hon. member knows, there are exceptions for things that mark specific days in the House or specific events, such as the MS Society of Canada sending us flowers and everyone wearing those, but the hon. member's button does have a particular message to it that sends a very clear message that not everyone is supportive of.

Therefore, I would ask the hon. member, as he is very well aware that this is a matter that has been raised in the past, to remove the button, so that we can go to questions and comments.

Mr. Martin Shields: Madam Speaker, it is a button that states what I personally—

• (1150)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, at this point, the member is using this opportunity, where we are addressing a procedural matter, to further advocate for the political position that is represented on that button he is wearing.

Either he is going to have to adhere to the rules that are set in this House and being enforced by you right now, or he is going to have to leave the chamber. I would encourage you not to allow him to continue to advocate on behalf of the position that he is trying to advocate for with that button.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I do want to remind other members not to weigh in into the conversation, unless they wish to rise to do so. This is a matter that has been raised several times with other members as well, and with the hon. member himself, so I would just ask the member to please remove the button, so that we can continue on.

Mr. Martin Shields: Madam Speaker, do you mean the other one that I am wearing as well?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): No, just the one that has the very clear message regarding the positioning of the party.

I thank the member.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I heard the member talk a lot about inflation. I heard the previous Conservative member talk about Conservatives only run-

ning a deficit when it is necessary, because of the stimulus that is required from the government at the time. I find that very fascinating, given that between Stephen Harper and Brian Mulroney, 14 out of 16 of their budgets ran deficits. That would only lead me to conclude that times were extremely tough and we were running constant recessions and economic hardship during the times of both Stephen Harper and Brian Mulroney.

Would the member like to comment on why times were so tough just during the years of those two prime ministers?

Mr. Martin Shields: Madam Speaker, in response to my hon. colleague, whom I have worked with for many years on a committee in this particular House, on the environment committee, one of the challenges we have, and he refers to it, is that if we are here in person we are capable of doing a lot more things. In the opportunity that I had of working with him in committee, when we are there in person, we are able to do a lot more things and work on a lot more issues, so when he makes suggestions like that, we could have dealt with a lot more things if we had been here in person. This virtual set-up does not allow us to have a lot of good discussions, like those I have had with the member before.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, yesterday I had a conversation with an extremely bright young girl, my 10-year-old daughter Lily Rose. She asked me why some countries are poor and others are rich. She told me she thought that we here in Quebec and Canada are very lucky to have machines that print money when we do not have enough. I found that very sweet, but obviously, that was from a 10-year-old child. Sometimes I get the impression that the Liberal government is operating as though we actually had amazing money-printing machines, but we are adults, and we know that is unfortunately not the case.

Here is my question for my colleague from Bow River. At this point, we need to look to the future, invest wisely for the future, and make sure that my daughter, whom I just mentioned, does not have to bear the burden of the debt and deficit we are racking up because of the crisis.

Would my colleague agree that it is time we did as the Bloc Québécois suggests by investing in the sustainable, renewable energy sources of the future and engaging in a transition toward renewable energy rather than a spontaneous movement?

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

[*English*]

Mr. Martin Shields: Madam Speaker, in this budget, that is one of the things we look for. We look for things for the future, things for our environment, things for our workforce, things for energy and what we can do. In the province of Alberta, I have seen some of the most phenomenal innovative projects to do with different forms of energy. There are fantastic ideas that are coming out of Alberta, coming out of the resource sector, for how they can develop and work with new technologies and do this, but I do not see that in the Liberal budget.

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• (1155)

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to compliment my colleague on his very attractive tie.

I appreciate that his speech had a lot to do with fiscal responsibility, making sure that those dollars that are being spent are being spent wisely, and I agree with him on that.

One of the concerns I have is that some of the programs we have spent money for have had huge gaps in them. In my riding, we have an example where an employer is actually using the wage subsidy to pay for scab labour instead of negotiating in good faith with Boilermakers Lodge 146.

Could the member talk about whether he feels that it is reasonable for the wage subsidy to be used for employers who are not negotiating in good faith with their workers?

Mr. Martin Shields: Madam Speaker, of course, we have to have accountability, and one of the things we have lacked through the spending programs, through these programs that have been running out, is accountability. We need accountability for those tax dollars spent, and that has been lacking.

In the Liberal budget, going forward, when they talk about \$100 billion unaccounted for and what they might spend it on, that is the lack of accountability we have with the current government.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to be here in the House.

Of course, when I speak from home, in my riding, it is important, but when I am here, I find that my words have even more importance.

[*English*]

I would just like to take a moment and thank my constituent, Paddy Bossert, for the beautiful pin she gave me. She and Dale Bossert have been big supporters of Calgary Midnapore for some time. The pin is a quill and ink, and she says it is because I have such lovely handwriting. I believe my staff would beg to differ with her, but nonetheless, I thank Mrs. Bossert very much for this beautiful pin I am wearing in the House today.

I appeared on Alberta Primetime with the previous speaker, the member for Edmonton Strathcona, where I quoted two articles regarding the budget that I am going to mention here again today. The first one was an Andrew Coyne article. Andrew is of course seen as somewhat Conservative but also seen as, I believe, a very reasonable individual. His comment in his opinion piece was that this was “a budget about everything, except how [we are going] to pay for it”. Those words really resonated with me.

The other article I referred to was a Rosenberg article in The Globe and Mail. This article indicated something I thought was very interesting, which is that the budget used to be an economic document. It used to be a document about the economic future of Canada. In fact, this is how I was raised, which is that one's family brings in so much money a month, spends a certain amount and then a certain amount is left for savings. It was really an education

for me to arrive in the public policy world and find that it is about spending priorities for the fiscal year, whatever they are. Rosenberg's other point was that this budget was not even an economic document, it was a social engineering document designed to vote-grab, which really puts a sad commentary on the government and this budget.

What makes me the most sad is that I really believe every Speech from the Throne and every budget is an opportunity to face the future with confidence and with possibility, especially at this time of coming out of a pandemic. Right now it is hard for Canadians to see the future and have hope. This document did not do that.

We have seen the terrible vaccine procurement and distribution throughout Canada resulting in the delay of a return to life as we once knew it. What we need to do is restart Canada. Our economy is crumbling. Never mind the debt and the deficit my colleagues talked about previously, as well as inflation and money supply. In the last question, it was said that someone's daughter actually thought Canada could print money.

There is just so much supply as a result of the government and a lack of goods. Trade is also failing under this economy. There is a container crisis affecting shippers, distributors and businesses. I actually had someone in my riding tell me that they paid \$2,000 to ship a container from China prior to this pandemic and that the price has now gone up to \$8,500 a container. This is a cost they are going to have to pass on to consumers.

Interest will start to go up. We will see it start with variable rates and it will increase and increase. With household debt, people are paying down their credit cards but now we are seeing them take on this debt with housing prices. As well, small and medium enterprises are struggling.

Mental health during this pandemic has been horrible. I was very proud to host a session with a psychologist in my riding last week on parenting teens in a pandemic, in an effort to help the next generation of Canadians who are looking for some hope in this pandemic, a way out of this pandemic, which this budget did not provide. I received so many sad notes from seniors, who told me they are completely depressed and even contemplating suicide. We need to restart Canada.

• (1200)

I have advocated tirelessly for the aviation sector within the House. The National Airlines Council of Canada put out a statement, which said that:

As vaccination rates continue to climb globally countries are announcing plans for the safe restart of their travel and tourism sectors, drawing on analysis provided by the European Centres for Disease Control and Prevention as well as the US Centres for Disease Control...“Yesterday the National Airlines Council joined with over 60 other industry organizations in writing to the Prime Minister on the urgent need for Canada to move forward with a restart plan for the overall economy and for the travel sector. Countries that successfully plan will not only safely restart aviation and their overall economy, they will take jobs and investment from countries that do not. We must get moving now on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of Canadians in every region of the country whose livelihoods depend on travel and tourism”....

It is not just here, but other jurisdictions are restarting. They have a restart plan. I will point out some examples brought forward to me by the Business Council of Canada, which said that:

Other jurisdictions have paved the route for us to follow. In February, the United Kingdom unveiled a four-stage “roadmap out of lockdown”, with clear guidelines to mark the journey back to a more normal life. For example, in “Step 3”, most businesses in all but the highest risk sectors are allowed to reopen while adhering to public health guidelines.

We need to restart Canada.

The U.S. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention has issued guidance for those who are fully vaccinated and outlines which activities are now considered safe, including domestic travel without the need for testing or quarantine. Right here within Canada, here at home, Saskatchewan recently unveiled a three-step reopening road map that clearly links the lifting of restrictions to vaccination milestones. For example, once 70% of those 30 and older have received one dose, 150 people will be permitted to gather in public, indoor settings provided they adhere to physical distancing and mask guidelines. We need to restart Canada.

Further along that reopening plan for Saskatchewan, in phase 1, May 4 to June 1, we see reopening previously restricted medical services; phase 2, reopening retail and select personal service facilities; phase 3, reopening places of worship, increasing indoor, public and private gatherings of 15 people and outdoor gatherings to 30 people; and phase 4, reopening child and youth day camps, outdoor pools and spray parks as well as libraries, museums, galleries and it goes on and on. Canadians are waiting for this. We need to restart Canada.

However, we need to be smart about this restart. We need not only the government but Canadians to think about the restart. I want every Canadian to think about, when the pandemic is over and when their benefits run out, whether they will they have a job, and if not, why? Did their restaurant close? Did their retail store close? Why? If a person owns a business, is their business safe?

The next question I want Canadians to ask themselves is: What did they not get to do this winter or spring because of no vaccines as a result of this government with no vision and no restart plan? Did someone around them pass away? Was there a surgery that was denied? Did someone have to quit their job in an effort to home-school? Did they have to quit their beer league? Was it like my son who had to go without his hockey league, which gives him so much exercise and happiness?

More importantly, I want Canadians to ask themselves what they want their future to look like. Do they want to own a home? It is not going to happen under this government in the direction that we are going. Do they want to have a family? They might not be able to provide food for them because of inflation and the price of groceries and gas, which is at 127.9 cents a litre in my hometown of Calgary. Do they want to have a car? Why does it have to be an electric car? Why can it not be a car run on diesel? By the time this government makes any effort to get the infrastructure up for electric cars, we will have moved on to hydrogen.

We need to do this restart plan intelligently. However, Canadians' lives do not have to be how the government designed them. They have an opportunity for change. They have an opportunity for

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choice. This government had an opportunity and it failed. We need to restart Canada.

• (1205)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her very passionate speech.

I find it quite ironic that the member talked about restarting Canada and referenced various provincial plans. Those provinces are the ones that shut down their economic activity and the various elements within their province as they saw necessary, and those are the same provinces that are now reopening it all. Ontario just did the same thing and released a three-stage plan, which shows certain milestones, just as the member indicated in her speech that it should be done.

These plans have been set up by the provinces. The provinces are reopening their economies and getting things moving as we hit certain milestones. How is it confusing to her that the provinces that shut things down are also now reopening them?

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Madam Speaker, the provinces have consistently had to react and respond to the shortcomings of the federal government since the very beginning of this pandemic. Since we saw the virus coming over the Pacific Ocean, we have been asking the government to respond. Its vaccine procurement and distribution has been the worst part.

The provincial governments have reacted and responded. The federal government can and should follow their lead in having a national restart plan.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, we all share my colleague's desire to see a reopening soon. Of course, here in British Columbia, we are looking forward to news later this afternoon on what our province's plans will be.

A lot of workers have seen many of their benefits eliminated, either because they have seen their workplace hours reduced or they have lost their jobs altogether. Some of the biggest hits, of course, have been to workplace pharmacare plans. The cost of pharmacare could be a huge burden to the monthly budget of families. What is the member's position on establishing a national pharmacare plan, so that we can really relieve working families of those unexpected costs going forward, on something that is based on the existing Canada Health Act?

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Madam Speaker, I just want to commend my leader for doing incredible work with workers and unions since he was installed as the leader of this party. As Conservatives, we know that Canadians always make the best choices, whether it is about child care, dental care or preferred health care when they get the opportunity to choose for themselves. This is what we want. This is what the government has denied Canadians: the opportunity to have more choice.

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I certainly stand in solidarity with my colleague from the NDP when it comes to supporting workers, unions and Canadian families, but as Conservatives we want to offer Canadians choice as well as the autonomy to make the choices that are best for them.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, I spoke to a number of constituents over the weekend. One talked about how she is simply feeling hopeless during these times and even contemplated suicide because of the circumstances she finds herself in. Another constituent I spoke to had been denied funding, falling through the cracks because of the programs that the Liberal government has brought forward. Another constituent felt like she was not sure she could move on.

Certainly, Conservatives, I think, are realistic in asking for a plan to provide Canadians some hope. My colleague articulated that very well. Specifically, when it comes to the travel industry, I have spoken to some travel agents who said they have fallen through the cracks of the government's plan.

I wonder if my colleague could speak further to how there are sectors, including the travel industry, which have fallen through the cracks because of the Liberal government's mismanagement of the pandemic.

• (1210)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Madam Speaker, to my colleague from Battle River—Crowfoot, the sad reality is that the government will only ever act when it feels it can gain some votes and make some gains in the upcoming election, which it is planning for during this pandemic. Unfortunately, the aviation sector; travel and workers throughout—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Sturgeon River—Parkland.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, today I am speaking to something very historic, which is the budget implementation act for the largest and most anticipated Liberal deficit budget in Canadian history. Usually when history is being made, there are those who will be remembered well and those who will not be.

Judging by this budget, it is clear that the current government will not be well thought of by future generations. These generations will be the ones tasked with the consequences of this massive Liberal deficit budget, one that will mean higher taxes than what we pay today, fewer services, higher inflation and bigger debt servicing costs. All of these factors will vary based on the policy choices made in the years to come, but as a whole, they represent a much higher likelihood that future generations will not be as well off as folks are today.

I know how hard my great-grandparents and grandparents worked to make this country as strong and prosperous as it is today. They sacrificed through two world wars and a depression, building their families while keeping our country's finances under control. I think of my parents' more recent generation, which sacrificed so much in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the last Liberal government drastically cut spending and services for Canadians while leaving their tax burden the highest in Canadian history to date. All of these sacrifices are at threat of being made in vain because of the lack of fiscal accountability and responsibility shown by the Liberal

government over the past five and a half years, particularly in its new plan for future years.

We are facing unique challenges, and the Liberals have proven in this budget that they are not up to dealing with them. The fact is that we cannot count on the factors that previous generations counted on to make and keep our country prosperous. There is no post-war baby boom around the corner, and the steady flow of skilled immigrants to this country is likely to tail off in the near future, as the rest of the world wakes up to the demographic aging crisis and the implications of mass population decline. Fewer and fewer productive taxpayers will be around to service the ever-increasing annual deficits and debts.

Many of the commodities and goods that have made Canada an economic powerhouse are at risk of being phased out by the policies of the World Economic Forum and our own Liberal government. Goods such as oil, automobiles and minerals are at risk of facing drastic reductions in production because of demand destructive policies implemented by woke governments.

Even with the growth in electric vehicles, the scarcity of necessary raw materials such as copper, cobalt and lithium, among others, will make these transportation solutions less accessible for working families. With Liberal legislation like Bill C-69 in the previous Parliament, it is unlikely we will even get new mines permitted in time to benefit from any green commodity booms, making us beholden to foreign global competitors such as China, which will set prices for our consumers and control market supply.

The confluence of factors that made our country prosperous, such as a young population, high immigration, fiscal responsibility and increasing consumption of resources, has been inverted. Now we have an aging population, out-of-control debt, and soon-to-be-more-limited immigration prospects, and the resources that have made our country prosperous in the past are being phased out. Nowhere in this Liberal budget did I see a direct plan to address these challenges. It is a failure.

On the environment, which makes up a significant part of this Liberal budget, I see other key failures. The natural resources committee is studying low-carbon and renewable fuels. I agree with the consensus that we need to do more in this area in order to be competitive economically and lower carbon emissions. I was interested to learn that the Liberals have launched a new tax credit to promote carbon capture utilization and storage. There is a big catch, however. On page 168 of the budget, the Liberals make clear, "It is not intended that the investment tax credit be available for Enhanced Oil Recovery projects."

This is a slap in the face to my constituency. It basically means that Alberta and Saskatchewan should not bother applying. It will significantly undermine investment in carbon capture, which is already effectively being used in my riding at the Sturgeon Refinery, which has sequestered over one megatonne of carbon dioxide in under a year. We could create tens of thousands of jobs and produce the lowest diesel emissions in the world, but the Liberals have essentially barred them from accessing this tax credit.

It is out of line with our trading competitors in the U.S., where under the 45Q policy, a more limited tax credit is available for enhanced oil recovery producers. Why are the Liberals turning their backs yet again on the energy industry of this country, especially when they are taking the important step of decarbonizing their operations with expensive investments in carbon capture?

Is the real reason that the Liberals cannot stand to see a successful, sustainable hydrocarbon industry in this country? That is the only reason I can see, and it is shameful. It is shameful because it exposes that the Liberals are not really interested in finding the most cost-effective solutions for carbon emissions. They are only interested in looking for solutions that come from groups that are not interested in working with our oil and gas sector.

● (1215)

The government claims it is not picking winners and losers in this industry, but its actions speak differently. I am proud that, under a Conservative government, we would support carbon capture across all industries, regardless of whether they are engaged in enhanced recovery or not. Under the Conservatives, our emissions would be significantly lower, while growing jobs in our oil and gas sector.

I am over halfway through my speech and I have not even mentioned the government's failure during the COVID-19 pandemic. We all recognize that Canada is going through a tough time. We have been in and out of lockdowns for over a year now, and it is taking a huge toll on families and small businesses. That is exactly why, over the past year, the Conservatives have supported the government by allowing it to pass massive income support measures on an expedited basis.

We trusted that the Liberals would take that goodwill and do the job right, or at least that, if they did the job wrong the first time, they would make it right as soon as possible. Unfortunately, they did the opposite. They have used this pandemic and the political logjam in this Parliament to govern as if they had a majority, threatening a snap election in a health crisis rather than working with opposition parties to do what is best for Canada.

We see it in question period on a daily basis. Our basic questions are met with disgust. Ministers do not even bother to listen to the questions and choose to throw around unparliamentary language accusing the opposition of lying or misleading Canadians. They have no interest in hearing constructive criticism or implementing our proposals for positive change.

For example, let us look at the Canada emergency wage subsidy. In theory, it is a great program aimed at protecting jobs and our economy, yet as I read through the company quarterly reports, I am shocked by how many profitable businesses have been using tax-

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payer dollars, delivered on a silver platter by the Liberals, to pad their bottom lines. Many of these companies took these benefits while laying off hundreds of workers, yet the Liberals put no strings attached. There is no accountability for these businesses.

I read in the budget that the Liberals have a big solution for this. They will claw back the wage subsidy for companies that raise executive pay. I thought it was a joke. These companies are spending billions on share buybacks and dividends, and the Liberals are saying that, if they raise executive compensation, they will claw it back. It is laughable. It is a feast for big business and government relations executives put on by the Prime Minister, and the taxpayer is footing the bill.

We need to chart a new course to maximizing growth in the years to come while returning to fiscal responsibility by setting a clear plan to get our country back to a balanced budget and address the rising debt load and face the challenges of tomorrow. We have faced them before, as in the 2008 financial crisis. Under Conservative leadership, this country came out stronger than ever, and we are ready to do the hard work to get our country back on track to secure our future.

In my short time to speak today, I have raised serious problems with the Liberals' economic mismanagement, whether it be their poorly designed programs, or their programs designed to outright exclude important industries and regions in this country. I have highlighted some deeply concerning trends, such as the threat of a reduced population, lower immigration and an aging population. These are challenges that would be difficult for governments to face even at the best of times.

What we have seen from the Liberal government is that it has a willingness to spend whatever it takes to get re-elected rather than spending to face the challenges of the future today. It is clear that only a Conservative government can get our country back on track and secure our future.

● (1220)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I was listening to my hon. colleague's speech, and he seemed to be telling us what the Conservative government would do if it were in power.

We are currently in a health crisis, but we are heading toward a social crisis.

Last week, I met with organizations that help the homeless in Montreal and in my riding, Longueuil—Saint-Hubert. People are very worried. They are talking about the fallout from the crisis, including when it comes to housing, over the next five to 10 years.

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Given that the Liberal government is doing nothing to address the serious housing crisis now, if a Conservative government came to power, which is not impossible, would it commit to dealing with this crisis?

Vacancy rates are very low. We are seeing homeless camps across Canada, not just in Quebec, but in Toronto and Vancouver too. There were some in Montreal recently, and this will just keep happening.

Can the Conservative government commit to dealing with this serious social crisis that we are facing?

[*English*]

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Madam Speaker, the member is absolutely right. The pandemic may end, and the health crisis may end in the next few months, and I certainly hope it does, but the mental health crisis and the other consequences of this nearly 18-month pandemic will be felt for years, if not generations, to come.

When we look at the federal deficit picture, we have to take into account that, just because we get out of this pandemic, it does not mean that the economy is going to recover overnight. It is going to take strong leadership that will target economic support where it needs to be, and a lot of that economic support is going to be on important social initiatives, such as addressing homelessness.

I am very proud of our team, as Conservatives, talking about implementing a three-digit number to address mental health challenges. We passed a motion in this House months ago. What have the Liberals done? They have done absolutely nothing. Conservatives will get the job done.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, that is fascinating because the member went on talking about how we were spending too much money and about the debt and deficits that have been piling on. Then, in response to the first question, his default answer was that we need to spend more money. Other Conservatives keep coming out here saying that we need more for a Canada emergency wage subsidy and that we need more for this or that. He even said himself, in response to the last question, that we need to spend money on social programs.

Rather than talking about where we do need to spend money, could the member please suggest, from this budget, where we need to remove money? That might be an easier way for the Conservatives to look at it. Where should we take money out of this budget?

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Madam Speaker, I will answer that with pleasure. For example, how about not giving billions of dollars in wage subsidies to profitable companies engaged in share buybacks and dividend increases? We could have saved a few billion dollars for Canadians there. How about the hundreds of millions of dollars that have been sole-sourced to Liberal insiders during this pandemic? We could have saved a few hundred million dollars there. There are lots of examples. I could do this all day.

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, earlier this morning, I challenged a Bloc colleague on his concern about inflation that is being fuelled by this budget implementation measure. What are my hon. colleague's concerns regarding inflation? I know members across the way accuse us Conservatives of being concerned. I am guilty of that.

• (1225)

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Madam Speaker, I too am worried. I am worried about inflation. If the spectre of inflation were not bad enough, what worries me more is the fact that the Liberal government does not seem to be concerned about inflation. The Liberals bring out a mixed bag of economists, and they say inflation is not a big deal.

I am 30 years old, and I have never really lived in an economy where we had inflation, but I can talk to my grandparents and my parents. It is the idea that the value of that money in a savings account in our bank is going down every day as the government continues to print money and overheat the economy. For example, there are seniors on fixed a income. The threat to our country is real. When is the government going to take concrete action?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be speaking this morning about Bill C-30, budget implementation act, 2021, no. 1.

My colleagues will recall that the Bloc Québécois voted against the budget because some of our important conditions were not included. However, we will be voting in favour of the budget implementation bill, which contains plenty of promising measures.

All the same, that does not mean that we will be giving up the fight, in particular with respect to health transfers. In my opinion, it is inconceivable that a government that is running a deficit of more than \$350 billion this year still refuses to help the levels of government that have the responsibilities stipulated in the original agreement.

The federal government used to pay 50% of the costs, not 22%. At this rate, it will only be paying 20% five years from now. What the provinces and Quebec are unanimously asking for is 35%. That corresponds to \$28 billion, which by purest coincidence is equal to the leeway that the government decided to subtract from its deficit. I certainly think the Liberals could afford this.

Our other major condition was a decent increase in old age pensions. I am not talking about the increase of about \$1.75 given to those who received the largest increase. That will just about buy them one extra coffee a year. I am talking about a decent increase of \$110 a month, which is not asking much.

It feels like we keep repeating the same things. Sometimes repetition is the only way to get a point across. At a time when the government wants to launch a recovery plan involving more than \$100 billion in spending, how can it justify not giving seniors some breathing room by providing \$110 a month?

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It is a small amount. These people will not be putting it in the bank for later, they will be spending it. That is exactly what we need for our economy this year. We need a recovery, some breathing room, help for these people who were hit so hard by the pandemic.

Another concern we have about Bill C-30 is that it lays the foundation for a Canadian securities regulation regime. Historically, the Bloc Québécois has always been opposed to this, and we are not alone. The Quebec government and Quebec's business community are unanimous in rejecting the idea. The Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec, the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal, Finance Montréal, the International Financial Center, Mouvement Desjardins, the Fonds de solidarité FTQ and most companies, including Air Transat, Transcontinental, Canam, Québecor, Metro, La Capitale, Cogeco and Molson, all agree.

Why are all of these economic stakeholders in Quebec saying that Quebec should not be losing more control to Ontario?

It is because this amounts to an attempt to move a strong financial centre to Toronto. I know that I am in the House, that I must remain calm and watch my language, but it is pretty darn hard to stay calm when faced with this constant financial expropriation. What the government wants to do is to make Quebecers dependent, so that they think they need the rest of Canada and that they want to remain a part of it. That is the bottom line.

Why fix something that is not broken?

Quebec's securities commission is extremely effective, and it is important to have a strong economic centre. This is the institution that insisted on keeping the Montreal Stock Exchange in Montreal even after it was sold to the Toronto Stock Exchange. I will be so bold as to say that, if it had been up to Toronto, there would not be a stock exchange in Montreal anymore.

There are many jobs involved. The financial sector accounts for 150,000 jobs and contributes \$20 billion to the GDP. Montreal is the 13th-largest financial centre in the world. The 578 head offices in Quebec account for 50,000 jobs. Since these are head offices, these jobs are not just ordinary jobs. They are 50,000 well-paying jobs that create more jobs. When a company's head office is located in Quebec, because that is where the financial centres are and where decisions are made, the company tends to hire within Quebec and to adapt its strategy accordingly.

• (1230)

That is what the federal government wants to eliminate. Well, I have news for the government: We will not allow it. We will work on it and propose amendments. I hope that the people in the government will see reason and defend Quebec's interests. I would remind them that there are elected officials from Quebec in their party.

Of course, Bill C-30 is massive and does not cover everything. We do applaud the extension of the special assistance programs, such as the Canada emergency wage subsidy and the Canada emergency commercial rent assistance program, until September 25.

However, I think that the rates are dropping rapidly. Companies are not quite back on their feet yet; we need to make sure that we

do not take this assistance away too soon, since companies need predictability. Last week, I received more calls from companies that have held on so far, but they are telling me that they may not be able to hold on for much longer. This is not the time to cut them off.

The creation of a hiring program is a good idea. Disallowing bonuses for senior executives of companies that received the wage subsidy is an excellent idea. I hope the rule will be applied to the letter.

Speaking of wage subsidies, I cannot help but make a brief interjection. It is a shame that I cannot refer to the presence of members in the House, because I would have definitely named someone. My Conservative colleague who spoke previously referred to the wage subsidy several times, bemoaning the fact that the government gave wage subsidies to companies that give bonuses, and yet the Conservatives, the Liberals and the NDP all received the wage subsidy. They have the gall to make accusations and feign outrage. It is crazy.

Sometimes I think I am dreaming. I hear a member say something and I wonder whether he really dared repeat it. Members ought to have a little decency. I am launching an appeal to the three political parties that misappropriated public funds. That is the polite way of saying what I think. I am asking them to give the money back, because it is Quebec and Canadian taxpayer money. They should not use public funds for campaign purposes, especially if they refuse to amend the laws governing the public financing of political parties. It is doubly sickening.

They announced measures in the budget to tackle tax avoidance. That is fine, but they seem pretty minor to me. More needs to be done. I know that they are sick and tired of hearing us talk about this because it is a really sore spot for them, but when are they going to do something about tax havens? If they had the courage to take action in this matter, we would have a budget surplus rather than a deficit. Let us get moving on this.

The argument that government members cannot vote in favour of Bill C-208, which aims to facilitate the transfer of SMEs, including farms, because this constitutes tax avoidance really raises my hackles. It is mind-boggling.

There are a few small positive measures on zero-emission vehicles. It is also an excellent idea to extend the tax deferral on patronage dividends for cooperatives. The industry has been asking for this for ages. However, I wonder why they have not made this measure permanent rather than extending it for another five years.

Would members like to know the real reason? The government wants to keep these people dependent and in line. In three and a half years, or four years, they will have to start begging their generous government to extend the measures again. People are more compliant in those situations. The government wants to keep us dependent, and so do the Canadian securities regulators.

The Bloc Québécois will be there to fight this.

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• (1235)

[English]

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, it was very interesting to listen my colleague from the Bloc. When I read through the budget document and the BIA we are debating today, it seems there is a continuation of a trend, this Ottawa-knows-best mentality of the federal government trying to interfere with provincial jurisdiction by laying out specific frameworks that may or may not represent the best interests of different regions of the country.

Could my colleague from the Bloc comment further on whether he agrees with the government's Ottawa-knows-best strategy and the further stretch of Ottawa regulations into provincial jurisdiction?

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I will begin my answer by warmly thanking my colleague for his easy question. It is true, the Bloc criticizes this every day. The federal government should not meddle in all sorts of areas the way it does, on the pretext that it controls the budget.

The problem with this Confederation is that half of Quebecers' taxes end up in Ottawa, but Ottawa does not take on half of the responsibilities. That creates dependency and forces people to toe the line, which I was saying earlier in my speech. The federal government is therefore forcing people to remain dependent. The government wants to impose standards for long-term care facilities.

I am not sure whether my colleague noticed that Quebec is held up as an example in the budget when it comes to its day care system. If Quebec is an example, so much the better. However, it is important to respect what it is doing and not impose other Canadian standards or conditions on funding. The government is launching a program and that is a good thing. However, it must give Quebec the money that it would have been paid under the program with no strings attached.

[English]

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the hon. member. I know he understands that young people have been affected by this pandemic, particularly students with ongoing student debt.

Does the member support our proposal to eliminate up to \$20,000 of student debt and stop interest on student debt, or does he think it is a good idea for Canada to continue to collect interest and make money on the tuition and debt obligations of students?

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for St. John's East for his question. We are not against the initiative in principle. I myself spent many years paying back my student loans, so I would love to give this gift to young people.

I agree with the idea, but we cannot forget that this issue falls under Quebec's jurisdiction. As I always say, the government can do it, but it must transfer the equivalent amounts to Quebec in the name of tax fairness. I remind members that 50% of the money from Quebecers goes to Ottawa.

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like my colleague from Berthier-Maskinongé to comment on the issue of seniors. The Bloc is calling for the government to increase old age security by \$110 a month. I would like to know why my colleague thinks that the government wants to give an increase only to seniors 75 and up.

• (1240)

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

I do not understand that. It makes absolutely no sense. Considering the \$500 one-time payment promised to people 75 and over, and the fact that the government is creating two classes of seniors by offering a pension increase only to seniors in that age group and only starting in 2022, the only explanation that comes to mind is that an election must be near. As long as we are speculating, does the government by any chance want to hang on to that as an election promise? I cannot think of any other explanation, because it is insensitive, senseless and irresponsible not to increase the standard of living for all seniors.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is always an incredible honour to rise and speak on behalf of the people of Timmins—James Bay.

I think if anybody had said in the House last March that we would still be in COVID now, dealing with lockdowns and the crisis of this terrible pandemic, it would have been impossible for any of us to even imagine finding a way through.

We are getting through this pandemic, but it is really important to point out that there are still serious gaps and problems, and I think many lessons that should have been learned have not been learned.

I was reading an article this morning that talked about the political malpractice that has occurred in Canada at the provincial and federal levels, with leaders refusing to look at the crisis of the pandemic and recognize what we are dealing with. We remember Premier Kenney dismissed COVID as less harmful than influenza, yet we see the ICUs in Alberta being overrun and 25,000-plus deaths in this country. Premier Doug Ford promised to use an "iron ring" to protect seniors in long-term care. The only thing he did was put an iron ring around the investors to keep them from being charged for the horrific negligence that caused the deaths of our loved ones, parents, cousins and grandparents in long-term care facilities. There needs to be a day of reckoning over these issues.

I raise this because people in my region are very tired. They are dreaming of being able to sit on a patio and have a beer with their friends. They are counting the days. The people of Canada have carried their weight. They have done an incredible job of following the rules, being responsible, doing what was necessary and taking on incredible emotional, psychological and economic burdens. The longer we go without a way of saying we can truly put this behind us, the harder it is going to be, and I am very concerned that many businesses will not be coming back.

This past weekend there were 128 new cases of COVID in the region of Timmins. We have cases at the Monteith jail. We have cases now at the OPG centre in Cochrane. We have multiple cases at the Detour Lake mine site where contractors are going in and out. We have 17 new cases in the Fort Albany First Nation, and I understand there are now cases in Attawapiskat. This is deeply concerning, given that we have many communities on the James Bay coast where sometimes 15 or 18 people live in a house and there is no place to do proper self-isolation. When I see 17 new cases over the weekend in Fort Albany, big alarm bells go off. The City of Timmins is now under a state of emergency because of COVID. The community of Moosonee has 38 cases with a very small hospital. It is under a state of emergency.

I am asking the federal government to commit the resources necessary to help our communities get through this. We need the surge capacity that was promised to be on the ground now. We need to be able to put the supports in place for the health units, hospitals, doctors and front-line workers who are dealing with people in very marginalized situations and do not have proper places to stay. I think of the staff at Living Space in Timmins who work with the homeless. They are on the front lines of the medical catastrophe that is unfolding in our communities and we need to have supports for them. I am asking this of the federal government, and will be following up with the Minister of Health, because we need that support there now to keep people alive. All of us who have come through the three lockdowns and the 15-something months of this crisis with hope on the horizon agree that we cannot lose any more people to this.

I see the government pat itself on the back again and again on the vaccine rollout, but let us be realistic. Right now only about 2% of our population has had the second dose. Until a person has had the second dose they are not free of COVID, so this idea of a one-dose summer is ridiculous. We need to have enough people with two doses to ensure that we can safely go back to living the lives we have all been missing for so long and see the loved ones we have been unable to see.

• (1245)

It raises questions about the decisions that were made. I know those in government do not like to be accused of making a wrong decision in a time of crisis, but we have to look at the fundamental problems that happened with this pandemic. We were fundamentally unable, as rich a nation as we are, to make our own PPE. The government and our Prime Minister, who I believe is the last of the Davos defenders, believed the free market and big pharma would look after us.

We saw the United States and the U.K. invest heavily in their domestic vaccine production. We have some really wonderful vaccine companies trying to get off the ground now. The lesson we need to learn from this is that never again can we be in a situation where we are dependent on big pharma and other countries to try to meet this nation's needs.

With Connaught Labs, we had a world-class vaccine facility that served us for 100 years. Brian Mulroney got rid of that. I never hear the Conservatives talking about what a brilliant idea it was to sell off such a national treasure to their friends in private business. If

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we had Connaught Labs right now, I bet many more people would have their second dose. There are lessons to be learned from these issues.

In terms of Timmins—James Bay, some very positive steps have been taken, which are really important to recognize.

[*Translation*]

I want to say congratulations to the Franco-Ontarian community in Timmins on the construction of its new cultural centre, the Centre culturel La Ronde.

That organization plays a key role in developing the Franco-Ontarian community. I am very proud that the federal government has invested \$2.5 million in the construction of this new building for the Centre culturel La Ronde.

In addition, the federal and provincial governments have invested \$2 million to support the Fire Keeper Patrol in its efforts to combat the opioid crisis in our region, particularly in downtown Timmins.

[*English*]

There are many, many good things we have seen with investments. On FedNor, the Liberal government has finally agreed with the position the New Democrats have taken for years: We need FedNor as a stand-alone agency. FedNor is the only economic development agency that has been the poor cousin. It has been a project of the industry department. What we needed all along was a stand-alone agency, because the economy of northern Ontario is as different from the economy of southern Ontario as the economy of Alberta is from Toronto's. We are resource-based and need to have investments coming back.

I applaud this in the budget. People think I am just going to get up here and beat on the Liberal government. On any given day, that makes me get up in the morning, but we have to recognize that when we make good investments we should be talking about good investments. The investment in FedNor is really important. It has been a lifeline to many of our businesses. It has kept our communities going through this time.

I pushed and worked with the federal government on the fire keepers proposal. We are being hit by a massive opioid crisis, not just in Timmins but across the country. A great program came forward in the Fire Keeper Patrol, where indigenous people work on the streets 24/7 to deal with the homeless and the opioid crisis. That funding is essential right now. Marginal populations, such as those who are homeless, are a vector for COVID, so the fire keepers are on the ground doing this.

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I would like to point out we received a record \$2 million in funding for Canada summer jobs. That will hire over 526 students this year in communities from Attawapiskat in the far north to the farm belt down in Earlton. This is all important.

The Liberals always ask me why I was so angry about the Canada student service grant they signed off on with the WE brothers. We worked with the federal government. Every MP in the House worked with the federal government to put in place a plan to get students hired. We could have had those students hired last summer. Instead, the program went to the WE brothers, fell off the tracks and has been a disaster ever since.

I am glad to see these investments to hire our young people. I am glad to see the work going on with FedNor and the fight against the opioid crisis, but I am begging the government for help. We need help right now to deal with the crisis of COVID hitting our communities, working people, young people and indigenous people.

● (1250)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I definitely expect to hear Conservatives trumpet the line of one dose versus two doses. The recommendation to get as many single doses into arms as quickly as humanly possible came from medical experts. The chief medical officer of health in my own riding, Dr. Kieran Moore, has overseen one of the best implementations of dealing with this pandemic, in my humble yet biased opinion, and he also agrees this is the procedure we must take. We must get doses into arms as quickly as possible. That is for the betterment of society, if we are looking to take care of society as a whole and if we want to go through this all together as a whole.

Would the hon. member agree that listening to the experts, with respect to getting as many single doses into arms as possible, is the best approach?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I obviously support listening to our experts, but I feel like my hon. colleague is listening through Liberal ears and not to what they are actually saying. I did not hear the experts say that one dose was good enough. They have not said that. They said that we need two doses. The fact is the government does not have two doses. The experts are saying the next best thing is to get one dose into every arm until we get two doses. Yes, totally: Let us get one dose in. Until we have two doses, we do not get to reopen. We do not get to be safe.

Look at the United States. I have talked to people across the border who are going to events now because they have had two doses. They have had two doses for some months.

Again, it is due to the negligence of the government not delivering those two doses when they were needed that we are still having lockdowns and are still being held back.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have pointed out quite a number of concerns around accountability. There are some issues in terms of the budget itself. As I read through this bill for the budget implementation act, I have further concerns about transparency, accountability and contracts, and a few related issues in that regard.

The member mentioned the issue of the WE scandal and getting dollars to students. I wonder if he would have further comments on

some of the challenges the Liberal government seems to have in terms of leveraging a global crisis for its own political advantage, which saw the Liberals' friends and associated businesses benefit.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I think what was so frustrating with the WE brothers scandal was that the government had asked every member of Parliament to work with it, in terms of getting jobs for students on the ground last spring. We had all done that work. It would have worked great, but instead we had over half a billion dollars diverted to the Kielburger brothers, who were not signed up to lobby. They could walk right into the then finance minister's office. We can see from the Ethics Commissioner's report that they would talk to staff in the then finance minister's office, calling and saying, "Hey, girl." What kind of group gets that kind of insider access and then gets \$500 million without a due diligence report? There was no proof that those guys could actually pull that scheme off.

We have gone through 5,000 pages of documents. We have not seen any due diligence reports. This damaged the Prime Minister dramatically. This program hurt students. There needs to be some accountability for how this thing went off the rails so badly.

● (1255)

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to pick up on some comments that my hon. colleague made, in terms of provincial and federal mismanagement. I have mentioned before years of consecutive Liberal and Conservative cuts to health care. In Manitoba, we are in a crisis. In fact, our ICUs are so full that patients are now being sent to Ontario: five to Thunder Bay, two to Ottawa, two to Sault Ste. Marie, two to North Bay, two to Windsor and one to London. The number keeps growing.

A CBC article came out today. The headline states, "Patients suffering, dying while waiting for care as Manitoba hospitals overwhelmed by COVID-19, doctors say". This is because of mismanagement by Premier Brian Pallister.

How has that failure resulted in the current level of the crisis, from failure to have a good vaccine rollout to failure to provide proper funding and management of health care?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is entirely correct. We should not have people getting sick and dying this far into the pandemic. This is the result of the negligence of premiers such as Pallister, Jason Kenney and Doug Ford, who have completely ignored their obligations. They were not working without a road map. We knew what the problem was. We needed to fix it. Instead, they have left people at risk, particularly in far north indigenous communities.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, we have before us the government's budget implementation act, a disastrous piece of legislation that runs counter to the Canadian spirit and threatens our way of life now and in the future.

Canada, as I see it, is a great frontier nation, a nation characterized also by a great frontier spirit. To be Canadian is to set out into the unknown in pursuit of a better life.

Indigenous peoples who survived in these vast and beautiful but harsh lands since time immemorial were living and surviving on a frontier. The first European settlers who came here for resources, space and greater freedom pursued opportunity on a new frontier where the outcomes were highly uncertain. Loyalists who left their communities came north because of a commitment to ideals that had been betrayed by the American revolution. Former slaves also came north, risking brutal reprisals to find freedom in the land they had never seen. Pioneers risked starvation by moving west for more land. Successive generations of immigrants still today come to this new frontier to discover new things and new opportunities, leaving the familiar behind.

This is the Canadian story, one of sacrifice and boldly setting out for adventure, opportunity, security and justice.

Today, when the comforts of indoors are available to most of us, many still pride themselves on keeping this frontier spirit alive by encountering nature in all its elements at all times of the year: skiing, hiking up mountains, sleeping in tents when we do not have to, going for long walks in the middle of the woods through rough terrain even when no one is chasing us and ignoring the stove and microwave to cook food outside. We have braved the elements to get here and survive here, and now we venture out into the cold, the rain and bear country purely for the fun of it. Consciously or not, this is because we are proud of an identity and heritage that connects us with the grubby struggle of the outdoors. We are still a frontier people.

In the first instance, when people chose to leave the ease and comfort of a country or region of origin and when they chose to set out into a place that seemed inhospitable, they were clearly not just acting for themselves. For so many, the sacrifices of the present are consciously made to give something better to the next generation. Those who first venture onto a frontier are laying the groundwork for their children and grandchildren who will grow up on the frontier with the benefit of a new wealth in land and resources, and with the benefit of the security created by the hard work of their forebears.

This, too, is essential to the Canadian story. These national virtues are of hard work, courage and sacrifice in service of the next generation in the hope we can always say to our children that they will have joys, comforts and opportunities that we did not see.

Part of living on a frontier and living a frontier spirit is recognizing that we have to work for everything we have and we will be able to keep the things we built. With a bounty of natural resources in front of us, we can combine our labour with those things and so establish a future for ourselves and our families through dogged and relentless effort. The character of indigenous peoples and of

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those who immigrated here as well as the circumstances of the country itself made this possible and created communities of relative equality where opportunity was available to all.

This was very different from many old-world countries where resources were often more scarce and where domestic or foreign aristocracies often lived in idleness, benefiting through exploitation. These kinds of societies, where opportunities were not available to most people, have been understandably ripe for political doctrines emphasizing violent redistribution. It is an interesting feature of the history of European colonialism in general that less naturally hospitable areas like Canada ultimately have done better economically than many parts of the world where it is easier to survive.

History shows that early colonizers of warmer regions were more likely to be privileged people seeking wealth through the exploitation of indigenous peoples and slaves and the expropriation of existing wealth. Our country, on the other hand, was colonized by a greater proportion of less privileged European migrants who were prepared to work hard to survive instead of import slave labour. The circumstances of harsher environments such as Canada's also compelled a greater degree of initial co-operation between newcomers and indigenous peoples.

The history of European colonization is therefore one of richer regions becoming poorer and poorer regions becoming richer. This contrast shows the uniqueness of our national experience and the particular impact of the frontier spirit that relatively poorer newcomers to Canada brought with them.

Of course, inequality and exploitation have been and are in certain respects present in Canada today, and they are present any time governments seek to impose unmanageable burdens on workers and on families. However, those who fight back against exploitation do so from a commitment to cultivating and maintaining our national frontier spirit, where anyone can build and where those who choose to build new things can benefit from them. To maintain abundant opportunity and the benefits of this frontier spirit, we must continue to be willing to use our natural resources and to make them available to those who work on and develop them.

● (1300)

The opportunities of the new frontier are not gone. Still today, the option has always been available to go west or north and earn a living through hard work. This is why socialism has never taken root here, because for most of our history, we have been able to provide opportunity and access to resources for those who are willing to move to the frontier and pursue them.

In addition to providing opportunity for all who seek it, our frontiers have supplied the rest of the nation with wealth and resources unimaginable in other countries. We do not have to live on a frontier to benefit from living in a frontier nation.

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However, sadly, there are those in our politics who do not believe in this frontier spirit, who have been suspicious of our resource development sectors past and present, who have preferred the comfortable status quo to the challenge of growth and who have tempted us to put the comforts of the present ahead of the opportunities of the future. The extent to which the government represents such an attack on the frontier spirit of our nation has been an unfolding reality.

The government initially promised small deficits for the short term and a balanced approach to spending in resource development. However, now it has bet big on something more radical. This budget unveils a plan to run massive, historic deficits in perpetuity, financed by borrowing and outstripping the borrowing of any previous national crisis. This is a budget that seeks a decisive break with our history. While there are claims about growth coming from undefined jobs in the future and dreams of greater workforce participation facilitated by state-run day care, the only actual articulated policy in this budget is more spending financed by the printing of money and the continuing, unprecedented assault on those resource and manufacturing sectors of our economy that have driven our frontier spirit and have been the mainstay of our prosperity.

Simultaneously, the government is proposing less production and more spending. The national resource sector is being undermined at every turn, including even projects with net-zero equipment built in, even projects that will demonstrably lead to reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions by displacing dirtier foreign sources. It should be obvious that increasing the availability of child care is only going to increase workforce participation if there are actually jobs available to work in.

Any student of history can figure out where this is all leading. This is the path of hyperinflation and a national debt crisis. This, in turn, will create radical inequality between everyday people and well-connected insiders. This is how we undermine trust in public institutions and exacerbate social divisions. This is how we impoverish a once great nation.

There are those who say that this cannot happen in Canada, that our nation is immune to these things, that our national success has been the product of particular characteristics, choices and circumstances. In particular, it has been our frontier spirit, the fact that we are the kind of people who look at a naturally occurring pile of asphalt and say, "How can I squeeze the oil out of that?" We are the kind of people who understand that prosperity comes from hard work, not from printing money. This is Canada. However, if our leaders continue to seek a different course, then there is no reason to believe that our historic success will continue.

Canada's current government is the most left wing of any government in this nation's history. Other governments have sought to develop our resources and redistribute the surplus, but the current government is blocking growth and development at every turn, while actively seeking to redistribute that which has not been created. It will tell us "Don't worry, your efforts are not required because we are going to take care of things. We are going to take care of you whatever it takes." However, whatever it takes it not going to work if we are not putting anything in the tank. We can only run on empty for so long.

The government will say that its spending will create growth, but its approach to growth emphasizes central planning and the alleged wisdom of bureaucratic predictions about industries of the future. Central planning of economic development has never worked in the past and has always increased inequality and social resentment. Nations that have relied on government planning instead of on the spontaneous genius of people have never prospered except temporarily and by imitation and expropriation.

It is time that Canada's leaders turn their attention to the need to secure our future. Securing our future requires an all-hands-on-deck approach to the economy, one that leverages the hard work, ingenuity and sacrifice of all people from all backgrounds, in all sectors and in all regions of our national economy. Securing the future means innovating in the way that we deliver public services instead of re-promising the unkept promises of the 1960s. Securing our future means restoring our commitment to paying for the things we buy today rather than passing the bill on to the next generation.

The source of our prosperity is not the printing of currency, central planning or the distribution of government largesse. It is the ingenuity and courage of the Canadian people. Securing our future is about celebrating our frontier spirit as survivors, as immigrants, as builders and as innovators. I am proud to be opposing this budget.

• (1305)

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, my friend and colleague's speech certainly touches on some of the real, existential challenges Canada is facing, many of which were brought on by the Liberal government and its failed response to COVID-19.

I specifically want to give the member an opportunity to respond to some of the concerns I have heard from people in my constituency about this Ottawa-knows-best approach to child care and a national child care strategy that has been outlined within the Liberals' most recent budget, contrary to the minister's mandate letter. I wonder if my colleague could provide his thoughts on this Ottawa-knows-best approach to child care.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, we already have seen child care providers speak out against the government's plan. The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care is speaking out against it, saying that it does not provide it with clarity or certainty, and it raises big concerns about how co-operatives, not-for-profit child care centres and others would be pushed out by a centralized government-controlled plan that lacks the flexibility for which parents are looking.

The nature of work is changing. People are looking for greater flexibility. They are working different hours. They are more likely to work from home. They are looking for flexible child care arrangements that accord with the particulars of their circumstances.

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We do not need the re-promising of a promise from 50 years ago that was not kept and that has not kept up with the emerging reality. What child care providers as well as parents are looking for is more support to be offered to parents to allow them to make child care choices to reflect the needs of their families. There is a broad range of other measures that could be considered as well, such as partnering with employers, looking at resources for not-for-profits, but we need to maintain—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I noticed how the default reaction to that last question was to talk about the child care providers, not the parents who are looking for child care.

Nonetheless, we do not have to look too far to see the success of child care at a very reasonable cost. We do not even have to look outside the country. We can look to Quebec and the success it has had and what it has meant for its economy, how it has been able to get more women into the workforce as a result of having an aggressive and progressive child care plan, one that looks toward ensuring everybody can see his or her fullest economic potential.

Knowing that Quebec can do it, is the member against child care that costs \$10 a day? Is that what he is saying?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, since the member did not listen to my last response, I am pessimistic about whether he will listen to this response.

Parents strongly oppose the government's direction on child care as do child care providers, and I have spoken about it extensively in the House and just now. People who work in this area as well as parents are saying that the government's inflexible approach is simply not working.

As a parent, parents in our country are looking for flexibility. His party's plan does nothing for the single mom who works an overnight shift. Is the member telling me that these government-run child care centres are going to be available 24 hrs a day? I doubt it. The flexibility that we need—

• (1310)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have met with many people who have asked for child care, whether it be parents, child care providers, advocates for child care or the business community. I find some of the member's comments a bit curious.

The question I have today is on the extreme wealth some of Canada's billionaires have accrued during this pandemic. When we talk about being fiscally responsible and when we talk about what needs to be done to balance the books, does the member not agree that a wealth tax would be a very smart way to make the wealthiest, those who have profited greatly during this pandemic, contribute to things like child care, pharmacare, dental care and mental care for people in Edmonton and in Alberta?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, on child care, I support engagement with child care but not a government-controlled, government-knows-best approach. Policies that provide direct support to parents who are looking for that are a much better alternative.

On the issue of a wealth tax—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Edmonton West.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak today to the budget implementation act. It is a budget I would name after the Rick Moranis film *Honey, I Shrank the Kids*, but I am going to call it “Honey, I Sunk the Kids”. I would have used a different word for “sunk”, but that would have been unparliamentary language.

Why would I call it that? It is because of the massive intergenerational debt that we are passing on with very little thought or oversight of what it is going to do to our children and our grandchildren. How bad is it? It is \$500 billion added in just two years and \$700 billion of debt added over the next five years.

By the time I am done my 10-minute speech and five-minute question and answer period, \$7.3 million will be added to the debt that Canadians will owe. People my age will remember Lee Majors as Steve Austin in *The Six Million Dollar Man*. That would be just about 13 minutes of today's time with the government's spending to rebuild him better.

In the budget, one of the big problems I have, as someone from Edmonton, Alberta, is that there is almost nothing for Albertans. There are well over 700 pages in the budget, yet next to nothing for the province. It has been described in our province as a slap in the face for Albertans.

Going through the budget, I saw it mentions pipelines several times. Hurray, but it mentions a talent pipeline; a vaccine pipeline, and we see how the government has failed on that; a genomics talent pipeline; an innovation pipeline; and a pipeline of PPE. We are going to see tomorrow in the Auditor General's report on PPE how the government has funnelled taxpayer money to people connected with the Liberal Party and other insiders, but it mentions a pipeline of PPE in the budget. What about a pipeline of oil and gas? Guess what, there is no mention of that.

We have seen what is going on in Michigan right now with Line 5. If Michigan shuts down Line 5, it will cost tens of thousands of jobs in Sarnia, Ontario, and other places, and it will probably double the price of gas, yet there is nothing in the budget to address that issue.

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There is also no mention of the fact that Alberta's oil and gas industry is the largest employer for indigenous workers. At the operations committee we did a study on government procurement for the indigenous and every single witness from the indigenous community stated that the only one doing its job was the oil and gas industry. It was not the federal government. It was failing, but the oil and gas industry was providing wealth and prosperity for the indigenous communities. In this budget, we have nothing.

We have heard repeatedly in my riding that small businesses that opened just before or during the pandemic were left out of all the support, including the wage support and the rent support, through no fault of their own. I used to be in the hotel business, and it takes a year, two years, or even longer now with all the regulations, to build a hotel. If people had the misfortune of deciding to invest before COVID started, they were cut out from the support of the government.

We have asked repeatedly, in the House and at committee, for the government to address that. Each time, Liberals stand, hand over heart, and say small businesses are the backbone of the economy, but they are not going to do anything. There is nothing in the budget to address that.

A friend of mine in the riding, Rick Bronson, has a comedy club in West Edmonton Mall called The Comic Strip. He employs almost 100 people. He opened a new one in British Columbia just before COVID happened. It is no fault of his own, but he is shut out from the government program. Again, we have asked repeatedly to help small businesses, but there is nothing for them.

In Alberta, we had two main asks in the budget, one was money for carbon capture research. The premier shot for the moon asking for billions, so I was expecting maybe a billion less. No, we ended up with a plan with carbon capture tax incentives, but only if it is not used for enhanced oil recovery. We have spoken to all the big players and the junior players in oil and gas and they have all said the same thing. There is no economic way forward for carbon capture without it being available for enhanced oil recovery.

On the one hand, the Liberals put out a carrot, and on the next hand, they hit people with a stick. In the budget there is some money for carbon capture research, with \$20 million next year to \$220 million over the next five years.

• (1315)

Let us think about it. Oil and gas, even at reduced prices, is still our number one export. It absolutely dwarfs the automobile industry, and it dwarfs aerospace, yet we get a pittance toward tech research for it. To put it in perspective, the government has given wealthy Tesla owners \$100 million in subsidies to buy Tesla cars, half as much as it has given to the entire oil and gas industry for carbon capture. It shows very clearly the current government does not care about Alberta and that it really does not care, when push comes to shove, for the environment.

The Liberals also did not fix the unfair cap on the fiscal stabilization program that punishes Alberta because resources are included in that. They changed it to benefit Quebec and Ontario, but they continue to discriminate against Alberta by adding a ceiling if oil and gas resource revenue is put in there. Since 2014, Albertans

have been net contributors of over \$110 billion to the federal purse. What we get back is a slap in the face.

Going back to carbon capture, there is \$20 million next year for carbon capture research. Also in this budget is \$22 million for a recognition program for atomic workers from the 1950s, during the Korean War era. It is wonderful that we are recognizing the work of people done 70 years ago, but there is as much money for a recognition program for the 1950s as there is for vital carbon capture research. It again shows the priorities of the current government are not working people and certainly not those in Alberta.

Of the 739 pages total in this budget, pipelines are only mentioned five times. The word "supports" shows up 1,000 times, and the word "benefits" shows up 1,300 times. "Productivity", though, only appears 39 times and "competitiveness" appears just 13 times.

What do we get for \$700 billion of added debt over the next five years? The government predicts in its own budget that the growth rate will slow every single year starting in 2022, all the way down to 1.7% growth in 2025. Let us think about that. There is \$700 billion in added debt and all we get is a mediocre 1.7% growth.

Robert Asselin, the former policy and budget director to Bill Morneau and a policy adviser to the Prime Minister, stated about this budget, "it is hard to find a coherent growth plan...spending close to \$1 trillion, [and] not moving the needle on...growth would be the worst possible legacy of this budget."

Dave Dodge, former Bank of Canada governor, stated that it does not focus on growth and that it is not a reasonably prudent plan.

The budget's title, though, states it is a recovery plan for growth, but we know what is growing. It is not the economy. Taxes are growing. In this budget, taxes received by the current government are projected to grow 28% from 2019-2020 to the end of 2025.

Also scheduled for growth is the interest that we are paying to Bay Street and Wall Street bankers for this debt the Liberals are piling up. Forty billion dollars of interest is what we are going to be paying per year in five years. Let us think of what we could do with that \$40 billion. We could buy off, 40 times, the amount for the WE scandal and keep the Prime Minister's friends in business for a while. More important, think of the health care that we could invest in with that \$40 billion. Every single premier asked for an increase in the health care transfers. They got nothing, but we have \$40 billion for wealthy bankers.

We could be investing in the aging population and in the military. There is \$51 million in this budget for NATO participation. There is the rise of China with its aggression and there is Russia, and we put in \$51 million, which is barely double what we are putting into a recognition program for atomic workers from 70 years ago.

It is clear that this budget is not meant for growth of the economy. It is not meant for the people of Edmonton West, and it is certainly not meant for Albertans. It is not meant for our future generations. This budget is a failure, and it is a disgrace. That is why I will not be supporting it.

• (1320)

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and for evoking some childhood memories of mine by talking about Steve Austin from *The Six Million Dollar Man*. To my generation Steve Austin is the Six Million Dollar Man, but to another generation Steve Austin is the real name of the professional wrestler Stone Cold. I have to admit that it was the Six Million Dollar Man's female counterpart who occupied the evenings of my youth. Jaime Sommers, the Bionic Woman, was quite captivating.

To come back to the subject at hand, my question is on what my colleague said at the end of his speech. Every provincial premier and Quebec have been calling for health transfers, but they are once again absent from the government's intentions. I also want to come back to improving life for our seniors and the lack of consideration for those 65 to 74.

These days we keep hearing the Conservatives say that they will win the next election and will do all sorts of things. Could my colleague tell me whether a future Conservative government would increase health transfers and ensure that seniors are treated fairly and that their pension is increased at age 65?

[English]

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments about Jaime Sommers. I had forgotten about her, so I thank him.

The member brought up some good points about priorities. The government seems to be prioritizing wage subsidies for hedge fund billionaires and companies that are growing exponentially. They do not need the money. At the same time, it is ignoring the provinces. I agree 100% with my colleague that the focus needs to be on health care, not paying off the connected friends of the Liberal Party.

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am going to stay with the \$6-million theme in my ques-

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tioning. Am I understanding correctly that only 43 minutes of the next year in this budget has been dedicated to our carbon capture storage? If \$6 million is spent in 13 minutes, that means about \$20 million is spent in 43 minutes.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, I have not got my calculator in front of me, so I will trust my colleague's numbers.

Yes, it shows a hypocrisy. The government talks so much about the environment. The number one job creator in Canada, which led us out of the 2008-09 recession and which will lead us to grow out of this difficult time, is the energy industry. Alberta and the energy industry have done an amazing job reducing carbon already, but another way for us to further help the environment is through carbon capture research. However, the government is more focused on giving millions and millions of dollars to wealthy owners of Tesla cars, rather than the industry and the environment. It is clear that the government has its priorities wrong. We hope it will change that and focus on what is better for Canadians.

• (1325)

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, one of the big challenges I have is comparing this BIA and the budget with the Liberals' dismal record on accountability. We have pointed out the \$100-billion, so-called green slush fund. We only need to look back on the pandemic to see some of the challenges associated with WE Charity and other scandals with the contracts given to Liberal insiders.

Does my colleague have more comments on the lack of accountability that exists within this budgetary framework?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, that is a great comment from my colleague from Battle River—Crowfoot. We talked about accountability. It has been in the papers a lot concerning the Canadian emergency wage subsidy. It is the largest support program of the COVID crisis and totals \$100 billion. We have heard money has gone to wealthy hedge fund managers and to multinational corporations. We even heard we were giving taxpayers' money to a Chinese state-owned company.

When we asked the president of the Treasury Board what oversight he provided for the \$100 billion and if it went through the Treasury Board process as required, his comment was that he did not know. His job is to oversee the spending and he did not even know whether it went through the process. It did not, and the results are showing.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to budget 2021, the first budget from the government in two years.

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Canadians have been patient. While they were asked for two weeks to flatten the curve, they have given 14 months. What they have been waiting for is a plan, a plan to safely reopen our economy and get Canadians back to work, a plan to provide future generations with the hope and confidence they so desperately need right now that they do, indeed have a future. However, this budget is a massive letdown.

Unemployed Canadians hoping to see a plan to create new jobs and economic opportunities for their families are going to feel let down. Workers who have had their wages cut and hours slashed hoping to see a plan to reopen the economy are going to feel let down. Families that cannot afford more taxes and are struggling to save money for their children's education or to buy a home are going to feel let down. Saskatchewanians looking for a plan to support important sectors in our province are going to feel let down.

A government focused on economic recovery would support all sectors of the economy, especially sectors that have been reliable sources of economic stability for Canadians in the past. In this budget, the Liberals have decided to throw caution to the wind and ignore these sectors. For instance, the oil and gas industry in Canada has long been a sector that has fostered economic growth and prosperity for thousands of hard-working Canadians, with revenues supporting social programs and infrastructure like schools and hospitals. Yet as we look to return to normalcy, this important sector has been left behind once again. Workers in this sector have been hit hard during this pandemic through lost wages and jobs, yet there are no supports for them.

Another sector left behind is the agricultural sector, specifically farmers, ranchers and producers. They have worked continuously to support Canada throughout this pandemic, yet these two immensely important sectors, which have consistently offered economic growth and stability, have been shunned in this budget, with workers who are so crucial to getting Canada through the pandemic being ignored by the government, all in favour of partisan spending. This is unacceptable.

What is included in this budget is an expensive Ottawa-knows-best proposal for a national child care system. This Ottawa-centric approach should come as no surprise to Canadians familiar with the Liberals' disregard for provincial jurisdiction. In a Liberal politician's mind, a one-size-fits-all policy makes sense, but this does not work in the real world. For example, the circumstances and needs of parents in urban versus rural Canadians are very different. While parents do need support, they should ultimately be the ones to make the decision on how to care for their children, not bureaucrats in Ottawa. While Conservatives supported and put forward changes to the wage subsidy and the rent relief programs, extensions to these programs would more than likely not be necessary if the federal government had done a better job in managing the pandemic and procuring vaccines for Canadians.

As it is now, we are in the middle of a third wave sweeping across our country, causing provincial governments to impose more restrictions and lockdowns of their respective economies. Conservatives have been supportive of measures that support Canadians and Canadian businesses. We are supportive of spending that will make real change for struggling Canadians who have been heavily affected by the pandemic, but what we are seeing in this budget is

an avalanche of spending that increases the size and role of government in the Canadian economy. We are emerging from a pandemic. Small and medium-sized businesses, entrepreneurs and individuals need financial support to recover from the devastation this pandemic has wrought.

When so many are in dire need of assistance, it is unacceptable that the Liberals would set aside \$100 billion for what amounts to electioneering expenditures. Unfortunately, unbridled spending on pet projects is par for the course with the government. It has always run deficits, not once trying to control the national debt or rein in spending. Prudent financial planning would have had the federal government running surpluses prior to the pandemic, saving in the good years so that there is a buffer against the bad.

● (1330)

Instead, the failures of the government before the pandemic, and now during it, have caused Canada's debt to shoot to over \$1 trillion for the first time in our history. This debt will be paid back by future generations.

This budget does not set up Canadians for future prosperity; instead, it has set up Canada for long-term post-pandemic failure.

The Liberals have made numerous missteps in their spending during the pandemic, like the spectacular over-expenditure on ventilators. Even more egregious was the secretive awarding of billions of dollars of contracts to Chinese firms for PPE supplies without much, if any, regard for our domestic ability to ramp up production here in Canada.

Finally, I want to talk about the infrastructure file, on which the government has completely fallen far short.

The Prime Minister's Canada Infrastructure Bank has woefully underperformed. In the past four years it has spent billions of dollars and completed zero projects. A new report from the PBO revealed that it is losing money and will miss the government's set targets by over 50%. Instead of stimulating the economy, it has been a complete waste of taxpayer money.

The spring 2021 edition of *We Build*, Saskatchewan's construction magazine, notes:

Almost \$900 million in federal spending has been earmarked to be spent in Saskatchewan, and yet 64 per cent of this amount...remains unallocated. Of the 36 per cent that has been "allocated", more than half of this is still "under review" — meaning that of the \$887.26 million in federal money targeted for Saskatchewan, only \$152.01 million has actually been invested. This is a travesty, and it is almost entirely because of federal bureaucratic inefficiencies.

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Further, the infrastructure gap between indigenous communities and the rest of Canada will not be addressed by the money pledged in this budget. Many first nations communities have already stated that they need more assistance in closing the infrastructure gap, yet the current government continues to fail them both in this budget and through the Canada Infrastructure Bank. There are still many communities without clean water. Now it is even clearer how badly the government has failed them. The Canada Infrastructure Bank, which had a specific mandate that included improving infrastructure for indigenous communities, has fallen far short of the mark, just as the government has continuously fallen far short of the mark.

Canadians need thoughtful, focused and effective spending by the government, even more so in times of a crisis. The spending in this budget should have focused on recovering and creating jobs for Canadians, not partisan priorities.

In conclusion, this budget has been a massive letdown. It is a budget that has truly missed the mark. It is a budget that is adding nearly half a trillion dollars in new debt that will only be paid back by raising taxes on hard-working Canadian families, all while placing a massive burden of debt on future generations.

In this budget we find a complete lack of thought regarding the priorities of Canadians, a failure to address their needs and an ignoring of vital sectors in need of stimulus. The government needs to rethink its priorities as we move toward reopening the economy. Canadians need a real plan for the future. They need a budget that puts Canadians first.

• (1335)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, yesterday was National Patriots Day in Quebec. I salute all Quebecers who took the time to commemorate these proud freedom fighters.

The rest of Canada celebrated Queen Victoria. It is interesting to note that one of Queen Victoria's first orders when she assumed the throne was the order to execute these freedom fighters, the patriotes of Lower Canada. While in Quebec we paid tribute to the people who were hanged, the rest of Canada celebrated the hangman. That is another sign of our distinct society.

Now to my question. Two of the groups hardest hit by the crisis are seniors and young people. We have been talking a lot about mental health issues. I have a 17-year-old daughter in CEGEP. I heard about what was going on with university students, and mental health is really a crucial issue. University students are one of the groups hardest hit by the crisis, along with seniors. The two sectors we should be investing in are health and seniors, but there is nothing for them in this budget.

If the Conservatives come to power, and considering the mental health problems we see, can we hope that health transfers will be increased and that seniors under the age of 75 will receive help?

[*English*]

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, I would start off by saying the member should actually direct questions about the level of

health transfers that are included in this budget to members of the governing party.

The Liberals' failure to deliver a plan to reopen the economy and their massive deficit spending jeopardize the long-term viability of important social programs, like education and health care. Their unsustainable debt will lead to higher taxes, penalizing those who can afford it the least. Provincial governments only have to look back to the 1990s to remember what the previous Liberal government had to do to deal with its debt and deficits.

Conservatives are committed to improving the well-being and financial security of Canada's seniors. We have also committed to addressing the mental health of Canadians should we form government.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Madam Speaker, one in five people in Canada do not take the medication they have been prescribed, because they cannot afford it. However, the Conservatives voted to continue protecting the profits of big pharma.

The Liberals have been promising a pharmacare program for 23 years. Can the member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek explain why this bill continues to put pharmaceutical profits ahead of the needs of Canadian families, and why her party continues to vote against a pharmacare program?

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, the member is correct, this budget does not address the topic that the member has raised.

I believe we need to be focusing on ways to help Canadians who do not have or cannot afford drug coverage, rather than upending a system that works for the vast majority of Canadians. No one should have to go without the medications they need. During the pandemic, we have seen many Canadians endure prescription drug shortages.

Conservatives believe that it is key for the federal government to work with the provinces to help strengthen our domestic pharmaceutical drug supply.

• (1340)

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the speech given by my colleague from just across the border in Saskatchewan.

One of the challenges we have seen throughout the last six years of Liberal governments is emphasized in the budget, the growing divide between urban and rural Canadians. Certainly a lot of the promises made in this budget seem to just outright ignore rural and remote Canada, whether that be rural areas like those that the hon. member and I represent or more remote areas like in Canada's north.

I am wondering if the member would comment on some of the ways that this budget fails to address the challenges faced by rural and remote Canada.

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Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, quite simply, I would say to my hon. colleague that over the past six years what we have seen is a government that practises policies of division, whether it is pitting the east against the west or pitting rural Canadians—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Banff—Airdrie.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Madam Speaker, after waiting two long years for the Liberals to table a budget, they have instead presented a massive new debt burden for Canadians rather than a hopeful plan for a path forward post-pandemic—in a word, failure.

Unemployed Canadians wanted to see a plan to create new jobs. Workers who had their wages cut and their hours slashed had hoped to see a plan to reopen the economy. Families that simply cannot afford more taxes were looking for relief. Instead, this costly plan will add over \$100 billion in new spending and will increase Canada's debt to a whopping \$1.2 trillion. Yes, that is trillion with a "t", for the very first time in Canadian history.

It is a staggering amount that most Canadians cannot even begin to comprehend: \$1.2 trillion. It is equivalent to every single Canadian being responsible for \$33,000 of federal debt. Canadians and their children, their children's children and their children's children's children and on and on will be forced to pay off this massive debt of the government.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer recently released a report saying that this budget even underestimates the size of the federal deficits by about \$5.6 billion per year. To quote the PBO, it "puts Ottawa on a long-term path of higher debt".

What about fiscal anchors? No, there are none of those in there. There is only a vague mention on page 53, which says, "The government is committed to unwinding COVID-related deficits and reducing the federal debt as a share of the economy over the medium-term." That sure sounds reassuring, does it not?

Canadians are right to be concerned about this Liberal spending. They will be footing the bill of \$40 billion in taxes every year to pay the interest expenses on that debt alone. This is all predicated on a very risky assumption that interest rates and inflation will continue to remain low.

With all this spending and fiscal risk, one would expect some actual substance, but many Canadians are being simply left behind or ignored in this budget. How about a plan to unleash the prosperity-producing, economy-boosting Alberta energy? No, that one is definitely not in the budget. The government has been abundantly clear on its plan to landlock Canadian oil with Bill C-48 and Bill C-69 in the previous Parliament and the Prime Minister's comment that the oil sands need to be phased out.

The Liberal government already stood by idly while the U.S. administration cancelled Keystone XL, and of course it itself caused the cancellation of things like northern gateway and energy east. With Enbridge's Line 5, of course we know about the jeopardy it is in, and it is responsible for supplying half of the oil needs of Ontario and Quebec. The closure of that pipeline would literally create an energy crisis here in Canada, and then of course we would see more of Alberta's oil stranded, when Alberta's economy is already

suffering. Instead, that biases it toward oil from places with far less environmentally friendly records elsewhere in the world.

All of that is due to the Liberals strangling Alberta oil in favour of that less environmentally friendly oil from other countries, which certainly do not share our commitment to environmental protection or to human rights. Again, the budget is completely silent on Alberta energy.

Despite this deafening silence by the Liberals, Conservatives will always continue to advocate for pipelines and projects that end our dependence on foreign oil and that will unleash our energy sector. Energy- and job-killing legislation from the Liberals has only decreased Canada's ability to produce and trade environmentally sustainable energy resources and to create more jobs.

Alberta's energy sector could be the key to economic growth and to success post-pandemic in Canada, but the Liberals have chosen instead to denigrate and ignore it. Its absence is glaringly obvious and Albertans will not forget it. Instead, this budget proposes a reimagined Canadian economy that dabbles in risky economic ideas that will leave the Canadian economy in a very precarious position.

• (1345)

However, so much more is also missed in the budget. For start-up businesses that are in desperate positions and do not meet the government's narrow rules of assistance programs, there is nothing either. For small businesses, there are major gaps and issues with federal programming that the Liberals continue to ignore. The CFIB said of the budget that "the government did not deliver on many of the major program gaps affecting thousands of small businesses facing restrictions, closures and huge amounts of COVID-related debt."

Many of those small businesses are tourism businesses, and tourism businesses are desperate to have the government table a safe plan with metrics and targets to be able to open their businesses for the key summer season. I am sorry; there is nothing for them in the budget, either.

In my beautiful riding of Banff—Airdrie, tourism is a key economic driver that has been devastated by the pandemic. Lockdowns and border restrictions have stifled businesses. Many have been forced to lay off employees and in some cases, unfortunately, have closed down altogether.

This is happening everywhere, right across Canada. Tourism and travel-related businesses lost approximately \$19.4 billion in revenue last year from the absence of international visitors. However, the government just extended, once again, the U.S.-Canada border closure well into the key summer tourist season without any kind of plan or any metrics on how or when it might be willing to safely reopen that border. Now, tourism businesses are looking at losing another key summer, and the budget is completely silent on a safe plan for reopening and for a safe way forward.

The government has unfortunately chosen winners and losers in this budget and unfortunately left many people out to dry. The Liberal government loves to tout the saying “We are all in this together,” but recently I heard another metaphor about the pandemic, which I thought was very apt to the chosen winners and losers in this debt-heavy Canadian Liberal budget. It is this: We are all in the same storm, but some are in yachts and others are in leaky rowboats. The Liberal government should not be waving to Canadians struggling in the pandemic storm in leaky rowboats while the Liberals are drinking champagne from the deck of their taxpayer debt-paid yacht. Spending without a proper plan is failure.

To the government, I say this: Fix this budget and give Canadians a hopeful path forward for economic recovery post-pandemic, not a lifetime of taxes and debt. That is what we see with this budget. We see a lot of money being spent, but a lot of people still being left behind, and what we then see is people being burdened. Canadians, their children, their grandchildren and their great-great-grandchildren will be seeing that burden of debt to pay for all of this spending.

That is the thing I think the Prime Minister and the Liberal government fail to understand. Money does not grow on trees. The government does not just manufacture the ability to spend money. That money comes from hard-working Canadian taxpayers who have earned that money, and it takes away from their ability to meet the needs of their families, to meet their own needs, to keep their businesses running and to keep their employees with jobs. That is not just now, but it is well into the future, to pay for the kind of debt burden that we have seen put on by the government.

It is just staggering to imagine the amount of money being spent and how there are still so many people being left behind. I talked about our oil and gas industry in Alberta. I talked about our important tourism industry across this country, about the small business owners, about the many people who have started new businesses and are left out of many of the government programs. The Liberals have been able to spend a lot of money, but they have not been able to help so many of the people who actually need it, and those are the same people who are going to have to pay for the burden being left by the government and all of its massive spending.

I say to the government that it has to try to do things to make sure it is not leaving people behind and that it is creating a hopeful and optimistic future, instead of burdening people with massive amounts of debt that will do the exact opposite.

• (1350)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, we are talking about debt and debt-related concerns. How-

Government Orders

ever, beyond debt and the economy, I am also concerned about something else, namely social issues.

I am thinking about future generations, workers, the environment and investment. What does my colleague think about investing in a better environment and in a transition to forms of energy other than oil, as well as enabling workers to succeed and be part of that transition?

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, I would say that we have a multitude of different energy means to serve the energy needs of this country and the world. We are fortunate in Canada to have the opportunity to provide for that in a variety of ways. Frankly, we have a very strong environmental plan that does include moving forward with things like new types of energy, but it also has to include our very environmentally friendly oil and gas in this country, which takes away the ability from other countries to fill that need in a way that is far less environmentally friendly, far less human rights-conscious and far less good for our Canadian economy. Our oil and gas need to be a big part of that picture going forward, because it is good for the environment and for the future of our country economically.

That is how I would respond to the member. We can have new forms of energy, but oil and gas are a key part of that going forward and will be for many years to come yet.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will follow up on the previous question that was asked of my colleague.

Last week, we saw the news that Ford has introduced the F-150 Lightning, which is very significant, because the F-150 is hands-down the best-selling pickup truck for the last number of decades. Ford sells 900,000 F-150s every single year, so that is a game-changer of an announcement.

When Ford is making such a huge leap into electric vehicles and when, indeed, the rest of the world and corporations around the world are making an active attempt to reduce their use of fossil fuels, how can my colleague say that an increased investment in more pipelines is a smart way to go, when the rest of the world is actively trying to head in the opposite direction?

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, first of all, I think that the idea of seeing other forms of energy being used is a wonderful thing. It is great, but I have to make it very clear that oil and gas are going to be a big part of the future for many years to come. If we are going to have oil and gas be a part of that future, why does the member think that it should come from places like Saudi Arabia or other countries with far less environmentally friendly records and human rights records? I would much rather see that oil and gas come from Canada, where we can create Canadian jobs, ensure that we have the highest environmental standards of just about anywhere in the entire world, and ensure that human rights abuses are not occurring.

Statements by Members

The oil and gas here in Canada stand up to anything else in the world in terms of our environmental record. The member should encourage that the oil and gas being used here is from Canada rather than places with far less environmentally—

• (1355)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Madam Speaker, a question to my hon. colleague. You mentioned interest rates in your speech, and we are hearing a lot of talk—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would remind the member to speak to her colleague through the Speaker. When the member was asking her question, she was saying “you”. I did not mention anything about those things, but the hon. member did.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Madam Speaker, I actually addressed you and then I said, “a question to my hon. colleague”. I am sorry if you did not like my phrasing. I will try again.

My colleague mentioned the interest rates, and we are hearing a lot of talk now about potential raises in interest rates, which makes debt servicing a real problem. I am interested in what the hon. member might have to say about how an increase in debt servicing will affect services generally for Canadians.

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned in my speech, even if interest rates were not to rise, by 2025, we would be looking at about a \$40-billion per year cost to the taxpayer just to cover the interest on all this new debt. Imagine what would happen if those interest rates—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Kenora will have about three minutes to start his speech.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be back physically in the chamber. It is great to be back after participating virtually for quite some time. I think all my colleagues would agree that we hope this becomes to norm once again in the not too distant future.

With the limited time I have before question period, I would like to emphasize, as many of my colleagues have raised already today, that I cannot support the implementation of this budget for a number of reasons. Personally, the greatest reason is that there is no plan back to balance. There is simply a plan from the government to spend into oblivion. We know that will hurt future generations in a number of ways and have many negative fiscal and social consequences going into the future. I will touch on that in much more detail when I resume after the votes later today.

I wanted to make note of something interesting in the budget. It pertains to food security across the north. If I am not mistaken, the government has allocated \$163 million over three years to expand the nutrition north Canada funding. In the face of this, there are no concerns with that. Having increased funding to support northerners who are struggling with food insecurity is a positive.

However, I will note that the Liberal government has raised funding for nutrition north Canada each year, however, the rates of

food insecurity across the north have also increased year after year. The government is continuing to spend more money and is getting a worse result for northerners.

The government likes to pat itself on the back. It likes to talk about all the money it is spending and the great job it is doing. However, on this side of the House, we measure success not based on dollars spent, but on results for northerners. It is very clear that the government's approach to addressing food insecurity in the north is not getting the job done.

I look forward to resuming my speech after question period.

• (1400)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member will have seven and a half minutes left after Oral Questions.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Ind.): Madam Speaker, over the past weeks, the world has witnessed the violence in Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. Thousands of Canadians have written to my office and expressed their horror at seeing the Israeli army brutalizing Palestinians as they worshipped at the Al-Aqsa Mosque as well as the forcible removal of Palestinians from Sheikh Jarrah.

These Canadians are also concerned about the report from Human Rights Watch, calling the violation of international human rights and forcible removal by Israel as apartheid. Canadians have always fought against apartheid. They want Canada to take a leadership role during this ceasefire to ensure that the 680,000 displaced Palestinians are given back their homes and land.

Canada values human rights and we must fight for human rights for all, not a select few.

* * *

[Translation]

MULLIVAIKKAL REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Tuesday, May 18, 2021, marked the 12th anniversary of the Mullivaikkal genocide and the end of the armed conflict in Sri Lanka.

Over 70,000 innocent Tamil civilians were killed, three million were detained and a countless number went missing.

[English]

My thoughts and prayers go to the families and friends of the victims of the Tamil genocide and survivors who experienced unimaginable trauma.

[Translation]

I appreciate the strength and perseverance of the Tamil Canadian communities in my riding of Laval—Les Îles and across Canada. I wish all Tamils a peaceful and prosperous future, a future where peace prevails, always.

[English]

Canada was and will always be an advocate for peace and human rights and will pioneer all efforts to ensure that these atrocities will never happen again.

* * *

COMMUNITY LEADER

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, today, I want to congratulate and thank my friend and community hero, Will Gault. Will has faced challenges and adversity in his life, but he never gave up. He now owns a successful small business in our community, Willy Dogs, and grills up the best hot dogs in Winnipeg.

Last week, I was pleased to stop by Willy Dogs to grab lunch and support his campaign to thank front-line hospital workers for their amazing dedication throughout the pandemic.

Will is selling specially priced vouchers that anyone can purchase to buy lunch for front-line hospital workers as a thanks for their tireless work. Whether it be through this campaign to support health care workers or fundraising for the Bruce Oake Recovery Centre to support those on the path to recovery from addiction, Will is always looking for ways to help support our community.

I thank Will for all that he does.

* * *

TOURISM WEEK

Ms. Gudie Hutchings (Long Range Mountains, Lib.): Madam Speaker, from Rose Blanche to L'Anse aux Meadows, Hampden to Cox's Cove, Burgeo to Port aux Choix and so many places in between, my riding of the Long Range Mountains in Newfoundland and Labrador is an incredible tourism destination.

It is Tourism Week in Canada. It is a chance to celebrate our amazing tourism operators. However, like so many other places in Canada, our tourism industry has been one of the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, there is hope and there are bright lights shining through. For example, right now in Norris Point in the heart of Gros Morne National Park, the Trails Tales Tunes Festival is hosting its 15th annual festival, and thanks to the incredible work by its team, it is able to do it safely and in person following provincial regulations.

As we build back better all across the country, I hope everyone in the House will join me in pledging that when it is safe to do so, we will travel, explore and be a tourist within Canada and within our own provinces, taking in all the wonders that make us love our country so much.

Happy Tourism Week everyone.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

RACISM

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a year ago today, George Floyd was killed by a police officer. We will not forget the images of a white police officer kneeling on the neck of this Black man, even as he pleaded for his life.

He kept saying, "I can't breathe." We will not forget that, despite this plea for help, the police officer pressed his knee into George Floyd's neck for nine minutes and 29 seconds without letting up.

We will not forget that George Floyd was killed after being confronted over a matter involving \$20. That is racism at its worst.

We will not forget the unprecedented Black Lives Matter movement, which called for justice to be rendered. A year later, the police officer was convicted.

Let us keep the memory of George Floyd alive so that it serves to help all those who are the victims of profiling, police violence and even murder because of the colour of their skin.

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● (1405)

CHILEAN ELECTION

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise as a Quebecker who is proud of my Chilean roots. A historic election was held on May 15 and 16 for the 155 members of the constitutional convention. Chileans elected 79 men and 77 women, including 17 representatives of indigenous people, to make up the gender-balanced body tasked with drafting the new constitution.

The Chilean people want an institutional mechanism that will enable them to do away with Pinochet's constitution. The new constitution will be written by professors, journalists, social workers, scientists, homemakers, nurses and youth, many of them ordinary people, some from traditional parties, but most of them independent and members of indigenous groups.

I want to highlight the extraordinary participation of Chilean women. Many female governors, mayors and councillors also won seats during this election. They are part of a movement that began with the unforgettable Mothers of the *Plaza de Mayo*.

I applaud the people of Chile and the country's indigenous people for this democratic initiative, which promises greater justice and solidarity going forward.

*Statements by Members**[English]***SENIORS**

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, seniors across northern Ontario and across the country are struggling. I have heard from many in my riding who have shared their difficulties living on a fixed income and dealing with the health and mobility challenges that come with age, while they are not getting the supports they need and deserve.

On top of that, seniors have had to cope with the pandemic during which they have been at a heightened health risk and in this past year, many seniors have been unable to see their loved ones and have struggled to access the services on which they rely.

That is why the Conservatives have consistently called for a clear plan to help seniors navigate this crisis. We called for increased financial supports for all low-income seniors and timely action to address the serious challenges in long-term care. Seniors built our country and they deserve better.

I rise in this place today to thank all seniors across our riding for their contributions to the communities and to renew my commitment to fighting for them.

* * *

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise virtually in the House today to share that my beautiful riding of Richmond Hill is home to vibrant members of the Asian community. As we all know, May is Asian Heritage Month.

The York Region Liberal MPs are hosting a local appreciation event to celebrate the lives of Asian descent in our community. Diversity is our greatest strength. We all need to recognize the contributions and accomplishments made by Asian Canadians and highlight their rich and vivid culture.

This is also a challenging time for our Asian community as misinformation and anti-Asian hate have been at an all-time high since the pandemic started. Hate, prejudice and discrimination have no place in Canada and is unacceptable. We must continue to stand together and stand up for our Asian community.

Happy Asian Heritage Month everyone.

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*[Translation]***MULLIVAICKAL REMEMBRANCE DAY**

Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, on May 18, I joined the Tamil community in my riding of Vimy and across Canada in commemorating Mullivaikkal remembrance day. Every year, we remember the thousands of people who were killed in the Mullivaikkal massacre during the Sri Lankan civil war, an event that is still deeply troubling to this day.

[English]

When we look around our towns and cities, we see members of the Tamil community who lived through the darkest moments of

the civil war. Many are family and friends of the survivors and the victims. Others are survivors themselves.

As we reflect on the destruction and pain inflicted during the war, we are reminded of the strength and resilience of the Tamil community in Canada and around the world. Today and every day, let us remember the lives lost and recommit ourselves to standing against injustice in all forms.

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AUSTIN CARON

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of Austin Caron, a Calgary political activist who passed away suddenly last week in his sleep at the much too early age of 23.

A former staffer here on the Hill, Austin was a true politico who could be found at the doors campaigning during any municipal, provincial or federal election. Remembered for his larger-than-life personality and dedication to the Conservative movement, Austin touched the lives of many people and packed a lot of campaigning in his 23 years.

Austin will be dearly missed by many of his friends and fellow University of Calgary Tories who named a leadership award after him in memoriam.

On behalf of the Conservative parliamentary caucus, I want to extend our heartfelt condolences, prayers and appreciation for Austin's contributions to the Conservative movement, to his family and especially to his grieving parents Darryl and Tammy.

May he rest in peace

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• (1410)

*[Translation]***CANADA CHILD BENEFIT**

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, families across Canada, and especially in Alfred—Pellan, have been hit hard by the pandemic. COVID-19 has brought about unforeseen expenses, increasing the financial burden on families in Laval.

Our government has been committed to supporting Canadian families since 2015, and this pandemic has been no exception. This is why we are implementing the Canada child benefit young child supplement. Families will receive up to \$1,200 per child under the age of six, and the first payment will be issued starting this week. Parents will have more money to put food on the table, buy clothes or sign their kids up for summer activities.

Our federal government will continue to be there for the Canadian families who—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Perth—Wellington.

*Statements by Members**[English]***TOURISM WEEK**

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is Tourism Week in Canada and while normally we would see a flurry of activity, this year optimism is guarded.

Few places can boast the variety of tourist attractions Perth—Wellington does. Not only do the arts enrich our communities, they also help to diversify our economy. Drayton Entertainment, Stratford Summer Music and the SpringWorks and Stratford festivals all contribute millions to our local economy while also supporting the hospitality and accommodation sectors.

Our local museums, including the Stratford Perth Museum, St. Marys Museum, the Palmerston Railway Heritage Museum, the Wellington County Museum and the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame, all work to preserve our rich and enduring history.

Others have sought a more unique way to preserve history, like Broken Rail Brewing, which might be one of the few craft breweries in Canada that is also located within a national historic site.

Too often we may not see the historic and tourist treasures that exist in our own backyards, so this summer, when safe, I hope all of us will be tourists in our own communities.

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TOURISM WEEK

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week is Tourism Week across Canada. Tourism is a major economic driver in my beautiful riding of Niagara Falls. Before COVID-19, about 40,000 workers from across Niagara had jobs in our local tourism sector, which generated over \$2.4 billion worth of receipts a year.

Nationally, Canada's travel and tourism industry is the country's fifth largest sector, responsible for \$105 billion in GDP and employing, prior to COVID, one in 10 Canadians.

Normally, we would be celebrating the beginning of our summer tourism season this week. Instead, the tourism sector continues to struggle because of the current federal government's mismanagement of Canada's pandemic response. Had the Liberals secured vaccines more quickly, implemented widespread rapid testing and had a data-driven plan to reopen our economy safely and responsibly, we could be there by now.

As we acknowledge the celebration of Tourism Week, Canada's Conservatives renew our commitment to advocate for those hardest hit in our travel and tourism industry, so we can get life back to normal as quickly as possible.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are all heartened to see that the ceasefire in Gaza is holding, but the humanitarian crisis in the region is dire and urgent. Over 100,000 Palestinians were forced to leave their homes, thousands have had their homes destroyed and hundreds of families are mourning the loss of a loved one. UNICEF and other organizations

are on the ground providing humanitarian relief, distributing food, fuel, medicine and supplies for clean drinking water. At this critical juncture, Canada must help ensure these teams have unfettered access to Gaza.

Canada must also address the causes of the conflict and push for reconciliation. This means calling for an end to the illegal occupation settlements and evictions, recognizing statehood for Palestine, ending arms sales to Israel and urging Israel to allow Palestinians in East Jerusalem to participate in the Palestinian elections.

There is only one side Canada should be taking in this conflict, the side of peace and justice.

* * *

● (1415)

*[Translation]***SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois welcomes the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. We reiterate our support to finding a lasting peace, which must imperatively be based on a two-state solution and which requires Israel to stop colonizing Palestinian territories once and for all.

In the spirit of seeking a lasting peace, the Bloc Québécois supports dialogue and discussion, which necessarily involves the free expression of conflicting viewpoints by both sides, calmly and peacefully.

We condemn the anti-Semitic remarks and violence of the last few days, in particular in Montreal on May 16. These outbursts against people of the Jewish faith must stop. They inherently undermine the Palestinian cause. The Bloc Québécois fully supports the creation of a Palestinian state, but we will never condone hate and intolerance.

We therefore call for a return to peace so that everyone can respectfully have their voice heard. It is a prerequisite to dialogue and, ultimately, to peace.

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*[English]***THE ECONOMY**

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under the Liberal government we have seen our country's debts skyrocket and now the annual inflation rate is at 3.4%. Inflation is eroding the purchasing power of everyday Canadians and making it harder for families to get by. We supported the various specific measures to protect Canadians in the pandemic because it was the right thing to do. Now this latest budget contains billions of dollars that go far beyond COVID support programs and it is all paid for with borrowed money. We need a recovery plan, but with the Liberals we are witnessing a risky, out-of-control debt plan without any real stimulus.

Oral Questions

Our Conservative team is offering another path, one of security and certainty that will safely secure our future and deliver us to a Canada where those who have struggled the most through this pandemic can get back to work. We want a Canada where manufacturing at home is bolstered, where wages go up and where the dreams of so many Canadian families can be realized. Canada's Conservatives got Canada through the last recession and with Canada's recovery plan, Conservatives will get Canadians through this one too.

* * *

OLYMPIC BOXER

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Mandy Bujold is one of the best boxers in the world: 11 Canadian national championships, three continental championships, a gold medal at the first Pan American Games and a bronze medal at the first Commonwealth Games that included women's boxing.

Mandy is a Canadian flyweight champion. She is also a mother and because she made the choice to have a child, she is being excluded from the Tokyo Olympics. No woman should have to choose between her career and motherhood. Mandy would be the first female boxer to represent Canada at consecutive Olympic games, but due to the pandemic and her motherhood, Mandy is being denied this opportunity. Champs like Lennox Lewis and Billie Jean King have spoken out in support. The minister of heritage has written a letter of support.

I add my voice to those who say that Mandy deserves the opportunity to fight and represent her country in the Olympics.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, everything is getting more expensive under the current Liberal government, and now we have the proof. Last month, inflation powered through the government's target to a 10-year high. Lumber is more expensive, houses are more expensive, food is more expensive, life is more expensive. How much more is the government's economic failure going to cost Canadian families?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the beginning of this pandemic, we made a simple promise to Canadians that we would have their backs, however long it took, whatever it took. That is exactly what we did, by supporting Canadians right away who lost their jobs because of this pandemic with the Canada emergency response benefit and by supporting small businesses across the country with things like the wage subsidy and the Canada emergency business account. We have been there to support Canadians through this difficult time and we have seen our economy bounce back quicker than other economies around the world because we have been there to support them. We will continue to be.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the current government is the first one in Canadian history to make it impossible for Canadians to aspire to home ownership. Inflation is making construction more expensive. Only the wealthy-

est first-time buyers will now qualify for a mortgage and the government has been studying capital gains taxes on principal residences for years. Why is the government making it harder for Canadian families to get ahead?

• (1420)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is, in fact, not true. One of the very first things we did when we took office was raise taxes on the wealthiest 1% so we could lower them for the middle class, and the Conservatives voted against it. Then we brought in the Canada child benefit, and it puts more money in Canadians' pocket every single month to help with the cost of raising their kids. By not sending cheques to millionaire families, like the Conservatives did, we have continued to invest in affordable housing and to work toward a Canada-wide early learning and child care system to lower the price of child care to \$10 a day in the coming years. We have continued to make life more affordable.

* * *

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the economic news for Canadians went from bad to worse last week. The United States announced it wants to double tariffs on softwood lumber. That will impact mills in British Columbia, northern Ontario and the Saguenay. Canadian resource workers are once again being threatened by the United States. When are Canadians going to finally see this Prime Minister stand up for working Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the Leader of the Opposition was these past five years, but Canadians across the country watched this government consistently stand up for Canadian steelworkers, Canadian aluminum workers, Canadian dairy farmers and Canadian forestry workers. We have continued to stand up for Canadians faced with a difficult American administration, under the last administration and under this administration. We will continue to stand up for Canadian jobs and for Canadian interests and make sure we are protecting Canadian jobs every step of the way.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, everything is getting more expensive under the current Liberal government. Inflation powered through the government's target to a 10-year high. We now have proof: Lumber, houses and even food are increasingly expensive. Life is more expensive. That is a fact.

How much is the government's poor management going to cost Canadians?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the beginning of this pandemic, we promised Canadians that we would have their backs, however long the pandemic lasted. That is exactly what we did with the Canada emergency response benefit, support for businesses, the Canada emergency business account, and support for seniors and youth.

We have been there to support Canadians, as we have been doing for six years. The reality is that the Conservatives continue to vote against our measures to help Canadians, whether it is the tax cut for the middle class and the tax increase for the wealthy that we implemented when we first came to power, or the work we continue to do to present an ambitious budget for Canadians.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the news about the Canadian economy is getting worse every day. The United States announced last week that it wants to double tariffs on softwood lumber. That will have real consequences for mills in British Columbia, northern Ontario and the Saguenay region. Workers and their resources are being threatened by the United States.

When will this Prime Minister get serious about the economy in order to help all Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is nonsense. For five years now, the Leader of the Opposition has watched as we delivered on our commitments to protect jobs in the regions, especially against Donald Trump's protectionist administration.

We will continue to stand up for jobs, supply management and our workers in the softwood lumber, steel and aluminum industries across the country. We have always been there to defend Canadians against U.S. protectionist policies, and we will continue to do so.

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Quebec has exercised its prerogative to amend the Canadian Constitution to say that Quebec is a nation, that this nation's only official language is French and that French is this nation's common language.

The Prime Minister has acknowledged this choice that will be put to the Quebec National Assembly. However, a formal response is warranted in this situation. Will the Prime Minister confirm in the House that he recognizes the will of the Quebec nation?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been saying for a long time that we are working with the Government of Quebec to protect the French language in Quebec and across Canada, while protecting the anglophone minority in Quebec and francophones outside Quebec.

We will continue to work with all of the partners and governments that share this goal. I look forward to being able to continue working on this matter with the Government of Quebec.

• (1425)

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the answer is yes.

However, it seems that the will of the Quebec government, and the Prime Minister's decision to acknowledge it, may have been ill-received or perhaps just misunderstood by the provinces. To avoid unfortunate misunderstandings among the public or the media, did the Prime Minister make the effort to explain his acceptance of Quebec's will to provincial premiers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the start of this pandemic, I have been meeting with the premiers of all provinces two or three times a week. Our next meeting is two days from now.

Naturally, I look forward to speaking to them about the pandemic, the upcoming summer and measures we are working on together to ensure that Canadians are safe. I look forward to continuing to discuss files that are important in all parts of the country, including the protection of French and the protection of linguistic minorities across the country.

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FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the pandemic has been hard on people, but not on banks. Banks have made billions of dollars in profits. Despite that they have increased their service fees. Worse yet, the Liberal government has the power to stop them, but it continues to allow them to increase their service fees. Why is the Prime Minister refusing to stop the banks from gouging people?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the NDP likes to talk about the wealthy, but I would like to remind this House that in 2015, we raised taxes on the 1% of wealthiest Canadians and lowered taxes for the middle class. The NDP voted against that measure.

In budget 2021, we made sure that digital service providers will pay their fair share of taxes, we instituted a tax on yachts and luxury vehicles, we are tackling aggressive tax planning schemes and we are building the government's capacity to crack down on tax fraud and tax evasion.

We will always stand up for the middle class and make sure that everyone pays their fair share of taxes.

* * *

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister ignored my question about banks increasing their banking fees, just like the Prime Minister ignored the Deschamps report.

Oral Questions

However, his national defence deputy minister has clearly stated what we have known for a long time: “I think that as little was done as possible to make it look like the report had been responded to without any real change. No structural change, no legislative change, no outside the department, outside the Canadian Armed Forces reporting.”

Why does the Prime Minister refuse to put in place the Deschamps report and why does it continue to fail women in the Canadian Armed Forces?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we agree that our institutions are not living up to the needs of those who have experienced misconduct, and that includes the military justice system.

We have taken concrete actions to address this. We have named Lieutenant-General Jennie Carignan as the Chief, Professional Conduct and Culture. We have named Morris Fish to conduct the third independent review of the entire military justice system. We also recently appointed Louise Arbour to conduct an independent review of the treatment of sexual misconduct.

These are just the first steps. We know that every woman or man who serves in the Canadian Armed Forces deserves to be properly supported, and we will ensure that.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after some flip-flopping, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Official Languages, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry and even the Minister of Canadian Heritage have all mentioned at one time or another that they support net neutrality.

By definition, net neutrality is the principle that all Internet traffic should be treated equally.

Can the heritage minister explain how regulating social media fits in with that concept?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe there is some confusion about the nature of the definition of net neutrality, since it has to do with the infrastructure, that is, how people can access the Internet. Bill C-10 will not affect the issue of telecommunications and infrastructure in any way.

All Bill C-10 seeks to do is ensure that the web giants pay their fair share and that our Canadian artists become more and more accessible on these platforms.

• (1430)

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would invite the Minister of Canadian Heritage to check the dictionary, because that is where I got that definition. The minister would have us believe that he is in favour of net neutrality or he is trying to make sure that people do not understand what is happening with Bill C-10.

However, an internal memo that his deputy minister gave him clearly indicates that the new Broadcasting Act could apply to training apps, gaming apps and even audio books. The reality is that the Minister of Canadian Heritage is preparing to give the CRTC even more power to regulate Internet applications.

Why?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to once again confirm that what we are going to do with Bill C-10 is ensure that web giants pay their fair share. Bill C-10 will not apply to health apps, for example, or to videos produced by individuals. We have been very clear on that.

My colleague was there when a Department of Justice statement presented to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage indicated that there is no issue with Bill C-10—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, briefs from senior officials, experts, academics, artists and Canadians express opposition to what the Minister of Canadian Heritage is saying and are fighting against his attack on freedom of expression.

Canadians want the truth about the government's true intentions. It is trying to give more power to the CRTC to regulate what happens on the Internet.

What is the minister waiting for to do what is right and announce that social media, Internet applications and audio books will be excluded from Bill C-10, clearly and unequivocally?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my hon. colleague that a petition initiated by Quebec's Union des artistes has been signed by people like Yvon Deschamps, Ariane Moffatt and Claude Legault, who all support Bill C-10, as well as by artists from English Canada. I am thinking in particular of Loreena McKennitt, of the CRTC's former executive director, Janet Yale, and of University of Montreal law professor Pierre Trudel.

As far as individual activities are concerned, whether it be podcasts, workout videos or personal videos, the bill will not contain any requirements concerning this type of content.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, net neutrality is the principle that Internet users should have equal access to all sites, all content and all applications without being blocked or having preference given to certain sites over others. In 2017, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said he would defend net neutrality. The previous heritage minister made net neutrality a foundational part of Canadian cultural policy.

Why is the current heritage minister going against this principle by legislating that some content gets to be showcased and other content has to be downgraded in order to show favouritism to some artists over others?

The Speaker: Before going to the answer, I just want to remind the hon. members that when asking a question or speaking in the chamber, in referring to another member, we refer to them by their riding or their title, not by their proper name. With questions, when we have a chance to write them ahead, we get a chance to think about it. I just want to remind everyone of that rule that exists in the chamber.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe there is some misconception about the concept of net neutrality because it refers to hardware: to Canadians being able to access the Internet and having these conditions be the same for all Internet users.

Bill C-10 is not about telecommunications or hardware. It is about ensuring that web giants pay their fair share and that Canadians have easy access to the content developed by Canadian creators.

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister reads his speaking notes very well, but what he is saying is actually really misleading to the Canadian public and actually quite insulting to their intelligence.

Net neutrality ensures that all Internet users are treated fairly. The Liberals once believed this principle. Now, as stated, they will say Bill C-10 has to do with web giants, but that is actually not the case.

We are talking about a bill that targets everyday Canadians in their everyday Internet use. We are talking about regulating the Internet: everything from YouTube to Facebook to TikTok, etc. It is unfair, it is undemocratic and it is incredibly regressive.

• (1435)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, this is a profound misconception by the hon. member opposite. We are not regulating the Internet. We are regulating some activities on the Internet. There is a huge difference.

Bill C-10 does not affect how Internet service providers manage Internet traffic and does not modify the relevant provision in the Telecommunications Act, therefore maintaining net neutrality.

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, basically what the minister is saying is, “Don’t worry, folks, discrimination is okay, as long as it’s approved by the government. I’ll do it right.”

No. The government cannot and should not be trusted to regulate what we access online. I am talking about successful YouTubers like Simply Nailogical, or Justin Bieber, who came up through YouTube, or Lilly Singh, a famous YouTuber right now. I am talking about individuals who are innovative, creative and inspiring. They use these platforms to gain an audience and influence culture.

Why are the Liberals so intent on picking winners and losers instead of letting Canadian artists continue—

Oral Questions

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, this is a profound misconception about what we are trying to do. In fact, the Department of Justice has stated that there is no problem with free speech in Bill C-10, and the member opposite was at the committee. She got to ask the Minister of Justice questions regarding this.

Frankly, what I cannot understand is why the Conservative Party of Canada continues to oppose the fact that we are asking some of the wealthiest companies in the world to pay their fair share when it comes to Canadian artists and Canadian musicians. I just do not understand.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of Bill 96, an act to protect French, the official and common language of Quebec, is to ensure compliance with Bill 101.

Clause 65 clearly states that any enterprise or employer carrying on its activities in Quebec is subject to the act, and that includes federally regulated enterprises.

We know that the Minister of Official Languages is working on her own language reform. Will she clearly state that she has no intention of interfering in any way whatsoever with Quebec’s intention to apply the Charter of the French Language to federally regulated enterprises?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague for her question, which gives me an opportunity to remind the House about the government’s position on official languages and specifically the protection of the French fact in Quebec and Canada.

I want to remind my colleague that we will of course protect the right to work in French and the right to be served in French, as well as francophones’ right not to experience discrimination in federally regulated enterprises in Quebec and in regions with a strong francophone presence across the country.

I would be happy to work with her to achieve that vision.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, everyone agrees that we need to better protect French as the language of work in Quebec.

That is precisely what I want to ask the minister about. In all of the discussions on Bill 96, no one in Quebec has indicated that the federal government should be exempt from applying Bill 101. Everyone wants the federal government to abide by that bill, which it has spent over 40 years circumventing.

Will the minister clearly commit to ensuring that her reform of the Official Languages Act will not in any way undermine the application of Bill 101 to federally regulated businesses?

Oral Questions

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, I have the pleasure of confirming to my colleague our common objective of ensuring that francophones are able to work in French in federally regulated businesses, not only in Quebec but also in regions with a strong francophone presence. I am sure my colleague will agree with me that we need to protect French both in Quebec and across Canada. That is important.

I would also like to confirm that Quebecers and francophones across the country will be able to receive services in French in federally regulated businesses, and I hope to be able to introduce a bill on that issue in 2021.

* * *

• (1440)

[*English*]

HEALTH

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two Canadian government scientists, Dr. Qiu and Dr. Cheng, were fired this January from the government's National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg. We know that CSIS urged the revocation of their security clearances because of their work related to China's Wuhan Institute of Virology.

When will the government come clean and tell Canadians and the House what actually happened?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I informed the member of Parliament and the House last week, those two researchers are no longer employees of the Public Health Agency of Canada. I cannot comment further.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, The Globe and Mail reports that seven government scientists at the Winnipeg lab collaborated with Chinese military scientists and conducted experiments with deadly viruses. One of those Chinese military scientists was actually given access to the government's lab in Winnipeg.

How on earth did a Chinese military scientist get access to the government's lab in Winnipeg, a level 4 facility equipped to handle the world's most deadly viruses, and why are Canadian government scientists collaborating with China's military scientists on deadly viruses?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this question gives me an opportunity to thank the incredible hard-working researchers and scientists at the National Microbiology Laboratory who have been there for Canadians from the beginning of the emergence of COVID-19 and before. These scientists, researchers and doctors were some of the first in the world to be able to create a gold-standard PCR test that led to the ability for provinces and territories to test for COVID-19.

We are happy and proud we have a lab of this stature in Canada able to serve Canadians across the country from coast to coast.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two Chinese researchers, Dr. Qiu and Dr. Cheng, will not be returning to work at the National Microbiology

Laboratory in Winnipeg. This long-awaited decision comes two years after the pair were escorted from Canada's highest-security lab for policy violations.

The two doctors coordinated shipments of Ebola and other deadly virus samples from the Public Health Agency of Canada to the Wuhan Institute of Virology in China. Can the Prime Minister explain to Canadians why samples of deadly viruses were sent to the Chinese regime?

[*English*]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, these two scientists and researchers are no longer employed with the Public Health Agency of Canada. I cannot comment further.

I will quote Dr. Poliquin, who is the head of the National Microbiology Laboratory. He said that there was no connection to the situation with COVID-19. I would encourage the members opposite to stay focused on making sure that we can get through COVID together and that, indeed, provinces and territories have what they need to support Canadians during this time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the minister that I did not suggest a connection to COVID-19. What is clear is that there are reports of these scientists collaborating with the Chinese People's Liberation Army to experiment on deadly pathogens. That is a really bad idea.

Moreover, the president of the Public Health Agency of Canada and this government are refusing to answer questions. None of our allies collaborate with the Chinese regime, but Canada is all in. Can the Prime Minister tell us why samples of deadly viruses were sent to China and how these two scientists managed to get secret security clearances?

[*English*]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, scientists and researchers routinely collaborate around the world. In fact, that is what they have done through COVID-19 to develop tests, to develop vaccines and to develop therapeutics. I think the member opposite is confused if he says that no other ally collaborates with other countries across the world. In fact, this is a standard of scientific research.

As the member opposite knows, these particular researchers are no longer with the Public Health Agency of Canada. I cannot comment further.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since 2015, the Liberals have been sitting on the Deschamps report, failing to implement any of its recommendations. Instead, they announced yet another report on the sexualized culture in the armed forces. Even the deputy minister of National Defence admitted that the government failed women in the armed forces, saying as little was done as possible to make it look like the report had been responded to without any real change.

Why should women in the armed forces have any faith in the government when a high-ranking member of the Department of National Defence agrees that the Liberals only make symbolic gestures rather than real change?

• (1445)

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that the measures we have implemented have not gone far enough and that we have much more work to do. More needs to be done to fully enact the structural, legislative and cultural changes outlined in Justice Deschamps' recommendations. This is one of the reasons why the sexual misconduct response centre reports to the deputy minister and not to the military.

More work needs to be done and this is why we have appointed Justice Arbour, who will build on the work of Justice Deschamps to examine defence culture and provide recommendations on how to effect that culture change.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week, the leading experts in the International Energy Agency released a report calling for an end to the development of new oil and gas projects if the world was to meet the target of net-zero emissions by 2050. However, the federal government subsidized the oil and gas sector to the tune of \$18 billion in 2020 compared to a 10-year budget of \$15 billion to fight climate change.

How can the Liberals tell Canadians that they are serious about climate change when they will not stop propping up the fossil fuel sector?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we certainly know that around the world countries, industry and businesses are moving toward a cleaner, innovative, low-carbon future. As this report identifies, to reach a net-zero future, we need cleaner solutions and targeted policies, and that is precisely what we have been doing. We have made historic investments in nature and clean technology, put a price on pollution, tabled climate accountability measures and just brought forward a new emissions reduction target, all measures that will help us to deliver on a cleaner future for our kids and grandkids while building a clean economy.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

HEALTH

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past year, Canadians have stayed at home to slow the spread of COVID-19, but for some people, home is not a safe place.

Many victims of family violence have become even more vulnerable during the pandemic. All Canadians deserve to feel safe at home.

Could the Minister of Health tell us how the government is working to support victims of family violence?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle for her very important question.

The federal government is investing \$50 million in Public Health Agency of Canada programs to promote healthy relationships and prevent family violence.

Our government will continue to do everything in its power to prevent intimate partner violence, child maltreatment and elder abuse, and to support survivors.

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[English]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has ended cross-border co-operation to vaccinate more Canadians, like the Montana Blackfoot first nation that has provided vaccines to my constituents. The reason given to media is that vaccines are widely available in Canada.

If vaccines were so widely available here, then there would not be wait lists, there would not be delays and there would not be a four-month gap between shots. The Liberal vaccine failures are the reason Americans are helping deliver vaccines to Canadians.

If the government were actually working to end the lockdowns by any means necessary, why obstruct these cross-border vaccine clinics?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member makes, let us just say, broad use of the word “failure”. I do not think that 25 million doses distributed to provinces and territories is a failure. Nor is 61% of adults receiving one dose a failure. Nor is being in the top three of the G20 for doses administered a failure. On the contrary, our vaccine rollout is continuing apace, and we will not rest until all Canadians have access to vaccines.

*Oral Questions***HEALTH**

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, “Patients suffering, dying while waiting for care as Manitoba hospitals overwhelmed by COVID-19” means failure. In Detroit, many unused doses of Pfizer vaccines may go in the garbage. Inexplicably, Windsor Mayor Drew Dilkens has been blocked by the Liberals in virtually every innovative attempt he has made to deliver these essential medical tools to Canadians. This is just crazy.

Will the Minister of Health commit to phoning Mayor Dilkens by the end of the day today to deliver a firm solution to get Detroit doses into the arms of Canadians by the end of the week?

• (1450)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me just reiterate what my colleague has pointed out. In fact, 61% of Canadians have received their first dose of a vaccine in the country. In fact, in terms of Manitoba, it received 111,310 vaccine doses last week. In Ontario, by the way, 2.193 million doses were received last week.

We have seen immunizers step up in innovative ways in every community across the country to get those doses in arms. I want to congratulate the many creative ways that communities are vaccinating their members.

As the member opposite notes, the United States has said that crossing the border to receive a vaccine is not an appropriate reason—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Lakeland.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Ontario Superior Court ruled the January 2020 Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' attack on flight 752 was an intentional act of terrorism. All 176 on board were killed, including 55 Canadian citizens and 30 permanent residents.

In 2019, the U.S. White House declared that the “IRGC actively participates in, finances, and promotes terrorism as a tool of statecraft.”

When will the Liberals stand up for Canadians and list the IRGC as a terrorist organization?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been standing up for Canadians and particularly the families of those who were tragically lost in PS752 on January 8, 2020. We are reviewing the Ontario court decision at the moment.

However, we have said right from the beginning in all the communications with Iran that it has failed to be transparent, open and accountable for the actions that it committed against flight PS752. We will not cease to pursue it on that matter until it has provided all the necessary answers with respect to that tragedy.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2018, the House voted to condemn Iran for its ongoing sponsorship of terrorism and called on

the government to list the IRGC as a terrorist entity. It has been three long years and the government still refuses to respect the will of the House even after this latest ruling confirming that the downing of flight 752 was an intentional act of terrorism.

When will the Minister of Public Safety finally declare the IRGC, which is responsible for the deaths of 85 Canadians, as a terrorist entity?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working with all like-minded countries to ensure that Iran is held to account for its support of terrorism. As part of this, we continue to list the Islamic Revolutionary Guards' Quds Force as a terrorist entity.

In 2019, we added three additional Iran-backed groups to the Criminal Code list as terrorist entities. We continue to impose sanctions on Iran and the IRGC targeting all four of its branches as well as members of its senior leadership.

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[*Translation*]

ELECTIONS CANADA

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers and Canadians do not want an election during the pandemic, not when there are still over 50,000 active cases of COVID-19 in Canada.

Members will vote this afternoon on a Bloc Québécois motion calling on the House to declare it irresponsible to hold an election during a pandemic and on the government to make every possible effort to avoid it.

If the House votes in favour of the motion, will the Prime Minister respect this request, which is in line with the will of the people, and commit to not calling an election during the pandemic?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois's lack of consistency should never come as a surprise.

Last summer, the leader of the Bloc Québécois desperately wanted an election to be called. The Bloc Québécois stands up in the House and continually votes against the government on confidence votes, which means it wants an immediate election.

Our priority has always been, and will always be, to ensure the well-being of Canadians and to find ways to protect them throughout this pandemic. We will continue to focus on that.

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, can we put this posturing aside and get serious?

I am asking the Prime Minister to commit to not calling an election during the pandemic because he often ignores the votes in the House. We voted to increase employment insurance benefits to 50 weeks for people who are seriously ill, but the Prime Minister ignored that vote and went with just 26 weeks. We voted to increase health transfers, but the Prime Minister ignored that vote and budgeted no increase over five years.

If the House asks him not to call an election until the pandemic is over, will he commit to respect that vote or will he ignore it yet again?

• (1455)

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague in the Bloc Québécois should talk to his leader. In the fall, the Bloc Québécois tried to trigger an election by voting against the throne speech. It really wanted an election.

The Bloc Québécois leader even said, and I quote:

If this Parliament has any courage, the days of the current government are numbered. If some of us had courage, the hours of this government would be numbered.

He even went as far as to say that anyone who did not want an election was afraid. Who is telling the truth here, today's Bloc Québécois or yesterday's Bloc Québécois?

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COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister repeatedly promised not to leave anyone behind. I repeat: not leave anyone behind.

As we speak, young mothers who gave birth between the first and second waves of the COVID-19 pandemic are still not eligible for the Canada recovery caregiving benefit because of the rules this government brought in, requiring claimants to already have their child registered for child care. The Liberals are leaving them behind. What will they do to fix this for once and for all?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is determined to support parents dealing with the unique challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. That is why we brought in the CERB, which has supported more than eight million Canadians, and introduced three recovery benefits to help workers. With budget 2021, we are also investing nearly \$30 billion to create a Canada-wide child care system that will allow more women to participate in the workforce.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, The Hamilton Spectator reported that Hamilton is less affordable than New York City. I will let that sink in. It is easier to buy a home in the Big Apple than it is in Hamilton.

What is happening to our country? The Liberals' first-time home buyers' plan is a proven failure. A generation of Canadians are be-

ing left behind, and they are losing hope. What is the government's plan to secure our housing future?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government absolutely believes that affordable housing is a priority for Canadians. It is a priority for our government. That is why we are acting.

I will list some of the things we have been doing. Over \$70 billion has been invested in the national housing strategy, which will support the construction of up to 125,000 affordable homes. There is also the rapid housing initiative, which is addressing urgent housing needs for vulnerable Canadians. It is a \$1-billion program and is set to be expanded by an additional \$1.5 billion in the recent federal budget. On January 1—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Provencher.

* * *

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with Bill C-10, the Liberals are opening up the door to massive abuses of Canadians' freedom of expression. The heritage minister has denied this, yet an internal memo from his own department indicates that things such as podcasts and news sites could be regulated as well. Canadians recognize a threat to freedom of expression when they see one.

Will the Prime Minister commit to Canadians that he will not regulate their social media, or will he just repeat his same old tired talking points?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I profoundly disagree with the basis of the hon. member's question, as does the Department of Justice Canada. Its analysts confirmed that Bill C-10 remains consistent with the charter's guarantee of freedom of speech.

Bill C-10 is about levelling the playing field between creators and web giants. It will require big, powerful foreign streamers to provide information on their revenues in Canada and make financial contributions to Canadian stories and music. I wonder why the Conservative Party continues to oppose this.

* * *

[Translation]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, honouring Canada's legal obligations to first nations and working collaboratively to renew relationships are key to righting historical wrongs and advancing reconciliation with first nations in Canada.

Oral Questions

Our government and the Madawaska Maliseet First Nation recently concluded a negotiated settlement that resolves the first nation's specific claim. I believe that this land claim settlement with the Madawaska Maliseet First Nation is the largest land claim settlement in the Maritimes. Can the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations inform the House of the progress that has been made in resolving that claim?

• (1500)

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question and his good work. This \$145-million settlement was achieved through the unwavering dedication, determination and hard work of Chief Bernard and the first nation. As Chief Bernard said:

Every member of our band will be helped by this settlement, leading to great economic opportunity — not only on an individual scale for each of our members, but also for the First Nation's community as a whole and the Madawaska region.

* * *

[English]

TOURISM INDUSTRY

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that the government has implemented a cruise ship ban until February 2022, but the U.S. has gotten smart and has passed legislation that allows ships to go from the U.S. to Alaska without stopping in Canada. This will absolutely devastate the cruise ship industry.

Will the Minister of Transport work with the United States and implement technical calls?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are aware of the recent developments in the United States regarding cruise ships. We have had discussions with our American partners, and I have had discussions with my counterpart in British Columbia. We will continue to engage all stakeholders on this issue.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague if Conservatives want tough border restrictions or not. We are sensitive to the needs of our communities, but we will continue to follow public health advice and be guided by our experts.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, \$1 million is how much money gets pumped into the Victoria or Vancouver economies every time a cruise ship stops by on its way up to Alaska, but the government's outright ban is going to kill all of that. Our American neighbours got tired of waiting for our reopening plan, so they made their own plan, which is to just avoid Canadian ports altogether. The Alaska Tourism Restoration Act has passed both houses of Congress, and the president has signed it into law.

Will the minister acknowledge that he totally missed the boat on this one?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the beginning of the pandemic, we have told Canadians that we will do whatever it takes to protect their health and safety. We have stood by Canadians and businesses. The tourism industry has been hit really hard, and that is why we have rolled out many programs to support it.

I want to assure my hon. colleague that we are working with our U.S. counterparts. We are working with the industry to make sure that when we restart our travel and cruise ship industry, we will do it in a safe manner that follows public health advice.

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last month I raised the issue of Alaskan cruise ships by-passing British Columbia. The minister was stunningly apathetic about the crisis. He dismissed safe technical stops, during which passengers stay on board. These would have kept our industry afloat.

Recently, I met with U.S. senators. They were disturbed by the Liberal government's unwillingness to show any bilateral accommodation. Well, the bill has passed, and it has been signed by President Biden. Those ships will no longer be stopping in B.C., sinking a \$2.6-billion industry and thousands of jobs.

Will the minister apologize for being asleep at the helm?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me assure all Canadians that we are focused on protecting the health and safety of Canadians. I want to ask my colleague to join us in doing so. I have spoken with U.S. Senator Sullivan. I have also spoken with my counterpart in British Columbia, and I have spoken with public health experts. We are in constant discussions with our friends in the U.S. We are aware of the challenges that communities are facing. That is why we will continue offering support to those communities.

We will restart our travel industry when it is safe. We will continue to follow the public health advice of the experts.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that Canada's long-standing trade relationship with the United States and Mexico under NAFTA, and now the new modernized NAFTA, has been a model to the world. In 2019, Canada exported more than \$440 billion of merchandise to the United States and more than \$7 billion to Mexico.

Given the CUSMA free trade commission meeting last week, could the minister kindly update Canadians on how the new NAFTA is creating good-paying jobs and strengthening the middle class in Canada?

• (1505)

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week I met with my U.S. and Mexican counterparts to discuss the effective implementation of the new NAFTA and our shared priorities for economic recovery, which include the environment, labour and inclusive trade. The new NAFTA is a good deal for Canadian businesses and workers, with total trilateral merchandise trade reaching nearly \$1.3 billion in 2020.

As we recover from this pandemic, it is more important than ever to work together to increase North American competitiveness and emerge stronger, creating good middle-class jobs.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last Monday was International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. Many Canadians were hoping for action from the current government to mark the day. Making progress toward inclusion means the government should have already brought an end to the gay blood ban and gotten the bill to ban conversion therapy over the finish line.

After repeated promises to act, can the Minister of Justice explain why, instead of simply getting the job done on ending the blood ban, the government is fighting my community at the Federal Court this week, trying to stop an investigation by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal into the stigma and discrimination caused by its ongoing blood ban?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we agree that the blood ban is discriminatory, and that is why we have taken such strong steps to eliminate it. In fact, we brought it down from five years to six months and then to three months.

We know that the job is not done. That is why we fund Canadian Blood Services and Héma-Québec to conduct the rest of their research. I have met with both organizations, and I can reassure the member that I have urged them to submit their applications to Health Canada for a review, so we can get the job done.

* * *

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I am hearing from constituents who lost their jobs, very briefly collected EI, then found ways to earn income through self-employment. Now, they have once again lost their income due to COVID-19. They are being told that they cannot restart EI because they were self-employed and they cannot access CRB due to an open EI claim.

For trying to be self-sufficient, they are being abandoned with zero income, zero support and bills piling up. Can the minister explain what the government is doing to address this issue?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when workers find themselves without a job, the EI program and the

Oral Questions

Canada recovery benefit are there to support them. As we continue to fight COVID-19, EI and recovery benefits are important tools to help keep Canadians safe and financially stable.

In order to receive EI benefits, applicants need to demonstrate they are ready, willing and capable of working each day. We know that Canadians want to work and that the vast majority take jobs when they are available. Many Canadians continue to face challenges during this time, and we will continue to be there to support them.

* * *

[Translation]

LAC-MÉGANTIC BYPASS

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, whereas,

(i) the town of Lac-Mégantic has requested by resolution of its council the commitment of all political parties to have the Lac-Mégantic bypass built as soon as possible,

(ii) the town of Lac-Mégantic suffered the worst rail tragedy in Canada on July 6, 2013, when 47 people lost their lives,

(iii) the Prime Minister and member of Parliament for Papineau, accompanied by the Premier of Quebec, announced on May 11, 2018, the construction of the rail bypass,

(iv) Transport Canada is the prime contractor for this project,

(v) the work has not yet begun and many concerns have been raised regarding the timeline to deliver the bypass by year 2023,

(vi) the Minister of Transport has reiterated his commitment to deliver the bypass road to the citizens of the Granit regional county municipality by the year 2023,

(vii) the Chief Executive Officer of Canadian Pacific Railway believes that this timeline is unrealistic without significant legislative changes to expedite the regulatory process;

the House:

(a) call on the government to put in place all the necessary elements, to respect the timeline announced by the Prime Minister on May 11, 2018, and to provide the House with a detailed plan of the construction phases of the Lac-Mégantic bypass by May 28, 2021; and

(b) remind the government of the willingness of all parliamentarians of each political party and independents to collaborate in order to facilitate the rapid adoption of the legislative changes necessary to make the project a reality by 2023.

• (1510)

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member 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.

Points of Order

Hearing no dissenting voice, I declare the motion carried.
(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[*English*]

HEALTH

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for the House's consent to table a document. This document contains data that has been compiled by Our World in Data, which has been the leading organization in compiling data from throughout the world with regard to COVID-19, which shows that Canada is now only second to the United Kingdom as it relates to first doses that have been administered throughout the G20.

I would ask for unanimous consent to table this document so that all members could have an opportunity to review the data.

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay. I hear none.

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

Hearing no dissenting voice, I declare the motion carried. The hon. member can table his report.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during my S. O. 31 today, when I was honouring a member of my community, somebody, and I am sure it was inadvertent, coughed, interrupted the feed and appeared on the screen.

I would like to request the opportunity to redo it.

The Speaker: We will have to ask for unanimous consent.

All those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay. I hear none.

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

Hearing no dissenting voice, I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Speaker, today I want to celebrate and thank my friend and community hero, Will Gault.

Will has faced challenges and adversity in his life, but he never gave up. He now owns a successful small business in our community, Willy Dogs, and grills up the best hot dogs in Winnipeg.

Last week, I was pleased to stop by Willy Dogs to grab lunch and support his campaign to thank frontline hospital workers for their amazing dedication throughout the pandemic. Will is selling specially priced vouchers that anyone can purchase to buy lunch for frontline hospital workers as thanks for their tireless work. Whether it be through this campaign to support health care workers or

fundraising for the Bruce Oake Recovery Centre to support those on the path to recovery from addiction, Will is always looking for ways to support our community.

We thank Will for all that he does.

The Speaker: Before going to the next point of order, I just want to remind all members, especially those joining us remotely, that when someone is giving their S. O. 31, it is normally something that is very precious to them and very precious to their riding, and it is very important for us to hear that. Please make sure that your microphones are off so that it does not interfere with the message coming across. It will be so much more pleasant for everyone.

We have another point of order.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I would like unanimous consent to table the CBC article entitled “Patients suffering, dying while waiting for care as Manitoba hospitals overwhelmed by COVID-19, doctors say”. I referenced this in question period today and I believe it speaks to the fact that Canada is nowhere near having vaccinated enough people.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I think you have noticed that we welcome each and every member who would like to table a document. This is quite important. I have done that many times and unfortunately the government refuses to do so when I try.

[*Translation*]

What is important is that the documents be in both official languages.

Unfortunately, the member tabled a document in English only. I invite him to fix this.

[*English*]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, the situation is being rectified and the information will be given to the table very shortly.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1515)
[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—ELECTIONS DURING A PANDEMIC

The House resumed from May 13 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:15 p.m., pursuant to the order made on Monday, January 25, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the House Leader of the Bloc Québécois relating to the business of supply.

Call in the members.

• (1530)
[Translation]

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

(Division No. 118)

YEAS

Members

Aboultatif	Albas
Alghabra	Alleslev
Allison	Amos
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arnold
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baker	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bessette
Bezan	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Block
Blois	Boudrias
Boulerice	Bragdon
Brassard	Bratina
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Cannings
Carr	Carrie
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Champagne
Champoux	Charbonneau
Chen	Chiu
Chong	Cooper
Cornier	Cumming
Dabrusin	Dalton
Damoff	Dancho
Davidson	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desbiens
Desilets	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diotte
Doherty	Dong
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Drouin	Dubourg

Business of Supply

Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duvall	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Epp	Erskine-Smith
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Fergus
Fillmore	Findlay
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Gallant
Garneau	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Généreux	Genuis
Gerretsen	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Gould	Gourde
Gray	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hallan	Harder
Hardie	Harris
Hoback	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Ien
Jaczek	Jansen
Jeneroux	Johns
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Julian
Kelloway	Kelly
Kent	Khalid
Khera	Kitchen
Kmiec	Koutrakis
Kram	Kurek
Kusie	Kusmierczyk
Kwan	Lake
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Larouche	Lattanzio
Lauzon	Lawrence
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lehoux	Lemire
Lewis (Essex)	Liepert
Lightbound	Lloyd
Lobb	Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Lukiwski
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacGregor
MacKenzie	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maguire	Maloney
Manly	Marcil
Martel	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saainich—Gulf Islands)
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLean
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
McPherson	Melillo
Mendès	Mendicino
Michaud	Miller
Monsef	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Morrissey	Motz
Murray	Nater
Ng	Normandin
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus

Government Orders

Pauzé	Perron
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Poilievre	Powlowski
Qaqqaq	Qualtrough
Ratansi	Rayes
Redekopp	Regan
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Rood
Ruff	Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Saini	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sangha	Sarai
Saroya	Savard-Tremblay
Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Schiefke	Schmale
Schulte	Seeback
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Shields	Shin
Shipley	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Simms	Singh
Sorbara	Soroka
Spengemann	Stanton
Steinley	Ste-Marie
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Tabbara
Tassi	Thériault
Therrien	Tochor
Trudeau	Trudel
Turnbull	Uppal
Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Van Popta	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Vecchio	Vidal
Viersen	Vignola
Virani	Vis
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Weiler	Wilkinson
Williamson	Wilson-Raybould
Wong	Yip
Young	Zahid
Zann	Zimmer
Zuberi — 327	

NAYS

Members

Sloan — 1

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

**UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ACT**

The House resumed from May 14 consideration of the motion that Bill C-15, An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Monday, January 25, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-15.

● (1540)

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

(Division No. 119)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	Amos
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Bachrach	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baker	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bergeron
Bérubé	Bessette
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blois
Boudrias	Boulerice
Bratina	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Champagne	Champoux
Charbonneau	Chen
Cormier	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duval
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Garneau	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hardie	Harris
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Julian
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Larouche	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Lemire	Lightbound
Long	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Manly	Marcil

Martinez Ferrada
 Mathysen
 May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
 McDonald
 McKay
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 McPherson
 Mendicino
 Miller
 Morrissey
 Ng
 O'Connell
 Pausé
 Petitpas Taylor
 Powlowski
 Qualtrough
 Regan
 Rodriguez
 Romanado
 Saini
 Saks
 Sangha
 Savard-Tremblay
 Schiefke
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Sidhu (Brampton East)
 Simard
 Singh
 Spengemann
 Tabbara
 Thériault
 Trudeau
 Turnbull
 van Koevorden
 Vandenberg
 Vignola
 Weiler
 Wilson-Raybould
 Young
 Zann

Masse
 May (Cambridge)
 McCrimmon
 McGuinty
 McKenna
 McLeod (Northwest Territories)
 Mendès
 Michaud
 Monsef
 Murray
 Normandin
 Oliphant
 Perron
 Plamondon
 Qaqqaq
 Ratansi
 Robillard
 Rogers
 Sahota (Brampton North)
 Sajjan
 Samson
 Sarai
 Scarpaleggia
 Schulte
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Simms
 Sorbara
 Ste-Marie
 Tassi
 Therrien
 Trudel
 Van Bynen
 Vandal
 Vaughan
 Virani
 Wilkinson
 Yip
 Zahid
 Zuberi — 210

NAYS

Members

Aboultarif
 Alleslev
 Arnold
 Baldinelli
 Barrett
 Bergen
 Bezan
 Block
 Brassard
 Carrie
 Chong
 Cumming
 Dancho
 Deltell
 Diotte
 Dreeshen
 Epp
 Falk (Provencher)
 Findlay
 Généreux
 Gladu
 Gourde
 Hallan
 Hoback
 Jeneroux
 Kent
 Kmiec
 Kurek

Albas
 Allison
 Atwin
 Barlow
 Benzen
 Berthold
 Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
 Bragdon
 Calkins
 Chiu
 Cooper
 Dalton
 Davidson
 d'Entremont
 Dowdall
 Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
 Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
 Fast
 Gallant
 Genuis
 Godin
 Gray
 Harder
 Jansen
 Kelly
 Kitchen
 Kram
 Kusie

Speaker's Ruling

Lake
 Lehoux
 Liepert
 Lobb
 MacKenzie
 Martel
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 McLean
 Melillo
 Morantz
 Motz
 O'Toole
 Paul-Hus
 Rayes
 Reid
 Richards
 Ruff
 Saroya
 Schmale
 Shields
 Shipley
 Soroka
 Steinley
 Stubbs
 Tochor
 Van Popta
 Vidal
 Vis
 Warkentin
 Webber
 Wong
 Lawrence
 Lewis (Essex)
 Lloyd
 Lukiwski
 Maguire
 Mazier
 McColeman
 McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
 Moore
 Morrison
 Nater
 Patzer
 Poilievre
 Redekopp
 Rempel Garner
 Rood
 Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
 Scheer
 Seeback
 Shin
 Sloan
 Stanton
 Strahl
 Sweet
 Uppal
 Vecchio
 Viersen
 Wagantall
 Waugh
 Williamson
 Zimmer — 118

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
 (Bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

COMMITTEE STUDY OF BILL C-216—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the point of order raised on May 11, 2021, by the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot concerning the consideration of Bill C-216, an act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act (supply management), by the Standing Committee on International Trade.

In his remarks, the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot explained that the bill had been referred to the committee last March 10 and that its clause-by-clause study would not be until June 7. Until then, the committee had decided to concentrate its efforts on studies carried out under its general mandate.

[*English*]

According to the member, bills referred to a committee must take precedence over its work since they are the subject of a specific order from the House. He cited several extracts from the third edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, which say that committees do not enjoy absolute freedom and that they are constrained by orders of reference and instructions from the House.

Government Orders

He added that since committees are creatures of the House, the consideration of bills should take priority and he asked the Chair to order the committee to proceed with the study of Bill C-216 without delay.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

The Chair would like to take this opportunity to remind members of the rules governing the consideration of bills in committee, and of private members' bills in particular.

The member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot is right to say that committees are entities created by the House. They must take account of the orders of reference that the House sends them from time to time, particularly in the case of specific instructions. The House has also given them the power to undertake their own studies under Standing Order 108. A committee may, therefore, decide to study questions related to the mandate, organization, administration or operation of the department or departments within its purview.

[*English*]

As for private members' bills referred to committee, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, reminds us at page 1,158 in footnote 21:

Until 1997, there was no time limit on committee consideration of a private Member's bill. [...] In April 1997, and again in November 1998, the Standing Orders were amended to require committees considering a private Member's public bill to report back to the House within a time limit.

[*Translation*]

Since then, there has been an established framework for the study of these bills and committees must comply with the deadlines prescribed by Standing Order 97.1. They must consider private members' bills within 60 sitting days following the date of reference. If it is not possible to proceed by the established deadline, a committee can request a 30-sitting-day extension, failing which the committee is deemed to have reported without amendment. The rules in place thus prevent a private members' bill from remaining in committee indefinitely without being studied.

[*English*]

Practice is explicit regarding the moment when a committee proceeds with the consideration of bills. *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, specifies at page 1,004 and 1,005 that:

The committee decides when and how it will consider each bill that is referred to it. It also decides when the clause-by-clause consideration of the bill will begin.... The period of time devoted to the consideration of the bill is determined by the committee, but it can be circumscribed or restricted by various factors, such as the obligation to report the bill within a prescribed time pursuant to a special order of the House or to a time allocation motion, or due to limits the committee has placed upon itself by adopting motions to that effect.

[*Translation*]

Each committee therefore remains the master of its proceedings and decides how it will organize its work, within the limits, of course, of the mandate and powers conferred by the House.

Thus, pursuant to Standing Order 97.1, barring any indication to the contrary from the House, the Committee has 60 sitting days to

deal with this bill and must report it to the House by September 27, 2021.

I thank the hon. members for their attention.

* * *

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2021, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-30, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 19, 2021 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by 28 minutes.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Kenora has seven minutes and 30 seconds remaining in his time.

The hon. member for Kenora.

• (1550)

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is great to resume my remarks.

Before question period, I was talking about some of the ways the government has been spending a lot more money and getting worse results for Canadians. I used the incidence of food insecurity in the north and the government's approach with nutrition north as a good example of that. I will go into more detail about some of the concerns I have with the budget, but I am in a good mood today, and I want to mention something in the budget that I am cautiously optimistic about, something that I was happy to see in the budget.

I was happy to see sector-specific support for tourism. I believe it is \$500 million under the tourism relief fund. I know many colleagues on my side of the House are happy to see this funding. We have been calling for this funding for quite some time, because we know that tourist outfitters and industries have been hit very hard as a result of the pandemic. We know that all too well in northwestern Ontario. Many camps have not been able to open and have been losing revenue for the past year. A number of outfitters have told me that if they lose this summer or most of this summer, they likely will not be able to operate and will have to close their doors for good.

I say I am "cautiously optimistic" about this funding, because we know the government has brought forward a number of measures that were supposed to support small businesses last year and, with rigid criteria for accessing the programs, many operations, particularly the seasonal operations, were not able to access that, and many of those that were able to access the supports found they were not strong enough to cover what they needed for the year. I will be watching to see where those funds end up. I am, as I say, optimistic, but cautious, and hopeful those funds will get where they need to get to.

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Again, as I alluded to, the government has been spending a lot of money. This is a big spending budget, and the Liberals like to pat themselves on the back for that, I am concerned about this budget for a couple of reasons. One of them is that there is a clear lack of direction in the budget. The stimulus programs we need to get our economy going again should be focused and time-limited. They should be focused on creating jobs in all sectors and in all regions, and that includes supporting natural resources, forestry and mining that create so many good, well-paying union jobs across northern Ontario and are major drivers of our economy as well.

Of course, as I mentioned before question period, my most pressing concern with the budget is that there is no plan to get back to balance, and I am concerned about that for a number of reasons. Before I get into that, I will maybe get ahead of some of the members across the way here, and I will note that Conservatives have supported many of the necessary stimulus programs every step of the way. We believe in supporting Canadians and getting them through this crisis. There is no question about it. Regardless of what members on the other side will say, the voting records show that we have stood with Canadians and in many ways. We were able to pass things unanimously. We were able to bring forward a number of suggestions to fix some of these programs and make them better for Canadians. In some cases the government took our advice, and that was great.

However, we know that we cannot continue to spend into oblivion, as the Liberals have set us up to do. We believe the stimulus must be targeted, but it must be phased out responsibly, so that we can preserve public services for future generations. These are critical public services that future generations are going to be relying on, and we know that every dollar we spend on servicing our debt is a dollar that is being diverted away from Canadians; it is a dollar that is not going toward these critical services, and of course young people are going to bear the burden of that.

• (1555)

If the Liberals continue their high spending plan, we know we will receive either major cuts to services or higher taxes, or some terrible combination of both of them. That is why Canada's Conservatives have been advocating instead for a responsible, measured approach to phase out many of these targeted stimulus programs to get us back to balance, to get our economy going again and to ensure that we are protecting those critical services.

I want to make one more point about this. We often hear from the Liberals and other parties that the Conservatives are only focused on dollars and cents and we just want to balance the budget to say, "Check: We can balance a budget for fiscal reasons." However, that is certainly not the case. A balanced budget is not an end in itself. It is a means to preserve these public services for future generations. It is a means to leave the next generation and those afterward with better lives than we had. I believe that is a goal that we all share, and it is why we cannot continue down this path and burden young people with this debt.

Young people are concerned about going to school. They are concerned about getting jobs after school. They are concerned about being able to afford homes. They are concerned about climate change. They are concerned about so many things, and the Liberal

government has just given them another thing to be concerned about: They need to worry about what sorts of public services they will have in the future. Again, if we continue down this path, it will not look great for them.

Overall, that is primarily why I cannot support the implementation of this budget and why I will be voting against this piece of legislation.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, like my hon. colleague from Kenora, I have tremendous concerns for the tourism sector. Unlike him, I do not think that the \$500 million announced comes close to what is needed for the sector. There was a further billion dollars announced for Destination Canada to advertise Canadian tourism, which normally I would cheer. I have had owners of very substantial tourism operations in my own riding express sad concern that the promotion from Destination Canada, the \$1 billion, will be for places that no longer exist.

How can we move to do more to assist the tourism sector as we move forward through a very tough year for it?

Mr. Eric Melillo: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. That is why I noted that I was cautiously optimistic about the funding that has been allocated in this budget. I am happy to see it, but we know that tourism operators are really hurting and they need a lot of support.

To the member's question, what I have been hearing across my riding is that there is only so far that these programs are going to go. There is only so much these programs will be able to do to keep these businesses afloat. At the end of the day, what they need is a plan for a safe and gradual reopening so that they can get back to operating and have the capacity that will allow them to make the profits that they need. That is especially true in northwestern Ontario, as many tourists come primarily from the United States. It is very important.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am a member of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. We have just finished a study about rural women and how they have been impacted by COVID, but they also face a lot of other challenges. The committee talked about lack of access to services, housing, violence against women and the services and supports that are there.

One of the key things is transportation. I know that Ontario Northland has been gone for far too long, but now the disappearance of Greyhound is extremely concerning, considering the access that women have to services that are typically more urban-centred. Could the member talk about the impact on his constituents, and what his party would like to see in terms of access to transportation services for women in the north?

• (1600)

Mr. Eric Melillo: Mr. Speaker, I am very interested in seeing the report and the work the member's committee has done.

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It is a very good point. I could probably talk for 10 minutes about that, which I am not allowed to, but the point the member made about the difference in services between urban and rural I could not have said better myself, to be quite honest. The government needs to do a lot more to support rural communities and rural women and to ensure they have all the services they need, whether it is transportation or health care in northern Ontario.

I could go on for quite some time, but I agree with the member that there needs to be a greater focus on these services in rural northern Ontario.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I would like him to share his thoughts on the budget's green recovery funding, which is around \$17 billion. That sounds like a heck of a lot of money, but it is actually exactly what the government will have spent on the Trans Mountain pipeline.

This budget continues to underwrite rising greenhouse gas emissions by continuing to invest in the oil and gas industry even though it is still so bad for the environment. I would like to know if my colleague thinks Canada can actually reach its greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets if the government continues to invest so heavily in this industry.

[*English*]

Mr. Eric Melillo: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, my friend from the Bloc and I disagree on this issue quite a bit. I and many members of my party believe that we need to be working with our oil and gas and natural resource industries to ensure we are helping them be a part of getting to net zero and reaching our climate goals, not demonizing and attacking them in the way the Liberal government has.

I respect the question from the member, but I respectfully disagree with the assumption.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the budget and the implementation bill we are debating today will put a stamp on federal politics for many years. That is why it is crucial that we, as parliamentarians, take the time to analyze this bill and to ask the difficult questions that must be put to the government. It goes without saying that this is not a small bill. That is understandable given the context.

Given the little time at my disposal, my comments will focus on measures contained in divisions 1, 5, 6, 9, 24 and 32.

I hope the government will answer our written questions, as it is in the interest of all Quebecers and all Canadians for each question to be answered. It is the government's role to obtain the support of the House for its budget and its bill, and it is our role to question it.

Some measures in Bill C-30 are good, such as extending until September 25 critical support programs like the wage subsidy and rent relief. I would remind the House, however, that the Bloc Québécois voted against the budget since the government ignored our two key demands, namely to provide adequate and recurring

health funding, which was and still is a demand of Quebec and the other provinces and territories, as well as to increase the old age security pension for seniors 65 and up.

As I was saying, obviously some measures in the budget are good, but when it comes to those two things, the government ignored common sense by offering one-time cosmetic solutions to problems that are much more serious and well documented.

Worse than that, the House of Commons adopted a motion that goes with our demand. I can understand that the government does not want to cave to the Bloc Québécois, but I should remind it that it has to at least consider the will of the people represented by those elected to the House.

I will read a few very clear lines from the motion.

That the House:

...(c) highlight the work of Quebec and the provinces in responding to the health crisis and note the direct impact on their respective budgets; and

(d) call on the government to significantly and sustainably increase Canada health transfers...

Again, the government must significantly and sustainably increase Canada health transfers.

The government needs to get the message we have sent over and over. Health transfers need to go up from 22% to 35%. Unfortunately, Bill C-30 includes just a one-time health transfer increase, which is downright unambitious. As fate would have it, the 2021 budget deficit is precisely \$28 billion lower than expected, which is pretty ironic seeing as that is exactly how much Quebec and the provinces are asking for. The government would have us believe its political choice, which will compromise everyone's health, is actually a budget choice.

The government's handling of old age security is also more politically motivated than anything else. The Liberals are creating two classes of seniors: those they can buy and those they cannot.

Let me be clear: I will not object to some seniors receiving the help they need, as outlined in Bill C-30. However, I do object to the Liberals thinking that financial insecurity starts at a specific age, when in fact it is much more the result of retiring and leaving the workforce. Furthermore, what the Liberals are proposing to give is clearly insufficient for vulnerable people, regardless of their age. Sixty-three dollars a month is not even enough to buy a few days' worth of groceries. If the Liberals thought they could change the world with that, they are mistaken.

Also, this measure is a campaign promise that was made two years ago and was clearly thought up before the price increases caused by COVID-19. When it comes into effect, people between the ages of 65 and 74, or half the current recipients, will be very eager to reach their 75th birthday. Unfortunately, they will realize that pensions will not be much more generous than they have been.

In addition, in spite of what the Liberals might say, some of them have tried to deny the truth. One minister said, and I quote:

...contrary to what the Bloc Québécois is suggesting, we chose to give more to the most vulnerable seniors, instead of giving less to a greater number of people.

I am not the best at math, but \$63 is less than \$110. I want everyone to know and take note that the Bloc Québécois is more generous toward seniors than the Liberals, and it will continue to call for a substantial increase of \$110 a month for all seniors, as it has over the past few years.

• (1605)

Another point on which we disagree with the Liberals is about how Bill C-30 lays the foundation for a Canadian securities regulation regime. I do not need to paint a picture. The Bloc Québécois and Quebec are, of course, strongly opposed to that.

It is very simple. Division of Bill C-30 is the realization of a very dear dream of Toronto's financial elite, the dream of stripping Quebec of its financial sector. That would be done at the expense of Quebec and Canadian taxpayers, who would have to hand over hundreds of millions of dollars to fund Bay Street's supremacy in a jurisdiction that has been repeatedly confirmed as provincial.

Everyone in Quebec is against it and is speaking with one voice, which is something that is seldom seen: political parties, business communities, the financial sector, labour-sponsored funds and unions. In addition to the Government of Quebec and the Quebec National Assembly, there is also the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec, the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal, Finance Montréal, the International Financial Centre Corporation, the Desjardins Group, Fonds de solidarité FTQ, Air Transat, Transcontinental, Canam, Québecor, Metro, La Capitale, Cogeco, Molson, and the list goes on.

A strong Autorité des marchés financiers in Quebec means thousands of jobs in North America's only French-speaking metropolis. Nearly 150,000 jobs in Quebec depend on it, and \$20 billion is generated. This plan would inevitably result in a shift of regulation activities outside Quebec and is an attack on our ability to keep our head offices and preserve our businesses. One would have to be blind and deaf not to see it. Quebecers can count on the Bloc, for we will do everything in our power to block this bill.

On another note, as many people know, I am the Bloc Québécois critic for international co-operation and the vice-chair of the Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. Accordingly, it is understandable that I am very concerned about division 6 of Bill C-30 dealing with the Sergei Magnitsky Law. Section 7 of that act, which requires banks, insurance companies and loan companies to disclose certain information on a monthly basis, will be amended by Bill C-30 to make that requirement quarterly, which I simply do not understand. I see this as reducing the obligations of financial in-

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stitutions and a setback for human rights. It does nothing to ensure enforcement or to strengthen monitoring activities, when it is well known that these reports are of paramount importance to the legislation's effectiveness. I hope my hon. colleagues will have some answers on this matter.

I must say that I am quite baffled to see that division 9 of Bill C-30 removes the requirement that the superintendent of financial institutions approve changes to multi-employer pension plans in which the employer's contributions are set out in an agreement with employees. I will refrain from pointing out that the former finance minister probably wishes he had thought of this himself. Jokes aside, what is the reason for lowering the requirements for this specific type of pension plan? Do pension plans of big companies have funding issues? Is the stock market in such bad shape that pension plans are having solvency issues that warrant relaxing the laws? To me, this division of the bill sounds like the government is eliminating an important safeguard that ensures pension plans remain solvent. The government will have to explain this sooner or later.

I am running out of time, but I would be remiss if I did not speak about division 24 of Bill C-30. I commend the fact that the government wishes to give more leave to parents whose child has died or disappeared so they can reorganize their lives and deal with the tragic reality of the death of a child. However, I am disappointed that the government is agreeing to double benefits for these circumstances, but refusing to double EI sickness benefits, a subject that I had the opportunity to speak about two weeks ago.

I cannot oppose extending eligibility of this benefit to parents of a child under the age of 25 who is deceased or has disappeared, and I cannot oppose increasing the maximum length of leave from 52 to 108 weeks. One question remains and it is important that the government clarify it. If parents are separated, are both entitled to these benefits or is it custody that determines eligibility? It is important to know this because parents are separated in a growing number of Quebec and Canadian families.

In closing, the budget mentions and praises the Quebec child care system several times, claiming to be inspired by it. The reference to an asymmetrical agreement with Quebec is a positive sign, but only if this agreement comes with full and unconditional compensation for the total cost of the program's measures. That money could be used to help with the economic recovery or with the health care system, which is still underfunded because of the federal government's laxness. This Canada-wide child care program is another attempt at federal interference and cannot be seen otherwise.

• (1610)

[*English*]

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague, the member for Lac-Saint-Jean, works very hard for his region.

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He spoke quite a bit about seniors and the hardships they are facing, which is something I have been hearing a lot about in my riding as well. I gave a statement about this in the House earlier today.

I could not agree more with the member on the fact that the Liberal government has not done enough to support seniors and give those who built our country and their communities the supports they deserve.

Has the member heard any specific concerns from those in his riding when it comes to the lack of supports for seniors?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for that question. I appreciate it, and I know that we are on the same page on this file.

Like him, I have gotten a lot of calls to my office from people who are angry about the federal Liberal government's new measure. It is not just people who are 75 and under and who will not receive the increase who are angry. It is also those who are aged 75 and up who will receive the increase but who have a brother, sister, cousin or friend who will not be entitled to it. These people feel bad and are wondering why they are entitled to the increase while others they know are not.

My hon. colleague reminded us that these people built Quebec and Canada. We need to stop looking at seniors the way the Liberals do, as though they are a burden. Instead, we need to change the paradigm and ask ourselves what we owe these people who built our country. We owe them everything.

The government is not doing its job right now.

• (1615)

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

This budget makes it clear that the Liberals prefer flashy announcements about big things and national programs that seem really great, like child care, to investing in areas that really need support.

We already have programs through Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions and Transport Canada that help small regions revitalize themselves and renovate old buildings. Those programs never get enough funding.

For example, there is an aquatics complex in Matane, in my riding, that will not get the funding it needs. The same goes for the Mont-Joli airport. I am sure there are projects in my colleague's riding that will never get the money they need because the government does not allocate enough funds to those programs.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that. Does he think the government should help regions like ours by investing in things that seem a little less sexy rather than spend money on big, shiny programs?

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia.

Yes, once again, the federal government looked at what the provinces were doing and decided to do the same thing, even

though it is outside its jurisdiction, instead of minding its own business and taking action where it has the right to act. For instance, the Canada summer jobs program should be expanded much more, because many applications and people are being rejected. This year, in my riding alone, the Canada summer jobs program was short \$1.9 million.

Instead of sticking its nose into an area of provincial jurisdiction and spending on programs that will never see the light of day, like the plan to plant two billion trees that was announced with great fanfare during the 2019 election campaign and for which the money never materialized, the government should, as my colleague just said, invest in programs like Canada summer jobs, new horizons for seniors and CED. Then the federal government could do its job properly.

[*English*]

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to join the debate this afternoon on Bill C-30, which is the government's first budget implementation act from this year's budget.

When I approach legislation that comes before the House of Commons, my first priority is always to look to see how this impacts people, families, communities and the businesses located within my riding of Perth—Wellington. What I also look for when I review these pieces of legislation is what might be missing, what important aspects might be missing from legislation and how that would impact the people of Perth—Wellington and by extension, people of the region and of the country.

There is no question that COVID-19 has had a significant and ongoing impact on our communities, on individuals, on their health and on their lives. Sadly, more than 25,000 Canadians have died due to COVID-19, countless others have fallen sick and some are continuing to experience the long-term health impacts of COVID-19.

From an economic standpoint, the ongoing lockdowns have created challenges for businesses. They have created stress, anxiety and feelings of loneliness. Many Canadians are feeling isolated because of this ongoing challenge. Coast to coast to coast businesses have had to shut down, have had to lay off their employees and, in some cases, have gone out of business altogether.

A country without a strong and vibrant small business sector is not really much of a country at all. We rely on small businesses as the lifeblood of our communities and the employer of so many Canadians.

As the official opposition, there is a duty on our part to not only review legislation, but many times to encourage and promote improvements. We have done this countless times throughout this pandemic.

I reflect back to early in the pandemic when our opposition members criticized but also encouraged the government to come to the table with a more generous wage subsidy. When the government initially announced 10%, it was us as the opposition who encouraged Liberals to come to the table with a more meaningful option.

The same goes for the back-to-work bonus that we proposed throughout the summer, encouraging that incentive that when jobs came available, people were able to take them without losing their entire CERB payments.

Unfortunately, though, when it comes to this budget and this budget implementation act, it looks more like a pre-election plan rather than a meaningful plan forward for recovery.

I draw the House's attention to the Parliamentary Budget Officer's May 5 report in which he writes:

The Government did not make a clear link between the measures in Budget 2021 and its \$70-to-\$100 billion stimulus plan announced in the Fall Economic Statement. Rather, Budget 2021 combines \$36.8 billion in additional COVID-19 spending along with other new spending...

Once again, we see the Liberal government using the guise of COVID-19 for other non-related funding and spending.

This week is Tourism Week and the riding of Perth—Wellington is certainly proud to host so many amazing tourism attractions, some that I highlighted earlier today in Statements by Members. I think of the Stratford Festival, the Stratford Summer Music, SpringWorks, the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum and, of course, Drayton Entertainment.

You will know Drayton Entertainment, Mr. Speaker, because one of the theatres is also located in your riding. Originally, the first theatre, the Drayton Festival Theatre, was in Drayton and is now in the township of Mapleton. Drayton Entertainment is one of those amazing theatres with an amazing offering each year across its seven theatres.

One unique thing about Drayton Entertainment is that it has not in the past received operational funding from the government. Instead, it has been self-sufficient, and relied on donors' funds and box office revenues to make its impact in the community. Unfortunately, this success has also hindered it throughout this COVID-19 pandemic. Last spring, when the government announced the emergency support fund for cultural, heritage and sport organizations, organizations like Drayton Entertainment were not eligible because it had not received past funding through the Canada Council for the Arts.

I raised this issue in the House early in the pandemic in the Special Committee on the COVID-19 Pandemic. Sadly, that issue has not yet been addressed.

• (1620)

Going forward in this budget, we saw another commitment to the recovery fund for arts, culture and sports sectors. This might be a positive sign, but I worry, and I know that many arts and cultural organizations worry, that the same criteria will once again be used for this funding and thereby wonderful artistic and cultural organizations, such as Drayton Entertainment, will be unable to access these important funds. I will call on the government very clearly to ensure that this funding envelope is directed to all arts and cultural organizations as they look for recovery.

Another concern that we have had with the government spending on COVID-19 relief is the impact on new businesses. I hear from far too many constituents in my riding who signed a lease just be-

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fore the pandemic hit, or who took over a business just before the pandemic hit or the week the pandemic hit. I heard of one constituent who literally signed their lease on March 13, 2020, and because of the pandemic's impact on their business, they have never been able to really get off the ground. Since day one, the government relief packages have not addressed new businesses. Not only did these business owners have the misfortune of starting their businesses during a worldwide global pandemic, they are also fighting with their own government to get the support they are in dire need of.

We called on this before. We have raised this in question period. We have raised this in debate. We have raised this at committees. I am imploring government members to please ensure that, going forward, government support programs for businesses are targeted and are able to be accessed by new business owners who only had the misfortune of starting during a global pandemic.

I want to talk a little about division 37 of the budget implementation act. Those Canadians paying attention may find it strange that within an omnibus budget implementation act the government also proposes to amend the Canada Elections Act. Colleagues may know that within the corridors of this very building, many are referring to division 37 as the John Nater vindication act, because it fixes the clause that I made an amendment on in the Procedures and House Affairs Committee during the previous Parliament. I was adding back the word “knowingly” in the rule about publishing false statements that affect election results.

Sadly, the government did not adopt that small but meaningful amendment. What happened? The government was taken to court, where the court ruled that this aspect of the Canada Elections Act was unconstitutional. Instead of relying on the advice of the official opposition in the previous Parliament, the government instead went with its misinformed approach. The result was a finding that it was unconstitutional. In a scathing decision, Justice Davies wrote about the advice that came from the Privy Council Office which is, in fact, the Prime Minister's own department. Justice Davies wrote, “More importantly, the advice given to the standing committee by Mr. Morin,” a senior policy adviser, “that the inclusion of the word knowingly in section 91.1 was unnecessary, redundant and confusing was, for several reasons, incorrect and potentially misleading.” At paragraph 58 he went on to state, “To the extent that Mr. Morin testified about the import of removing knowingly from section 91.1, his comments were inaccurate and cannot be taken as reflecting Parliament's true intention.”

In the other place, Senator Batters tried to take the president of the privy council to task on this matter, but he refused to take responsibility and he refused to hold his own department accountable for the misinformation that its public servants provided and that resulted in an unconstitutional finding by the courts.

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I want to say this very clearly. I will not be supporting this budget implementation act because it does not address the meaningful concerns of people in Perth—Wellington, who are just trying to get ahead.

• (1625)

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's speech with a great deal of interest. I know that tourism and the performing arts play a big role in his riding, as they do in mine.

We are coming up on July, when CERB benefits will be cut by 40%. In my riding I am finding lots of people who work in the performing arts, hospitality and tourism do not have their jobs back yet.

Does the member support the government's proposal in this bill to cut the CERB benefit by 40% on July 1? If people do not need the CERB because they are working, that is great, but why the arbitrary cut in the benefit for those who are not back to work yet?

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, the member reflects on the hospitality industry, the tourism industry and all the industries that have not recovered yet from the global pandemic and likely will not recover until some time in the distant future. They are likely considered to be the last to respond.

The member talked about a specific aspect of this bill, in terms of the CERB reductions. I do not support this bill, including that part of it. We need to ensure there is a targeted approach to the tourism industry and those industries that will take the longest time to recover from this global pandemic.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Louise Charbonneau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Perth—Wellington for his presentation. He talked a lot about cultural and tourism businesses, which have been affected by the pandemic.

What caught my attention when I read this bill was the fact that small charitable businesses are excluded from the definition of “small business”. I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on this exclusion.

• (1630)

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Trois-Rivières. I really appreciated her comments about the arts and culture industries.

In the charitable sector, the fact that non-profits do not have access to certain programs is a big issue. In Perth—Wellington, I have heard from non-profit businesses that applied for certain government programs but did not qualify. The government needs to fix this to help non-profit businesses.

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member talked about the tourism sector, which hires a lot of young people. That is what my comment is about.

He is probably aware of the Brock study in 2018, before the pandemic, that found that 65% of software engineer graduates leave Canada, and around 30% of other STEM professionals leave. This

is problematic. The Liberals will say they are throwing more money at education and training, but when people are trained and they are leaving the country, that is a problem.

Could the member comment on how this budget is failing young people, especially our youngest and brightest who graduate with great degrees but have to go offshore for employment?

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate all my colleague for Oshawa is doing in his community to support the hard-working families of Oshawa.

He is 100% right. We should be attracting the best and brightest to Canada, and keeping those people in Canada. When someone graduates from college or university with high-skilled job training and then goes to an international destination, that is something we need to combat. The way we do it is to ensure that Canada is a welcoming and hospitable place for businesses to set up.

We can look at places like Silicon Valley, which is attracting bright, smart young individuals. We need those people to come to Canada to access the great things we have to offer here. We could do that by having a meaningful conversation about what we need to do to encourage businesses to relocate here in Canada, rather than chasing them away to international destinations.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Before resuming debate, 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 Regina—Lewvan, Natural Resources; the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, National Defence; the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, The Economy.

[*English*]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to speak today on the budget implementation act. There is a lot to talk about, so I will stick with a few important issues, and I will start with the good.

This budget has a few elements that are remarkably similar to parts of the NDP election platform in 2015. One, of course, is the promise of \$10-a-day child care. The Liberals criticized the NDP in 2015 for that proposal and I am glad they have finally seen the light. I am sorry it took a pandemic to make them realize how critical child care is to Canadian families and our economy, and I am disappointed that it took them six years to figure that out, but I am glad to see it here.

The second is the \$15-an-hour minimum wage for workers in federally regulated sectors. Again, that NDP idea was criticized by the Liberals in 2015. I say good work, but it is six years late. I am really disappointed that there is no part of the bill that is designed to ensure that ordinary Canadians do not end up paying for the necessary pandemic stimulus and programs to build back better. There is nothing in the budget that makes sure the superwealthy, Canadians who literally made billions of dollars in extra income in the last year while most Canadians struggled, pay the lion's share of those pandemic spending programs.

The NDP has put forward a plan for a 1% wealth tax applicable to all Canadians who have more than \$20 million in assets. That is a very small number of Canadians. It is fewer than 1% of Canadians, yet the Parliamentary Budget Officer has calculated that such a tax would net \$5.6 billion every year. The NDP has also demanded the government close off access to offshore tax havens. That would net the treasury \$25 billion per year. An excess profit tax, such as the one we instituted to pay off the debts accumulated during World War II, would bring in \$8 billion. Instead, this budget suggests a luxury tax that would make sure the wealthy would pay an extra 10% for their Lamborghinis or private jets. That would net us less than \$1 billion. Apparently it is all talk anyway, as it is not included in this budget implementation act.

I would like to turn now to aspects of the budget that have real resonance in my riding of South Okanagan—West Kootenay. It is the most beautiful riding in the country, as I have said on numerous occasions. It has a high percentage of seniors on fixed incomes, a high percentage of people working for minimum wage in the service sector and a high percentage of people working for low wages in agriculture, yet it has some of the highest real estate prices in Canada. The ratio of average income to housing costs here is one of the worst in the country. The big issues in my riding are housing, housing and housing.

The average cost of a single-family home in Penticton, my hometown, is over \$800,000. That is the average. Many families, especially young families, are forced to rent, but in many communities across the riding rentals are very expensive or simply not available. There was an ad recently offering a single room with a shared bathroom and no access to a kitchen for \$1,000 a month. A local family in the news recently lost their rental suite when the landlord decided to cash in on the housing market and sell the house. The new owner was not interested in renting, so this family had to find a new home. There was none available. The family eventually set up a GoFundMe account and raised enough money so they could buy an old RV to live in.

It gets worse the lower one's income is. People on income assistance or disability pensions are eligible for subsidized housing because the income we provide them is far too low to live on: It is about \$1,000 per month for everything. As of last week, there are officially no subsidized rental units available in Penticton, so if a house someone rents goes up for sale, that individual is literally homeless. They are unhoused and on the street. For those who are still lucky enough to have rentals in old motels, the news is not much better. Penticton has a large supply of old motels that are mainly used for affordable rental accommodation. Two were sold recently and the residents evicted. Three more have just been sold

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and the concern is that they too will be unavailable to low-income residents. A hundred more people will likely be unhoused in Penticton.

Homelessness is not just a Penticton problem. It is a crisis in almost every community in B.C. In my riding, it is a huge concern in Grand Forks and Trail. The City of Trail recently wrote to the provincial and federal governments pleading for help with housing and mental health and addictions, and for support for the RCMP to make sure detachments are fully staffed. These communities are overwhelmed with these complex problems. This is a crisis across the country. We need urgent action from the government.

• (1635)

The NDP would create 500,000 affordable housing units across the country in 10 years to catch up with the backlog that has been building up over the last 30 years, since Liberal and Conservative governments gave up on federal housing programs. Instead, what we get in this budget are relatively small investments that will not make a dent in the housing crisis, not in the short term and not in the long term.

Now I will get back to the good pieces in this budget.

There are a couple of line items that would be welcomed in my riding. One is the \$100 million over two years for the wine sector to make up for the loss of the excise tax exemption, a loss that will kick in next year. Losing that exemption will be very hard on many small wineries in my riding, and I have been lobbying hard, along with other MP colleagues from other wine-producing ridings, to find a trade-legal support that would ease that transition, so this is good news.

Another change comes a little too late to help my riding, and that is the new disaster mitigation funding that will cover projects between \$1 million and \$20 million. I have been trying to help the Town of Oliver get federal funding to cover some of the costs of irrigation canal repairs after a disastrous rockfall in 2016. Those critical repairs cost about \$11 million, but federal infrastructure funding covers only drinking water and waste water, not agricultural water that is absolutely essential in the South Okanagan.

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Federal DMAF funding only kicked in for projects costing more than \$20 million. I repeatedly pointed out this problem to successive ministers of infrastructure, suggesting they allow smaller projects under \$20 million to qualify as well. Unfortunately, the Town of Oliver could not risk waiting one more year to make these fixes, so it went ahead with the project last winter with provincial funding, but without federal help. While I am disappointed this change took so long in coming, I am sure it is welcomed by other small communities facing larger costs to repair infrastructure after floods, landslides and wildfires.

One topic I have spoken up on in this House on numerous occasions is the important of home retrofit programs. I even had a private member's bill in the previous Parliament to bring back the ecoENERGY retrofit program the Conservatives had in place. It was a hugely successful program leveraging five dollars for every dollar spent, allowing thousands of Canadians to make their homes more energy efficient, saving them monthly heating bills, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and benefiting the local economies in every community in Canada. I am happy that the government included a similar program in the fall economic statement and a loan program in this budget, but both these measures fail to help the Canadians who need that help most.

Twenty per cent of Canadian households live in energy poverty. They spend more than 6% of their income on home energy. They cannot afford the upfront cost to access grants, and they cannot afford to take on more debt, no matter how low the interest, to do those necessary retrofits. We need a turnkey, fully funded federal program, like the one Jack Layton proposed years ago, to make these older homes more energy efficient and support Canadian families who live in energy poverty.

To conclude, this budget gets gold stars for the child care program, a federal minimum wage, help for the wine industry and small communities facing big infrastructure repair bills, but it fails on so many other fronts. After decades of promises, it only promises more talk on a public pharmacare program. It does almost nothing for students facing crushing debt after post-secondary education. It cuts the Canada recovery benefit for workers still jobless because of the pandemic. It does nothing to take the profit out of long-term care. It does nothing to end fossil fuel subsidies and it does nothing to make the ultrarich pay their fair share.

As the government knows too well, better is always possible. These better ideas are needed now more than ever.

● (1640)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am the chair of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, and we have just done a study on unpaid work. Certainly child care has been a huge issue during the pandemic, and even before, and when I look at this budget, I see the government has \$30 billion for it over five years. However, this is contingent on the provinces putting their part in place. It also fails to recognize that in addition to this kind of national solution, many people are looking for a culturally sensitive solution for themselves, so we need to have options for parents.

This looks more like an election promise than anything likely to happen anytime soon. Would the member agree?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, what is really clear to me is that a big component of any economic recovery we will have from the pandemic has to be aimed at getting women back into the job market. We have lost a tremendous share of the job market that women used to have. They took the real hit in job losses during the pandemic.

The key to that is child care. I have talked to so many people who are looking for work. Someone in my riding got a job, but was forced to relocate because there was no child care available for her. That is the critical part, and we can fix it. I do not know which provincial government would turn down funding for child care. It is such an essential part of this recovery.

● (1645)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member. I always appreciate his speeches; they are very thoughtful. I have a great deal of respect for him.

Does he agree with the government's record support of transit or anything else? There are a lot of items in the budget to reduce greenhouse gases, but in particular there are record amounts for transit. This includes a brand new program, announced not long ago, for rural transit, which is very important for my area. There are already over 1,000 projects approved, but many more will be coming. I want to make sure the member is in support of that.

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for the Yukon for those comments.

I agree with him. Like his riding, my riding is very rural, with a lot of small communities scattered far apart. Rural transit is essential here. It has suffered a big blow in recent years, after Greyhound pulled out of the area. It has become impossible for people to move from community to community, to go from the Okanagan Valley to Vancouver or Calgary. Greyhound has now pulled out completely from all of Canada.

This is where the government really needs to step in and create an interprovincial transit system for people who cannot afford to fly, although right now there are few options to fly. We have to put in a rural transit system that works for people. I am all for transit in cities. I think it is very important and I am glad there is funding going into that, but rural transit is often forgotten about completely. I hope it has not been forgotten and that we get a complete, real and integrated system across the country.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: We have time for one short question.

The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will be as brief as possible.

I thank my hon. colleague for his speech. If the NDP were in office right now, would it increase health care transfers from 22% to 35% like the provinces, territories and Quebec are calling for?

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, to be quick, I would say that, yes, this is one issue where the NDP and the Bloc agree completely.

Ms. Nelly Shin (Port Moody—Coquitlam, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have waited a long time for the budget. The last one was tabled in March 2019. The absence of a budget in 2020 is a little bizarre, but here we are with budget 2021.

Having a well-planned budget in this pandemic environment is critical because it is like a compass that can help us find our way out of the wilderness. Canadians are distressed by the pandemic. They want a sense of assurance that the government has a plan to help us move forward toward recovery. Families have tragically lost their parents and grandparents to COVID-19 outbreaks in care homes. Social isolation has exacerbated domestic violence and challenged women from being able to reach out for help or leave their abusive partners. Businesses have been crushed. Entire sectors are hanging by a thread. Addictions and suicides have escalated. COVID-19 has stubbornly held our lives, institutions and finances hostage for long enough. The trauma that Canadians have been facing throughout the pandemic has been daunting, and Canadians need hope.

Our country needs a budget that mirrors a plan for recovery, job creation and long-term growth. Canadians are waiting for a practical plan. Unfortunately, budget 2021 seems like a déjà vu of the original COVID-19 emergency benefits that required many hands from opposition parties to fix so that more than just a select number of people would qualify for the announced supports.

While the budget appears benevolent in its parts, as a whole, when examined, it lacks foresight and at times transparency and clarity. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer's May 5 report, a good portion of the recovery-plan spending will not actually be used to stimulate the economy, but is presented as such. Furthermore, the government's projections on growth are inflated. About \$24.7 billion in spending from the fall economic statement was already in the economy and accounted for in the figures present when the budget was being written, and much of the \$101.4 billion in spending proposed by the budget was already accounted

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for in the private sector growth projections. It would appear the Liberal government wanted to overstate its generosity.

Furthermore, the increase in jobs, according to the PBO, would grow from 39,000 to 74,000 to 94,000 jobs from 2021 to 2024, while according to budget 2021, the employment growth from the recovery plan would evolve from 315,000 to 334,000 to 280,000 jobs in that period. The PBO report captures this discrepancy in the statement, "Finance Canada's impact assessment of the Recovery Plan overstates the economic impact of stimulus spending in Budget 2021."

When it comes to balancing the budget, we experienced yet another déjà vu. The PBO states:

...the Government has decided to effectively stabilize the federal debt ratio at a higher level, potentially exhausting its fiscal room over the medium- and long-term. This means that any substantial new permanent spending would either lead to a higher debt-to-GDP ratio or have to be financed through higher revenues and/or spending reductions in other areas.

Therefore, the next time we have a crisis, who or what are we going to sacrifice? We will have very little reserve to work with.

He also says, "Long-term projections presented in the budget also show the federal debt ratio remaining above its pre-pandemic level through 2055." In other words, the government does not plan on returning our deficits to at least the pre-pandemic levels.

The Liberal government has left no fiscal room to make future investments and it has no intention to get out of debt. Prolonged deficit spending will bring an inflation hike. We are experiencing this already, with increases in the prices of groceries, lumber, housing and gas. What kind of future does this leave for our country, for our children? Budget 2021 needs a reality check into the future.

The unprecedented needs during the pandemic called for spending from the government to sustain individuals, families and businesses in a temporary time of crisis. The pandemic is a temporary crisis. We are still going through it, but it is supposed to be temporary. We do not need to make it permanent with poor planning or no planning. The deficit will not replenish itself.

As parliamentarians, we need to listen, analyze, process and respond to the needs of Canadians with the foresight of visionaries, the thoughtfulness of problem solvers and the focus and integrity of conscientious leaders who have a plan and purpose greater than ourselves. This is what our constituents expect of us and deserve. However, this budget instead looks like a patchwork of short-sighted, reactionary, electorally driven promises that will leave our country with a larger debt, more deficits and more government interference. Again, the budget strangely feels like déjà vu.

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Happily for the Liberals, they have gotten away with the way they have been operating for a long time. However, tragically for Canadians, the government's short-sighted haphazard leadership, which is also reflected in this budget, has delayed our country's path to recovery and has allowed greater plight for businesses and the mental health of Canadians.

• (1650)

Vaccinations were a key part to a swifter path toward recovery, but poor decisions on vaccinations delayed that and caused the third wave of lockdowns. In the business world, this has translated to more losses and fewer reserves to bounce back. Each wave and each lockdown tests the patience of reasonable Canadians, who have been faithfully following COVID-19 regulations for the safety of all.

The CanSino deal between the Liberal government and the Chinese company was blocked by China's communist regime and ended Canada's would-be first procurement of vaccines. This process occurred from May to July last year, when insolvency of businesses was climbing to a peak, and Canadians were gripped with shock and fear. At our most vulnerable stage of crisis, the Prime Minister gambled the health and well-being of our nation on working with a communist regime. I would be curious to know from the Prime Minister's why pursuing this risk took precedence over the lives of Canadians.

Given the Liberals' bad track record when it comes to timely procurement, does the budget reflect a realistic vaccination recovery timeline? Given the extension of the ideal three-week gap between doses that Canadians will receive, the possibility of having to mix vaccines for first-time AstraZeneca recipients and the yet-to-be-confirmed date for the next delivery of Moderna vaccines for second doses, how will the government's abysmal rollout of vaccines impact the effectiveness of the budget?

Our future is uncertain because the government is unpredictable and follows its own convenient electoral clock. How will any efficacy issues outside the government's anticipated success of the vaccinations impact the effectiveness of the budget? Our future is uncertain because the government is unpredictable and follows its own convenient clock.

I would like to speak now on one of the hardest-hit sectors, travel and tourism, which was the first to shut down and will likely require the longest time to reboot. British Columbia's tourism revenue in 2019 was \$22.3 billion. The tourism sector provided 149,900 jobs in B.C. The hotels in my riding are dependent on the overflow of the success of tourism in Vancouver at large. Their revenue continues to be tested.

A group of Korean business owners in downtown Vancouver who are also dependent on the tourism sector for their livelihoods reached out to my office to express their struggle. They are primarily owners of small restaurants and convenience stores that are dependent on tourist seasons. They have suffered due to low foot traffic of tourists from international flights and cruise ships.

Because of high commercial rental prices in the downtown corridor, they have been unable to hire employees and are run instead by husband and wife owners. They also have relatively low non-de-

ferrable business expenses that do not meet the \$40,000 minimum, therefore they do not qualify for CEBA. They continue to struggle without support. Their recovery will be dependent on the recovery of the travel and tourism sector, which will probably be the last industry to recover.

Where is the support for these small ma-and-pa shops? Will they continue to be left behind? How is the government going to ensure these business owners will make it through?

The President of the United States has told American cruise ships to skip docking in Vancouver because the Prime Minister continues to show no sign of reasonable and safe reopening. The independent travel advisers in Port Moody—Coquitlam and across Canada are concerned and feel left out. They have continued working through cancellations without pay and with clawed back commissions, which are now just starting to get sorted out. Simultaneously, if they were to start booking clients, they would not see commissions for a long time.

Most of them are women, and they are only eligible for CRB. As the travel industry does not anticipate most people will make travel plans until 2022-2023, even though the travel restrictions will be lifted, and their income will be hurt greatly. They need sector-specific help that will support them until the travel and tourism industry operates again. All of this is dependent on the efficacy of vaccinations and safe reopening.

Business owners generally do not want to depend on government assistance in the long term. They want to succeed on the merit of their entrepreneurial excellence and hard work. What they really want to see is for the government to implement a plan to safely reopen. This will let them prosper, and it will create jobs.

They cannot handle one more lockdown. Canadians are moving their businesses from our country to the U.S. because we are so behind in our reopening. A constituent in Port Moody has done just that.

Canadians are waiting for a plan to reopen. Where is it? They are depending on us to give them hope and a pathway to a sustainable future. I hope we will find a way to do just that.

• (1655)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member is supportive of tourism because there is over a billion dollars for the tourism industry in the budget. This is because we recognize that it is the hardest-hit industry of all. There is \$200 million for local festivals, cultural events, heritage celebrations, local museums and amateur sporting events.

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There is also the same amount, \$200 million, for larger events and \$100 million for Destination Canada to market Canada. There is \$500 million for the tourism relief fund, and then there is another \$700 million in support for business financing and reopening the economy. As the member said, she would like to reopen the economy.

I wonder what other supports the member thinks we could provide to the tourism industry over and above these record amounts.

Ms. Nelly Shin: Mr. Speaker, I will give the government credit in that it has poured in a lot of money, and that is necessary in times of crisis like we are in now, but it does not necessarily translate into productive fruit that will actually help them.

The reason I mentioned sector-specific support is because they need specialized support. It is not a one-size-fits-all deal. On top of that, as I said, many entrepreneurs do not want to keep depending on these rollouts. They would rather work hard to move forward, be able to plan out their future and have certainty that they are going to prosper again.

While these supports are helpful, it brings me back to the time when we were helping the government refine those COVID supports. I feel that a lot of the things that were mentioned in the budget report require that kind of support with many hands coming together.

• (1700)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam for his excellent speech. I am going to continue in the same vein as the question that I asked the NDP.

I know that the Conservative Party has said that it supports increasing health transfers for Quebec and the provinces. However, it has not said anything about the percentage by which it would increase those transfers, even though Premier François Legault and his counterparts from the other provinces and territories provided a number in their request.

The Conservative Party is saying that it wants to support the provinces, so then why is it unable to officially put a number on the increase in health transfers?

Will my colleague's party agree to increase health care transfers to the provinces and Quebec from 22% to 35%, as requested by all of the provincial premiers?

[*English*]

Ms. Nelly Shin: Mr. Speaker, I do not have a clear answer because I personally do not know, but I do know, concerning the throwing out of numbers and making promises, that our motto as Conservatives is that we want to over-deliver and under-promise.

We do not necessarily want to give out numbers, as we are in a very fluid situation. I think it would be wise, if the opportunity came to present a number, and that if we were to form government again, then that would be the right time to introduce it.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for all of her hard work on the status of women committee.

I wonder what the member thinks about this budget in light of what it would and would not do for women in Canada and what is needed.

Ms. Nelly Shin: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to work with my colleague on the status of women committee. We have been looking at the impact COVID has had on women, and what keeps coming up is the issue of child care.

The federal government can promise a lot of money to this effort, but the provinces are struggling. They may not be able to provide the 50% of the money that the federal government requires to provide the transfer, so there may be support for something that we may not see in practice, which is one of my concerns.

The other concern is that, again, one size does not fit all. There were many voices on a variety of needs that came to the table during our committee meetings regarding child care. I hope that in the future we will be able to see those kinds of sensibilities regarding child care.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy being here in the House to talk about various bills. I have to say it has been a while. I feel a bit rusty, but I would like to take this opportunity to thank the House of Commons staff who support us and make these hybrid sittings possible. When we are at home, we can be in our ridings. I am grateful to them because I think it is just incredible that this all came together so quickly. I also want to thank the interpreters. Their work is so important, and we do not say that often enough.

We have waited two years for the Liberal government's budget. Let us not blame everything on the pandemic. Canada was the only G7 country that did not introduce a budget in 2020. All the provinces introduced budgets too. The federal government kept us waiting.

Admittedly, there are some good things in this budget, which I will come back to. However, there are some gaping omissions. The Bloc Québécois has made its position clear on those. My colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean outlined them clearly earlier: seniors and health have been forgotten. It is quite ironic, given that we are experiencing one of the worst health crises in our history. We think that that is where investment is needed, to support the health care systems of the provinces and Quebec.

The government ignored the unanimous request made by the House through the motion that was tabled by the Bloc Québécois and accepted. It also ignored the unanimous requests of the provincial premiers, who asked for health transfers to be increased from 22% to 35%.

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As I was just saying, it is inconceivable that we could be going through a health crisis without making the necessary investments in health care. Seniors are not getting enough. We did see a glimmer of hope. The Liberal government got in on a promise it made in 2019 to increase old age security. That is great, but the government is not going far enough. It is forgetting seniors aged 65 to 74 who are also in financial difficulty, just like those aged 75 and over. The government is increasing pensions for seniors aged 75 and over, but only by roughly \$60 a month, which we do not think is not enough. We in the Bloc Québécois have been asking for an increase of \$110 per month, and we will continue to lead that debate. The House has not heard the last of the Bloc on this issue, because the people of all regions of Quebec deserve it.

This comment comes up a lot in my riding. Grandparents, who have worked incredibly hard all their lives, feel so neglected by the federal government, even though they are the ones who have suffered the most in this pandemic, both mentally and physically. This virus can be extremely harmful to their health. It is appalling that they are being let down like this, when we thought we were making progress with this request.

I would like to talk about the money being allocated to the tourism industry in this budget. For a region like mine, the Lower St. Lawrence and the Gaspé, tourism is extremely important. The fact that some emergency assistance programs, such as the Canada emergency wage subsidy and the rent subsidy, are being extended will certainly help many businesses back home. I commend that, but there are businesses that were in financial difficulty before the pandemic or that were having a hard time finding workers. Some other programs that were necessary for some people, such as the Canada emergency response benefit, or CERB, are now hobbling business owners. It was already hard enough to find people who wanted to go to work, and things did not get any easier once the situation stabilized a bit. There were pros and cons to this program. It is a little frustrating because business owners are the ones paying the price. It is important to have targeted assistance for this type of sector, but that is not really what we are seeing. Yes, a few million dollars has been allocated to the tourism industry, but the devil is often in the details. When we look a bit closer, hundreds of millions of dollars are going into ad campaigns to make sure people go visit the various regions of Canada. That is good, but is that really the way to help our industries and our small businesses? That is the question. I think we can do several things at the same time.

Allow me to share some figures. The tourism industry is a vital part of the economy in the Gaspé region. There are 700 businesses and nearly 7,000 jobs, 50% of which are permanent. This is not just a seasonal industry.

● (1705)

Businesses in the area benefit from tourism year-round, which is good. The region saw around \$16 billion in economic spinoffs in 2019, but that figure dropped to \$5 billion in 2020. This more than \$10-billion drop represents a lot of money, and business owners are the ones taking the hit. It is shameful that they are not getting direct assistance, which we have been calling for since the beginning of the pandemic. The message does not seem to be getting through to the other side of the House, though.

As we gradually reopen over the summer, I truly hope that the industry will recover. However, we must bear in mind that there are still no international tourists or cruises, so we cannot expect to see the same results, the same amount of money coming in. The sector will need targeted assistance from the federal government, and that is what we are calling for.

When I see all the different Canada-wide programs that are being announced, such as the national child care program, I realize that it may be good news for the provinces that do not have this type of program. However, Quebec already has a day care program.

We have heard the Prime Minister speak about an asymmetrical agreement with Quebec to redirect these funds. I do not really understand what is meant by an asymmetrical agreement, but it looks like interference to me. The Government of Quebec has been managing its day care system very well for many years. If the federal government decides to implement a similar program, it must give Quebec the money it is owed with no strings attached. Letting Quebec invest these amounts as it sees fit seems perfectly logical to me.

In regions like mine, there is definitely a shortage of day care spaces. Elected officials and families are saying so. However, it is up to Quebec to decide how to use these funds in its system. I believe that it is in the federal government's interest to redistribute these funds without conditions, but that is not the message we are hearing at this time.

I would also like to talk a bit about the environment. Bill C-30 offers no details about how the government plans to invest the funds announced in the budget. I hope that will be revealed in another bill soon because we are talking about \$17 billion in green recovery funding. As I said earlier, \$17 billion seems like a heck of a lot of money, but consider this: It is exactly what the government will have invested in the Trans Mountain pipeline alone.

Considering the fact that the government continues to invest heavily in the oil and gas industry, we have to wonder how committed it is to fighting climate change. That is a little frustrating too. The budget allocates a mere \$1 billion to climate change adaptation. People in the Lower St. Lawrence and Gaspé are very concerned about shoreline erosion, and they are experiencing more and more floods. Stakeholders in the Lower St. Lawrence and Gaspé have said how disappointing it is to see so little money invested in adaptation. The Conseil régional de l'environnement du Bas-Saint-Laurent has pointed out that rebuilding roads only to have them destroyed again the next year is not good enough. What people need is a multi-year framework and actions that will stand the test of time.

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I still have several things to say, so I will say them quickly. In the budget, the government announced that, if all of the proposed measures were put in place, Canada would be able to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 36%. However, according to people in my region, that reduction is not enough. The executive director of the Conseil régional de l'environnement du Bas-Saint-Laurent thinks that number is all well and good but that it is lower than Quebec's commitments and the targets adopted by many countries that are parties to the Paris Agreement. The federal government itself realized that several days later and announced a range of higher targets. Ambition is all well and good, but the measures that were announced are not consistent with that ambition. We need to look at how we can align all of that.

Since I do not have much time left, I will close by saying that members are beginning the clause-by-clause examination of Bill C-12 tomorrow in committee. I heard the minister assure us that he was going to include this new target in the bill, but that does not seem to be the case based on what we are seeing in the amendments. I am anxious to see how the government will keep its promise with regard to fighting climate change, because that is the challenge of this century, and we really need to address it.

• (1710)

[English]

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since the outset of COVID, we have seen 60,000 small businesses shut their doors. More than 200,000 are at risk, according to the CFIB, and yet we continue to see significant gaps with regard to some of the government's COVID relief supports for small businesses, including with respect to the commercial rent assistance program for companies that have both a holding company and an operating company, as well as the requirement that the full amount of rent be paid within 60 days.

Then, there was absolutely no support for new businesses that opened their doors just before COVID. It has been 15 months, and still no support.

Could my hon. colleague speak to some of those issues affecting small businesses?

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his extremely relevant question.

I have to say that I have seen some extremely brave people in my riding who decided to open a business in the midst of a pandemic, or just a few months before, and who managed to get through it, but that is not the case for everyone.

This government claims to champion families and small businesses, but that is not necessarily true.

As I said, there was already a labour shortage before the pandemic, and the health crisis certainly did not help. In the Gaspé region, in the tourism sector alone, there is a shortage of some 20,000 employees. That is a pretty significant number.

I think the government needs to invest more to help our small businesses. If our businesses are thriving, we can revitalize the

smaller regions and get people to move there. That is hard to do if the government does not step up and help.

• (1715)

[English]

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, although my riding is the farthest from the hon. member's, I think what we have in common is support for tourism. I am delighted the member is in support of targeted tourism support.

There are \$200 million for local festivals, cultural events, heritage celebrations and local museums in small communities, and then another \$200 million for the large ones, \$100 million for marketing, and a \$500-million tourism relief fund in the budget. On top of that, there are the CEBA loans, which have helped over 170,000 businesses in Quebec, and CEWS has protected over a million jobs. For those who fall through all the cracks, there is the RRRF program, which has supported over 7,000 businesses in Quebec.

I am just wondering what the member's positive suggestions would be on what else we could do to support tourism in the Gaspé.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very relevant question.

I would agree that what is being done for tourism is a step in the right direction. However, in my view, the assistance needs to be more targeted.

As my colleague said, \$200 million is being allocated to festivals. There are 56 municipalities in my riding, and they are all small. In one of them, there is a small western festival, and another village is home to a small guitar festival. We do not have any large-scale events. These people and these projects are not getting targeted assistance.

When I received the electronic version of the budget, I did a search and could not find any of the municipalities in my riding, but many big cities with their big projects were included.

I think we need more targeted assistance to meet the needs that exist in all regions.

[English]

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as the member has indicated, the climate emergency is urgent, and action and leadership are desperately required from the federal government.

British Columbians actually do not want the Trans Mountain pipeline. We want to stop that expansion, so we are in agreement there. However, if we really want to address the crisis, would the member agree that we also need a jobs guarantee for those transitioning out of the oil and gas industry?

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[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

I agree that there needs to be a transition. It would ultimately cost more not to make a transition. We completely understand that there are good jobs in some sectors and that no one wants to see those jobs disappear. However, I think we can invest in other sectors, such as wind, solar and hydro power. We can help our neighbours who may be struggling more with the transition. We can invest in those areas to give them a hand.

I think that is how we will be successful. For example, projects like Lion Electric are getting some big grants to electrify our transportation. That is the direction we need to be heading in. The government needs to stop investing heavily in increasing greenhouse gas emissions. That is unfortunately what it is doing by continuing to invest in the oil and gas industry.

[English]

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today in the House to speak to the budget implementation act. This is the first time for me as a new member of Parliament to speak to a federal budget. It is hard to believe I have been here 19 months, but this is our first budget.

I am here to speak about what it means for my constituents in Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry and for our country. It is very hard, in 10 minutes, to put all my thoughts together on a federal budget, but I will do my best.

We are talking about \$300 billion in revenue and \$50 billion in expenses equalling a deficit of \$350 billion last year. Finally, after two years, we got a federal budget. That is important because we have seen a lot of money go out the door for those in need. The Conservatives have supported programs that have helped people, but we need this accountability, we need this framework. We need the whole picture of the budget to see what is happening in our country for both short and long-term fiscal sustainability.

We have had different world wars and a global pandemic a century ago. At no time have in our history have gone this long without a budget. The United States and the United Kingdom, which I cite often in the House, never skipped a beat and were able to continue to produce budgets throughout. Nevertheless, we are here. We have a document and we are able to comment on it.

In my limited time, I want to focus on two key themes. I call them the two Ds: debt and delivering. Frankly, this budget does not take our financial realities seriously. The Liberal government and the Prime Minister have accumulated more debt in the last six years than every other government and prime minister combined before them. We have spent hundreds of billions of dollars. I acknowledge again that we supported many of those programs because it was the right thing to do to help people in need, but they were some of the highest per capita in the developed world in terms of spending.

Recently, I was looking at the OECD website when I was putting my speech together. When we look at our unemployment rate compared to similar G7 countries, Canada stands at 8.1%. The G7 aver-

age at that time was 5.6%. We can all watch Japan in amazement. It has an incredible unemployment rate of 2.6%. We have spent nearly the most to get the least amount of results with respect to our outlook and moving forward past COVID.

My political science degree from Carleton University comes in handy in looking at some of the history of budgeting and our fiscal realities in our country. The Parliamentary Budget Officer recently said that at best we would have a 1% maybe 2% growth. For the amount of money we have spent and the times we are in, other economies are growing at a much faster rate.

The reason I believe my political science degree comes in handy today is when we go back and look at the amount of debt. When we go back a generation ago and look at the debt under the first Trudeau government of the day, the challenge of the PC government and Brian Mulroney and into Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin's Liberal governments, interest rates truly hurt our economic outlook. It was increased interest rates, not in the short term when the debt was acquired but over the course of time that led to significant structural deficits.

Under a Liberal government, under Jean Chrétien and finance minister Paul Martin, we saw cuts to health and social programs in an effort to get our budget sustainable. I worry we could be in the same situation. The numbers we are seeing today, even in contrast, are astronomically larger than we saw back a generation ago when I was just starting out in elementary school. Nevertheless, that lesson is important.

I say this respectfully, but I get frustrated when I look at this. We cannot get things done very easily anymore. Let us look at the slow vaccine rollout. We are now acquiring a higher and higher deficit because we did not secure vaccines early enough so we could reopen and get our small businesses and jobs back on track. We would have been able to wind down our support programs because our economy was reopening. The United Kingdom and the United States have been successfully procuring vaccines, getting them into the arms of their citizens which has allowed them to start to reopen. Their numbers are quite safe lately so they have been able to do that.

● (1720)

We talk about getting things done. I look at the United Kingdom. It was in a similar situation to Canada in not having domestic vaccine procurement in its country. Under the leadership of the U.K. government, when COVID hit, it put in a “wartime-like effort” to build domestic capacity within its country. It worked tooth and nail and when vaccines were approved and ready to be manufactured, the U.K. was able to do it and look after its citizens.

In Canada, the Prime Minister took one year to make an announcement in North York and Toronto to much fanfare. If we look at the website, the facility will be ready in 2027. There is a direct contrast there. The United Kingdom and Canada took two different approaches and had two different results, which is very clear today.

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That builds on my second point, which is delivering. Notice that the title of the bill is not just the budget act, but it is the budget implementation act. I am a Conservative member who represents a rural eastern Ontario riding. The word “deliverology” was a big word the new Liberal government of the day used in 2015. It splashed it out in cabinet retreats. It had speakers talk about how “deliverology” was going to be the way of the Liberal government. I hope the Liberals fired that guy. Actually, they did because we do not hear that word anymore.

The key theme in a lot of my speeches is that the government, and I will give it a compliment, is the best in the game with respect to making announcements and making us feel good. However, it does not have the ability to properly implement what it says it wants to do. It gets an A for announcement, but an F for follow-through.

Regardless of where we sit in the House, we have to ask ourselves, when we see some of these items, if we actually rehash them over and over again, will we see a different result? How many times have we seen the Liberal government commit to national child care? Over and over again, it promised that this time would be the year it would get it done. Interprovincial trade has come up numerous times with very little progress. Every target it has set for itself with respect to the environment it has failed to meet.

I think of infrastructure projects in my riding, and I am appreciative and I ensure we get our fair share of dollars at home, but we need timely announcements of those projects. In South Glengarry, the Char-Lan rink got approval for funding. That is wonderful. However, it got the money too late and cannot go to tender this year. Now this infrastructure project is delayed likely for another year before it is completed.

I want to acknowledge the situation, a perfect example, and I do not want to say national shame, of Lac-Mégantic. It has been eight years since that disaster happened. I can still remember the images of that horrible day. I watched it as a staffer on Parliament Hill. I remember the lives that were lost and the anger and frustration that this had happened. We are now looking at maybe the year 2024 the government says. We are still under negotiation. We are still looking for more details. It is still not out to tender. There is still not a shovel in the ground. My colleague today successfully passed a resolution, calling for this to be recommitted to. How is it that on something so vital, a national disaster of that scale, it is taking us over a decade at least to get that project done?

We are losing the ability to get things done in a reasonable and timely manner. The dollars we spend in a federal budget need to be timely, targeted and temporary for our sustainability. Saying we are going to spend money is not a result. We have to check projects off, make tangible differences and put that money to proper, efficient use. There is virtue-signalling, there is talking a good game and there is actually delivering.

We have an amazing country, with great businesses and great people, but the government's inability to deliver is hampering our recovery. I hope we can get better implementation of the budget.

• (1725)

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know there are a great many things the hon. member and I agree on, but the budget is probably not one of them. I want to point out at this point that because the New Democrats have said that we will not plunge the country into an election during the pandemic, he has the luxury of voting against this bill in its entirety.

I want to ask him about a provision that this budget implementation act brings forward, and that is cutting the CERB, starting July 1, by 40% for people who are not back to work yet. Yes, I would like to see an early reopening and I would like to see everybody not needing the CERB, but does the hon. member support cutting by 40% the benefits that are being offered to those who are not able to get back to work yet?

• (1730)

Mr. Eric Duncan: Madam Speaker, my colleague from the NDP knows I have a great deal of respect for him. We do agree on some issues here and there.

On his comment about that, I will go back to my comments before. We need to have supports as people begin to recover. I am frustrated that we have to offer CERB as we go into this summer, because parts of our country will be reopening.

We have made it very clear that we need to be there for our businesses, we need to be there for individuals, but for me, that means getting more vaccines into arms quickly so we can safely reopen. July is almost a year and a half after this started. We are months behind the United Kingdom, the United States, Israel and other countries that have had successful rollouts. The fact that we need to have this and the fact that are businesses are not allowed to reopen, flourish and regrow our economy is a failure in itself.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for all his hard work. I share his concern with this budget. There are a lot of things that have been promised time and again that have not shown up, and we are losing our ability to do things in the country. One of the things that was really absent in this budget was something to inspire the natural resources sector. There was zip-a-dee-doo-dah in the budget. Considering the contribution to our GDP and the fact that the industry has been decimated, I would have expected the government to identify some package. What does the member think about that?

Mr. Eric Duncan: Madam Speaker, I would agree with my colleague from Sarnia—Lambton with respect to our natural resources sector. I have spoken in the House many times about the importance of our natural resources not just for those in Alberta and Saskatchewan but for our entire country. We are lucky from the east coast to the west coast in a wide variety of jobs and industries.

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When we look through the budget, the sector is absent. More than ever the sector needs our support. We talk about the environment and the opportunities to do better environmentally. Investments in our oil and gas sector, investments in research and development and investments in technology can make Canada a world leader on emissions reductions and job retention. People in Alberta, Saskatchewan and across the country look at this, and it has certainly been missing in this federal budget.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, and I will follow up on what was just discussed.

It is interesting to hear that the most polluting sectors need help making this transition. I do think that may be a good idea. However, the government continues to take taxpayers' money and put it into these industries while in regions like mine, in Matane, wind turbine manufacturing plants are closing because these businesses have no more contracts. They have to lay off their employees because the different levels of government believe that investing in the wind industry is not a good thing. The government may not believe that it is enough.

I have a problem with continuing to subsidize the most polluting industries. I believe we must take action on several fronts at the same time. Yes, we must make the energy transition, but in several ways, by investing more in renewable energy sources. Oil is not one of them.

I would like my colleague to comment on this.

[*English*]

Mr. Eric Duncan: Madam Speaker, I think we will agree that the environmental plan presented by the government has not done what it said it would do. Every target that has been set has been missed. To my colleague from the Bloc's point, if she speaks to the oil and gas sector workers, they do not want government assistance, they do not want any subsidies; they want the government to get out of the way and allow them to grow the sector. We can do that, as we recently announced in our environmental plan, by investing in the sector and in the technology. It is amazing out there. Every opportunity we get, there is so much technology and so much potential for the industry. The government just needs to stand back and let the sector flourish.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, during the pandemic, inequalities have increased. The ultrarich are becoming richer, while those in need of help are still struggling to get by.

We have learned a lot about the Liberals in the last few years. They talk a good game, but time and again we see they have little intention of walking the walk when it comes to taking bold action. The Liberals choose to continue to give their rich friends a free ride, when what we need is for them to pay their fair share.

This is evident in budget 2021, which brings no wealth tax, no excess profits tax. If anything is clear in this pandemic, it is the fact that Canada needs a wealth tax on the super rich to rein in extreme inequality and contribute to crucial public investments in the wake of COVID-19. A wealth tax is economically and technically feasi-

ble, but it requires breaking with a status quo that all too often is just there to serve Bay Street and the wealthy few.

According to the Canadian group for fair taxation, three-quarters of Canadians surveyed are in favour of a wealth tax. What is clear is that the only thing lacking in bringing in a wealth tax is the political will to make this bold change. One has to ask what is wrong with this picture: According to the CCPA, Canada's 87 richest billionaire families control 4,448 times more wealth than the average family and as much as the bottom 12 million Canadians combined. Budget 2021 will only serve to perpetuate such inequalities.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer estimated that if a 1% wealth tax was brought in for those with a net wealth of over \$20 million, as proposed by the NDP, it would raise \$5.6 billion in the first full fiscal year, rising to close to \$10 billion per year by 2028.

In addition to a wealth tax, the NDP is also calling for a profiteering tax. Members should try to wrap their heads around this: The ultrarich made \$78 billion over the course of the pandemic. Surely they can afford to pay a bit more to support Canadians in need. We also know that the ultrarich often stash their wealth in offshore accounts so they can avoid having to pay their fair share on their massive wealth.

It is a disgrace that budget 2021 only seeks to consult instead of taking action on tackling the problem of tax havens. Meanwhile, big banks are going unchecked, with no oversight. They are making billions during the pandemic, while hiking bank fees. This is wrong. We have to remember that Canadians were urged to avoid cash transactions during COVID-19, and now they are being dinged with increased bank fees.

All this is happening when one in five Canadians does not take the medication they need because they cannot afford it. As people continue to struggle, the call for a comprehensive universal public pharmacare continues to go unanswered after 24 years of promise by the Liberals. Not only that, but one in five Canadians avoids the dentist every year because of cost. The community is desperate for dental care, and that is not even mentioned in budget 2021.

As these basic needs are ignored by the Liberals, they have chosen to continue to provide fossil fuel subsidies to big corporations, and Canada continues to fail to meet its Paris accord targets. It is also disgraceful that the Liberals chose to turn a blind eye to the abuses of large companies that received the wage subsidy despite cutting jobs, increasing dividends to shareholders and increasing the salary of their executives.

The wage subsidy was clearly to protect Canadian workers and their jobs and was not meant for bonuses for top executives. Here on the west coast, the Pacific Gateway Hotel has terminated 140 workers. At the Hilton Vancouver Metrotown, another 100 workers have lost their jobs. The Sheraton Ottawa has fired 70 of its workers.

Any federal relief to be provided to big companies should require the companies to include an agreement on recall protections for workers who lost their jobs during the pandemic. This includes the new federal hiring subsidy, which should prioritize rehiring laid-off staff over replacements.

• (1735)

Speaking of supporting workers, the increase of EI sickness benefits from 15 weeks to 26 weeks in the budget implementation act is not enough. Not only that, but it would not take effect until 2022. For those suffering from chronic illnesses, 26 weeks is not sufficient. I have heard from constituents who are recovering from cancer or from a stroke and they are in dire situations because their EI benefit has run out. Since they did not lose their job because of COVID, they did not qualify for the CERB or the CRB. These families are falling through the cracks in their time of need. I am calling on the government to increase EI benefits to 50 weeks so that people can get the help they need.

On the CRB, while the government will extend the benefit for 12 weeks, for the last eight weeks, from July to September, the support will be reduced from \$500 per week to \$300 per week. This will be detrimental for workers in sectors that are slow to return. For many, \$300 a week will not even cover rent, let alone ensuring that there is food on the table.

Similarly concerning is the fact that the Liberals have chosen to create two classes of seniors: those who are 65 versus those who are 75 and older. The increase for OAS should not be just for seniors over 75. We can afford to ensure that all seniors, 65 and older, are lifted out of poverty.

Also, it makes no sense that the Liberals have decided to study the needs of people with disabilities for three years instead of taking action now to lift them out of poverty. Most people living with disabilities have been excluded from some of the financial assistance offered by the Liberal government. Even the one-time payment to people with disabilities, a meagre \$600 offered by the government, is difficult to access. For many people, because of the requirement to provide a disability tax credit certificate, it is not feasible for them to access this support. It is incomprehensible that the most vulnerable are not getting the help they need, while top executives are allowed to get big bonuses using government wage subsidies.

As this pandemic drags on, many Canadians are faced with significant rent arrears. The last thing we need to see is more people displaced without a home. That is why I fully support the National Right to Housing Network's call for action, which includes the call for a residential tenant support benefit. I also support Acorn's call to stop predatory lending.

On the issue of loans, the Liberals have finally taken the baby step of eliminating interest on student loans this year, although I

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have to note that this is not permanent. The Liberals need to stop making money from student debt, period. Not only do I want to see the interest gone, but I would like to see the government forgive student loans to help struggling students during the pandemic.

• (1740)

There is money to support Canadians in need. It is a matter of priorities.

As we look to the recovery, every effort must be made to support small businesses. There are huge gaps in the programs right now. Many new businesses that opened just prior to the pandemic did not get the support they need to get through the pandemic. Many of those businesses had to shut their doors.

Artists, musicians, performers and cultural workers have been among those hardest hit by the public health orders and advice issued in order to curb the spread of COVID-19. I have connected with many of my constituents and labour groups that represent theatre workers, like IATSE and ACTRA, to discuss the need for the federal government to provide better emergency pandemic supports in those sectors. I am in full support of their call for action on the #ForTheLoveOfLive campaign, which includes extensions of the wage subsidy and rental subsidy to the end of the pandemic, as well as additional sector-specific funding specifically for the live performance sector.

I am also renewing my call for the federal government to support the PNE. It needs to be able to access the wage subsidy. This 110-year-old institution in Vancouver East must be saved. Aside from the wage subsidy, I am also calling on the government to support the PNE with a grant similar to what was provided to Granville Island. Likewise, Vancouver's Chinatown needs support and this—

• (1745)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to go to questions and comments.

The hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her speech.

I am pleased that she mentioned how much attention the budget pays to seniors, namely none. In my opinion, the Liberal government's reaction shows a blatant lack of respect.

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I would like the member to share her opinion on the following. Why did the government abandon our seniors?

Could this possibly be an attitude the government is adopting because there is going to be an election? Is the government going to show up in August with something more for seniors than the small amount of \$500 and the 10%?

What does she think about that?

[*English*]

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, it is shameful that the Liberal government has left seniors out. It promised seniors during the election that it would support them, but of course after the election it forgot all about that promise. Then, in the face of the pandemic, what did the government do? On the eve of another election, the Liberals said they will give a bit of support to seniors who are 75 and older, to entice them to vote Liberal. Maybe that is their message; I do not know. However, what about seniors who are under 75? Do they not deserve support as well? All seniors should be treated fairly and equitably and with respect and dignity. They all deserve support.

Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a great honour to enter into debate today on the budget. I would like to share my thoughts and what I am hearing from the people who I represent about how disappointed they are.

They are disappointed that this budget, two years late, has nothing in it to get our economy back and rolling again. It is immensely frustrating, coming from Saskatchewan, to see that, if we look at the sectors that have been ignored over the years by the Liberals, this has continued with this budget. It is frustrating because of what this budget would do for future generations, or what it unfortunately would not do.

It is a budget that unfortunately adds more debt. The Prime Minister will add more debt than all other prime ministers in the history of Canada combined, which is a shocking amount of money, and we are going to have to pay that back. It is generational theft that is occurring here.

Another great concern of mine is how the Liberals are paying for this debt or how they are accounting for it. It has been commented on that in our history regimes around the world have tried to print money to get out of the fiscal issues those countries were facing. Those regimes in other parts of the world all failed, and they failed miserably. They failed their society and their citizens because of what printing money ultimately does. When we print money, additional currency enters into the system, which means existing money is worth less, and that ultimately leads to inflation. We are already seeing this.

When I meet with seniors, they are mostly concerned about the cost of living. When I meet with young families, it is the cost of living they are concerned about. This is combined with professionals who are concerned there will be to be fewer opportunities for them or their children because of the decisions that are being made right now in Ottawa.

On that backdrop is the item I am most concerned with. Once we create this inflation by printing currency, and that is what the Liber-

als would be doing, the government will attempt to tap it down by measures, which are usually interest rate increases. That would have a cascading effect throughout our country. It would have a cascading effect on other levels of government. Consumers and citizens who are just holding on by the skin of their teeth right now are paying record low interest rates, which we know will rise because of inflationary pressures to combat those effects.

What we would have is an effect of layering on misery with citizens. That mortgage payment for families that are just scraping by right now would be increasing. For anyone who has personal debt, that would be increasing. What choices are those families going to be making because of this budget? I shudder to think what the country would look like.

Let us examine what will happen to other levels of government. The provinces are all running deficits throughout Canada, and some of them are near record deficits because there is a pandemic going on. There are all hands on deck, and we need that to get through this pandemic. Conservatives have been very clear that we support short-term emergency relief, but what we would be getting out of this budget is much more, unfortunately.

● (1750)

The provinces are fighting this pandemic with everything they have and any extra dollars they may have are going into health care. That is probably the most disrespectful and shocking part of this budget. Not one thin cent is going to health transfers to the provinces. We have the provinces on the front line paying for nurses, doctors and everything that goes along with providing health care, and there is not one additional dollar in health transfers from the federal government to the provinces, which are on the front line of this pandemic.

If we go a step further, we are hopefully rounding a corner, but we are severely lacking second doses in Canada. We are 50th out of 70 countries when we look at fully vaccinated people. It is a mammoth mistake that the government has done such a poor job of procuring vaccines for our citizens, worse than any other G7 country in the world.

Another unfortunate aspect of this pandemic is that a lot of health care has been delayed. We know that diagnoses of cancers have been delayed, and that one is quite scary for me. We all know that health outcomes, especially with cancer, improve with early diagnosis. If we push back diagnoses, what does it mean for patients and families?

Let us also consider the elective surgeries that have been pushed back. Other health concerns out there are not getting attention right now in our health care system because every additional dollar in capacity is going to fight this pandemic, and the feds are nowhere.

There is not \$1 in health transfer increases this year. They all point out that they are paying for the vaccines and PPE. Of the contracts we are aware of that we have paid for as a country, we paid a premium for slow delivery. We can see the slow delivery in the world.

Now that we are into the playoffs, I hope we are all taking a bit of a breather from our schedules to watch a little hockey. If we turn on the highlights of the teams in the states, because their government procured enough vaccines, they have fans in the stands. This is compared to the stark reality of arenas in Canada that lay empty. The excitement is there, but there are no fans. That is all at the feet of the federal government failing to procure enough vaccines.

Even the aspects the federal government is responsible for, it has failed us. It failed us in getting enough vaccines. Of the contracts we are aware of, we paid a premium for late delivery. One has to ask why that is. Was it the three months wasted at the start of the pandemic when it was negotiating with the Chinese Communist government for vaccines? Why did we pay a premium? Were we late in the negotiations and other countries already had their orders in?

I have never heard a reason for us paying this premium. I am not against paying a premium for vaccines if we have them already. The delay of getting them into the country means the lockdowns and economic hurt is going to continue. That is most disappointing to the people of Saskatchewan.

The VIDO centre in Saskatoon did receive some funding. Members may remember that facility was the first in the world that isolated COVID-19. The leading scientists and doctors working on this vaccine are in Saskatoon, and they isolated COVID-19 first among all other countries in the world. It is a renowned centre. Within days, if not weeks, after isolating it, it had a prototype for a vaccine.

One of the most frustrating days as a member of Parliament was meeting with its representatives. They asked the federal government for additional dollars and they had to wait for the budget before getting the dollars. We are in the middle of an emergency—

• (1755)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to interrupt the hon. member. We are almost over time.

[*Translation*]

Questions and comments.

The hon. member for Trois-Rivières has time for a short question.

Mrs. Louise Charbonneau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Saskatoon—University for his speech.

As he pointed out, this budget increases inequality for all classes of voters. As he also mentioned, the government refused to meet the expectations and needs of the provinces and territories when it comes to health care transfers.

What does he think about the premiers' requests to increase health care transfers from 22% to 35%?

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have time for a very short answer from the hon. member for Saskatoon—University.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Corey Tochor: Madam Speaker, during a pandemic is not the time to keep baseline health transfers flat, and that is what has happened. It should tick off more Canadians that they have kept it flat for a number of years, but we are in the largest health crisis of our times, and they did not increase it. Yes, they should be increasing it this year and they did not.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

STANDING ORDERS OF THE HOUSE

The House resumed from April 27 consideration of the motion.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Etobicoke North for bringing forward this motion.

The member for Etobicoke North and I have a history of trying to help science in Canada, which began when I was elected in 2015 and was named the critic for science. At the time, she was the Minister of Science. We got together and said we needed to make a plan that is good for science in Canada, because then whatever party is the government of the day will be doing the right thing in an area that is so important for Canadians.

Science creates jobs and opportunities. Canada is a leader. There are many areas of science where we are leading the world, and there are many areas of science where we need to participate, along with the rest of the people in the world. Then there are industries that we have where we need to maintain our scientific effort as we go along. All of these things are worth doing.

How does the government learn about all these things and study these things? This motion is calling on the House to put in place a standing committee that has science as its mandate. I think this is a very good thing.

In addition to the plan that I mentioned, I would say that as the first female engineer in the House of Commons, I have a great interest in science. In my career, I was involved in research. One of the first things I was involved in doing was developing artificial kidneys for dialysis. Later in my career, I developed plastics for the electronics industry and for personal care products. I worked in many industries, including medical and pharmaceutical, developing products there as well. I see the good effects that science can have for Canada.

The Naylor report, as members may recall, is a report that looked at science in Canada and made recommendations to the government on things that we should do. Happily, some of those things have been followed up on. The recommendation that is in the motion is something that would really advance the cause.

Private Members' Business

The way it works today in the House of Commons, we have science as sort of a sub-subject under the industry committee: innovation, economic development, whatever name of the day members want to talk about. The problem is that things are changing quickly in the world, and there are lots of things to focus on. When we look at that committee, it is looking at things from broadband Internet, which we know is a huge issue, to things that are affecting trade, areas of emerging economy, and all kinds of different studies are involved there. Many of them overlap with science, but if we start putting them in priority, science falls lower on the list.

I was also on the health committee when I was the shadow minister of health. This is another area where there are huge amounts of research being done in Canada. We are such a leader in brain research and vaccine research, and all kinds of hugely advanced things in the bioindustry. Again, when it is the health committee and we are in the middle of a pandemic, that has to be number one. The health committee has studied a huge number of things: pharmacare and a bunch of very important topics. Again, science ends up falling to the bottom of the pile, not because it is not important but in a relative sense. That makes it difficult. Some of the things we need to look at need to be looked at in detail. They are not simple to solve.

This is where a standing committee that looks into these things in detail and can provide the government with recommendations that it can then act on would be very helpful. Obviously, we have a chief science officer now. I am sure the work that is being done by her is excellent, but I am not privy to what that is. However, I expect that as she is being consulted in different ministries for different legislation that is coming forward or on issues of the day, there would be things they are not too sure about that need to be studied. That is an area where recommendations might be put forward to the committee to look into, things of that nature.

Again, we have the huge climate change task before us, how we are going to meet our targets, and the technology that is coming out of the green tech, clean tech, new energy, all these very exciting areas that might fall under another standing committee's portfolio, but likely would not have the priority to really get the attention they need. If we get this right, we would be able to take the leap.

• (1800)

There was a time when Canada was much more of a leader. As the competitive nature of science goes on, and considering that we are a smaller country, the amount of money that has been put into science has not always kept us at the front of the pack. There was a period of time when we slid from our position in the top 10 and went back a bit. We are starting to regain that. We have identified areas where Canada is leading. It is sitting at the table with other nations and is able to leverage what they are doing back into our plans.

When we look at the climate change issue, our own carbon footprint is less than 1.6% of the world's total. We could eliminate the whole thing and it would not have a huge, significant impact. What we can do, as Canadians, is leverage our technology. There are all kinds of carbon sequestration methods. There are all kinds of emissions reduction technologies out there, and there are the nuclear

technologies that we have. All of these sectors will need things to drive them to success.

Over the full spectrum, some people want to focus on applied science while others want to focus on fundamental science. The reality is that both of those approaches are wrong. If we do not have fundamental science, we are not discovering the things that become the aha moments that give rise to some of the space-age technology that has been hugely profitable and created a lot of jobs. If we do not work on the applied science part of it, we do not get the collaboration among industry, universities and all the different areas that come together with concrete solutions that help in the shorter term. That is important.

Considerations such as the way companies are launched in the science industry, and how to make Canada competitive there, would get lost at some of the other committees. They simply would not be talked about.

As a woman in engineering, I would say that getting more women into science, technology, engineering and math is a big priority. Although we have come a long way in that respect, there is a long way to go. I can remember when I first started in engineering, I had to build a women's washroom everywhere I worked because there were none, and there were girlie pictures on the walls. I would say we have made lots of progress since then.

However, that is not to say we are at the percentages we need. I am disappointed to see that we are falling back, in some cases. We get women to enter these areas, but they do not stay. Why do they not stay? How do we motivate them to stay? Who will be looking at that? That is another area for a committee on science, which is dedicated to looking at this area and specifically the culture in it that may be very different from other workplaces, to work out.

When we think of crises of the day, a committee of this nature would provide extra flexibility for the government. In this pandemic, there was a lot to think about. There was testing to think about. There were vaccinations to think about. There were different protocols and looking at all the therapeutics that were coming forward. It is a lot for the government to take on. This is another instance in which having a committee dedicated to science to look at some of these specific mandates would be very helpful.

The government invests a lot of money in science. In the latest budget, \$3 billion was brought forward. That was in line with what the Naylor report was calling for, and that is good. When we think about the amount of money it takes for a standing committee to operate, we are not talking about a lot of money in comparison to \$3 billion. A lot of members of Parliament would have great interest in participating in such a committee.

I thank the member for Etobicoke North, and fully support having a committee dedicated to science to take Canada into the future and make us a leader there. It would be good for Canadians, it would create jobs and it would create prosperity. I urge everyone in the House to support this motion.

Private Members' Business

• (1805)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is good to see you again. I noticed earlier that you were so eager to hear from me that you might have called on me a little too soon.

Just for your enjoyment, Madam Speaker, before I get to Motion No. 38, I would like to share an image that came to me today while I was thinking about the motion moved by the member for Etobicoke North, a motion I support, incidentally.

It made me think about my first day at my old job, when I showed up at the university to teach. I still remember that day, August 29, 2005. There was a poster that read, “One day, I’ll have an office on the top floor. The knowledge economy”. That stuck with me. I wondered how anyone could distort the university’s role to that extent when the institution’s purpose was to provide a platform for all fields of knowledge, not just to serve the economy.

The reason I mention that is that this motion might solve the problem. The problem is that science has kind of gotten buried under economic interests.

People often ask academics what the point of social sciences, philosophy and the arts is. They also ask us what the point of basic science and discovery is unless there is an application. That is why I think we need a scientific perspective.

That is why I welcome the motion so heartily. Not to pat ourselves on the back, but my party’s leader had the great foresight to make that distinction already. I am my party’s critic on science, whereas my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue deals more with the innovation and industry side of things. In committee, I generally field the questions on science-related issues.

I also think this is an excellent motion because it allows us to give the chief science advisor a forum, which is essential.

On what grounds can we as legislators make decisions?

I sometimes criticize colleagues because many people seem to be experts in everything. We cannot be experts in everything. When we are called to speak, we must be very diligent about it, and that means considering the science. We might have the opportunity to talk about the much-vaunted green recovery. I will come back to that.

We went through this with the vaccines. No one here can call themselves an expert on vaccines, and yet everyone speaks to this issue. If we want to be effective, we have to listen to the science.

The motion would provide a forum to the chief science advisor and free up the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology. Judging from the work being done by this committee, it has one of the broadest remits of all the committees. For the simple reason that it would slightly free up this committee, which has a very broad remit, and provide a forum to the chief science advisor, I think this motion is fantastic.

However, we have to be careful. There are some caveats. A committee specifically dedicated to science must not become an excuse to interfere in scientific work.

One concept I still remember from a political philosophy course I took is that according to Pierre Magnan, science reigns supreme in western countries right now. He equated it to a religion. In ancient times and in the Middle Ages, individuals were governed by religion. However, there is a fundamental separation between religion and politics. Similarly, we must see a separation between politics and science. It is not up to politicians to decide how things work. We may not like the idea of climate change, but that does not mean we can turn to scientists tomorrow morning and ask them to alter their calculations and their approach in order to suit our economic interests.

I think most people would agree that interfering in scientific work is also a problem.

Moreover, splitting the committee must not create a silo where research and science are isolated from the rest of society. Such a siloed vision is not advisable, especially since we have just done some fairly in-depth studies on vaccines and we have seen how long and tedious the process is, in terms of basic research, applied research and clinical trials, and how it intersects with different realities.

• (1810)

If I could recommend one thing to my colleague, it would be to consider what several experts refer to as translational research. Many steps are proposed along the way from the starting point of basic research to its application. As public decision-makers, we must be aware of this.

The committee specializing in science must not create a silo, because there must be interactions with the other steps.

I have read the mandate of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, which, in my view, is one of the broadest of all committees. The mandate of the industry committee covers 17 departments and agencies and 36 acts. Its responsibilities are very broad and very disparate. I will quickly list a few of the topics it studies: business assistance; industrial policy; regional development, a topic that is very important to the Bloc Québécois but that the committee has not had much opportunity to address; scientific research; domestic trade; competition and the effective operation of the marketplace; telecommunications; the functioning of federally regulated businesses; and tourism.

Clearly, science is taking a back seat, buried under a massive pile of different types of studies. I think this is similar to what happened during the previous Parliament.

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Since the fall, the committee has studied the accessibility of Internet and cellular coverage in the regions; vaccine manufacturing, during which some scientific questions arose, but certainly not enough; the aerospace industry; foreign investments; and business regulations. The committee studied all of these topics, but others were left untouched.

For example, there is the much-vaunted green recovery plan, which says anything and everything. It took a lot of effort for me to figure out the government's strategy for the green recovery, a key component of which is apparently hydrogen. There are three types of hydrogen: green hydrogen, blue hydrogen and grey hydrogen. I want to thank Professor Karim Zaghbi, who explained this to me. Grey hydrogen is actually hydrogen derived from oil or gas. It is anything but green. We need scientists if we are going to do this.

I have had many meetings with the Canadian Association for Neuroscience; with Rémi Quirion, Quebec's chief scientist; with the Canadian Society for Molecular Biosciences; and with the Canadian research forum. They all told me the same thing: we need an entire department dedicated to science.

The pandemic has shown us that we are somewhat unprotected on the science front. The government must also restore funding to 2000s levels.

During the discussions, we heard from a young researcher who will be presenting a research project to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. If memory serves, just seven out of 48 applications get approved. With the United States poised to do a considerable amount of research, Canada is quite behind. We have a 30% success rate for research funding, but that is because of the pandemic. We need to get back to the 30% rate we had before the 2000s, before the Conservatives sadly gutted the sector. The committee would be a good place to study this issue.

• (1815)

Of the 100 research chairs, nine are in Quebec and 50 are in Ontario. Quebec has the largest share of scientific value-added exports at 40%, yet it has 9% of the chairs. That is one more topic that could be extensively studied by a science committee.

[*English*]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak in support of this motion, with great thanks to my colleague for Etobicoke North. We entered the House of Commons together in 2008 and it has been a privilege to serve with her in that time.

This motion's call for a new standing committee on science and research provides the opportunity to highlight how critical the need for this is and also some current examples that illustrate how dire the situation has been allowed to become in this country. First, Canada's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been severely impaired by a lack of scientific capacity and literacy at the Public Health Agency of Canada. Second, our country's lack of domestic research and biomanufacturing capacity has delayed COVID-19 vaccine access for Canadians. We must ensure that this never happens again. I will speak to both of these examples that underscore the importance of this motion in highlighting this important gap in our national capacity.

The Public Health Agency of Canada, PHAC, was established in 2004 after the SARS outbreak exposed massive failings in our country's public health infrastructure at the federal level. The agency was specifically mandated to be Canada's lead organization for planning and coordinating a national response to infectious diseases that pose a risk to human health. However, last fall, several PHAC whistle-blowers told *The Globe and Mail* that they often struggle to communicate urgent and complex messages up the chain of command inside PHAC. One PHAC scientist told *The Globe* that key messages often had to be "dumbed down" within the agency because senior officials lacked an understanding of the science.

A series of scathing audit reports have since confirmed and highlighted this troubling lack of scientific expertise and literacy within PHAC. In January 2021, an internal audit of PHAC's COVID-19 response was released through an opposition motion for production. The audit revealed a serious and troubling lack of scientific capacity of PHAC. Among other things, the audit found limited public health expertise, including epidemiologists, psychologists, behavioural scientists and physicians, at PHAC senior levels and a lack of emergency response management expertise and capacity within the agency. It said that PHAC is missing sufficient skills and capacity for risk communications specifically for communicating uncertainty to support the agency's messaging around COVID-19.

The senior medical expertise needed to support Canada's chief public health officer, Dr. Theresa Tam, in navigating the rapidly changing science of the new virus was slow to be put in place and most likely remains insufficient to provide the support required at the time of the audit. There were a limited number of quarantine officers within the agency at the beginning of the pandemic and it was difficult to staff quickly because this position requires specific education and training. Dr. Tam's office noted that she often receives information in the wrong format and even with inaccuracies. The audit also found that the modelling information critical to the public face of the response and the foundation for strategic planning was mentioned as being problematic in its initial stages because of the lack of a coordinated or strategic approach to the work.

That audit was followed up on March 25, 2021, when the Auditor General of Canada released another audit report on the federal government's emergency preparedness and pandemic response. It also was scathing and, frankly, horrifying. Among other things, the audit found that PHAC had not tested or updated its readiness plans in direct violation of its own internal standards. PHAC failed to resolve shortcomings in Canada's health surveillance information and data systems first identified by the Auditor General in 1999, in 2002 and again in 2008. PHAC did not assess the pandemic risk posed by COVID-19 or the potential impact were it to be introduced in Canada.

As a result, the Auditor General found that the agency underestimated the potential danger of COVID-19 and continued to assess the risk as low until mid-March 2020, nearly a week after the World Health Organization had declared a global pandemic. By then, Canada had already recorded over 400 confirmed cases and community spread was under way. Despite Dr. Tam's assertion that PHAC's assessment that COVID-19 posed a low risk to Canadians was accurate in the moment, the Auditor General found the methodology used to reach that conclusion was neither formally evaluated nor approved.

● (1820)

Worryingly, Canada's Global Public Health Intelligence Network did not issue an alert to provide early warning of the novel coronavirus. The Auditor General was unable to determine the reason for this oversight. We have since discovered that the government inexplicably allowed GPHIN to be neutered in 2019, a failure that experts have said cost Canada precious time to prepare and worse, without doubt, cost Canadian lives.

Finally, PHAC failed to verify compliance with quarantine orders for two-thirds of incoming travellers, and did not consistently refer travellers for follow-up who risked not complying.

Michael Garner, a former senior science adviser at PHAC who left in 2019, recently told the health committee that the diminishment of GPHIN is a symptom of a bigger problem within the agency: Scientists are increasingly replaced or usurped by senior bureaucrats with no training in public health, resulting in decisions made on the basis of politics. Mr. Garner traced the root of this problem back to 2014, when the Harper government, which was perhaps the most anti-science government in Canadian history, installed a senior bureaucrat as president of public health, which relegated the role of the chief public health officer to that of an adviser. That change created a cascade effect throughout the department, he said. This misguided policy has been kept in place, unfortunately, by the current Liberal government.

I want to turn to research- and evidence-based policy-making, which the motion speaks to.

Canada once had a publicly owned drug and vaccine producer, Connaught Labs, which contributed to some of the biggest medical breakthroughs of the 20th century. This lab was profitable throughout its history and made significant contributions to medical research by allocating royalties to universities, where, by the way, most research and development take place today. More importantly, it produced essential medicines and vaccines for Canadians at very low prices while exporting to the world. However, Connaught Labs

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was sold to the French pharmaceutical giant Sanofi Pasteur by the Mulroney government in the 1980s for purely ideological reasons.

The privatization of Connaught Labs was part of a broader package of market-based reforms to Canadian pharmaceutical policies that were billed as necessary to spur private investment and create jobs in the pharmaceutical industry, something I think all parties agree on. At the core of that approach was the 1987 agreement to extend patent protection in exchange for a commitment from pharmaceutical companies to boost their research spending in Canada to 10% of sales. However, no penalties were imposed for failure to meet this voluntary target. The Mulroney government's policy overhaul also included the start of a neo-liberal trade policy that has provided global pharmaceutical companies with increased protections and market access.

Unfortunately for all of us, the promised research investments and employment benefits never really materialized in Canada. In fact, the ratio of research and development expenditures to sales revenues for pharmaceutical patentees in Canada has been falling since the late 1990s and has been under the agreed-upon target of 10% since 2003. Although the federal government attempts to compensate for this bleak investment by funding medical research and development with public money, it rarely attaches public interest conditions to ensure that the resulting innovations will be affordable and accessible to all who need them.

The NDP believes it is time for a new Canadian pharmaceutical policy that reorients our market-based approach to one that facilitates access to vaccines and critical medications for Canadians in order to protect and promote public health. As a first step, the NDP believes the federal government should immediately re-establish a public drug and vaccine manufacturer in Canada. This would ensure a resilient domestic supply capacity in the event of future public health emergencies and shortages, while facilitating lower drug costs for Canadians through the production of affordable medications.

Private Members' Business

This re-establishment of public pharmaceutical manufacturing should be complemented by the promotion of an open science approach to drug development that promotes collaboration and data sharing, along with policies to ensure that health technologies developed from publicly funded research serve the public interest. Contrary to big pharma propaganda, most research and development and discovery of new molecules and technology come from publicly funded research at Canadian universities. By combining that research with public medicine development, we can better ensure that we produce innovative medicines in Canada by Canadians and for Canadians at reasonable costs.

• (1825)

Mr. William Amos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry (Science), Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak today on Motion No. 38 from the member for Etobicoke North. It is a strong motion with some positive consequences. I am really excited to support it and also speak to an issue that she has led on for years, both in her pre-political career and now over many years serving the Canadian public, including as minister for science.

I would note the important contributions from the MP for Etobicoke North since 2015. When our government was elected back then, we recognized right away that research, science and evidence should be the centre of decision-making and investment choices. There were several initiatives launched to demonstrate this commitment, many of which fell to the MP for Etobicoke North to lead, and I want to salute her efforts today on this.

In addition to reintroducing the long-form census on day one, we also invested more than \$10 billion to support Canadian scientists, researchers and cutting-edge equipment between 2016 and 2019. We appointed a chief science adviser, Dr. Mona Nemer, as an independent adviser to the Prime Minister and Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry. I consider myself very privileged to have regular conversations with our chief science adviser.

We also implemented a set of scientific integrity policies for federal scientists so that they could speak freely about their work. As well, we introduced the digital citizen initiative, which is a strategy to combat digital misinformation, including science and health misinformation, and instituted new requirements for openness and transparency in science and research in the federal government.

There are some major initiatives, and I want to credit the MP for Etobicoke North for her leadership in this regard.

• (1830)

[*Translation*]

We also took important steps to modernize the scientific ecosystem and federal supports. For example, we implemented equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives that create a more inclusive research ecosystem in Canada; focused more on funding multidisciplinary and collaborative research that reflects the way research is conducted today; ensured better coordination among our world-class funding agencies; and promoted co-operation among federal government laboratories, university research facilities and the private sector.

The global pandemic obviously brought science and research to the forefront. Our efforts to rebuild Canada's science and research capacity in recent years and to forge strong ties with the research community and the innovation ecosystem have been essential in our fight against COVID-19.

Our government has reiterated its commitment to making science-based decisions by mandating the creation of 11 expert groups and task forces, including those convened by the chief science advisor, to inform the government's response to pandemics.

[*English*]

We mobilized researchers and the life science companies to support large-scale efforts to combat COVID-19. As part of more than \$1 billion for the COVID-19 response fund, our government invested \$217 million in coronavirus research and medical countermeasures to advance projects undertaken by university researchers and others. We also committed \$1 billion in support of a national medical strategy to fight COVID-19, which includes vaccine development, production of treatments and tracking the virus. Clearly, in the COVID-19 context, we are talking about a real focus on science in governance.

As well, we helped launch CanCOVID, a new Canada-wide network of health science and policy researchers to facilitate COVID-19 research collaboration and to expedite communication, and we did not stop there. We know that a plan for a long-lasting recovery post-COVID must be led by a growth strategy that builds on our unique competitive advantages in our Canadian economy and in the Canadian research sector.

[*Translation*]

That is why budget 2021 includes important new resources to strengthen Canada's position as a world leader in research and innovation by building a global brand that will attract talent and capital for years to come.

That includes more than \$440 million over 10 years to support the pan-Canadian artificial intelligence strategy, \$360 million over seven years to launch a national quantum strategy and \$400 million over six years to support a new pan-Canadian genomics strategy.

[*English*]

We are talking about significant investments that are going to lead to distinct Canadian advantages in particular research sectors that really do speak to the importance of science in our approach to governance.

With the remaining time that I have, I want to focus on the importance of Motion No. 38, as advanced by the member for Etobicoke North. As I mentioned, our government since 2015, has had a total commitment to supporting Canada's science and research sector. Facts, evidence and data are informing all elements of government planning and decision-making. I think that, as I mentioned before, in relation to this legacy of science-based decision-making, the MP for Etobicoke North, through her service to the Canadian public as a researcher, academic and later MP, and then minister for science, really has established a legacy that is only going to be further cemented by Motion No. 38.

The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly highlighted the role that scientists and researchers play in our society and their remarkable work is obviously what has informed the global effort in the fight against the pandemic. I think the Canadian public has really come to appreciate how much they rely on good science being at the foundation of government decisions.

I believe that all parliamentarians appreciate the importance not only of listening to science but of convening a forum within this House where members from all parties and the public might benefit from the reflections of our scientific and research communities. The standing committee proposed by Motion No. 38 would serve as an important dedicated forum to study and report on scientific matters and relevant research activities. It would provide all governments, not only our own but future governments, with an opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to the centrality of science and evidence in the context of Canada's legislative branch. It is not just government that needs to focus on science, it is legislators as well. The standing committee on science and research would provide parliamentarians with opportunities to incorporate scientific information in their work within their communities and in the House of Commons.

I think that it is fair to say that science has never been more important in our country's history, in the world's history. Whether looking at the immediate term of COVID-19, or looking at the immediate medium and long-term issues like climate change, science is going to remain our most powerful tool in fighting these crises. We need to make sure that we nurture science and research wisely and that we enable public discussion of science and research. I think that is one of the key pieces of this motion and I salute the member for Etobicoke North for this.

Canada has always had world-leading researchers and has a tremendous track record of scientific accomplishment. It is really remarkable that the House of Commons lacks a dedicated scientific-oriented standing committee to vote on and do scientific and research. I think it has probably been raised by colleagues previously that there have been five previous House of Commons standing committees with either science or research in their titles, but they have always been combined with distinct subject areas; for example, energy industry and energy, industry and technology or regional and northern development. In an era beset by fake news and conspiracy theories, I think that it behooves us as members of Parliament to stand with Canadians. The vast majority of Canadians, in my estimation, would support the idea that Parliament can serve as a better steward of and a better platform for the dissemination of scientific knowledge and facts.

Private Members' Business

By voting for this motion, I believe that we, as parliamentarians, have a chance to acknowledge our responsibility to protect science and research, and to bring the public to it, but also to bring—

• (1835)

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

The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Motion No. 38, which proposes to split the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology in two after the next election. The Bloc Québécois welcomes this proposal. We need to recognize that the current committee's mandate is very broad, perhaps too broad, and that its responsibilities are numerous and disparate. The innovation, science and economic development portfolio for which the committee is responsible includes 17 federal departments and agencies, and it is responsible for the administration of 36 acts and a large number of regulations.

Creating a committee devoted exclusively to the subject would therefore ensure that science and research are given all the attention they deserve, in order to develop a truly comprehensive vision, which is sorely lacking at this time. In addition, it goes without saying that political decisions must be made based on evidence and critical analysis. That is precisely what is known as the power of science.

One need only recall the Stephen Harper government, under which government scientists were muzzled and ignored, especially on environmental and climate change issues. To this day, certain analyses by government researchers remain unavailable, including the Department of Industry's economic analyses of net benefit under the Investment Canada Act.

This new science committee would also free up the industry committee to focus on other issues that deserve more time and consideration than it is currently able to offer. I am thinking about support for SMEs and regional development, which are issues that are truly very important to the Bloc Québécois.

As we gradually emerge from the health crisis, fingers crossed, it is urgent and essential that we focus on the economic recovery, which must be green and based on innovation. This should be a priority file for the industry committee, whose work on the economic aspects of this recovery has not yet started and therefore could not be considered during the drafting of the 2021-22 budget, even though it was touted as the recovery budget.

Private Members' Business

Once it is freed from some of its current responsibilities, the industry committee could also study one blatant injustice toward Quebec and hopefully address it too. The government cannot claim to want a recovery based on innovation without acknowledging that Quebec accounts for roughly 40% of Canada's research and development intensive exports. Meanwhile, Canada has some of the lowest levels of research and development activity in the OECD.

Quebec is a leader and a trailblazer in artificial intelligence, information technology and transportation electrification, which are all fields of the future. The same goes for aerospace, of course, which is very important to me and which I often talk about in the House, as I am the critic for this file. Quebec is the third-largest aerospace hub in the world, after Toulouse and Seattle.

However, of the 100 National Research Council of Canada research centres, 50 are in Ontario compared to only nine in Quebec. This means that Quebec accounts for 40% of Canada's technology exports but only 9% of the federal research centres.

This does not add up. This lopsided distribution demonstrates that our strengths and ingenuity are being sidelined in favour of a federal strategy whose main purpose is to let Canada play catch-up, rather than allow Quebec to expand as it could if it had full decision-making power, as a nation should.

Despite the undeniable advantages of the changes proposed by Motion No. 38, we must ensure that the creation of two separate committees does not separate science from issues related to industry and innovation. It is good to have a new structure that will make it possible to conduct more in-depth studies on specific issues, but that does not mean that we should now say that science is not equal to industry, since there is a very fundamental connection between these two areas. The whole issue of developing COVID-19 vaccines showed us how basic research, applied research and bringing an innovation to market are all links in the same chain.

That is why the Bloc Québécois is proposing a change to the motion, and we hope that the mover of the motion is open to the idea.

• (1840)

We are proposing the creation of a subcommittee on science and research that would study the scientific aspects and then report to the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology. That would make it possible to obtain much the same benefits while avoiding the risk of negative effects.

• (1845)

[*English*]

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Deputy House Leader of the Government, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank everyone who took the time and effort to speak to Motion No. 38. Most important, I thank them for their support. Our world-leading scientists and researchers, and our outstanding students and research institutions, deserve a dedicated voice in Parliament, and that means a permanent standing committee on science and research beginning in the 44th Parliament.

Science is not a club. It is not for a select few. Science is for everyone. Canadians should have better access to the science and research they fund because science and research provide our best

hope for solutions to improving health, addressing the climate crisis, jump-starting economic growth and growing jobs. Canadians should hear about science and research through a permanent standing committee in the House of Commons.

Science should not be a partisan issue. It is a fundamental building block of Canada that everyone in this House has a stake in and everyone should fight for. In a politically charged environment in a polarized world, science, evidence and fact offer shared understanding and common ground. We need all sides of this House, all members of Parliament, fighting for fundamental and applied science and research. We need them to take a stand and say we have learned from COVID-19, that we have finally learned what we always learn following a pandemic, namely that science, research and public health matter, and not just when we are in crisis.

Research institutions have a crucial role to play in both research and policy, in reviewing pandemic response, in helping to define lessons to ensure we are better prepared for a future pandemic and in evidence-based policy. From a political perspective, science, research and public health cannot just be hot or on government agendas during the pandemic and the next few years. Rather, they require continual attention, nurturing and support for a better future, environment and quality of life for all. By voting for this motion, we have a chance to acknowledge our responsibility to protect science and research, and anchor them in one of our most important democratic institutions.

Science and research should have a permanent place where issues that are important to the research community, Canadians and the future of the country can be studied; where scientists, researchers and parliamentarians can come to know one another; where parliamentarians can get a better understanding of science and research; where parliamentarians can learn about Canada's research strengths in areas such as computer science applications, fuel cells, neurodegeneration, personalized medicine, bioinformatics and regenerative medicine; and where parliamentarians can learn about what is needed to make improvements and yield benefits to Canadians.

It is time for scientists, researchers and students to be given the key to the people's House. Not only is a standing committee on science and research long overdue, it is also critically important to building the future Canadians deserve. After all, it is science and research that will bring this pandemic to an end, fuel our restart and supercharge our economic recovery.

Let me be clear. Science and research have always mattered, and they will matter more than ever beyond this pandemic. We must turn the recovery from the pandemic into a real opportunity to build a better future, a future driven by knowledge and forged by curiosity and a quest for understanding.

I will finish by saying that science and research are a public good that we must all protect. One of the best ways to protect science is to have a dedicated standing committee in the House of Commons. My friends and colleagues, with this motion, we have an opportunity to do something really important. We have an opportunity to embed science and research into one of our most important democratic institutions and build a better future for all Canadians.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The question is on the motion.

[*Translation*]

If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division or that the motion be adopted on division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

• (1850)

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I would request a recorded division.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to order made on Monday, January 25, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, May 26, 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*]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to join the proceedings this evening. I am looking forward to having a better answer than the one I received during question period on Thursday, May 13. I asked a question of the Minister of Natural Resources about Line 5 and what the government of the day had done to ensure it would continue to run.

I will give a bit of background on Line 5. Enbridge Line 5 dual pipeline is part of a system shipping oil from Saskatchewan and Alberta through pipelines to refineries in Sarnia, a petrochemical hub in the southern Ontario region. From there, it goes to Quebec via the Line 9 pipeline. These pipelines connect provinces around Canada and ensure we create jobs in a sustainable way. We all know pipelines are the safest and most efficient way to move oil and natural gas, which is also moved in Line 5. The minister, floundering through his CTV interview, said that if Line 5 was to be shut down, oil and gas would be moved by truck, rail and in tankers, which would be less efficient than through a pipeline.

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I am hoping to get an answer on why the government filed the amicus brief at the last second. First, why did the government not submit it sooner to the district court? Second, why did the government not use some of its connections? We all know, and we have seen that it was on the BNN report. Maybe we could have picked up the phone and talked with President Biden to see if he would reach out to his political ally, Governor Whitmer, to see if they would cease the debate about whether Line 5 should be shut down. We know this was a political decision made by the governor in her 2018 campaign.

The actual costs if Line 5 is shut down are huge, not only in Canada but in the United States as well. It will cost tens of thousands of jobs. The Biden administration could, if it wanted to, issue an executive order either telling the Government of Michigan that it cannot revoke the easement or telling the governor not to revoke the easement until it has been determined whether a U.S.-Canada pipeline transit treaty applies. A pipeline transit treaty between the United States and Canada was brought into effect in 1977.

This was stated on BNN by Kristen van de Biezenbos, associate law professor at the University of Calgary, in regard to the 1977 transit treaty. This treaty has never been invoked and it was unclear whether it could actually be invoked in the Line 5 situation. There is still a question about whether it can be invoked, so it has to be settled in the courts.

At some point in time the government needs to take action before it reaches a crisis point. I wish the government would show western Canadians and the petrochemical workers at the refineries in Sarnia that this is a serious issue. I have concerns with the late reaction and coming to the table at the 12th hour to submit the amicus brief. Many people who I represent have told me that they sometimes feel they are not being heard as strongly as those in other areas of western Canada.

I would just ask whoever is going to answer the question why the brief was filed late, whether the 1977 pipeline treaty can be invoked and whether the Prime Minister picked up the phone and asked the President to intervene in this situation.

• (1855)

Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member opposite for allowing me to bring clarity to this very important matter. Despite all the partisan bickering, members of all four official parties have spoken with one voice in support of Line 5, including the small-c Conservative premiers of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec.

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I can assure Canadians that this government has taken a firm stand on this matter since it emerged. Our government has engaged and continues to engage at all levels to advocate for Line 5. Most recently, we intervened in the legal dispute between Michigan Governor Whitmer's administration and Enbridge, asking the courts to ensure that the case remains at the federal level, especially in light of the 1977 Canada-U.S. treaty on transit pipelines.

This is exactly what members of the special committee on Canada-U.S. relations unanimously asked us to do. We will keep pushing at the political level, all the way to the top at the diplomatic level. As the Minister of Natural Resources has said repeatedly, this is non-negotiable. Energy workers and consumers will not be left out in the cold.

[*Translation*]

We worked very closely with the provinces, industry and unions, and we raised the issue of Line 5 directly with the U.S. administration. This approach was and continues to be a Team Canada approach. We continue to voice support for North American energy security because Line 5 is not only important infrastructure on the Canadian side of the border, it is vital to the United States. It also represents the integrated, intertwined and mutually beneficial relationship of our two countries. It is a relationship linked by more than 70 pipelines and almost three dozen transmission lines. This ecosystem of deeply integrated investment and trade is connected through shared supply and manufacturing.

The people of northern Michigan rely on Line 5 to heat their homes and businesses. We also move Marathon's refined oil, which is used as fuel for government vehicles, trucks and planes, among other things. Line 5 also supplies refineries in Ohio and neighbouring Pennsylvania, as well as in Ontario and Quebec.

We also regularly remind our counterparts in Washington and Michigan that Line 5 has been operating safely for 68 years.

[*English*]

That is why we support Enbridge's proposal of the Great Lakes tunnel project to add a layer of assurance over and above Enbridge's oversight of this outstanding pipeline. The debate also draws attention to the renewed Canada-U.S. relationship, bonded by a common objective to confront and overcome this pandemic. We will build our economies and leave no workers or communities behind, and we will join forces to take on the essential climate change crisis. We are also united in recognizing that we need our respective petroleum sectors. As we drive forward, we need the know-how, skill and financial muscle to make the changes necessary to reach our Paris targets.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I believe it was not bickering. I laid some pretty salient points on the table. We were concerned that it was a bit late coming. I think that is a fair comment.

A few other pipeline issues have come to a head and have not really gone well, in Saskatchewan and western Canada, the way they would like to see them. There was Keystone XL and other projects where we were looking forward to having the opportunity to build some nation-building projects like Teck Frontier and northern gateway. Trans Mountain is on the way, but we just want to make sure

that people are hearing what we say. I am here to represent my constituents. There are a lot of people who work at Evraz steel and they want to see that good, sustainable and environmentally friendly pipeline used in making some of these nation-building projects.

Just to reiterate, we want to make sure that the government is on top of this particular file. Premier Moe did have a few comments about the natural resource minister's—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the floor to the hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Marc Serré: Madam Speaker, we recognize that many across the country are concerned about Line 5. That is why I am proud that our Prime Minister has continued to stand up for this vital piece of energy infrastructure at every turn, as has every minister, every parliamentarian and every senior official wherever and whenever there is a chance to engage with their American counterparts.

● (1900)

[*Translation*]

Members of the four official parties asked Enbridge and the State of Michigan to settle this matter out of court. Line 5 is vital to the economy and security of both our countries, and maintaining operations supports good jobs for the middle class and thousands of workers in western Canada and in Sarnia, Montreal, Lévis and Quebec City.

I thank my hon. colleague for asking the question and for continuing to work together as part of Team Canada to put pressure on the State of Michigan to resolve this matter in consultation with Enbridge.

[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am strong, proud and ready as the member of Parliament for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke representing Garrison Petawawa. I rise to defend the honour and reputations of the women and men who serve as members of the Canadian Armed Forces, particularly when the government refuses to do so.

The very reputation of Canada is at stake. On May 4, I asked the Prime Minister why he had not acted on the very disturbing evidence of war crimes. Responding on behalf of the Prime Minister, the defence minister once again claimed ignorance.

For the government, ignorance seems to be the only answer. How embarrassing for an image-obsessed Prime Minister that the head of the vaccine rollout in Canada, Major-General Dany Fortin, would be the flag officer responsible for informing the department about war crimes.

How lucky for the Prime Minister that he was sitting on another allegation of sexual misconduct. By sweeping up General Fortin into the Prime Minister's sexual misconduct scandal, the government's propaganda machine went into overdrive to bury the war crimes allegation crisis. First job: Get General Fortin out of the limelight by throwing him under the sexual misconduct bus. Next, signal to the subsidized media to cover up the story. Then pray by the time the Prime Minister pushes pandemic Canada into an unwanted election the war crimes allegation is swept under the rug: a rug now bulging with the Liberal sexual misconduct scandal, WE Charity, SNC-Lavalin and Mark Norman. This rug cannot cover much more.

Canadians have another example of the Prime Minister's failure to show leadership. According to the Canadian Armed Forces briefing note, the graphic images included raping a woman to death, torturing and executing a line of bound prisoners by beating them to death with what appeared to be rebar, executing bound prisoners by shooting, and executing a man by hanging him from the barrel of a battle tank. At least seven Canadian non-commissioned officers viewed the footage. To their credit, they immediately reported the situation to their superiors, with General Dany Fortin being at the top as commander for NATO Mission Iraq.

The defence minister's own press secretary, Jordan Owens, confirmed that when it comes to situations of armed conflict, members of the Canadian Armed Forces receive a rigorous pre-deployment training with respect to the Geneva convention and international law. Canadians are proud of the fact that a Conservative prime minister, Brian Mulroney, signed the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

There is an obligation to report, as a signatory to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. All trained soldiers know that article 50 of the Geneva convention prohibits acts of willful killing, torture or inhumane treatment of prisoners. Under the leadership of a Conservative prime minister, Canada was an early champion of this international law that exists to prevent torture in civilian and military detention centres.

Sadly, under the Liberal government, Canada has become an international laggard when it comes to things like torture and cruel treatment. As a follow-up to this convention, the UN developed the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, OPCAT. Canada has still not officially adopted that agreement. If Canada is complicit in torture, how can we credibly promote human rights?

We have heard before from the parliamentary secretary on the sexual misconduct scandal. I hope this time the House will hear something other than the excuse, "We did not know".

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the women and

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men of the Canadian Armed Forces support our government's approach to Operation Impact. Our contribution has been essential to fighting Daesh and bringing security and stability to the region. Members of our armed forces have worked tirelessly with our allies and partners on that non-combat mission.

• (1905)

[*English*]

They have provided intelligence and airlift capabilities and have worked alongside other members of the global coalition to defeat Daesh.

Ultimately, our government and our Canadian Armed Forces are contributing to building lasting security and stability. We are proud of the work of our deployed troops, and we are deeply troubled by the concerns raised by Canadian Armed Forces members about alleged violations of the law of armed conflict by members of the Iraqi security forces and the handling of those reports. The allegations referenced by the hon. member point to events that would have taken place in the fall of 2018. The Canadian Armed Forces is no longer operating with the Iraqi security forces related to these allegations.

We are grateful to the soldiers who first brought forward their concerns and continued raising them. This matter has now been referred to the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service for review and investigation. It is determining whether it is the proper body to investigate and whether procedures were followed in response to this allegation.

It is important to note that the law of armed conflict serves as a guiding principle in all of our efforts to counter Daesh. In accordance with those principles, Canadian Armed Forces members are required to report any violations of the law of armed conflict or international human rights law. Canadian Armed Forces members deployed on Operation Impact undergo training on the law of armed conflict, which includes how to prevent and report any suspected incidents or abuses. The partner forces that we train with currently go through a stringent and lengthy vetting process. That process ensures that all reasonable precautions are taken to reduce the risk of training forces that have committed or are likely to commit violations of the law of armed conflict.

Our military is known to act as a force for good in the world. We know that reputation will only be maintained by our willingness to continually question our own practices and fully support those who raise concerns.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, once again the parliamentary secretary has been sent to offer excuses for the failures of the minister.

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The claim that the Liberals are investigating is laughable. We all know they are covering this up to protect the Prime Minister again. When he made the immature remark about whipping out fighter jets, he was trying to brand himself as more enlightened. As a result, he recalled the fighter jets from Operation Impact and sent our troops to act as trainers on the ground.

Learning we were training war criminals goes against the Prime Minister's brand, but instead of reversing this immature policy, they covered it up, because in the Liberal government there is no higher obligation than to protect the Prime Minister's brand. Everything else is secondary. From the first indigenous justice minister to sexual assault survivors, they are all cannon fodder, human shields thrown out to protect the brand from incoming questions and investigations. If the parliamentary secretary disagrees, I encourage her to prove it by ending the Liberal filibuster at the defence committee.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld: Madam Speaker, the members of the Canadian Armed Forces are well trained and prepared to take on their roles and responsibilities, including those relating to armed conflict as part of Operation Impact.

[*English*]

We take these troubling allegations very seriously because we know any concern that is raised by Canadian Armed Forces members should be heard and given the attention that Canadians expect. We take all incidents regarding compliance with the law of armed conflict seriously and take the proper actions to address the issues that arise.

This matter has now been referred to the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service for consideration. It is determining whether it is the proper body to investigate whether procedures were followed in response to this allegation.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Madam Speaker, how we measure the value of things says a lot about who we are as a people and as a society.

Currently we measure the performance of our economy by gross domestic product. GDP measures the market value of all goods produced and services provided in a given period of time.

When the consumption of goods and services goes up, so too does the GDP, regardless of whether the effects on people and society are positive or negative. For example, if a couple gets a divorce, it is great for the GDP. There are lawyers' fees to pay, and if the divorce proceedings go to court, the bills are even higher.

The former spouses now have separate homes and greater expenses than when they lived together. If they have children, the cost of setting up two homes for the kids increases expenses even more. If things go horribly wrong, and an angry spouse burns down the family home or totals the car, that is a bonus for GDP growth. However, what is the real cost of all this economic activity?

Healthy family relationships are integral for childhood development, and many divorces have a negative impact on that development. GDP does not account for the personal and social value of

happy healthy families. GDP also does not account for the value of a healthy, biodiverse environment. When one is only measuring GDP, an old growth forest ecosystem has no value until it has been clear cut and turned into lumber.

Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz is among the economists arguing that gross domestic product fails to capture the impact of climate change, inequality, digital services and other phenomena shaping modern societies. He points out that GDP failed to reveal distortions in the bloated U.S. housing market, which triggered the 2008 financial crash.

Some economists refer to GDP as gross depletion of the planet. At a rate of 3% GDP growth annually, we double the size of our economy every 24 years. That means we also double the exploitation and consumption of resources, which is completely unsustainable. If all humans consumed and disposed of products and materials the way the average North American did, we would need seven planets for the necessary resources.

GDP only values things that can be commodified. In a society where GDP is the main measurement, efforts to protect the environment can never succeed. There might be occasional small wins, but the endless drive to turn everything into money will always triumph because unexploited nature has no value on a balance sheet. The crash in biodiversity is the inevitable result of an economy and society that only values GDP growth.

While it would not make sense to completely eliminate GDP as a measurement, it needs to be tied to other indicators, such as the United Nations human development index, which adds together consumption, life expectancy and educational performance at the country level. Another option is the genuine progress indicator, or GPI, which incorporates environmental and social factors that are not measured by GDP. For example, GPI decreases in value when poverty rates increase. The GPI separates the concept of societal progress from economic growth.

It is time to adopt measurements of well-being that support healthy and happy humans, healthy and happy societies, and a healthy, resilient environment.

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• (1910)

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member cited Joseph Stiglitz, who recently put together one of the most important books that I have read over the past few years. He hypothesizes in the book that it is essential that we not only pursue GDP, but that government should focus on improving the quality of life for middle-class citizens who reside within its borders. If it is our collective hope as a nation, and I would suggest it should be, to improve the quality of life that Canadians enjoy, then it is essential that we do a better job of measuring what matters. Thankfully, we have already started this important work of going beyond GDP to improve the quality of life of Canadians by focusing on their health and safety, the access they have to a healthy family situation and taking action to protect our environment and ensure that the growth that we do experience is both sustainable and inclusive.

Before I get too far, I want to emphasize the importance of recognizing that GDP does have a role to play. We should not for a moment necessarily reduce the importance of focusing on how investment can grow the economy or the importance of managing our fiscal situation in a prudent way. In fact, these elements of governance are essential to achieving a high quality of life. However, increasing Canada's GDP is not, in and of itself, enough.

As Canadians, we have been going through a challenging time together this past year and a half. This pandemic has made it abundantly clear that our quality of life is so much more than our country's gross domestic productivity and the people in our lives are far more important than the money in our bank accounts at the end of every month. Our ability to thrive is linked to our health and safety, good housing, access to the outdoors, access to clean water, education, leisure time with our friends and family, social connections and so much more. Our government agrees with the vast majority of Canadians that it is time to move toward a much more holistic decision-making process, one that takes these factors into account.

I would point the hon. member to budget 2021 where we brought forward Canada's first-ever quality of life framework located in annex 4, for those who want to dig in. I want to congratulate, in particular, the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity, who I have the honour and privilege of working alongside, for all of her incredible work in bringing this framework forward. This has helped guide decisions in the most recent budget that will in fact enhance the quality of life for Canadians. It helped lead to the decisions to formulate Canada's first-ever national affordable universal child care system, a robust climate plan that is going to create jobs and protect our environment for generations to come and to focus investments not only on growth, but also on measures that will improve the quality of our health care system, mental health, in particular, and so many other aspects of this recent budget.

This is a made-in-Canada approach that goes beyond looking at traditional macroeconomic indicators and will be used to enhance the quality of life that Canadians experience day to day. By using a broader suite of indicators, measuring, for example, factors such as mental health, the environment, employment and social trust, our government is going to be able to better measure and evaluate the

impacts of key initiatives that are essential to Canadians' well-being. This includes looking at the distribution of outcomes and opportunities across demographics and in places, and whether today's prosperity could potentially undermine the future living standards of the next generation. We need to ensure that gender equality, diversity and the well-being of Canadians are at the centre of decision-making. It is fundamental, if we are going to create a thriving and successful country that reflects our values as a nation, that we implement those values in the decision-making process.

Frankly, this is the right time for this framework. As we look forward to rebuild the inclusive growth—

• (1915)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

Mr. Paul Manly: Madam Speaker, there is a term that some thinkers use to describe our current economic model, and that is a “self-terminating civilization”. In the pursuit of greater and greater economic growth, we are driving ourselves toward extinction, so measurements of economic well-being must account for environmental degradation and social costs. I am glad to see the government moving in this direction.

We need to strive toward a circular economy with zero waste so that every product has a full life-cycle plan in its components. Our shared goals should be to eliminate poverty and homelessness; improve health outcomes through expanded health care services, mental health, dental care and pharmacare; provide free education from preschool through post-secondary; and leave a healthy environment for our children and grandchildren.

Doing better starts by placing a value on things that really matter for our survival: clean air, clean water, nutritious food and a safe and secure place to live.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member sincerely for his approach to this issue and so many others.

In the one minute that I have to conclude, it is essential that we see the value of a forest before it is cut down. It is essential that we see the value in the time we spend with our families, not just at our desks or at our places of work. If we want to focus, as we should, as I mentioned at the outset of my remarks, on ameliorating the quality of life that Canadians enjoy, then we need to measure what matters. That includes bringing into the decision-making process a focus on ensuring that all Canadians can benefit from economic growth, that growth is sustainable and that we do not put the almighty dollar ahead of concern for families' well-being.

It is an honour to speak to this issue today and every day.

Adjournment Proceedings

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
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 7:19 p.m.)

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