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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, April 26, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*English*]

COMMISSIONER OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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

[*Translation*]

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

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[*English*]

INFORMATION COMMISSIONER

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsections 39(1) and 40(1) of the Access to Information Act, a special report to Parliament from the Information Commissioner.

[*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.

* * *

[*English*]

WAYS AND MEANS

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and pursuant to Standing Order 83(1), I have the honour to table a notice of ways and means

motion to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7 and other measures.

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

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), and consistent with the current policy on the tabling of treaties in Parliament, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaties entitled “Protocol on Preparedness, Response and Co-operation to pollution Incidents by Hazardous and Noxious Substances, 2000”, done at London on March 15, 2000; “Acts of the 24th Congress of the Postal Union of the Americas, Spain and Portugal”, done at Willemstad on October 21, 2021; and “Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the French Republic concerning the Provision of Mutual Logistic Support between the Canadian Armed Forces and the French Armed Forces”, done at Brussels on February 16, 2022.

* * *

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

PETITIONS

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of residents of Chelmsford, in the greater Sudbury area, a community located in my riding of Nickel Belt.

These Canadians are asking the House of Commons to adopt human rights and environmental due diligence legislation.

[*English*]

This would require companies to prevent any negative impact on human environmental rights through their global operations and supply chain.

The Budget

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by Holy Cross High School students in my riding of Saskatoon—Grasswood. They call upon the House of Commons to adopt human rights and environmental due diligence legislation that would require companies to prevent adverse human rights impacts and environmental damage throughout their global operations and supply chains. It would require companies to do their due diligence by carefully assessing how they may be contributing to human rights abuse or environmental damage abroad and by providing access to remedies when harms occur.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS[*Translation*]**THE BUDGET**

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed from April 25 consideration of the motion that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government, and of the amendment.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to rise this morning to discuss budget 2022 and to share the views of my constituents from Kings—Hants. I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Ottawa Centre.

The budget contains many initiatives. Since I have only 10 minutes, my speech will focus on the following three areas: initiatives that are of particular importance to my riding of Kings—Hants, the importance of promoting economic growth and prosperity while remaining fiscally responsible, and the announced initiatives that support our energy and food security.

Before I elaborate on these three areas, I would like to give a bit of background, especially in light of the past two years of COVID-19.

[*English*]

We came into this pandemic with the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. Unemployment was at a 40-year low, and our economic growth was outpacing the cost of financing our country's debt. Sometimes it is easy to forget that, given the two years we have been through.

We can all remember back to March 13, 2020. It is a moment frozen in time. I remember arriving home on a Thursday night flight to Halifax. I was in my constituency office on a Friday when the Prime Minister, and indeed most of the world, was recognizing

the gravity of what the COVID-19 pandemic represented for our collective health and well-being.

We had a choice. Either we could have stepped up to be there for Canadians and businesses as we asked them to take precautions to protect our collective health or we could have asked them to fend for themselves. We made the choice to be there for Canadians. It came with a cost; let us recognize that. This government has spent significantly over the past two years to protect Canadians and make sure there was financial support in place.

The results are telling. We have recovered 112% of our prepandemic jobs. We actually have more jobs in this country right now than we did before the pandemic. Our economy has not only recovered, but is larger than it was prepandemic. Unemployment is at a truly historic low. In fact, it is the lowest since we started recording it in 1976.

It is an interesting dynamic. I am an MP from rural Nova Scotia in Atlantic Canada. If we talk to my predecessor, Mr. Brison, or other MPs who have served in the region, sometimes the biggest concern was having jobs for people in our region to let them stay home, be with their families and have opportunities. Now it is reversed: It is about having the people to fill the jobs we need for our small businesses to continue to grow our rural economy.

Our GDP had 4.6% growth last year, and we have a strong projection in the days ahead. However, it is important right now to recognize that we have to wind down the pandemic-related expenditures and be mindful of our fiscal position. I was very pleased to see the Minister of Finance, the Deputy Prime Minister, in her remarks two weeks ago highlight that importance and that we have a fiscal anchor and will be fiscally prudent in the days ahead.

This budget shows a declining debt-to-GDP ratio over the next five years. By and large, yes, there will be perspectives on this across the country, and indeed in my own riding, but Canadians are expected to make sure they keep their fiscal houses in order, and they expect their governments to do the same. I believe this budget presents a pathway back to balance given we have had to be there for the past two years.

I want to compare that with the Conservative record. I was just graduating high school in 2009 when we were going through the global economic recession. At that time, the Harper Conservative government was slow to react to the situation. It was slow to be there to inject the necessary stimulus to keep our economy moving, and the economic scarring lasted for the next five or six years. In fact, we never really got back to our economic strength until after 2015.

The Budget

• (1010)

I have listened to some of my Conservative colleagues in the House, particularly those in the 43rd Parliament and perhaps early in this Parliament, who have suggested that this government is doing too much. I want to compare our record, in a fiscal sense, on economic growth with their record back in 2008. By and large, I think Canadians believe that what we are doing and what we are moving forward with are extremely important.

[*Translation*]

I will now talk about initiatives for Kings—Hants.

When I knocked on doors during the 2019 election campaign, many homeowners in rural areas were worried about not being able to sell their homes.

The pandemic has shown how important quality of life is, and Nova Scotia's communities are an excellent place to feel at home. We welcomed thousands of Canadians from across the country.

[*English*]

In fact, housing is up 40% in valuation, year over year, in my riding of Kings—Hants. Of course, we need to be concerned about that in terms of affordability, but as I just mentioned, back in 2019, people were concerned about even being able to sell their house and people wanted to be in our communities. Nova Scotia is booming right now and we have to embrace that, but we also have to be there to try to support individuals who want to live in our province, and indeed those who want to live in Canada, because we know this is not just a Nova Scotia challenge. This is a challenge across the country.

I thought the Minister of Finance had important remarks in her budget speech two weeks ago when she highlighted that we are going to be there. We are going to focus on housing as an economic growth sector to make sure that people have a place to call home. She also readily recognized that it is not the Government of Canada's sole jurisdiction. We do not have the ability to go at it alone. We need to make sure we have other partners at the table. She recognized that and I think it is important to recognize it today.

I am one of the younger members of Parliament here in the House, and I have friends and individuals I went to high school with who, in this situation right now, are finding it very difficult to find a home. That is why we have introduced the housing accelerator fund. This is a \$4-billion initiative to partner with municipalities to try to expedite some of the red tape and municipal planning to make sure that our municipalities are partnering with the private sector to deliver the housing we need. We need 3.5 million houses by 2031. On average, we have 200,000 housing starts per year. We have a gap to fill. The government is stepping up by putting money on the table to incentivize that initiative, but again, we will need municipalities at the table and we will need the private sector at the table.

We are also putting \$1.5 billion to the rapid housing initiative. This program has been rolled out to try to expedite housing approvals in the country. Indeed, it has supported the construction of approximately 40 units in Kings—Hants alone. I know it has done upward of 4,000 or 5,000 across the country, although I do not have

the number right in front of me. It is an important initiative to continue moving forward.

We are banning foreign buying for two years. Obviously, there are individuals moving to the country who are going to come to study, but we are not banning that activity. This is for anyone who is going to simply buy housing as a speculative asset. We are making sure that this is not going to be possible.

We are introducing the first-time homebuyers' savings account. How this works is that a person is able to take \$8,000 a year, deduct that from income and put it into a savings account, up to \$40,000 per individual. It can then be withdrawn tax-free to help support the purchase of a new home. I know that is going to be extremely important to Canadians across the country, and indeed to many of my contemporaries who are trying to get into housing right now.

These are good initiatives, but this goes back to supply. We need more supply and we are putting initiatives on the table. We are also focused on social and co-operative housing. Admittedly, I would argue that, over time, the Government of Canada has not been in this space to the extent that it should, but we are stepping up and being there.

I am going to highlight a final couple of things.

On supply management, we are there to make sure we are compensating our farmers in Kings—Hants. Indeed, for the wine industry, we have signalled that we will have a program in place to represent their interests. Our Minister of Agriculture has been working with her provincial counterparts on the Canadian agricultural partnership. That will be extremely important, as will the specific agricultural worker program.

I wish I had more time, but I look forward to taking questions and perhaps re-engaging with my colleagues on points I might have missed.

• (1015)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about housing.

With this budget the government claims to want to help cities accelerate housing construction and address zoning issues. Cities are a provincial jurisdiction, so the federal government will have to negotiate with Quebec. That is a problem.

Following the 2017 launch of the national housing strategy, which was negotiated with Quebec, it took three years for the money to flow to housing in Quebec. Meanwhile, billions of dollars were being spent in Toronto and Vancouver. Everything was going very well for them.

My biggest fear is that it will take that long again.

Would it not have been simpler to send a cheque directly to the Quebec government, so that those who actually know the needs on the ground could manage municipal issues?

The Budget

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

In the previous Parliament, under the rapid housing initiative, nearly 40% of the funding was allocated to Quebec. We have a strong partnership with the Government of Quebec to propose and deliver housing in Quebec. I am confident that this partnership will continue in the future.

[English]

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague across the way for his fine speech. I have the opportunity to serve with him on the agriculture committee, which I appreciate.

He mentioned Nova Scotia wine. I will also inform him that I completed a project with him last night. I finished the final sip of a very good bottle of Nova Scotia wine.

He did not have the chance to complete his thoughts regarding agriculture in the budget. Could he comment particularly on grain drying and barn heating issues? Could he put a few thoughts on the record regarding that issue in the budget and what we are dealing with at committee?

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, yes, I did give my colleague opposite a beautiful bottle of Nova Scotia wine. I am glad he enjoyed it.

I want to talk about a couple of initiatives that I did not have the chance to address. Our government is tripling the agriculture clean tech program. This is going to be extremely important for farmers across the country. We are also working on the on-farm climate solutions. I believe there is close to \$400 million. In total, that is almost \$1 billion for the agriculture sector. That is going to matter in Kings—Hants. It is going to matter across the country.

On the wine industry, in budget 2021, we had \$101 million. I would like to work with this government and with the Minister of Finance to extend that timeline a little further in the days ahead so that we can continue to produce top-quality Canadian wine.

As it relates to grain drying, Bill C-8 has important initiatives. There is almost \$100 million for farmers in backstop provinces. I hope this member will work with his Conservative colleagues for us to get this through so we can make a difference for Canadian farmers across the country.

• (1020)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I always enjoy hearing my colleague speak in the House of Commons.

We know that housing has been in crisis now for decades. It has been since the Paul Martin Liberal government ended the national housing program. For its first term, the Liberal government only constructed or started construction on 14,000 units of affordable housing, when we need hundreds of thousands of units across this country.

With the NDP push on this budget, we finally have the kinds of investments that are needed to build those hundreds of thousands of housing units right across the country to really address the housing

crisis that so many people, including my constituents in New Westminster—Burnaby, feel very keenly.

My question is very simple: Why did it take the NDP and the strong push by the member for Burnaby South to have the Liberal government finally address the housing issue?

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, the initiatives that we are bringing forward were in our platform promise in the 2021 election. The member opposite talked about some of the past government choices to not invest in housing, but we are stepping up and making sure that they are there.

It is very similar to child care. For a long time, it was talked about. We are the government that stepped up and delivered it, and now we have something across the country. Indeed, we will work with all parliamentarians in the House to build on our housing and to make sure that everyone has a place to call home across the country.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. I am pleased to follow my colleague for Kings—Hants. I just noticed we are wearing pretty much identical ties today, so I am glad he got my text message this morning.

I am quite pleased to speak about this budget and what it means for Canadians, in particular my constituents here in Ottawa Centre.

I think it is really important, before we start any conversation about what is contained in this budget, to recognize the fact that we are still living through a global pandemic. We know that life has been quite difficult over the last two years as a result of this pandemic. I and many citizens did not see such a major change in our lives coming in the form of a public health emergency.

As the pandemic continued to impact our lives, it was so dramatic that governments not just in Canada, but around the globe had to take immediate action to protect their citizens from getting infected, and in more extreme circumstances dying, from this virus that invaded our lives.

Because of that, governments in Canada, the provinces and territories, and around the world took steps to help us be safe by initially shutting down the entire society we live in. It was quite unprecedented. My colleague for Kings—Hants talked about the early days of March 2020, and how dramatic things were. I know memories fade, but I think we are going to remember that for a very long period of time we were told to stay at home, not to go to our jobs, not to take public transit, and to isolate from our own families. Everybody may remember the bubbles we were asked to create so that we could help protect each other.

As a result, the entire economy had to be shut down. We can talk about an artificial recession, because the economy before that, as we will recall, was working and accelerating at full throttle. The unemployment rate was extremely low and the GDP was high, but we had to shut everything down simply to protect all of us.

The Budget

The government did not stop there. It had to then ensure that all of us could survive as we lost our jobs. Many Canadians lost their jobs. The unemployment rate went up to about 13% or 14% because we asked people to stay at home in order to be safe. The government invested billions of dollars in its people.

An unprecedented amount of spending was done: This often gets forgotten. It was done so that Canadians, the people who live in our constituencies, could feed themselves and look after their families, not to mention to help our businesses so they could survive through that pandemic-induced recession, as well. It is absolutely clear that it was costly. There are no ifs, ands or buts about it. It required hundreds of billions of dollars to do, but it was the right kind of investment, which I believe all members of the House supported because we were supporting Canadians, Canadian families and Canadian businesses.

Now, we are in a recovery mode. We have much better control over this pandemic. Vaccination has been a lifesaver for Canadians. Canadians should be very proud of how they have stepped up to get fully vaccinated. Over 80% of Canadians are double vaccinated, and close to 60% have now also received their booster shots.

• (1025)

Again, our government had to spend billions of dollars to procure those vaccines so that we could protect Canadians. The result is that people are employed again and our economy is growing again. Our employment rate is higher than it was before the pandemic started. The unemployment rate is roughly around 5%, which is better than it was before. The bigger challenge is that we cannot find enough people to work in our businesses. All those supports helped us get through the pandemic and ensured that Canadians could get back to where they were and do even better, and that is exactly what we are seeing.

This budget is in that context. It asks what kind of economy we are going to rebuild as a result of this pandemic. We are doing a few things in this budget. First, we are ending the pandemic supports. We knew there was a time limit to all those supports. They were there to help people and businesses get through the pandemic. We are now sunsetting most of those pandemic supports. They have now ended, which of course reduces government spending significantly. What we are now doing is really investing in post-pandemic economic recovery.

I am going to spend some time on how we are doing that while also bringing our debt and deficit under control. We see that the budget is working on all three of those aspects, because we recognize that we have to be fiscally prudent and make sure that all the borrowing we had to do, and the investment we had to make in Canadians, is now coming to an end. As this happens, we will also look at ensuring that we bring our debt and deficit under control as well.

In terms of investing in post-pandemic economic recovery, there are a few very important things we are doing in order to ensure that. I am speaking from experience as the member of Parliament for Ottawa Centre. I have seen how all the supports, whether employment income supports or rent support for small businesses, helped my constituents in Ottawa Centre. I talked to small business owners

and individuals about how they were able to manage through the pandemic and how they were now going back into the workforce.

Now, we are looking at issues around affordability. The most important thing, of course, is affordable housing: making sure we build more affordable housing, and making sure that affordability of ownership is available. In my community over the past couple of weeks, I visited affordable housing at Carlington Community Health Centre in my riding. Just downtown, on the corner of Rochester and Gladstone, 140 new homes are being built and families are moving in. It is one of the largest passive house developments being built with the support of the Canadian government so that individuals and families can have homes.

We are going to be investing in dental care as a result of this budget. Some people may say that this is something that happened as a result of a deal between the Liberals and the NDP, and that is a good thing. This is exactly how Canadians always ask us to work together and work on those good ideas. I am glad that, in collaboration with the New Democratic Party, we are going to be creating a dental care plan for low to mid-income Canadians.

For me and for my constituents, our transition to a low-carbon economy is extremely important. In fact, I would hope for a zero-carbon economy. We are seeing, through the emissions reduction plan, some real actions being taken to ensure that we are investing in public transit. Right here in my city of Ottawa, we are building the LRT, which is electrified, and we are getting electric buses to ensure that people are not driving cars. We are moving towards a low-carbon transition.

I see my time is coming to an end, but there is so much to talk about that speaks to this post-pandemic recovery that would not only help people but would also build a more resilient economy that is transitioning to an environment that is fossil-fuel-free. It would allow people to survive and thrive, and allow Canada to be an economic force around the world.

• (1030)

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, early in my colleague's comments he referenced the robust economy that Canada was experiencing just prior to the pandemic, and later on he referenced that the budget was getting the debt and the deficit under control. I am wondering if he could comment on the wisdom of having the government add \$112 billion to this country's debt pre-pandemic, and then how this budget gets our present debt under control, in the context of the Parliamentary Budget Officer's comments saying that stimulus funding was not required and the budget does not account for all of the other measures that have been promised but do not appear in the budget.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Madam Speaker, we have been investing in Canadians from the moment we came into government. Right here in my community, as I was mentioning, we have seen a tremendous amount of investment in affordable housing. In the past, under the previous Conservative government, the federal government was nowhere to be seen in the business of building new affordable housing.

The Budget

In fact, I had the honour of serving at the provincial level, and back then, in Ontario, we were working very closely with our local municipalities and we only wished that the federal government was at the table so that we could really address the issue of chronic homelessness. That is the kind of investment our government has been making.

Another good example is the child benefit, to ensure that we bring children out of poverty. All of those things helped us get through this pandemic. Now it is time to work on the next set of postpandemic recovery plans.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I heard something in my colleague's speech that I hear a lot: Canadians want us to work together.

My colleague mentioned the agreement with the NDP, but I want him to know that some Canadians want higher health transfers. That is what all the provinces want. The Council of the Federation is demanding increased health transfers.

We mobilized every single physicians' association, including specialists and general practitioners. We also mobilized every single large union that represents employees in Quebec's health sector. They are all saying the same thing: Health transfers must go up.

If my colleague wants to work for Canadians, why is there absolutely nothing in this budget about increasing health transfers?

[*English*]

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Madam Speaker, we all recognize that health care is a very important responsibility of both federal and provincial governments, and we have seen, since the introduction of the universal health care system, that both the federal and the provincial governments work very closely in collaboration to serve Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

In fact, the pandemic was a public health care emergency and both orders of government, including our municipalities, which are responsible for delivering public health services, worked together to make sure that resources were there to assist Canadians to work through this pandemic. Resources were increased in our hospitals, in ICU beds and in our long-term care homes. Of course, we can do better. We need to do more, but this is something that we will continue to work together on with our provinces and municipalities.

• (1035)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to recognize that the parliamentary secretary's riding was affected by the illegal blockade, as well as mine, and the extra stress it has caused on businesses. In my area, we are still out millions of dollars municipally to deal with the illegal obstruction of the traffic. Young people, persons with disabilities and those on the lowest employment scale lost out as well.

Do I have the commitment from the parliamentary secretary to make the city of Windsor whole after the illegal blockade, which not only cost this country billions of dollars, but still locally millions, especially in one of the most challenged areas in Canada?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Madam Speaker, I agree with the member that those blockades and the illegal occupation were a huge blow to our

respective cities and to local economies. I am very happy to see that in the case of both Ottawa and the city of Windsor the federal government has stepped up in supporting small, local businesses through investments to recover some of the losses they incurred during the occupation. We need to make sure that those types of things never happen again and that we help grow our cities, individuals, families and small businesses in both Ottawa and Windsor.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to split my time with my hon. colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

It is a great privilege to rise in the House today and speak in support of this budget. I want to say at the outset that no budget is perfect. There are many, many provisions in budgets with which we agree, and there are obviously many with which we disagree. This budget is no different in that regard, and the NDP will continue to push for all of the progressive policies that we have historically pushed for, that we know Canadians need and that, unfortunately, are not contained in this budget.

However, I rise today to speak in support of this budget, imperfect though it may be, for a couple of key reasons. As the health critic for the federal New Democratic Party of Canada, it is my unique privilege to be able to carry on the traditions of great health critics before me, going right back to Tommy Douglas, who is considered the father of medicare in this country. After examining this budget, I think that the absolutely most critical parts of it, and why all colleagues in this House should support this budget on a non-partisan basis on behalf of their constituents, are the historic elements it contains that would make Canadians healthier. I am going to focus on two parts of that: dental care and pharmacare.

All Canadians know that a year ago the Liberals in this House voted against dental care for Canadians. A year later, here we are in a minority Parliament, and because of the hard work of 25 New Democrat MPs and of the New Democratic Party of Canada, this budget includes funding of \$5.3 billion over five years and \$1.7 billion a year ongoing thereafter to move ahead with a dental care program for millions of families that do not have private insurance in this country, that do not have access to dental care, with an income of \$90,000 or less annually, with no copays whatsoever for anyone with an income of \$70,000 or less annually.

The Budget

This budget includes funding to move ahead immediately on dental care for children under 12 years old, in 2022, and then next year, in 2023, expand it to all children under 18 years old, seniors, and persons living with a disability. By 2025, there would be full implementation for all individuals who meet the income criteria. This means 6.5 million Canadians, at least, would have access to primary dental care within the next 36 months because of this budget.

I want to talk for a moment about dental care. I think everyone knows intuitively, without being a physician or having health care credentials, that dental care is a critical part of overall health. In fact, it is inconceivable that we have a public health care system that covers our entire bodies but carves out a section of our mouths from the tonsils forward and says that this is not covered by our public health care system. That is not only logically incongruous, but it is actually medically ridiculous. Poor oral health is linked to other serious health conditions, including cardiac problems, diabetes complications and even low birth rate and premature birth in women. Poor oral health can even kill.

We pride ourselves in this country, I think across all aisles in this House, on having public health care, meaning that everybody, regardless of their station in life and their income, has access to primary health care. That is not true when it comes to dental care. When it comes to dental care, we have two-tiered, private access to health care in this country, and that is antithetical to our concept of what health care should be in this country.

I should also point out that it is not just limited to physical health. People with poor oral health or bad teeth suffer from enormous mental health challenges as well. There has been a lot of focus on mental health from all parties in this House. I want to commend my colleagues, even in the Conservative Party, who have raised a number of significant deficiencies in our public health care system when it comes to mental health. Just yesterday, a Conservative member rose in this House and made a passionate plea for a suicide prevention hotline in this country. Mental health for people who are missing front teeth, people who are living with chronic pain, and seniors who have no teeth in their mouth and cannot afford dentures has an enormous impact on self-esteem and mental wellness. We should be as concerned about that as about any other mental health issue.

● (1040)

There are, of course, economic impacts. People with poor teeth have their job and career aspirations interrupted. Members can imagine interviewing an applicant for a job who shows up and is missing top front teeth. We make judgments about people, and people are embarrassed about the state of their teeth, because they are in their face. It is what we present to the world. I think it is long past time that we brought dental care to every Canadian for economic, physical, mental and emotional health reasons.

Ironically, dental care was always intended to be part of our public health care system. Back in the 1960s, the Hall commission recommended that dental care be part of our public health care system, and the only reason it was not implemented at the time was not because of cost, but because it was felt that Canada did not have sufficient dentists in this country to provide the services. That is not the

case anymore. What is the reality today? It is that 35% of Canadians, which is about 13 million Canadians, do not have access to any dental insurance whatsoever, and that understates the problem, because many more have insufficient, substandard or sporadic coverage with high copays, annual limits or high deductibles.

This budget, due to our work, aims to address this. New Democrats believe passionately and fervently in having universal access to public health care, so we consider this to be a down payment on our ultimate goal, which is universal dental care for every Canadian, regardless of the size of their wallet, through our public health care system, like every other medical procedure, whether it is a broken leg, heart surgery or cataract surgery. A broken tooth or an oral health issue should be no different.

I want to just briefly mention a couple of the key components that need to go into a dental plan. We need to create a plan with a good range of services, comparable to any normal plan in place now for Canadians, including the plans that we as MPs have. I want to see a proper fee schedule, so that all of the dental professionals who deliver these services are compensated fairly for their time and skill. We want to make sure that all dental professionals are involved in the creation of this plan: not only dentists, but dental hygienists, dental assistants, denturists and dental therapists. We want to build a system based on prevention of decay and oral disease, because ultimately, at the end of the day, that will save money.

Right now, we are fooling ourselves if we think that ignoring this problem is economically smart, because Canadians are, in record numbers, appearing in emergency rooms in every province and territory in this country every day with dental issues. In fact, I am told that the number one reason for children to enter emergency rooms in this country is poor oral health.

I want to speak for a brief moment on pharmacare, because this budget also includes steps, pressured by the New Democrats, to move toward universal and national pharmacare. This budget includes the requirement to table a pharmacare act by the end of next year and to task the Canadian drug agency to develop a national formulary, which were two of the steps recommended by the Hoskins report and part of the NDP's long-standing call.

The Budget

New Democrats believe that comprehensive public drug coverage should be in place for all Canadians as soon as possible. Every year, as with dental care, millions of Canadians are forced to go without their prescription medications, simply because they cannot afford them. Again, there is two-tiered health care in this country. If people are rich, they can get medicine; if they are poor, they do not. That is contrary to Canadian values. One in five Canadians, which is seven and a half million citizens, has either no prescription drug coverage or inadequate insurance, and Canadians, ironically, consistently pay among the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs.

Under the agreement made between the New Democrats and the Liberals, we aim to fix this. We will do that by compelling the introduction of legislation, creating a national formulary for essential medicines and creating a bulk-buying program, so that we can start saving money.

I want to end by saying that pharmacare saves money. It would save \$5 billion a year in this country; it would save businesses \$16.6 billion annually; families would see their out-of-pocket drug costs reduced by \$6.4 billion; and the average business would save \$750, with families saving \$350 a year. It makes good economic sense. I urge all my colleagues to support this budget.

• (1045)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his intervention today.

At the beginning of his speech, the member talked about the desire of the NDP to work with the government in order to see some of its priorities advanced and moved forward. Indeed, I would suggest, in a minority Parliament, that is exactly what parties within this House should be doing. I think that NDP members have seized on the opportunity to advance some of their own objectives, and it is in line. They are looking out for the best interests of Canadians, as opposed to just strictly trying to score cheap political points by criticizing the government at every single opportunity. However, as he indicated in his speech, he will still hold the government to account when he and his party see fit.

I wonder if the member could comment as to whether or not he sees this opportunity that NDP members have put themselves in as an opportunity to genuinely advance things on behalf of Canadians.

Mr. Don Davies: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for a very astute and fair question.

The last time Canada had two minority parliaments in a row in which the Liberals were in government and the NDP held a balance of power, we got medicare, old age security and the Canada pension plan. That was in 1965. I think that if we asked Canadians today what they are most proud of as Canadians, they would say our public health care system, which was created by parties working together, in that case, in the 1960s, the Liberals and New Democrats.

Where are we today? We have had two successive minority parliaments in a row, with the Liberals in power and the NDP holding a balance of power. We have used that power on this side of the House to work constructively for Canadians to deliver programs to make this Parliament work.

I will conclude by saying that, by definition, minority parliaments require parties to work together. Nothing would get done if parties did not seek common ground, and that is what New Democrats have done in this Parliament. I look forward to working together for the good of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Vancouver Kingsway for his speech.

I find it utterly fascinating to hear the NDP and others talk about a dental program, especially now that the Liberals are saying this is their way of helping seniors.

I would like to take this a little further because the NDP voted in favour of last year's Bloc Québécois motion recognizing that seniors are disadvantaged and that old age security should be increased.

Where are the New Democrats at with that? Have they backtracked on their pledge to do more for seniors? There is nothing at all in this Liberal-NDP budget that helps seniors.

• (1050)

[*English*]

Mr. Don Davies: Madam Speaker, I can tell the member that I have been an MP for 14 years, and I cannot tell her how many seniors have come into my office who do not have access to dental care. I have had seniors in my office who had no teeth. Can the member imagine what the impact is on nutrition and oral health if one has no teeth?

This budget, next year, would provide every single senior who makes under \$70,000 a year and who has no dental insurance, in other words, just about every senior in the country, access to public dental care.

My hon. colleague asked, "What is in the budget for seniors?" Well, I would say that this is the biggest expansion of public health care in half a century, and it will bring dental care to every senior in the country, including in Quebec. The member should support that or explain to seniors in Quebec why she is going to vote against the bill that would bring them dental care. I challenge her to ask seniors in Quebec what they think about that.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I will start by thanking the member for Vancouver Kingsway for his advocacy on public health care, with pharmacare and dental as two examples.

The Budget

My question is on the supply and confidence agreement that New Democrats have signed with the governing party, which mentions a plan to phase out fossil fuel subsidies. However, we know that this budget also proposes a new investment of \$7.1 billion in a new subsidy for carbon capture and storage. This is my question to the member: Is this a concern to him?

Mr. Don Davies: Madam Speaker, in short, yes, it is, and I share my hon. colleague's concerns about the climate crisis. As I said at the outset of my speech, we do not agree with everything in this budget, nor were we able to get all of the New Democrat priorities in the confidence and supply agreement. We negotiated as best we could.

I think we have to do much more, and do it much more urgently, to take the climate crisis seriously. That includes phasing out all fossil fuel subsidies immediately, and transitioning immediately, as well, to sustainable forms of energy. We cannot wait any longer, and I share the member's passion and sense of urgency in dealing with the health of our planet. We have to push the government to go much further, much faster.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am extremely pleased to rise today to take part in this discussion, this very important debate. I applaud the excellent speech given by the previous speaker, my colleague from Vancouver Kingsway. She did a great job presenting the progressive and humanistic vision of concrete gains that the NDP wants to achieve for people, including citizens, tenants, seniors, those who are struggling, and the less fortunate.

While it is not perfect, the budget does have some good points, and I will talk about them. The NDP managed to get some of the things we wanted, but not all of them, and we will continue to work on those.

This also stems from the fact that Quebeckers and Canadians voted in another minority government in Ottawa, with roughly the same proportion of members for each party as before. Voters told us to work together and come up with solutions, much like Jack Layton told us back in the day. In fact, our campaign slogan in Quebec in 2011 was about working together, so we in the NDP have used our strength, the fact that we hold the balance of power, to negotiate with this minority government in order to make gains and progress.

I too will come back to the very real gain of having a dental care program. It is a major breakthrough. At the NDP we have always been very proud of being the force behind our universal and free public health care system. The system still needs to be improved, of course, and we obviously agree that transfers to the provinces need to be enhanced.

The system presents us with an absurd situation where some parts of the body are insured by the public plan but others are not. For example, my heart is insured, my lungs are insured, but my teeth and my eyes are not. It is as though the human body is a puzzle and some pieces are insured but others are not. Dental care, for example, is a major piece.

During the last election campaign, when I was door-knocking and talking to the people of Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, Montreal and Quebec in general, people were very pleased with and receptive to the NDP's proposal to provide accessible dental care free of charge to people who earn less than \$90,000 a year.

I believe that this budget sets out a clear game plan. Beginning this year, children under 12 will be eligible for free dental care. Beginning next year, teens, seniors aged 65 and over and people living with disabilities will be eligible. In the third year of the plan, all households, families and individuals earning less than \$90,000 a year will be eligible. Fully one-third of Canadians will have access to dental care, whereas currently they do not.

We know that this has a considerable impact on people's lives, and especially on their wallets, because dental care is very expensive. If people have to pay out of pocket and cannot do so, they will not go to the dentist for cleaning or care, even though they should.

I believe that this has an impact on one's self-esteem, personal life and professional life, when it comes to choosing a career. The quality of dental health care is a question of social class, and I am very proud that the NDP, the opposition party, was able to get dental care into the budget. This will deliver tangible results for people.

This is not about creating a federal program with federal dental clinics and federal dentists. This is about instituting an insurance plan that will cover the bills for people eligible for this program. The bills will be paid by the government so that people do not have to pay out of pocket, which will help families in Quebec and all across Canada save thousands of dollars a year.

I am also very pleased to see a game plan for pharmacare. The first steps of the Hoskins report will be implemented through a bill slated to be introduced next year. This will be an important step forward.

We pay far too much for medications, which hurts workers, businesses and the government. A public, universal pharmacare program that is, of course, negotiated with the provinces, would represent a breakthrough that would help everyone. Quebec civil society, the Union des consommateurs du Québec, the FTQ, the CSN and the CSQ have all called for such a program.

The NDP believes that this can be done while giving Quebec the right to opt out with full compensation. However, we believe that this program would have so many benefits that it would ultimately be worthwhile for everyone, for both workers and employers.

The Budget

• (1055)

The cost of supplementary health insurance is staggering. It has been skyrocketing for years. There are workers who must sign up for these supplementary insurance plans through their job. For example, I have met people who work part time in grocery stores in Montreal, and 25% of their salary is used to pay for these company insurance plans, the supplemental insurance packages. A universal public pharmacare program could represent a nearly 25% increase in salary for people who work part time, particularly in grocery stores.

Another major gain we won in this budget was redefining the term “affordable housing”. Under the Liberals, affordable housing in Montreal could cost \$2,225 a month according to CMHC rules. This is completely absurd and out of touch with reality. We negotiated a review of this definition so that it would not exceed 80% of the average price of housing in a municipality. For Montrealers, that means \$730 a month for affordable housing. That is quite a difference. We have just lowered the price of an affordable unit in CMHC projects by about \$1,500, but we are also increasing the percentage of mandatory affordable housing units in projects from 20% to 40%. I am particularly proud of that. Home ownership and being able to pay the rent is a big concern for people. Again, in the last election, people often talked to us about health care and housing. For years, there has been a serious housing crisis in Montreal and in Quebec in general. We should be proud of this win.

One area in which the budget does not pass muster is the environment and the climate crisis. We would have liked to see much more ambition and action from the Liberal government. It is cutting one small oil subsidy, but it is creating a sizable new one with the tax credit for carbon capture, which is an inefficient technology. It is a kind of high-tech magic wand that will not appreciably reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. The Liberals' failure to deliver meaningful results in this area is appalling. Their greenhouse gas emissions reduction plan is just not good enough right now. They talked about targeting 40% to 45% reductions, but that does not meet the IPCC target of at least 50%, which is what the NDP campaigned on. Within that 40% to 45% range, they are aiming for the low end, the 40%. For the oil sector, the goal is 31%. Essentially, the government is giving the oil sector a gift when it is one of the industries, together with transportation, that should be working harder.

Recently I was amazed to learn that Canada's greenhouse gas emissions had gone down for the first time since the Liberals have been in power, but that was for 2020. In 2020, the economy was on pause because of the global pandemic. They celebrated that decline even though they had nothing to do with it and the economy was basically a standstill. There were no trucks or cars in the street, no transportation, no manufacturing. That is not how we are going to meet our international obligations and provide a brighter and more reassuring future for our children and grandchildren. We are not going to get there with decisions like the one on the Bay du Nord project, which, fortunately, is not in the budget. It is a ministerial order. A decision like the one on the Bay du Nord development project is not going to take us in the right direction because we are once again going to increase oil production in Canada through a totally irresponsible project. Yes, we are aware that extracting oil in

this way is less polluting than the oil sands, but production in the oil sands has not decreased either. That oil produces 85% of its pollution when it is burned, when it is consumed. That means that if it is consumed abroad because we exported it, it is not counted as part of our record, which is completely unrealistic, anti-scientific and hypocritical. It should be factored into our record because we are the ones who decided to extract it.

We are extremely disappointed in the climate and environmental measures in the Liberal budget. We managed to make some progress for Canadians, but we will continue to work hard on other issues, including the environment.

• (1100)

[*English*]

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to ask the member if he has had any opportunity or taken advantage of an opportunity to travel to Saskatchewan, to Estevan, and hear directly from those who have done an amazing job of creating carbon capture and storage in our province.

Also, does he see any value in the fact that coal mines are being developed all over the world that need our technology, and that perhaps that would be an amazing way for us to make a difference to the global climate?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

I did indeed have the opportunity to go to Saskatchewan. I did not meet with the workers she talked about, but I met many workers who were concerned about their future and who wanted to continue to have a good job to pay for their home and their children's education.

That is why a just transition is so important for the NDP. I think that technologies like carbon capture put the problem off until later and are not very effective. We need an energy transition that gives these families and workers a chance to retrain so that they can continue to work with dignity using clean, renewable energy. I think Saskatchewan has incredible potential that is just waiting to be developed.

The Budget

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Canada Infrastructure Bank provides opportunities for capital investments, and one of the significant aspects of capital investments is to have a green transition. A good example of that is in Brampton, where zero-emission buses will be put in place as a direct result of agreements between the City of Brampton and the Canada Infrastructure Bank. I am wondering if my colleague could provide his thoughts on the potential positive role the Canada Infrastructure Bank could have in investing in green transition.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

The NDP calls the Canada Infrastructure Bank the privatization bank, because it is governed by a market-based logic in which investors get guaranteed profits and returns. As a result, projects are selected mainly based on returns, not public usefulness.

That is what the NDP has a problem with. We would like to see the Canada Infrastructure Bank become a real public bank that serves the public interest, not a bank that gives guaranteed returns to private investors. If the bank is operating from a perspective of guaranteed returns, then the choices that are made will not necessarily be good for the energy transition or the well-being of the population in general. They will only be good for shareholders.

• (1105)

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, there are two things in life: pretty words and concrete action. In his speech, the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie denounced the government's climate inaction. Yesterday, however, we voted on an amendment to the amendment that called for concrete action.

In his speech, my colleague said that the NDP had achieved significant results for seniors, yet old age pensions are still not being increased at age 65.

We proposed this in the amendment to the amendment we voted on yesterday. We also proposed increasing health transfers to Quebec, which the member claims to agree with most of the time, but of course we wanted concrete action.

Now we get a speech from the NDP suggesting that they are the good guys, that they have an alliance, and that they are happy to be achieving results. The fact is, however, that his party voted against Quebecers and against seniors yesterday.

I wonder if he could explain why the NDP voted as it did. Indeed, if we are talking about the balance of power, a tremendous opportunity was missed yesterday.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to answer my colleague's question. I am very proud to have achieved real results for Quebecers.

We won on dental care for the poorest people and for the middle class. We have achieved results for tenants who are struggling and for Quebecers having a hard time paying their rent. We have

achieved results for workers who pay too much for their prescription drugs. We have achieved results for much fairer taxation. Dental care is important for seniors.

I can list everything the NDP has achieved. What has the Bloc Québécois ever achieved?

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was originally planning to speak for 20 minutes, but I then heard that the member for Richmond Hill had some very important stuff to contribute to the debate, so I will be sharing my time with the member for Richmond Hill today. I look forward to his speech.

I will start by saying that I am very happy that the government was able to come to a supply and confidence agreement with the NDP for the next few budgets that will be introduced in the House. I think that it is good to have the ability to work together with other political parties on the important issues of Canadians.

I say that because quite often what we hear, and the engagement in the House that comes from across the way, is just opportunity after opportunity to be overly critical and hyperpartisan, and to point fingers at individual personalities and people, rather than try to advance the objectives of Canadians. We have seen the supply and confidence agreement come to fruition.

Members from across the way in the Conservative Party are already heckling me over this, and I cannot help but remember earlier in the debate when the member for Miramichi—Grand Lake was so critical of this supply and confidence agreement. He said, and I will paraphrase because I do not have the direct quote, that Canadians did not vote for this, that they did not vote for an NDP and Liberal agreement like this and that they did not want any part of that. He was extremely critical of it.

However, do members want to hear something? In probably the most ironic twist of fate, with hypocrisy spewing out of this place with that comment, that very member, the member for Miramichi—Grand Lake, was a member of the Progressive Conservative Party of New Brunswick.

When they did not form a government in 2018, that member and his colleagues chose to enter into a supply and confidence agreement with, get this, the right-wing populist People's Alliance party. For 18 months, that member was in a supply and confidence agreement, provincially, in New Brunswick, yet he had the gall and the audacity to stand up in the House and insist that Canadians did not vote for the agreement the NDP and the Liberals have come together on.

I think the hypocrisy that comes from across the way is just absolutely remarkable, and we see it time after time, yet they continue to heckle me now.

The Budget

I do not want to get caught up and hung up on just talking about the member for Miramichi—Grand Lake, but the good news is that I will also be talking about New Brunswick in my speech, because he referenced the fact that New Brunswick does not have a lot of charging stations.

Well, I have good news for him on environmental vehicles. The good news is that the government is investing \$1.7 billion over 5 years to extend the incentivizing of zero-emission vehicles until March of 2025—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1110)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order.

There is a lot of heckling going on from the opposition. I would just ask them to hold onto their thoughts, or write them down if they are afraid they are going to forget them, because there will be an opportunity for questions and comments, and that is the time to voice their concerns or their opinions.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I see I have got the member for Miramichi—Grand Lake all worked up. There is no doubt, given the hypocrisy I revealed only moments ago.

Nonetheless, we are investing in those charging stations right across the country. As a matter of fact, the federal government has already contributed to over 1,500 charging stations throughout this country. Later this year, we, the Liberal Party, are having our national caucus meeting in St. Andrews by-the-Sea in New Brunswick. My wife and I will be attending the conference, and we will be driving our electric car from Kingston, Ontario, to St. Andrews by-the-Sea, New Brunswick.

I look forward to giving the member a full update on the various charging stations we stopped at along the way, including those in New Brunswick, so he can see the value in having an electric vehicle and the ability to move across the country quite freely with an electric vehicle. Later on, perhaps in the fall, I will have the opportunity to update the member on the success of our trip and whether or not my wife and I made it back in one piece.

I do want to also touch on another part, a very important part, of this budget.

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am flattered that the member's entire budget speech is about me. I love that kind of promotion, but the budget speech is supposed to be about the budget. As proud as I am to get his endorsement over and over again, which I appreciate, I really do—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is a matter of debate. The hon. member knows full well that there is a lot of latitude in debate, and the hon. parliamentary secretary is speaking about what is in the budget.

There has also been some heckling and some people talking while the hon. member is delivering his speech. If members are afraid they will forget what they want to ask and are not able to write it down because they do not have paper, I am sure the pages would be happy to bring them a pad of paper and a pen to them.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I am wholeheartedly endorsing the province of New Brunswick. I cannot wait until over 150 Liberal MPs descend upon the member's province in less than six months from now. It will certainly be a great opportunity to visit and see the incredible things that his province has to offer, and I look forward to that. It is a bit of a stretch to suggest that I was endorsing him or his politics, as he suggested. That is certainly not the case.

I want to go back to what I was talking about with electric vehicles. It is not the first time I have spoken about them in this House, and I am very encouraged to see not only this budget contributing to electric vehicles driven for individual uses, but also the specific changes and additions to the budget that will go to medium and heavy-duty, zero-emission vehicles. This is where we have a lot of work to do.

In my opinion, in the electric vehicle market, as it relates to the smaller vehicles that individuals and families use, we have passed the tipping point. Those vehicles will be in abundance within a few short years. People will be using them throughout this country, there is no doubt about that. What we really have to focus on are the medium and heavy-duty vehicles. That is why I am very pleased to see that this budget has a specific allocation of funds toward launching new purchase initiative programs for those vehicles. In particular, there is just over half a billion dollars and \$33.8 million over five years to Transport Canada specifically to work with provinces, such as New Brunswick, and territories to develop and harmonize regulations and conduct safety testing for long-haul, zero-emission vehicles.

In our economy, there are so many large vehicles that continuously move along all the major highways to move goods and services, not just within Canada, but, indeed, also with our major trading partner to the south, the United States. Putting the proper incentives in place to make sure that these vehicles can be net zero as an ultimate goal, and even achieving improved efficiency in emissions between now and then, is truly what we need to be focusing on, in my opinion.

As it relates to electric vehicles, I am very pleased to see the increases we have seen over the last number of years from this government and the investments from the federal government, despite the fact that provincial governments throughout the country are turning their backs on them. Doug Ford, three and a half years ago, was removing charging stations from GO stations, if I remember correctly. Now, as he gets ready for an election in just over a month from now, he is talking about how he is going to put new charging stations throughout the province of Ontario, as if this is not completely driven by a political agenda. Even Doug Ford, apparently, has started to understand that the future is in electricity and in making sure we electrify our grid.

We can either be on the forefront of this, as this government is attempting to do, or we can be chasing it from behind later on because we were dead set in assuming that the only form of energy comes from fossil fuels, as the Conservatives would like us to do.

The Budget

I am very pleased to see the approach that this government is taking when it comes to electric vehicles, in particular. I look forward to proving to my colleague from Miramichi—Grand Lake in New Brunswick that I can drive from my city to his province and back again on electricity, and I plan to provide him with a full report on that in September of this year.

• (1115)

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member talks about a political agenda. It is interesting because I have a private member's bill, Bill C-250; its second reading is tomorrow. Lo and behold, during the budget, the Liberals take my private member's bill for the second time. That has to be a political agenda. It does not even have any money involved. It should never have come into the budget bill, but there it is.

Why is my private member's bill, Bill C-250, in the budget bill? Is it because it is a political agenda by the Liberal government?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, this sounds like an argument between my three-year-old and my five-year-old. Is the member upset that the government said this is a good idea, whether it already had it on the back burner or genuinely got it from the member, as he is suggesting? Either way, why is he so upset that the government is moving forward with something he is passionate about? Is that not what this place is all about?

He talks about it being part of a political agenda. How is it an agenda to actually agree with people? If anything, it is a political agenda to stand up and say, "How dare someone take my idea. That was my idea." What is going on here? The member is genuinely upset right now because we are moving forward with something that he cares about. That is not how this place is supposed to work.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is amusing to hear the member for Kingston and the Islands trying to say that everyone is partisan except for himself, and that he is the only person in the House who is not partisan.

I would simply like to point out to him that all provincial premiers and all stakeholders in Quebec's health sector, including major unions and physicians' associations, and not just a specific political party, asked for an increase in the health transfer. I do not know if the member feels these stakeholders are being partisan.

The member for Kingston and the Islands is this close to following the Minister of Canadian Heritage's example and saying that we are trying to pick a fight whenever we contradict the government. I would like my colleague to explain that to me.

• (1120)

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I never said everybody was partisan in here. As a matter of fact, I never even brought up the Bloc in my speech. I talked about the NDP and I talked about the Conservatives. I am sorry if the Bloc is feeling a little left out right now. I will remind the member that health care transfers have been increasing over the past number of years. As a matter of fact, there was a \$2-billion top-up this year in order to help with backlogged surgeries.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, as I said in my speech, and I think my hon. colleague touched on it a bit, one of the signature pieces of this budget is the creation of a dental care program that will help six-and-a-half million Canadians get access to primary health care for their mouths. I know the Conservatives are opposing the budget and, in fact, they oppose dental care. I have not heard any positive comments from the Bloc Québécois on this.

Can my hon. colleague share with the House what he thinks of dental care and whether his constituents would benefit from having a program that would help people who make under \$90,000 a year get access to dental care?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I think that dental care was the natural transition from health care. I believe we are long overdue in terms of bringing forward dental care.

I recognize this member, in particular, is very passionate about dental care. He has brought it up before. What I would say to the House is that I believe this place is about coming together and putting forward ideas on behalf of Canadians, not on behalf of who gets to take the credit for those ideas.

Certainly, as members heard in my speech, I am very passionate about electric vehicles, electrifying our fleet and anything that can relate to getting us to net zero. This member is very passionate about dental care in particular. The member from the Conservatives who asked me a question is very passionate about his private member's bill that is now apparently in this budget.

I think we should all take great satisfaction in knowing that ideas can come forward from all different parties and that we can work together on behalf of Canadians, as opposed to on behalf of trying to get political wins.

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to speak in support of budget 2022: a plan to grow our economy and make life more affordable.

Let us talk about the budget, finally. What is this budget all about? It has become apparent that fiscal prudence and economic growth serve as two major themes throughout this plan, and there is a clear reason for that. With a prudent and responsible approach, this is a budget that acknowledges and addresses the biggest concerns for Canadians based on four pillars: housing, climate protection, affordability, and jobs and growth.

Before I get into my budget speech, I want to emphasize that the budget's comprehensive approach to these concerns is not by accident. It is a result of numerous consultations, community feedback sessions, town halls, emails, phone calls and more. For that, I want to thank everyone who has participated in the process of developing this budget. I want to specifically extend my gratitude to my constituents in Richmond Hill, because they took the time to engage with this process by attending my five community councils or contacting my office with their concerns.

The Budget

I would like to start by giving some context for the fiscal prudence of this budget.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and during the lockdowns, the economic downturns and more, our federal government quickly and effectively rolled out our major financial support programs that helped keep businesses, workers and families afloat. We have been at a 115% recovery in jobs since April 2020, over three million jobs have been created since the depths of COVID-19, and our unemployment rate has declined to 5.3%. It is lower than it was prior to the pandemic, and lower than it has been since 1976. Our focus has been on keeping Canadians safe and financially stable, and that continues to be the case today, but we know that we need a different approach from the one that was necessary during the pandemic. In essence, budget 2022 outlines a fiscally prudent plan to reduce deficits, lower the debt-to-GDP ratio and drive toward a near-balanced budget within five years.

Now, we need to turn our attention to growing an economy that is still in recovery, but we know that we cannot strengthen our economy without first thinking about affordability. That is why this budget continues to highlight our investment in affordable child care while touching on new commitments for affordable housing and dental care.

The overarching pillars of this budget can be further broken down.

The housing measures focus on building and supply, saving, and the banning of foreign investments.

The climate pillar invests in zero-emission vehicles, clean electricity, oceans and fresh water, and clean technology.

Under the jobs and growth pillar, we are helping small businesses benefit from tax cuts, establishing the Canada growth fund, and focusing on supporting tradespeople across the country.

Lastly, affordability plays a role in all of these pillars, but its own particular investments are most explicitly seen in child care and dental care.

I am really going to home in on housing, which is a topic I am passionate about, because I know that it will likely have the greatest direct impact on Canadians and the constituents in my riding.

Budget 2022 targets affordable housing through increasing supply and making it more obtainable for buyers, especially young and first-time homebuyers whose dream of home ownership is in jeopardy due to the continuing rise in costs.

On the supply front, we have made a commitment to doubling the number of housing units built over a 10-year period. This commitment is going to come to fruition in several ways, including with the launch of a new housing accelerator fund. The \$4 billion investment for this fund will be put toward creating 100,000 new housing units over the next five years.

In order to further speed up the construction of housing, we are also investing \$200 million in the affordable housing innovation fund, which will encourage new innovative building techniques in the affordable housing sector. In fact, this fund will dedicate \$100 million to support not-for-profits, co-ops, developers and rent-to-

own companies in building new rent-to-own units, and will turn the discussion of affordable housing into a reality for our communities.

● (1125)

We also recognize that increasing supply does not always work effectively unless it is accompanied by quick and timely execution. For vulnerable populations that are in urgent need of affordable housing, waiting years for the supply to increase is simply not an option. Thanks to the tireless efforts of housing support providers in my riding, such as Blue Door, Home on the Hill, Yellow Brick House, Sandgate Women's Shelter and more, there are services in place to help address the housing needs of vulnerable groups, but we need to do more to reduce the burden on their shoulders.

That is why our government launched the rapid housing initiative with the goal of delivering affordable housing units for vulnerable people in an expedited manner. Budget 2022 highlights our \$1.5-billion investment in this initiative, which will create at least 6,000 additional affordable housing units across Canada. This budget also proposes to advance \$2.9 billion in funding on a cash basis under the national housing co-investment fund, which will speed up the creation of up to 4,300 new units and the repair of up to 17,800 units for the Canadians who need them most.

All of this is going to mean more generous contributions, faster approvals, and an overall quicker and more efficient process that will make affordable housing more accessible, sooner.

Now let us talk about our future homebuyers: first-time homebuyers and youth who are going to be saving up for places they call home. In my riding of Richmond Hill, the cost of owning a home is at an all-time high. First-time homebuyers in Richmond Hill are now faced with the difficult decision between staying at home in a community that they know and love and having to move further away to be able to afford a place that fits their needs.

Our federal government is aware of these issues, which is why we are proposing a series of new measures, starting with the tax-free first home savings account. Through this, we are giving prospective homebuyers under the age of 40 the ability to save up to \$40,000. This could mean around \$725 million in support over five years for Canadians who are trying to save their money by having it go in tax-free and come out tax-free. We are also going to be doubling the first-time homebuyers' tax credit to \$10,000, which means up to \$1,500 in direct support to home buyers. This amount is not insignificant for young people: every penny towards their home matters.

The Budget

Providing financial support is not the only way to address the rising costs. We need to implement preventative measures that will protect buyers and renters. Through Budget 2022's commitment to prohibiting foreign investment in housing and the development of a homebuyers' bill of rights, we will tackle the issue of foreign commercial enterprises using homes in Canada for non-residential purposes such as parking their money, and we will also put forth a national plan to end blind bidding.

There is one more component to housing, and it is something that we see quite often in Richmond Hill. The concept of multi-generational homes is very important to my community, as families prefer to stay together and feel connected to their homes and to their relatives. This budget's introduction of the multi-generational home renovation tax credit helps provide up to \$7,500 for families hoping to construct a secondary suite in their homes for seniors or adults with disabilities. This means more money for more space, without separating families from one another.

In closing, all of these are targeted and responsible investments that align with the themes of fiscal prudence as well as economic growth, while giving more Canadians safe and affordable places to call home. This really is a responsible and responsive plan, and I hope that every member of the house joins me in supporting it, because its supports are necessary to build a more affordable and resilient Canada.

• (1130)

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a question. Maybe the hon. member could help me understand. I am coming from the mortgage business in my previous life. If we look at page 45 in the budget book, the Liberals put out an example of how the tax-free savings account would work for first-time homebuyers.

I have done the math. I have done everything possible for today and for 2027. As of today, that plan would allow individuals to purchase a home up to \$355,000. In my riding of King—Vaughan, where the average price has increased 142%, that does not work. However, if we look at 2027, with the tax-free savings account where individuals could add \$40,000, it would give them a \$500,000 purchase price. We cannot find a house for \$500,000 today. How are we going to find it in 2027?

Could you please explain that to me? I would like to learn.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will not be able to explain that to you, but I am sure the hon. member for Richmond Hill will.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Madam Speaker, this is a great question that I pondered at the dinner table with my children as we were exploring how we can make sure they can afford a house.

This is part of a bigger puzzle, and that includes our first-time homebuyer partnership with the Government of Canada, which means, if the hon. member recalls, that an individual will get 5% to 10% of a down payment depending on the type of home they are buying. There is also the tax-free savings account and the use of RRSPs.

A number of programs have been put together to ensure that first-time homebuyers, especially youth, have the money to make a

down payment, because as we know, after the down payment very few Canadians default on their mortgage. A combination of these things would put an individual in a position to buy their first home.

• (1135)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, in his presentation, our colleague opposite spoke about eco-responsibility. He also spoke about the energy transition and stated that the budget lays the foundation for moving in that direction.

If that is so, then why are billions of dollars still being allocated to support the fossil fuel industry?

I understand that we are talking about a transition. The goal is obviously not to shut the sector down tomorrow morning and lay off the workers. There is no question of that. However, there has to be a plan stating that, within a certain number of years, there will be no more money for the fossil fuel sector.

Why are we not seeing the start of a financial withdrawal from that sector?

[*English*]

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Madam Speaker, there has always been a plan. The plan is to make sure that the economy and the environment go hand in hand. We need to make sure that we not only protect jobs for those who are working in the energy sector, but also provide bridging programs for retraining to give people the opportunity to transition into sectors that are much greener. We also need to make sure that carbon is captured. That is why we see a large incentive for the oil and gas industry to ensure that we capture carbon and make sure that clean energy is coming out.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.*

I would like to thank the member for Richmond Hill for focusing on housing. As I have mentioned many times, indigenous housing is a major issue and a dire need in many of our communities. I had the privilege of visiting a family in one of my constituent communities in Kugluktuk. There were 13 people living in a three-bedroom unit.

Does the member agree with me that everyone in the House needs to do better to advocate for more indigenous housing? Will the Liberal government commit to do more than what it promised? I realize there was an increase of \$4.3 billion, but that is not sufficient to meet the housing needs of indigenous people.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for acknowledging the \$4.3-billion investment that has been earmarked for the indigenous community. I agree with the hon. member that we need to do better, and we will continue to do better. I continue to be an advocate very much the same as the rest of my colleagues on this side of the House.

The Budget

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to join the debate on budget 2022. I think it is the fifth budget I have been able to debate since arriving at this place.

This seems to be another case with the Liberal government of “if at first you don't succeed, try and try again”, duplicating past budgets with lots of spending and lots of added debt, but with a poor outcome. I think in the case of the government, though, the saying should be “in case you don't succeed, spend and spend again”.

I want to touch on three major items in today's budget. The first is housing. It is no surprise that I want to talk about housing, and it is covered a tiny bit in the budget.

We know there is a housing crisis of prices in Canada right now, an affordability crisis, and I want to read a couple of quotes from the housing minister. In February, just a couple of months ago, he said, “We have ensured that we have housed 1.1 million Canadians since the beginning of this government... We have built over 480,000 units of housing through...the national housing strategy.” Two months later, just last month, he said they spent \$72 billion and have housed two million people. In two months, he claimed in the House, we have gone from 1.1 million Canadians housed to two million. That is 900,000 additional Canadians housed in just two months. Unfortunately, it is not true.

Here are the facts, and this is from the Parliamentary Budget Officer. This is not me making up this information, nor pundits. This is actually from the Parliamentary Budget Officer. Across the country we know the average house price has doubled since 2015. The Parliamentary Budget Officer stated that funding for housing programs intended to help low-income households has, under the government, actually decreased 15% in purchasing power.

The government will stand and tell us to look how much money it has spent. It has spent all these billions, but we know that there is an inflation problem. We also know there is a housing affordability problem, with prices going up. The Parliamentary Budget Officer himself has said that the money put in by the government, based in real dollars, is down 15%. He further stated that since 2015, there has been a 42% reduction under CMHC's low-income housing units for houses that have been supported. Again, just in April, the housing minister said two million Canadians have been housed, up 900,000, miraculously, from two months earlier. However, here we have the Parliamentary Budget Officer noting a 42% decrease.

The PBO further states that CMHC's shift to capital contributions over affordability assistance, like rent assistance, means that little short-term relief is actually delivered to Canadians. Further, he says that while these capital contributions are spread out over time, even when looking at the long term, the actual result in lowering rents for Canadians is very little and maybe not worth the investment. The PBO also states that there are as many Canadians living in vulnerable housing now as there were in 2015, after \$30 billion to \$72 billion. It is hard to say how much because the housing minister changes the numbers each time he stands to speak. It is \$30 billion in one moment and then \$72 billion. Say it is on the low side, at \$30 billion in spending. What do we have for it? We have as many Canadians in vulnerable housing as we did in 2015. Home-

lessness in Edmonton has actually doubled in the last couple of years under the government.

I want to get to the second part: growth and the economy. What has \$1.4 trillion in debt, hundreds and hundreds of billions in added debt, by the government gotten us? The finance minister stands in this House, just as she did yesterday, and states that we have the highest GDP growth according to the IMF. Well, according to the IMF, with numbers that come directly from the IMF website, in 2021, the year the minister claimed we were number one, we were actually fifth in the G7 for growth. We are second in 2022. In 2023, the IMF predicts we are going to be below the advanced economy average for growth. Think about that. In 2021, we were fifth in the G7. That is after a 67% increase in the price of oil. Here we have our economy surging because of the price of oil and we are still fifth. In 2022, we are seeing another 12% increase in the price of oil, yet we are still not at the top in the G7.

• (1140)

There is an OECD report out called “The Long Game”. It says that Canada is going to have the worst-performing advanced economy from 2030 to 2060. When I was reading through this report and saw we are going to be the worst from 2030 to 2060, I thought maybe we will be okay from 2022 to 2030. Then I read the next page and it said that oh, by the way, from 2020 to 2030 Canada is going to have the worst-performing economy in the OECD as well. This is the OECD; this is not me. These are real numbers from the OECD. In that same report, the OECD talks about productivity. Canada is going to have one of the worst productivity improvements in the OECD.

Part of the name of the budget is “A Plan to Grow Our Economy”. This gets back to my comment about the government: “If at first you don't succeed, try and try again”. The Liberals have been trying for years and years and spending more and more, and what do we get? We get what the OECD says is going to be the worst-performing economy in the OECD. Turkey, Greece and second world countries are all going to have higher economic growth than Canada.

The Budget

I will go on to the environment. Here is a quote from our environment minister from January 31: “I would like to remind him that over the past few years, our government has implemented more than 100 measures and invested \$100 billion in the fight against climate change.” What are these 100 measures brought in by the government and this \$100 billion, as the environment minister claims? According to Stats Canada and the Library of Parliament, GHG emissions have actually risen every year under the government. Therefore, \$100 billion of taxpayer money is spent and there are 100 new regulations and programs, but we get higher GHG emissions. I wonder where we would be if the government had done nothing. I think we would be a lot better off.

I want to get back to another claim by the finance minister. Besides saying we have the fastest-growing economy in the G7, she talks about our GDP growth being the highest in the G7. What she leaves out is that this is not what we call real GDP growth, which is the real growth when we take inflation out of the GDP. When we take out our out-of-control inflation, we actually drop quite a bit in the G7. We are not the top, as the Liberals claim. Adjusted for inflation, OECD numbers say we are the fifth in the G7 for economic growth.

We heard today claims about the debt-to-GDP ratio. We notice the Liberals always say “net debt-to-GDP” or they just say “debt-to-GDP”. They do not talk about the gross debt-to-GDP. Do members know why that is? When we take the real debt or the gross debt, we are not the best in the G7, we are not the second and we are not the third. We are actually the fourth. When we look at the developed nations of the OECD, we are the ninth worst out of 38 for debt-to-GDP.

What is the difference between what the Liberals are claiming and the truth and reality? In net debt, they include the half a trillion dollars in assets of the CPP and the Quebec pension plan. They do not count the liabilities and all the money put aside by our parents, ourselves and our grandparents. They do not include that liability, but they include the money they have set aside. The government is therefore not counting every penny set aside for someone tomorrow, next year or in 10 years when it makes the claim of how great our financial situation is. Other OECD nations do not record the net amount like we do, so it is a false statement. It is unfortunate that the government continues to mislead Canadians on how bad things are with our debt, which actually has to be eventually repaid one day, one would hope.

Obviously, we are in a problem here in our nation. We have an aging population, no growth coming and an out-of-control deficit. Canada needs better, and that is why I will not be supporting budget 2022.

• (1145)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, anyone listening to the member opposite could very easily get quite depressed. I do not think that Canadians need to be as worried as the member tries to portray.

A lot can be twisted around in the numbers, so let me share a couple of reality numbers for jobs. Jobs are important, and today our unemployment is at record lows. We would have to go back

generations to get a lower unemployment rate. Do not quote me on this, but I believe it is right around 5.5%. It was many years ago that we had that sort of unemployment rate.

When we talk about the issue of inflation, which gets a lot of air-time here, it is important to recognize that there is a global situation, whether it is the pandemic or the war in Russia. The inflation rate is higher in the U.S. It is also higher, in terms of the average, in the European Union countries.

Would the member provide his thoughts on those two statistics?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague fails to mention something, and this is what the Liberals do. They will make a statement, knowingly twisting reality. They say we have the lowest unemployment we have had, but our unemployment is about 60% higher than in the United States. The U.S. has all these demographic and racial issues; it has all these problems, yet our unemployment here, despite massive spending, is 60% higher. Our unemployment is higher than England's. Our unemployment is higher than Japan's. Sure, it is better than it was perhaps a year ago or two years ago, but when we compare it to our peer countries, our unemployment is very, very high. The member opposite should be more forthright when he talks about such numbers.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I tend to agree with my colleague's criticism of the government's inconsistent housing figures.

The government admits defeat on the housing crisis right in the budget. The government admits that its proposal will not be enough. The Liberals claim that 3.5 million homes need to be built by 2031. I do not know where they got that figure of 3.5 million, but that is what they said.

The government said that Canada currently constructs 100,000 homes and that it will double this number. This 100,000 figure is not real. It does not exist. The National Housing Council said that 35,000 homes have been built since 2017. Say it were true that 100,000 homes have been built. This government is suggesting that 200,000 be built, but 200,000 a year for the next 10 years is just two million homes.

The government says that we need 3.5 million homes, but this will not happen. It is basically admitting that it will fail.

What are my colleague's thoughts on that?

The Budget

• (1150)

[English]

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague, and it has been disinformation from the government. We heard the housing minister in February talk about 1.2 million Canadians housed by his government. Two months later, it is two million Canadians. One moment it is \$32 billion spent, and the next moment it is \$70 billion.

The reality is that we have a housing shortage. We built fewer houses in the last six years, since the government came to power, than any of our peer nations in the G7. What the government is doing is not working. It has to change track. It should listen to us, to colleagues with the Bloc and to colleagues with the NDP. What the government is doing is not working and it needs to change track to help Canadians, not just its political fortunes.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I understand that the member for Edmonton West is quite concerned with debt and that the cost of housing is increasing in his community, as it is in mine.

My question for him is on his level of openness when we talk about addressing house flippers and speculators in terms of new revenue options, whether it is increases to a vacancy tax or reducing capital gains exemptions for second, third and fourth homes. Can he comment on these as additional ways to reduce the speculation in the market and increase revenue to do more for affordable housing?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, I respect the question and where my colleague is going. The reality is that Canada has a shortage, and that is not going to be fixed with taxes. It is not going to be fixed with the home equity tax the Liberals seem to keep funding studies of, but by addressing the supply issue.

We need to get government out of the way. We need more supply built. We see it in our G7 peer countries that have proper supply. They do not have the housing crisis, the affordability crisis, we have now. The best thing we can do is get government out of the way and build more houses.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Madam Speaker, budgets are important. They are the core of a parliament. It is a real honour to be able to rise here today and speak to budget 2022. For many of us, this is the first substantive piece of legislation that we as new parliamentarians are tasked with scrutinizing. The importance of this job that Canadians have trusted us to undertake cannot be understated.

Every single day, many people from Hastings—Lennox and Addington are calling and emailing my office with grave concerns about how they can make ends meet. Just last week, our office received hundreds of feedback forms indicating that the cost of living and affordability was their number one concern. The cost of groceries, gas, home heating and everything has increased. It is my obligation and my role as their member of Parliament to bring them a voice in this House.

On general spending measures, the Liberal government suggests that the announcements in the budget will help weather inflation and make housing more affordable. In my opinion, the continuation

of this Liberal approach is destined to drive us right back into a crisis of an order of magnitude larger than that of the early 1980s, based on constantly adding new permanent spending programs on borrowed money.

As noted in an article I read recently, only a small portion of our national debt is refinanced each year, so we will not get stung all at once. However, year by year, servicing costs will rise and the ability to afford our essential programs will dwindle, unless taxes rise substantially to cover the rising costs of both debt serving and increased program costs.

The core function of our Parliament has been, and remains, to oversee the expenditure of public monies.

Parliamentarians, and parliaments themselves, fought long and hard to pry this authority from the hands of imperial executives and governors, decades ago. Their actions lend themselves to our uniquely Canadian brand of responsible government.

In his important work, *The Public Purse*, which is used as source material in our most recent practice and procedure manual, Norman Ward describes the struggle of our nascent pre-Confederation legislatures, as it related to oversight, thus:

In principle, therefore, the first goal usually sought by an assembly was to make the executive at least partially dependent on the assembly for its income; the second was to make it wholly so; the third, and most sophisticated, was to insist on some sort of detailed public accounting, on a systematic basis, of expenditures after they were made.

In 1838, Lord Durham was sent by the mother of parliaments to investigate the cause of the previous year's rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada. One of the litany of causes was, as he describes, related to the relationships between the assemblies and the executives.

In his hugely influential report, Lord Durham wrote:

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

He went on to state:

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

This speaks to two principles of parliamentary control of finances: first, that the executive should have no income that is not granted to it or otherwise sanctioned by Parliament; and second, that the executive should make no expenditures except those approved by Parliament, in ways approved by Parliament.

The Budget

I am not suggesting that this legislature does not possess the capacity to scrutinize. I know it does, but I believe in recent years we have not been wielding that authority properly and effectively, especially as it relates to Mr. Ward's third point regarding what ultimately became our main estimates. As a result, Canadians are now paying the price.

● (1155)

We need only look at this very budget document for proof positive of what rushed legislation does, most particularly in the case of budgets. Hidden away in annex 3 of the budget, the fourth from last page reads as follows:

In Budget 2022, the government proposes to amend the Old Age Security Act to clarify that the one-time payment made in August 2021 to seniors age 75 and older will be exempted from the income test for the Guaranteed Income Supplement and Allowances. This amendment corrects a reference error resulting from the passage of the Budget Implementation Act, 2021, No. 1.

This begs the question: What was the error?

In sections 266 and 268 of the Budget Implementation Act, 2021, the section that had intended to make the one-time, \$500 payment to struggling seniors aged 75 and up non-taxable, the Liberals quoted the wrong section of the act. Instead of quoting section 275, the section that actually created the payment, they cited section 276, which is completely unrelated to seniors and instead deals with the Public Service Employment Act. As a result, right now, under law, as desperate seniors are filing their taxes, that \$500 is considered income, and not just at tax time but come the July recalculation period for benefits. In other words, the government has created and legislated yet another potential benefit clawback.

It is only prudent to highlight that last time, the budget was time allocated, meaning that the government, with the NDP's support, limited the amount of debate that we could have on the budget. That was debate where we might have found this error and saved seniors the stress of another possible clawback.

I would note that it was the same group of seniors, those aged 75 plus, who had the wrong T4 information sent to them due to a misprint. How convenient that the same, exact group of people who were subject to an age-restricted benefit that everyone, including, I imagine, the CRA and the ESDC, thought was non-taxable, received misprinted T4s. Now we find out that the benefit is, under word of law, actually taxable. That is why my colleague for Miramichi—Grand Lake and I called on this government to extend the filing date for seniors.

With regard to seniors, they have very little to celebrate in this year's budget. Of a projected \$56.6 billion in new spending through to 2027, a paltry \$20 million has been earmarked for supporting our seniors. To put that into perspective, that is 0.04% of spending announced in the next five years. There is nothing to help struggling formal and informal caregivers, nothing to help long-term care facilities and nothing to help alleviate the increasing cost of living they all face. Low-income seniors need help today, and they cannot afford to wait.

To get back to my original point, our job here is to scrutinize. What we do here is the basis for responsible government. When we cannot do our jobs, Canadians suffer. On my file alone, we have seen it with the GIS clawback, we have seen it with the T4 delays,

and now we are seeing it with the one-time payment, which are all things that could have been avoided if we actually took the time to do our job right. I will give credit to the hon. Minister of Seniors, who has acted on things when they were brought to her attention, but the point is that it should never have gotten to this point.

Lastly, I want to touch on the absolute absurdity that is our main estimates process in relation to the budgetary process and the need to align Treasury Board with Finance in the preparation of those documents. However, my time is running short, so I will leave members with one more recent quote from the 2019 report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, entitled, "Improving Transparency and Parliamentary Oversight of the Government's Spending Plans". The report quotes Scott Brison as saying, "The ability to exercise oversight over government spending is the most important role that...parliamentarians can play in representing Canadians."

I urge everyone here to heed the words of our former Liberal president of the Treasury Board and let parliamentarians do our jobs thoroughly and effectively, because Canadians cannot afford for us to do otherwise.

● (1200)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, originally I thought I would ask a question in regard to seniors, but I am going to pass on that. The changes have, in fact, been made, in good part, and the budget finalizes that. We have been very supportive of our seniors over the years, from day one.

My question, more specifically, is in regard to the member's historic perspective in terms of accountability of the House. One of the things, I would argue, being a parliamentarian for 30 years, in terms of the importance of getting that accountability and transparency, is looking at our rules. It is the Standing Orders. It is the way in which we process our daily proceedings.

For example, if we were to, heaven forbid, look at the modernization of our House and our rules, and many of the concerns that the member opposite recognizes as something that is important, which I personally believe too, would she not agree that it is time that the House of Commons look at modernizing our rules to ensure that we can have ongoing transparency and accountability no matter who is in government?

The Budget

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Speaker, I will start by suggesting that respect for this place, respect for my colleagues of all stripes, is incumbent on all of us to recognize. Due process, evaluation and critique of certain bills and passages are critical. In my opinion, it is the scrutiny of the public expenditures that is the core, and it is our Parliament's obligation. It is who we are as individuals and it is who we are as parliamentarians, and we can never give up that responsibility, especially in a confidence and supply arrangement.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague. We share files pertaining to the status of women and seniors, and we often have the opportunity to talk.

Naturally, she spoke about seniors. We sometimes forget that old age security puts money back into seniors' pockets and contributes to their purchasing power. Seniors have become significantly poorer, and were impoverished even before the pandemic.

The issue of health is just as crucial in our efforts to help seniors. My colleague accurately listed seniors' needs and the importance of increasing health transfers to 35%, as Quebec and the provinces are calling for. That is essential; it is crucial. That is what seniors are asking for.

Health is not just a matter of jurisdiction. Quebec and the provinces have the expertise to care for their seniors, but they need the financial means. It is important to hammer this message home.

Does her party commit to supporting the request to increase health transfers to 35% in a recurrent and predictable manner?

• (1205)

[*English*]

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Speaker, we have to recognize that when seniors get to that stage in their life, whether it be in their own home to age in place, in a long-term care facility or in the homes of their children, they will be living the rest of their lives there. It is their space. It is their social circle and their recreational circle.

When it comes to seniors, it seems like the current government has a habit of taking one step forward and two steps back. I am delighted with the record that the Conservative government has with regard to seniors. I think it is really important and prudent of us, as parliamentarians, to have their backs, in the words of the Liberal government. If they are going to have the backs of seniors, they need to step up and act.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I always enjoy hearing my colleague in the House of Commons. Certainly, I thank her and her family for their service to Canadians.

I have two questions. First of all, during the Harper government years, that dismal decade, the PBO evaluates that over \$25 billion a year in tax monies went to overseas tax havens. That is a quarter of a trillion dollars. Will she acknowledge the contribution of the Harper government to our national debt through the signing of many offshore special tax agreements that allowed the ultrarich to take their money offshore?

Second, in terms of dental care for seniors, there are over 29,000 people in Hastings—Lennox and Addington who would benefit from the NDP's dental plan. Many seniors will benefit from it. Will she acknowledge that dental care is important for seniors, and all Canadians, and that this will make a difference in their quality of life?

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the acknowledgement of my family's career. My father had a lovely retirement gathering last week and it was wonderful.

With regard to the question he asked, I believe that my colleague has failed to mention the positive record of the Stephen Harper government and the results that he did deliver for seniors.

More specifically to pharmacare and dental care, I think the devil is in the details. I would love to be proven wrong, but I am not—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mend s): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Humber River—Black Creek.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to see you in the chair and pleased to be back in the House. I hope everybody had a restful period of time and we are all back here now.

As I rise in the House today to speak to this year's budget, I will be sharing my time with the member for Mississauga—Streetsville, a wonderful new member of Parliament we have here who is doing great things and who is great to work with.

Several weeks ago, when it was announced that our Liberal government had made a supply agreement deal with the New Democratic Party, I was concerned about that, and I made that known. I am a firm believer in helping and supporting not just Canadians, but those all over the world as we continue, but I am also, like many of my colleagues, a very strong believer in fiscal responsibility. With our country still in an unknown due to COVID, a war on Ukraine, and any other potential things that could come our way, I was unsettled about how we could meet those needs and still remain financially responsible as a government.

I have to congratulate my hon. colleague, the Minister of Finance, as I no longer have those concerns because she struck the perfect chord in this budget. My concerns about the arrangements that we had made on the supply deal and the impact it was going to have on the direction of our government were very much unfounded, because we were able to produce a budget that, yes, delivered on things that mattered to other people but, importantly, we were fiscally responsible, and I was very pleased with all of that.

The Budget

Before I speak further on the budget, I want to mention page 101, which says, “Protecting Our Freshwater”. It might sound like an odd thing to be concerned about as a Toronto member, but we have to be concerned about our lakes. It is an ongoing subject that I have been involved with for some time when it comes to the invasion of sea lamprey in our lakes and the agreements that we had between Canada and the U.S. We were not paying our share to ensure that the invasive sea lamprey were not allowed to continue to cause the kind of damage that they do in the Great Lakes.

I have been lobbying on that issue with my former staff member Greg McClinchey and others. With the help of the member for Niagara Centre and his continued persistence, it is in the budget, with significant funds that will truly be our support in dealing with invasive species like that. I want to congratulate Mr. McClinchey and the member for Niagara Centre for pushing it over the line. I am glad it is done. It does not matter who gets the credit if it gets done, and it is going to make a difference in the Great Lakes and our cities.

The other issue that matters a lot to the residents of Humber River—Black Creek is that all of the provinces have finally signed an agreement for affordable day care, something with which I go back to the previous prime minister Martin, trying to get child care then. That was at least 12 years ago. Well, we finally got it over the finish line and we have agreements with all of the provinces and the territories for an early learning and child care infrastructure fund in the budget. It is going to make a huge difference in the lives of residents in Humber River—Black Creek. Many of the parents in Ontario will be able to save an average of \$6,000 per year per child by the end of 2022.

What I see as most important for the residents of Humber River—Black Creek is the fact that many of the families have had to have one member of the partnership stay home, and I know that these women, many of them, wanted the opportunity to go to work. They could not find child care that was affordable. Well, now they will have child care that is affordable. They will be able to go back to school. They will be able to pursue a career. It will make a huge difference in their lives. Otherwise, they had to wait until their children were significantly grown up in order to be able to actually get on to work.

• (1210)

When we look at seniors in poverty, which is an issue we have talked a lot about over the many years I have been here, every year we manage to reduce the number of seniors in poverty. However, if we turn around and make sure, and this is what we are doing with child care, that we provide women and men the opportunity to work, because their children are going to be in a safe day care, an affordable day care opportunity, they can go to work and contribute to their pensions from early on, not having to wait until their children are completely grown up and out of the house before they can go to work. The cost of child care has been exorbitant and parents were simply having to make a choice. They could earn money, but they would pay it all out in child care, so it just did not make any sense for them to go forward. The more Canadians are working, the better our economy will be.

Since our government took power in 2015, we have brought forward six other budgets. Many of them have included great things that have helped the residents of Humber River—Black Creek, such as the Canada child benefit. We should not forget all the families that are benefiting throughout this country. We have helped 435,000 families out of poverty since 2015 and continue to provide almost \$7,000 per child to families this year. We are increasing the minimum wage. We have also increased the amounts for the GIS and the old age security pension, things that matter to many people.

We have made investments in workers. As a result of the pandemic, we realized just how important it is to have paid sick days. We can keep our head in the sand all we want, but the reality is that if people are sick and have to pay rent and put food on the table, they are going to go to work, sick or not, and that is very unfortunate. Having 10 paid days of sick leave for federal and private sector employees will make a difference in the lives of many Canadians as we move forward.

We are increasing climate action incentive payments. Most families in my riding are going to receive over \$800. I am certainly talking to them about paying attention to how they file their income tax, because there is almost \$800 coming back as a result of the carbon tax that they continue to hear people criticize. It is putting money back into the pockets of many people.

I talk a lot about how important it is to use a budget to be fiscally responsible, but also to give people a hand up as we move forward, and dental health is one that we as a party and certainly I have talked about many times. I talk to people in my riding who are having a tough time and cannot get a job. They have missing teeth, and even when they try to pull themselves together to present themselves for a job, clearly they do not present themselves well because they do not have the money to have proper dental health care. We, as Liberals, have talked about it, and I think this agreement we have is a major boost. Yes, it is going to cost a lot of money, but if it makes people's mental health and physical health better as a result of having proper dental care, I think it makes a huge difference. We are phasing it in, again, in a fiscally responsible way. I think those things are very important as we move forward.

On housing, I cannot tell members how happy I am to see the amount of money going into housing, and how well we are doing with that. It is a huge subject. If people do not have a place to live or a roof over their head, it does not matter what else we do for them; that is what they need, so investing in affordable housing and making it all move forward is an extremely important thing. I am thrilled to see the amount of money that is going into housing. Co-op housing in particular is something that I have a real interest in. I would like to see a lot more of that built throughout the country, especially in Humber River—Black Creek, for the residents there.

Madam Speaker, I can see that my time is up. Thank you very much for the opportunity. I think it is a great budget, and I am very proud to stand and support it.

The Budget

• (1215)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, following the NDP-Liberal agreement and alliance and the announcements made about pharmacare and dental care, there is something missing in the budget, namely a recurrent and unconditional increase in health transfers. This an important, basic and unanimous request by Quebec and the provinces, to which the government is responding only in a roundabout fashion.

That is not what this government is doing with its noble proposals. In fact, no one is opposed to dental care or pharmacare. However, there are things that are the exclusive purview of the provinces and that could have been managed by Quebec and the provinces according to their respective priorities.

Does my colleague not think that it would have been better for all the provinces and Quebec to simply meet their request and transfer the money to the provinces so that they can pay for and manage these programs themselves? As we have been asking for a long time, and as the Bloc Québécois is repeating yet again, would it not have been better to increase health transfers on a recurrent basis so that we can properly manage our health care systems?

[*English*]

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Madam Speaker, I do not want to be too blunt about it, but the reality is that the federal government passes millions and millions of dollars down to the provinces for health care and so on, but the provinces' priorities are not always the same priorities that we at the federal level maybe think they should be.

On the issue of dental care, many of the provinces probably would have never got around to doing it because it is all about decisions. I am glad that we are supporting something this important. We were headed in that direction, and I suspect in the next election we would have been covering off dental care, but we were able to move forward sooner and it is that much better.

• (1220)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member, as well as Greg and others at the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, for their hard work on sea lamprey and getting that accomplished. I appreciate the member's continual work on that for the Great Lakes.

With that, I would like to ask the member about my private member's bill, Bill C-248, which is coming up. It is on a national urban park that would protect one of the last areas of the Great Lakes. It is supported by Caldwell first nation, and was supported unanimously by the City of Windsor just yesterday through a motion. I am hoping we can bring this bill to committee.

I would ask my colleague about how important national urban parks are. Given that this one will not require any funds, as it would be an assembly of public land, will it get the support to go to committee and be investigated for our national urban parks?

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Madam Speaker, the member for Windsor West and I have been working together for I do not know how many years now. We very often have similar thoughts. I would be very interested to see what is in the bill. To find the opportunity to dedicate land as a national park is a wonderful idea. I look forward

to seeing what is in the bill my hon. colleague has brought forward and to hopefully support it with him.

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Northern Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member's speech really goes to the heart of where many Canadians are. What she is hearing in her riding is very similar to what I have heard across my riding.

When we talk about affordability now, we know that it is increasingly harder for so many families and sectors in our society. I would ask the member to highlight for us some of the things in this budget that would make it easier for Canadians, seniors and families to be able to continue through what have been very trying times.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Madam Speaker, I can say that over the last last two and a half years that we have been dealing with the pandemic, nothing has made me more proud of our government than the amount of help that we put out there for people who were losing their jobs or did not have jobs to go to any longer. With the monthly support they received and the help that we gave to businesses, the job numbers are now back up to pre-1974 levels, and a lot of that is because this government handled the pandemic and those challenges the correct way.

Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today I am here to highlight three areas from budget 2022. Before I do that, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from Humber River—Black Creek for her lovely words.

To start, I would like to share a story about a Mississauga resident named Norma. Norma immigrated here to Canada in 1989 with her family. She had previously completed a bachelor's degree in nursing in the Philippines. However, since her foreign credentials were not recognized here in Canada, she had to work really hard to go back to school for additional studies while working and raising her family. After a lot of sacrifice, dedication and perseverance, she finished her schooling and college, and passed her board exams. Norma's credentials were eventually recognized as those of a registered nurse. The woman I am referring to is my mom.

The Budget

Many Filipinos and immigrants like my mom come to Canada to build a better life for families. I am excited to share that in budget 2022 we propose to provide \$115 million over five years, with \$30 million ongoing, to expand the foreign credential recognition program. This would help up to 11,000 internationally trained health care professionals per year to get their credentials recognized and find work in their field. It would also support projects, including standardized national exams, easier access to information, faster timelines and less red tape. That would reduce barriers to foreign credential recognition for health care professionals.

There are many immigrants like my mom who have the critical skills and/or experience required to fill the job and labour shortages we have in this country today. In a 2009 report, the Canadian Nurses Association predicted that Canada could see a shortage of 60,000 full-time nurses by 2022 as a result of retirement projections. We know that this has been further impacted by the negative effects of the pandemic.

This pandemic has really shown the public the value of nurses and health care professionals in our overall health care system. As such, I want to take a moment to thank our frontline workers, who continue to take care of our families and loved ones, and who have carried the greatest burden during the COVID pandemic. Their hard work and dedication are truly appreciated. I also want to thank my mom for sacrificing so much for John and me. After seeing her 25 years of service in the long-term care industry, I am so happy that she is now enjoying her retirement with my dad and the grandchildren.

Another major concern that worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic was family and intimate partner violence. Family and intimate partner violence is any type of controlling or threatening behaviour, physical or sexual violence, or abuse between intimate partners or family members. In 2020, police in Peel, which includes my riding of Mississauga—Streetsville, responded to more than 18,000 incidents of family and intimate partner violence. This averages about 50 disputes every day, or two per hour. Most incidents never get reported.

Over 85% of the incidents reporting this type of violence are from women, with the highest report rate being from those between the ages of 25 and 34. This includes women of any race, sexual orientation, religious or economic background. This happens mostly to women, and it threatens our basic right to live free of violence.

Between 2015 and 2019, there was a 12% increase in the rate of intimate partner disputes reported to Peel Regional Police. This has increased further during the pandemic. It has been reported that 44% of women 15 years of age and older who have been in an intimate partner relationship have reported experiencing some sort of psychological, physical or sexual violence in the context of an intimate relationship. It has been proven that violence and abuse can lead to poor physical and mental health, serious injuries and even homicide.

COVID-19 has created unprecedented challenges for those experiencing gender-based violence, and the organizations that provide support and services to them. Our government moved swiftly to ensure those facing gender-based violence have a safe place to turn. To date, the government has provided a total of \$100 million in

emergency funding to over 1,200 organizations, including shelters; indigenous shelters, both on and off reserve; sexual assault centres; women's organizations; and other organizations delivering essential frontline supports to women and children experiencing violence and abuse across the country.

• (1225)

The Department for Women and Gender Equality contributed an additional \$9.5 million from its program budget to support the high demand. Since April 2020, this funding has helped frontline organizations maintain capacity, so that the nearly 800,000 women and children across this country experiencing violence had a place to turn. This funding has ensured that critical services to those in need will continue, but the work does not stop here. That is why budget 2022 allocates funds to develop an action plan to end gender-based violence.

Budget 2022 proposes to provide \$539.3 million over five years, starting in 2022-23, to Women and Gender Equality Canada to enable provinces and territories to supplement and enhance services and supports within their jurisdictions to prevent gender-based violence and support survivors. These funds will also assist to address family and intimate partner violence, and I hope that in this House we can all work together to stop abuse against women in all forms.

I thank my mom for giving me the tools to choose a partner in my life who loves, respects and supports me for who I am.

Last month at the Dar Al-Tawheed Islamic Centre in Mississauga, a man intent to “kill terrorists” attacked Muslim worshippers during their prayers. The man had an axe, bear spray and numerous sharp-edged weapons. Fortunately, no one was seriously hurt, since 20 men took that man down as he let loose a stream of bear spray. This incident has shaken and greatly disturbed the residents and constituents in my riding of Mississauga—Streetsville. This is just one of many unacceptable incidents that have occurred regarding religion-based hate crimes.

The Budget

Canada has also experienced more targeted hate since the pandemic. The public health crisis further exposed and exacerbated issues related to community safety and discrimination in Canada, including hate crime. The Canadian centre for justice and community safety statistics found police-reported hate crimes targeting race or ethnicity rose 80% in 2020 compared with 2019, and they accounted for the bulk of the national increase. Hate crimes targeting East or Southeast Asian people went up 301%; those targeting Black people went up 92%; and those against South Asian people went up 47%. The number of anti-indigenous hate crimes reported to police jumped 152% during the first year of COVID-19.

In budget 2022, \$85 million will be allocated over four years to launch a much required anti-racism strategy and national action plan. This action plan will combat hate, and the funds are allocated specifically to fight racism, discrimination and hate. I hope that in this House we can all work together to end racism, discrimination and hate in all forms.

I thank my mom for teaching me to be strong and to stand up for myself in the face of hate and racism over the years. Very recently, my mom experienced blatant racism when she went door knocking for me. The hate and slander that she experienced while a door was being slammed in her face was absolutely unacceptable. That incident could have traumatized her and stopped her, but she kept going. I thank her for continuing to stand up for me.

I thank my mom for showing John and me what is possible in this country and for travelling with dad to two different continents to provide us with a better life. All John and I ever wanted was for her to be proud of us. As an early Mother's Day gift, I dedicate my maiden speech to her, to my grandmother Lola in heaven, and to our not so little girl, Cassidy.

• (1230)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague.

She has just made a remarkable speech. It was so very touching and inspiring. We do not hear enough speeches like this. I would like to commend her and sincerely thank her.

I would like to get back to something she mentioned that is a major concern, namely women who are victims of intimate partner violence.

Thanks to the funds allocated to housing, a frontline shelter for women who are victims of intimate partner violence was built in my riding. It will be able to take in nine women and their children. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of resources. Every day in Quebec, a woman experiencing intimate partner violence gets turned away from a resource and has to return home to a toxic relationship because of a lack of resources.

Does my colleague not think that we should work even harder to get the government to provide more funding for resources for families and women who are victims of intimate partner violence?

[*English*]

Mrs. Rechie Valdez: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his feedback and for his question. I am excited to

say that, as a part of our budget 2022, we are certainly investing in Canadians and making life more affordable. Specific to housing, I can say that we are allocating 25% specifically to women to ensure that they can continue to be supported in Canada.

• (1235)

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge what a moving and powerful speech my colleague across the way gave. I have shared some of the experiences, certainly as an indigenous woman, in terms of racism in this country. It takes a lot of courage to talk about those things in such a raw, open and giving way.

I have a question about the funding that has been provided specifically for gender-based violence. One of my concerns, and I have raised this publicly several times, is the fact that in this budget there were zero additional dollars provided for murdered and missing indigenous women and girls. This is something that has been acknowledged as a genocide, certainly by the Prime Minister of this country, and human rights groups have acknowledged it internationally.

I am wondering what my colleague thinks of that. Does she support the need to provide additional funding to address this ongoing genocide?

Mrs. Rechie Valdez: Madam Speaker, I can actually attest to what my hon. colleague just described. I visited Winnipeg and saw what was going on there. I listened to the stories of those people impacted in her community.

As I mentioned, in the funding we are definitely going to be focusing on providing supports to women in that way. I look forward to this being the beginning of a very strong conversation to continue to advocate for that, and I will certainly assist her and other colleagues in the House in that fashion.

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Northern Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I really want to thank my colleague for Mississauga—Streetsville for that very powerful speech today on the budget and for all the advocacy that she does for women and families in this country for funding and stronger supports.

How does the member feel this budget will have a positive impact on women, especially women who are suffering through violent relationships in communities across Canada?

Mrs. Rechie Valdez: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned, I am very excited for what we have in our budget to really support and make a difference in our communities, specifically for those who are impacted by gender-based violence. In my riding of Mississauga—Streetsville, there are tremendous organizations that we will continue to support and fund. That would certainly go a long way not just for the women in our community, but for their families and everyone that they touch.

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in this chamber and to represent the people of Regina—Wascana. I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak today on the budget.

The Budget

My grandmother would always say to me, when I was growing up, “If you can't say anything nice, then don't say anything at all.” While that may be good advice for getting along with the neighbour kids, it does not work so well as an opposition member of Parliament. I would like to at least partially take some of my grandmother's advice today and focus on one area of the budget on which I think there is broad agreement. That is the need for Canada to support Ukraine as it defends itself from the Russian invasion.

When the finance minister was presenting her budget earlier this month, I believe she received one standing ovation from both sides of the House, and that is when she said that the Russian army invading Ukraine needed to be vanquished. I agree. Vladimir Putin's war of aggression against Ukraine is completely and totally unacceptable. Countries around the world, including Canada, need to do their part to ensure that free and democratic countries are not overrun and annexed by a dictator like Vladimir Putin.

The finance minister went on to say that it was the brave people of Ukraine who would be doing the fighting against convoys of Russian tanks rolling into their country. There is one fundamental principle the minister did not mention in her budget speech that I believe everyone needs to understand. Every time one of those Russian tanks is destroyed by the Ukrainians, it is soon replaced by another Russian tank rolling off the assembly line.

If we are going to help the Ukrainians win this war and make the world a safer place for our children and grandchildren, then it is not enough to simply destroy the Russian tanks and other weapons on the front lines. We must also stop Vladimir Putin's ability to buy more of them. Tanks cost money. Bombs cost money. Battleships cost money.

Where does Vladimir Putin get his money to buy all these weapons? By far, the biggest source of funding for the Russian war machine is oil and gas exports to western Europe. That is Vladimir Putin's steady paycheck. That is Vladimir Putin's spending money: oil and gas exports to western Europe.

In fact, western Europe imports approximately 3.4 million barrels of oil and gas every day from Russia. The money western Europe spends on this oil and gas goes toward Vladimir Putin's war machine. He spends the money on tanks, bombs and battleships, all of which go toward the Russian war efforts against the Ukrainian military and toward committing atrocities against Ukrainian civilians, such as the bombing of a hospital maternity ward in Mariupol and the slaughter of civilians on the streets of Bucha.

If the international community could figure out a way to send an additional 3.4 million barrels of oil and gas to western Europe, we could seriously inhibit Russia's ability to wage war. How can the international community make up this shortfall? Canada alone could provide almost that entire amount from just four projects. These four projects have been debated many times in the House over the past few years. They are the Keystone XL pipeline, the energy east pipeline, the northern gateway pipeline and the Trans Mountain expansion.

All four of these projects have either been cancelled or significantly delayed over the past several years because of the govern-

ment's Bill C-69, Bill C-48 and other roadblocks it keeps putting in the way.

Recently, the Minister of Natural Resources announced that Canada would increase oil exports to western Europe by only 300,000 barrels per day from existing infrastructure. Unfortunately, the minister has also described this increase as a short-term solution and only a temporary measure to help our friends and allies fighting in Ukraine.

• (1240)

I would strongly caution the government against reverting back to its old policy of keeping Canadian oil and gas in the ground, for a couple of reasons.

First, no one knows when this war will end. As many of us probably learned in high school history class, when World War I broke out, all of the experts of the day said that the war would be over by Christmas. Four years later, the war was still raging. Today, we are 62 days into the current conflict and it would be foolish for anyone to try to predict with any degree of accuracy when this war will be over. It could very well be the case that our allies in western Europe will need oil and gas for the foreseeable future from countries other than Russia.

Second, even if the war were to end tomorrow, it would be foolish for us not to learn from our past mistakes. One of the reasons why the world is in this situation is because, for far too long, peace-loving democratic countries have fallen into the bad habit of relying on petty dictators for their energy needs. All the while, Canadian oil and gas has stayed in the ground.

If this country could increase its oil and gas exports by 3.4 million barrels per day and displace Russian exports to western Europe, it raises the question of what Canadians could do with this extra money. The short answer is they could do whatever they wanted. Many people who work in the natural resources sector would love the opportunity to pay down their mortgages, save for their children's education or take a well-deserved vacation, especially after the last two years.

It is not just oil and gas workers in the private sector who would benefit. In my home province of Saskatchewan, in any given year between 10% and 15% of the provincial government's budget comes from natural resource royalties. That is money that can go toward roads, schools, hospitals and other services that people rely on. Over a decade ago, when resource royalties were at their height, the provincial Government of Saskatchewan announced that it would build a new children's hospital in Saskatoon. This hospital opened just a few years ago and it has since helped thousands of children.

I believe that the vast majority of people who let their names stand to run for public office do so with good intentions to make the world a better place for our children and grandchildren, but we all know what they say about good intentions. The cost of our inaction could not be more clear and the contrast could not be more stark. Instead of oil and gas revenues going toward bombing children's hospitals in Mariupol, they should be going toward building hospitals here in Canada.

The Budget

Clearly, any objective observer would have to agree that Canada has a tremendous amount of potential to do a great deal of good on the world stage. It is not necessary for democracies in western Europe or the rest of the world to rely on petty dictators for their energy needs. It is not necessary for them to fund the war machine of Vladimir Putin or any other hostile regime.

Canada can be a force for world peace and stability by simply extracting and exporting the resources that we have in this country literally sitting beneath our feet and not doing anyone any good. If Vladimir Putin's army is to be vanquished, to use the finance minister's term, then we need to get serious about building pipeline capacity in this country so that western Europe and the rest of the world can buy their oil and gas from Canada instead of from Vladimir Putin's Russia.

• (1245)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I agree with the member that what is happening in Ukraine today is horrific in nature. I believe that inside the chamber there is virtually unanimous desire and willingness to support Ukraine in whatever way we can to get through this very difficult time. It goes far beyond Ukraine's borders, but impacts the entire free world. We wish Ukrainians the very best, and we will continue to support them in whatever way we can.

The member is trying to give the impression that if Canada were to export oil today, money going to Russia would dry up. We all know that even if the political will and the desire of Canadians as a whole was to have that happen, it could not happen overnight. I wonder this. Could the member provide his thoughts and comments in regard to that? We do not want to say something that ultimately we know we cannot deliver.

Mr. Michael Kram: Madam Speaker, I am glad to hear that all parties in the House support the people of Ukraine. Certainly, dictators cannot roll their tanks into neighbouring countries, take over and expect to think that is okay.

As for the issue with displacing Russian oil and gas going to western Europe, I believe that the four projects I mentioned should have been built years ago. I do not see why that could not have been done years ago. I do not see why it has to be so difficult for private sector businesses in this country to build pipelines or other major projects. It should be a lot easier and it should have been done a long time ago.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech.

I listened to him talk about building pipelines to solve the war in Europe. We need to understand that, if we start building pipelines today, that will not have an effect on the current war. He said that we should have done it a long time ago.

With all due respect, is my colleague aware of global warming and the world crisis we are in? Has he seen what I have seen, and what everyone in the country saw last year in British Columbia with the floods and forest fires? Does he not think that we should

start transitioning and stop the most polluting projects? The most polluting projects are those involving the oil sands.

We have nothing against his region. I understand the hon. member, who is only standing up for his constituents. We are prepared to invest in his region to begin a transition.

I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about this. Is he open to discussion?

• (1250)

[English]

Mr. Michael Kram: Madam Speaker, I think we can all agree that there has to be a transition to clean energies at some time, but I am of the belief that global warming and the energy transition are long-term problems that require long-term solutions. The war in Ukraine is not a long-term problem. People are literally being bombed to death today in Ukraine, so I think we need to prioritize the war in Ukraine for the foreseeable future.

I would also say that while some countries are transitioning away from oil and gas, that is clearly not the situation today in western Europe. About 3.4 million barrels of oil and gas every day are being exported from Russia to western Europe. That oil and gas creates greenhouse gas emissions just like from anywhere else in the world. Not only is our policy of keeping oil and gas in the ground bad for the war in Ukraine, but it is not doing any good for global warming because Europeans are just buying their oil and gas from Russia.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.*

We are seeing climate impacts that are man-made, and emissions reduction is now critical. It is an immediate and long-term issue, as is what is going on with the invasion in Ukraine. They are both immediate and long term.

Does the member agree that investing more into alternative energy sources is what is needed now at this important time in Canada?

Mr. Michael Kram: Madam Speaker, the short answer is yes. We do need research and development into clean energy technologies if we are ever going to deal with global warming.

I would say that one source of clean energy that we need to do more with is carbon capture and storage. I had the opportunity just a couple of weeks ago to visit the Boundary Dam project just outside of Estevan, Saskatchewan. It is incredible to see the technologies they are developing down there with respect to carbon capture, storage and sequestration. Greenhouse gas emissions are not a problem if they do not go off into the air. If we can sequester them under the ground and can make use of all our existing energy infrastructure, that is a good solution for everyone.

The Budget

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an extreme pleasure to rise here in the House of Commons to represent the good people of Cumberland—Colchester as we debate the spend-DP-Liberal budget of 2022. I think it is important to understand this budget in the context of my province, my riding and my constituents, and of course to understand the budget itself.

My home province of Nova Scotia is mentioned four times in the 300-odd pages of the budget and the gazillion other pages. There is a discussion about twinning parts of the Trans-Canada Highway, a reference to remaining project funding through the failed Canada Infrastructure Bank and a reference to a Nova Scotia agreement on offshore revenues. I am not sure the relevance of all those things. The final reference is about the shortage of doctors and nurses in Nova Scotia. We all know the Prime Minister promised 7,500 doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners, whom he is going to create out of thin air, but that has not materialized. Sadly, 88,000 Nova Scotians do not have a family physician. We also know very clearly that we are short 60,000 to 70,000 nurses in the entire country. We have that burden as well.

Sadly, despite requests by all the premiers unanimously, there is no funding committed for an increase in the Canada health transfer. The Liberals did talk about loan forgiveness for physicians and nurses, but they must agree to work in rural or remote areas. Physicians can easily, as I well know, accumulate 250,000 dollars' worth of debt during their education, and the proposed loan forgiveness of \$60,000 seems woefully inadequate.

Another major concern in my riding of Cumberland—Colchester is agriculture. Aside from the government's bungled creation of the potato wart problem due to its ineptitude in its relationship with the United States, there is no other mention of agriculture in budget 2022. In Canada, we have eight agricultural colleges, and in my riding we have one. The fact that there is no mention of agriculture in the budget and no funding for agriculture is just a sad misplacement of priorities.

We also know that this comes at a time when Canada could play a significant role on the world stage with respect to feeding the world. This great responsibility comes in relation to Russia's illegal war on Ukraine, which my colleague spoke about in depth. The opportunities that exist now for Canadian farmers come at a time when fuel prices are at an all-time high in the history of our nation. Of course, there is also an unfair tax on fertilizer that the government continues to place against farmers. This is a gross abuse of our farmers at a time when the potential for feeding the world is at an all-time high, and sadly we wonder whether Canada is going to be able to participate in that at all.

The budget speaks a bit about the environment and climate change. We are unsure of how this is going to relate to Nova Scotia, with the vague wording in the budget of "proactive management of marine emergencies and...more types of pollution". I do have an idea of what that means, but certainly there is no proverbial meat on the bones to help people understand how that may relate to Nova Scotia.

There is no mention at all of climate change as it relates to the Isthmus of Chignecto, which I have had the pleasure to speak about

here in the House before. We know this is a vital land link that links Canada to the great province of Nova Scotia. There is no mention of that and we know it is a climate emergency waiting to happen.

We also know in Nova Scotia, and hopefully my colleague from Winnipeg knows this as well, that seniors are important to all Canadians and certainly to those of us in Nova Scotia. The crisis that seniors are dealing with now, the affordability crisis, does not appear to be talked about in the budget either. There is no new financing added to the cheques of seniors. It is sad. The budget does mention undertaking another study, spending money that could easily be put in the pockets of seniors for a yet-to-be-named aging at home benefit. There does appear to be financing for seniors who need to make their home more accessible and for projects allowing seniors to participate in their communities more fully. However, as we know, this does not put oil in their tanks, gas in their cars or food in their bellies.

There is absolutely no financial relief for the seniors who helped build this great nation. Indeed, the budget has the audacity to say that Canadians who are seniors "do not have to worry about the value of their benefits keeping pace with inflation". I find that hard to believe. It goes on to say, "the share of seniors in poverty is only about half that of the overall population". Is that something to brag about? I am not entirely sure it is. Is that really the ambitious goal the government has set? Does it believe it is okay for our seniors or any Canadian to live in poverty? I should think not.

● (1255)

This leads me to speak, in a very personal way, about Daniel, who reached out and wrote to me about his budget. He really wanted me to speak about the affordability crisis in the House of Commons, which of course we know is ongoing for many Canadians. He came to my office last week when we were home on constituency week and gave me a budget for his monthly income of less than \$800.

Daniel is a frugal guy. He has a mortgage of \$547. He has life insurance on his home at \$35, car insurance at \$84, insurance on the house itself at \$125 and bank fees of \$20. Phone, cable and Internet are, shockingly, \$230 per month, property insurance is \$35, life insurance for himself is \$100 and medical insurance is \$140, plus \$10 a month for each medication, and he is on eight of them. His power bill is \$200 per month, and on top of all of this are groceries and gas. Without any food or any gasoline for his vehicle, Daniel is paying out about \$1,596 per month. He is, of course, struggling to pay his bills on his \$800 monthly income, but fortunately for him, his wife can work a bit as well to help support the family.

The Budget

As members can imagine, in this household there is no money left over for any extras. There is no frivolous spending. There are no extras at the grocery store. He has reduced his trips to town for groceries and other essentials to once a month, which saves on his gasoline bill since he is not going to town as much. There is no mass transit where Daniel lives, and I am not entirely sure, when I look at this meagre budget, where he might cut things out.

We are all beginning to realize that this is “just incredible”. It is really “just inconvenient”, and for some it is “just inconceivable” how we are now in a life affordability crisis.

• (1300)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, we have stood up for this in the past and will continue to stand up in the future. Obviously we cannot do indirectly what we cannot do directly. When the member makes reference to the word “just” and then throws in “in”, he is actually making reference to the Prime Minister of Canada, who does have a title. I would ask that we respect all titles, whether it is the official opposition leader, members, ministers or whoever it might be.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The point is well taken, and I was expecting it to be raised.

I remind members not to use the expression “just” and “in” together in the same sentence.

Mr. Stephen Ellis: I thank the member opposite for this unusual intervention. I did not realize that “just” was a—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I remind the member that it is not acceptable.

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, we cannot use “just” anymore. I will try to fix that somehow. I will learn some new English.

One thing for certain is that it is inflation, and it is a huge problem that is at the highest levels in over 30 thirty years. These spend-DP-Liberals can go on and say that this is a global crisis and things like that, but it is a lot of foolishness. Quite frankly, I do not believe for one second that my constituents are terribly concerned about what is going on specifically in Germany, France or anywhere else that these spend-DP-Liberals want to talk about. That is nonsensical.

When they call me, email me or drop into the office, they are concerned about how they are going to put food on their tables here in Canada, which is the government's responsibility and the Prime Minister's responsibility, not just any other problem. They are concerned about the highest inflation that Canadians have seen in over 30 years. They are concerned about the prices of everything they see, from home heating fuel to groceries to gasoline for their vehicles, which go up on an almost weekly basis. To get to the question that Daniel would like answered, perhaps by the Prime Minister, what is the government going to do about the affordability crisis that Canadians are now facing?

Finally, Canadians ask me every day how we are going to pay the incredible debt that these spend-DP-Liberals continue to accumulate. I look back to August 1994 when my eldest daughter was born. At that point, an individual's share of the debt was \$16,000, and today that has now ballooned to \$31,255. Of course, if we want to use approximate math, that is double the amount in 28 years. As

this number continues to climb, there is a major concern I hear from everyday Canadians with this out-of-control spending: How are we going to saddle these Canadians with that as they go forward in the future and cannot even afford a house?

To summarize, this budget has failed everyday Canadians like Daniel, important and vital industries such as agriculture, future Canadians like my eldest daughter, who are going to be saddled with this huge national debt, and, finally, all Nova Scotians. There was next to no mention of my home province in the budget and certainly nothing of substance for the constituents of Cumberland—Colchester. Therefore, it will come as no surprise that I have no confidence in the government and there is no way I can support the Prime Minister's budget 2022.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it does not surprise me that the member is not voting for the budget. Wow, what a surprise. I can tell members that, unlike the Conservative members, we recognize that there has been a pandemic, a world pandemic, which brought on the need to spend billions of dollars, not only here in Canada, but also around the world.

We also recognize, as one of his former members recognized, that there is a war happening in Ukraine, and there are economic and world conditions that have actually led to, yes, inflation. Compared to the United States, our inflation rate is less. Compared to many European Union countries, our inflation rate is less than theirs.

Does the member not believe that he is misleading Canadians when he tries to give a blanket statement, trying to give the impression that Canadians need to be frantically worried because of inflation and not necessarily putting it into a proper perspective?

• (1305)

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, if I cannot use the word “just”, I find it inappropriate that the member opposite can say that I am misleading Canadians by giving facts. That is a little bit rich, in my mind, and quite ridiculous, to be honest.

I think what is important is that on the Conservative side of the House, we hear about everyday Canadians. They talk to us. I am not sure that the other side really understands that, that we hear from real people who come in and cannot afford things.

I always find it fascinating, as well, that they continue to go on and on about the United States, France, Germany and other places that perhaps are worse off. If they cannot govern the country, and it is too darn difficult for them to manage a war and a COVID crisis while doing a proper budget that would help Canadians, I know a group of people on this side of the House that is more than happy to take over.

The Budget

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague has raised legitimate concerns about the public debt and inflation. However, there is a concern that he neglected to mention, and that is climate change.

I do not know whether Daniel in his riding is concerned only about inflation, but he should also be concerned about global warming. Many of my constituents find the situation untenable. It is going to have a major adverse impact on their future. I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about this.

I have a quick question to ask him: If we want to fight both public debt and global warming, would it not be appropriate to halt the \$2.5 billion in the budget to support the gas and oil industries? I am sure he will agree with me on that.

[*English*]

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, I think the interesting thing is that I did speak about climate change. Perhaps he does not know the geography of Nova Scotia. Canada is actually connected to us by an isthmus called the Isthmus of Chignecto, which I have raised multiple times in the House. It is in significant danger of being flooded from the climate change that is happening.

What we do know, again, as I mentioned very clearly, this is not mentioned in this budget, even though the government has chosen to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to study this issue multiple times, and the sad thing is that this is a very important link from Canada to Nova Scotia. It brings across many goods every day, and this would sadly be flooded by climate change. That is something that the government, again, has not addressed in budget 2022.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.*

The member and his party have made it clear that they oppose the increases to dental care and pharmacare, which are needed by so many Canadians. How can the member justify increasing the defence budget by \$24 million when so many Canadians would benefit from dental care and pharmacare?

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, there are a few things there. We do know that health care is very important. It is very clear that the government does not believe that. They did not increase the Canada health transfers at all, which, as I mentioned, was unanimously agreed upon by all the provincial premiers. That is a sad state of affairs.

In terms of other care, Nova Scotia does have a dental program, and I think, when we look at the details of the dental program and the pharmacare program, these are very wasteful programs. They really do not know how to administer things on the other side of the House. When one begins to understand the costs associated with them, there are probably better ways to do it. As I said previously, we would be more than happy to take that burden away from the country and take over as the governing party whenever we need to.

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Labrador.

Budget 2022 has been tabled at a time when Canada is seeing historic growth in our economy. Canada's GDP is higher than it has

ever been, and the IMF is projecting Canada to have the fastest-growing economy in the G7 both this year and next year. Canada has recovered 115% of the jobs lost at the height of the pandemic, compared to only 93% in the United States, and we have the lowest unemployment rate that we have had in almost five decades. Canada entered the pandemic with the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7, and budget 2022 will maintain this position by ensuring our clear fiscal anchor of a declining debt-to-GDP ratio remains in place to have a fiscally prudent path forward.

Despite these lofty numbers, inflation caused by COVID-related global supply chain disruptions, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and record low interest rates are impacting Canadians through rising prices as they buy their groceries, fill their cars or look for a home. This is why budget 2022 prioritizes tackling affordability challenges to make home ownership more attainable and to relieve health care costs, while we simultaneously focus on growing our economy and protecting our environment.

The rising cost of housing is the most visible and alarming example of affordability challenges in our country as home ownership continues to fall further out of reach for many Canadians. For example, in two of the three largest communities in my riding, the average house currently sells for over \$4 million, while the fastest growing areas saw homes increase by about 40% year over year. This is clearly not sustainable, and the large shortage of housing Canada is facing plays a big part.

Foreign investment and speculation have taken housing off the market for Canadians, while unfair real estate practices have driven up prices, and high prices have made it particularly difficult for young Canadians to enter the market. To respond to this, budget 2022 takes action on all these fronts.

Canada's population is growing faster than any G7 country, and, with fewer homes per capita than most OECD countries, which cannot continue if we want homes to be affordable. To address this, Canada will double new housing construction over the next decade. We are proposing to invest \$4 billion to launch the housing accelerator fund to work with municipalities to build over 100,000 of the right sort of housing in our communities. We are also tying our infrastructure investments to densification to do what we can as a federal government to discourage the Nimbyism that is shutting out young Canadians and workers from the communities they grew up in or work in.

The Budget

We are also extending the rapid housing initiative to quickly build more supportive housing units, creating a rent-to-own program to help young professionals get into the market, and making the largest investment in co-operatives in over three decades, among many other initiatives.

We also need to keep building more housing in indigenous communities. As difficult as it is to find housing is for most Canadians, it is even worse in indigenous communities. Fixing that is a vital step along the path of reconciliation. Budget 2022 proposes investments of \$4.3 billion to build and expand housing in indigenous communities and to co-develop and launch an urban, rural and northern indigenous housing strategy.

To tackle the commodification of housing, we are banning non-resident foreign investment in Canadian housing for two years to ensure the Canadian homes are owned by people that live and contribute to our country. We are also introducing a tax on home flippers where property is sold within 12 months of acquisition, and taxing assignments of new builds. We are also working with the provinces to develop a homebuyer bill of rights to eliminate unfair practices, such as blind bidding, that unnecessarily drive up housing prices and to ensure that buyers have the right to a home inspection when they are making the largest investment of their lives.

We are also creating the tax-free first home savings account to assist young Canadians to get into the housing market. This account will give prospective first-time homebuyers the ability to save and invest up to \$40,000. Like an RRSP, contributions would be tax deductible, and withdrawals to purchase a first home, including investment income, would be non-taxable, like a TFSA.

While housing is the most prominent factor in the affordability crisis, it is by no means the only one. One of the things I have consistently heard across my riding is that the high cost and lack of availability of child care has hurt both families and businesses. That is why our government created the Canada-wide early learning and child care system last year. By the end of this year, child care fees will be reduced by an average of 50%, or to \$20 a day in British Columbia, and will average \$10 a day by 2026. This will save B.C. families \$6,000 per child, on average, by the end of the year, and over \$9,000 per child by the end of 2026.

● (1310)

To build on the 40,000 new spaces that will be created as part of this, budget 2022 will invest another \$625 million to create even more spaces. Parents have told me that this, in many respects, is an even greater challenge than the cost, where some families are waiting over two years for child care. This is not just an important social policy. It is also an important economic policy, as it will allow both parents to return to the workforce.

Getting people back to work is in fact one of the largest challenges we have in our economy with almost 875,000 unfilled jobs across the country. Child care and building housing address two main factors, but the backlog in immigration processing caused by the pandemic is the third. Budget 2022 contains \$2.1 billion to clear these backlogs. Importantly, it will support improvements that will streamline the temporary foreign worker program, which is crucial to find workers in sectors and regions with the largest labour short-

ages, including in tourist-dependent areas that have been hit hard by the pandemic.

Canada's public health care system is a source of immense national pride. It protected us through the worst of the pandemic, but it is not complete. Budget 2022 fills an important remaining gap with the creation of a new dental care program. Starting this year, children under age 12 will have access to dental care. This program will be steadily expanded so that all Canadian families with income under \$90,000 will have access by 2025. While the federal government provided 80% of the pandemic relief programs to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic, a backlog of surgeries formed over the last two years. That is why the federal government is going to be stepping up once again to provide provinces the supports of over \$2 billion to top up the Canada health transfer to clear them.

Last year's devastating flooding and wildfires in B.C. were a wake-up call for many in B.C. that we are living in a climate emergency. Budget 2022 shows that the Government of Canada is both ensuring we are resilient to an already changing climate, while following through on its now legislated commitment to reduce emissions by at least 40% by 2030. Total investments in climate action and greening the economy will exceed \$28 billion in this year's budget, building on the over \$100 billion already committed. Importantly, to mitigate future wildfires, we will be training 1,000 new firefighters, increasing our satellite monitoring capability, investing in new firefighting equipment and working with indigenous peoples on traditional ways of mitigating wildfires.

Our government knows that climate policy must be implemented in a way that creates jobs and does not overly burden Canadians. That is why this year's budget will expand and extend incentives in zero-emission vehicles to tackle our second highest source of emissions. We will also invest in the charging networks to support them. New tax benefits for heat pump manufacturing and additional capital from residential retrofits will build on the \$5,000 grants and the \$40,000 no interest loans for home retrofits to save Canadians money and reduce household emissions.

The Budget

Investments of \$15 billion in the Canada growth fund and \$3.8 billion into our critical minerals strategy will allow Canada to be competitive in the entire battery supply chain, which will play a crucial role in the clean economy, which will drive job growth around the world. Scrapping tax credits that support new oil and gas production while creating new tax credits that support clean technologies will help the private sector play an increasing role in the transition to a cleaner economy. As we increasingly electrify our economy, we are investing to expand our green electricity generation with almost \$900 million to develop new clean electricity projects and modernize our electrical grid.

Our environment has a special place in the hearts of British Columbians, but many of our most important land and marine ecosystems are at risk. To protect our last remaining old-growth forests in British Columbia, we are creating the old-growth nature fund. This fund will leverage provincial and private capital to protect more of B.C.'s irreplaceable old-growth forests and the many species at risk that call them home. We are also expanding the highly successful and the oceans protection plan, which has done incredible restoration work throughout our most sensitive marine areas, with an additional \$2 billion to do even more.

As I see my time is running out, I will not have time to touch on the many other areas of this budget that will make a real difference in the lives of Canadians and help us continue to accelerate along the path to more sustainable development. I want to end by saying that these policies and investments mark the beginning of the post-COVID world. Through prudent yet ambitious spending, our government will help Canadians build a future in which everyone can prosper while maintaining a strong and sustainable fiscal position.

• (1315)

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I know he has done a great deal of advocacy before politics, in a previous life, I believe, as a lawyer with indigenous communities, and I wonder what he could point to in the budget specifically that relates to that issue, to how budget 2022 remarks and focuses on indigenous issues and what he sees as most promising there. I am especially interested to hear it from him, considering his background.

• (1320)

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Madam Speaker, indeed there are some very important investments made as part of this budget to support the path forward on reconciliation. I mentioned in my speech earlier the very much needed investments into indigenous housing. There are also important investments made in implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the action plan on that, as well as dealing with some of the main economic barriers that indigenous peoples continue to face that are preventing them from having the type of economic development that the rest of the country has, so the changes to the First Nations Land Management Act will be very important in that regard. As well, there are some very important investments on improving child welfare in indigenous communities.

I think, collectively, there is a lot in this budget that will support the path forward on reconciliation, which is of course a critical priority of this government.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member talked about the action the government is going to take in reducing foreign investment in Canadian real estate for the next two years. That is a great idea that came from the Conservative platform. I have two quick questions for him in regard to that.

We indicated that in two years it would be reviewed again. Two years is a short term for people who have investment plans, so would the government be looking at that? Does the member feel the government needs to make sure that it readdresses that?

Also, there is a loophole, and I have heard this from people in the Lower Mainland. This does not prevent students coming to Canada from having their parents purchase housing when of course they are here for the short term, on student visas. Does the member see that as a potential loophole that is harming Canadians' ability to afford a home?

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Madam Speaker, indeed this is a measure that is put in place for two years, and we will be able to monitor the impacts and benefits of this measure to determine what the path forward is at that point. We want to make sure that homes in Canada are used for people who actually live here and not as investments, and this will make sure that we are able to do just that.

I would caution a bit that this is certainly going to have an impact, but not a huge impact, as the experience from B.C. shows. However, I would also mention that as we are doing this measure we are also accelerating our path forward on a beneficial ownership registry. This will give all governments the tools to make sure that housing in Canada is not being used to evade taxes, for money laundering, or in other areas that are also boosting the price of real estate, so it is part and parcel of our overall fairness in real estate action plan.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, last year in committee I had the opportunity to interview the president and CEO of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, who came to talk about the housing crisis. When I asked her what we should do now to resolve the crisis, she had one answer: increase supply.

There are in fact a few measures in the budget aimed at increasing supply. However, there are long-term measures focusing on demand that we are having trouble understanding. For example, the tax-free savings account for the purchase of a first property is not a bad measure, but why will it take effect only next year? People will be able to contribute up to \$8,000 a year for five years. We will not be seeing any results for a while. In addition, to invest \$8,000 a year in a house, you need some income. These measures will not help the most disadvantaged.

The Budget

Why are we not focusing on real investments? Consider the rapid housing initiative. It is a good, \$1.5-billion program that will actually create social housing. We could have invested a lot more money into it to really help the most disadvantaged, but the budget falls short in that regard.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

The budget includes investments in the rapid housing initiative. I think that it is an important program for the most vulnerable Canadians. However, it is not the only investment. We also plan to invest in co-operatives. It will be the largest investment in 30 years.

There are also other investments to consider, such as the housing benefit and the additional \$500 payment, which are also positive measures. I believe that all of these investments amount to \$14 billion.

However, we must work very hard with the provinces and municipalities to do more for the most vulnerable Canadians.

● (1325)

[English]

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Northern Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today. I want to first thank and acknowledge my colleague from West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country for that fantastic speech he gave this morning, but also for all the work he does inside of our government, lobbying on so many issues that affect his riding and other Canadians.

I listened to a lot of debate around this budget in the last few days, and I know that some days, when we get up and everything is doom and gloom and all we see is negativity, it is really hard to see the positive impact that is happening for so many in their lives across this country. However, I live in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and I can tell members that in my riding of Labrador we will be supporting this budget wholeheartedly, and I want to tell members the reasons.

It is because not only are we recognizing that there are sectors in this country that deserve to be lifted up and singled out in terms of investments, but we are also responding to critical needs of people who have been ignored for far too long in this country. I am an MP from a northern region of Canada. I represent a strong indigenous population of Inu and Inuit people. I have many rural and remote communities across my riding, and I can honestly tell members that we have never seen investments in our northern communities before in our history like we are seeing today.

When we look at Newfoundland and Labrador in general, we have the federal government that renewed the Atlantic accord agreement with Newfoundland and Labrador at a time in its history when it needed the financial revenues and the assistance. The investment of \$2.5 billion under the Atlantic accord is allowing that province to share in the royalties it has over the years and continues to foster, develop, produce and remit to the Government of Canada. We made investments in rate mitigation of \$5.2 billion. That, again, was an agreement we made with the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

As a shareholder, Canada has drawn down taxes and benefits from our province for many years through the oil and gas industry. No other government, including those of the members opposite, ever agreed to do what was fair in giving back some of that revenue to the province at a time when it needed it the most. Ours is the first government to do that.

The members opposite talk about our not supporting industry or jobs. We have invested more in economic and resource development than any other government before us. We have bought pipelines; we have set up critical mineral developments; we have invested in infrastructure to support major resource development projects in Canada; and when the people of Alberta needed assistance through COVID, when the oil and gas industry was reaching the bottom of the barrel, who stepped up? It was our government, because we recognized that workers should always come first and that families should always come first.

Members stand up and they criticize the money that was spent in COVID. They criticize the fact that 40% of businesses that employ people in Canada received a wage subsidy. Do members think these workers should not have received that and that they should have been sent home with no income? They would have lost their homes; they would have lost their cars; their kids would have had to leave universities and colleges. Is that what they are suggesting? That is not what we believe.

Do members know that in my own province of Newfoundland and Labrador, 49,000 jobs were maintained as a result of the wage subsidy? That is 49,000 income earners who were able to pay their mortgages on their homes through COVID because of the response of our government. That is something I will never apologize for.

● (1330)

It is easy to be a naysayer. It is a lot more difficult to devise a plan that responds to the real needs of Canadians. That is where the challenge is. We talk about health care. There is no issue more important to the constituents I represent in this Parliament than health care, whether it be care for mental health and supports for suicide prevention, or addiction services, surgeries, physician access or nursing access. All of these things are critical. They are important, not only for the constituents I represent in the House of Commons, but for all Canadians.

Sometimes it is not a bad thing that the Government of Canada steps up when it is needed to step up. That is what we are doing. There is a backlog of surgeries in this country. I talked to a doctor in Quebec only last week, who told me that he cannot even get scheduled emergency room time. That is how much the ERs are blocked. That is how deep their backlog is.

The Budget

I talked to doctors in Newfoundland and Labrador, and the situation is no different. It exists across the country. When members stand and say they will not support this budget, they are saying they will not support the Government of Canada investing in surgeries and bringing the wait-list down for Canadians who need access to health care.

There is another thing we are doing. I am not the only member of a rural riding in the House of Commons, and I am not the only member of a northern riding in the House of Commons. I can say that the recruitment of doctors and nurses in rural and northern Canada has become a crisis. The only way to get a doctor or nurse is on a locum. It is temporary. There is no consistency in service. What we are doing as a government is providing an incentive for doctors and nurses to come and live in northern and rural communities across Canada, an incentive that will allow people to have good medical services no matter where they live.

The consistency of having a regular doctor or regular nurse could mean having diagnoses and treatments that will save people's lives early on. We can never forget that. Is that something we should be apologizing for as a government, that we are going to invest in a health care system that allows for that to happen?

I heard members today say it is not the federal government's responsibility and the provinces could be doing it. These are the same provinces that are asking us for more health care money. They are asking us to increase spending. They are telling us they cannot afford to continue down the path they are going down.

Therefore, we are stepping up, and we are stepping up in those areas, just like we are doing on dental care and just like we have done for many northern Inuit communities on a suicide strategy, to deal with what is becoming and has been a major crisis for many northern communities in Canada.

There is no other government in our history that has stepped up on reconciliation. We are the first. Not only have we built a relationship that respects and honours the rights of indigenous people in this country, but we have worked with them in partnership to build better homes, to build better infrastructure, to build a stronger economy and to build a future that they can grow and prosper in and one that they can control. Can anyone honestly say that is not the right direction for Canada? I can guarantee everyone that what we bring to indigenous Canada, they bring to the rest of us 10 times over.

• (1335)

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on her speech. It is a pleasure to sit with my colleague on the natural resources committee.

It is no coincidence that the price of a house has doubled in Canada, because the government has doubled the debt as well in the years the Liberals have been in government. It is a parallel, and it is not a plan for the future.

Prime Minister Harper was the first to apologize to first nations for the indignities that had taken place, so there is room for all governments to be involved. The current government is not the first one to do any of these things.

Liberals talk about the money they are putting into housing. We are still tremendously short of housing in Canada, yet inflation has doubled and the price of a house has gone to \$840,000 from \$420,000. How can they sustain this and say that the spending they have done is not causing inflation, when the Parliamentary Budget Officer himself has indicated that only a third of their spending has gone toward the pandemic?

The Deputy Speaker: Let us not forget that it is questions and comments.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, not only do I sit on the natural resources committee with my colleague, but for a few years we were Arctic parliamentarians together and he has certainly been a tremendous support for communities across the Arctic as well.

I want to say a couple of things. First of all, members cannot get up one moment and in one sentence criticize the fact that the Government of Canada is investing in Canadians and then in the same breath say it is spending too much money on Canadians. It is one way or the other. As a government, we have invested in housing. We have invested in housing for urban centres, for rural centres, for indigenous people and for low-income families. We have invested in housing for women and for women fleeing violence. We have invested in housing for the homeless and for many groups and developers who want to provide co-development housing. We have invested to make it more accessible and affordable for homeowners to buy.

My question for the member is this. What suggestions do you have that we have not done to make the programs stronger and more affordable for Canadians?

The Deputy Speaker: I have all kinds of suggestions, but as Speaker I am not allowed to share them with the member.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last week I did some volunteering in a homeless resource called “La Halte du Coin”, which took over an old church during the pandemic and is open 24/7. It was very troubling. I was there from four hours to six hours and helped serve meals. At six o'clock, everyone is asked to leave.

They can serve 50 meals, but they have only 30 beds. People wait outside, but not everyone can get in. That night, it was raining. It was unbelievably sad. When I left at around 6:30 p.m., there were a lot of people waiting outside. Those who were unable to get in would sleep somewhere in the neighbourhood, in a park or near an ATM. It is a tragic situation.

The Budget

The federal government was very reluctant to renew funding for these resources. According to the budget, they will continue to fund the reaching home program, in response to the pandemic, until 2026. People want predictability. Those who work there are not paid \$150 an hour. We need predictability.

Why can we come up with 15-year plans for all sorts of things like climate change, but not to help the homeless? That is scandalous, in my opinion.

[English]

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, I certainly understand where my colleague is coming from. I know that he recognizes a problem that has been challenging for many Canadians with regard to homelessness. He will be happy to know that in this budget we are investing over \$8 billion in housing and homelessness across Canada. It is the first housing strategy ever in the country, and I look forward to his voting for the budget and supporting that initiative.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy listening to my colleague in the House of Commons. She represents a stunningly beautiful part of this country in Labrador, but it is also an area, as she well knows, that has been unfortunately facing the same incredible shortage of affordable housing that we have seen in other parts of the country. Over the past few decades, from the former Paul Martin government that axed the national housing program to the dismal decade of the Harper government and going back to the current government, we have seen that governments have not adequately funded the important sector of affordable housing. Because of the NDP push and the work of the member for Burnaby South, we now have, for the first time, adequate investment in housing.

How does my colleague feel about these previous governments that refused to take the incredible dearth of affordable housing seriously?

• (1340)

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the question from my colleague, but it would take me the rest of the afternoon to answer it in terms of telling him how I really feel.

What I will say is that the money in this budget is not by accident when it comes to responding to housing needs in Canada. We know they are there. We know what Canadians have been saying. We have been listening and we are responding. I want to thank my colleague for his advocacy and his support toward these investments for Canadians.

The Deputy Speaker: I want to remind everyone that the quicker the questions, comments and answers are, the more people get to participate in this great round of questions and comments.

Continuing debate, the hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise today and join in the debate on the 2022 budget. I would like to congratulate the government for having a string of two years in a row where it tabled a budget. It kind of broke that historical trend for a while.

In many ways, this is a historic budget, and one that may well be remembered for generations to come. It will be remembered as a

budget that failed to rein in reckless spending and restore fiscal responsibility, a budget that has put the financial well-being and access to government services for future generations at risk, and a budget that doubled down on failed policies in the pursuit of ideology.

It will also be remembered as the New Democratic Party's first federal budget, which is no small feat for a party that officially won only 25 seats with less than 18% of the vote just six months ago. It is a government nobody voted for and was not even debated in the last election.

It has never been clearer that we have an NDP Prime Minister who just happened to be born into the Liberal Party. Instead of going his own way as a New Democrat, he decided it would be easier to turn the once fiscally reasonable Liberal Party of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Jean Chrétien into a mirror image of the NDP, complete with a coalition-style partnership, to avoid scrutiny and accountability. That reality is reflected in this budget, and it is future generations who are going to bear the burden of it.

It was necessary to engage in extraordinary spending in the early days of the pandemic in order to ensure that Canadians had the support they needed to make it through the incredibly difficult times brought on by the pandemic and the various public health measures brought in across the country by all levels of government to address it. Unfortunately, the government treated—

The Deputy Speaker: We have a point of order from the hon. member for Windsor West.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to note that this was not the first NDP budget. Our first budget was with the hon. Jack Layton. I was there at the time, and thought I would correct the record that it was not the first NDP budget. We have already done that and been there.

The Deputy Speaker: We are descending into debate once again.

The hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe has the floor.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from the NDP for reminding us of the napkin budget brought in a few years ago. That was with the Liberals as well.

Unfortunately, the government treated this rationale as an opportunity to spend wildly and recklessly on policies that did nothing to support Canadians through the pandemic or that would help create sustainable economic growth in the future to help pay for their spending.

This budget continues this practice, with a deficit of \$52.8 billion and no plan to reach a balanced budget. At the end of the 2014-15 fiscal year, the federal debt was just over \$612 billion with a budgetary surplus of \$1.9 billion.

The Budget

Now, the federal debt is almost \$1.2 trillion, and is anticipated to reach \$1.3 trillion in the next couple of years. The cost to service our debt this year alone will be \$26.9 billion. Inflation has reached a 31-year high, and we have just seen the largest rate hike in decades by the Bank of Canada: a full half a percentage point, bringing the overnight rate to 1% in order to deal with government spending-driven inflation. We know that the Bank of Canada will continue to aggressively raise interest rates, making this spending even less sustainable. In fact, one of the reasons why the Bank of Canada had to increase it so aggressively was because of this unsustainable spending, something the NDP-Liberals would realize if they were not all following the Prime Minister's example and not thinking at all about monetary policy.

We are all aware of the devastating impact that inflation is having across Canada. Too many people who have been just getting by for the past couple of years, or even longer in some cases, now find themselves in a situation where they no longer can get by. Groceries, fuel and pretty much everything else we can think of is getting more expensive. Housing costs have skyrocketed, with the price of the average house doubling since the Prime Minister came into office and increasing 30% in the last year alone.

Young Canadians, who have seen their dream of home ownership evaporate under the government, were hoping for some sort of inspired measure in this budget: something that showed the NDP-Liberal coalition understood the issue and was actually trying to fix it. Instead of hope, the government doubled down on more of the same failed policies that have not helped young people get homes in the past six years. Nothing in the budget will help get homes built this year. In fact, the solution that the coalition government has put forward seems to be a plan to increase the size of the bureaucracy, not the supply of houses.

The budget almost acknowledges that the government is not even trying to help young people get into their own homes. Instead of a serious plan to cut red tape, cut costs and build homes, the government decided that a multi-generational home renovation tax credit was the way to go. Families are the cornerstone of our society, and supporting our loved ones as they age or when they are facing hard times is admirable. I am sure we would do it for our families, and most Canadians would want to do the same if they were able to do so. However, considering the housing crisis, this tax credit, which gives up to \$7,500 for renovations to make a secondary suite, is not a nice social policy to help support strong families. It is an admission of failure by the NDP-Liberals.

It is an admission that they are going to give up on helping to get young people out of their parents' basements and put them into their own homes. The government is telling young people that instead of trying to fix the mess it created and helping to get them into homes, it is going to help families fix up basement suites so that they feel like their own places.

Young Canadians want the pride of home ownership and the ability to build some equity, and they want to have the autonomy that comes with living on their own or with their partner or spouse. They do not want the government to help put a shower in the half-bath in mom and dad's basement and call it a day. Without a meaningful plan to increase supply, bring prices to a reasonable level and help new people enter the housing market, that is exactly how this

tax credit is going to be interpreted by Canadians, and who could possibly blame them?

Another thing that was in this budget is the expected increase in the amount of equalization payments. Members will recall that in 2018, Bill "no more", I mean Bill Morneau, quietly locked in the equalization formula until 2024 with virtually no consultation.

• (1345)

The Liberal government members of the day did not really care that Alberta and other western provinces were going through hard times; they just saw my whole province as a piggy bank that they were willing to shake every last dime out of while they could. After all these years of Liberals taking from that piggy bank without putting anything back in, there is not much left to give, but that will not stop the NDP-Liberal coalition from trying, and if that means smashing the bank open, they are going to be quite all right with that.

The feeling that the government does not understand Alberta or that it is actively trying to dismantle its economy and way of life is not new. Some held out hope that, with the finance minister being at least born in Alberta and the associate finance minister representing an Edmonton riding, there could have been some sort of consideration given to our province, but that certainly was not the case with this budget.

The attack on the energy sector continues, with the NDP-Liberal government doubling down on the plan to phase out the oil and gas sector. With this budget, the government will no longer allow the use of flow-through shares for the oil and gas industries, so smaller firms that rely on this important tool will find it that much harder. The government has asked them to reduce their emissions and navigate an ever more complicated regulatory system, and at the same time the Liberal-NDP government is working to ensure that oil and gas companies do not have the resources that they will need to accomplish either of those goals.

The budget did include, however, a tax credit for carbon capture and storage, but unfortunately it is deeply flawed. The budget suggests that there is a credit for carbon capture, utilization and storage, which means that the recovered oil can also be utilized, but in the case of the energy sector in my province, that is simply not true. The tax credit specifically rules out enhanced oil recovery, where the carbon that is being sequestered can be pumped back into the well to be permanently sequestered and in the process help extract oil that is at the bottom, which otherwise can no longer be accessed. This technology creates the lowest-emission oil possible and allows for wells to be fully utilized, resulting in jobs and royalties, and the CO₂ is still sequestered.

The Budget

Enhanced oil recovery sequestration is already taking place. There is already a process, a regulatory regime, and there are businesses operating in this space. In my riding, enhanced energy has used this method to sequester CO₂ and recover the cleanest oil in North America. A year ago, they announced that they had reached the monumental milestone of sequestering one million tonnes of CO₂, an equivalent of taking 350,000 cars off the road.

If anyone is puzzled by the fact that the government is against this technology, so is absolutely everybody in Alberta. If the NDP and the Liberals want to see emissions reduced, they need to put their ideology aside, support the oil and gas sector and support CCUS.

• (1350)

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite spoke out of one side of his mouth saying the government has spent too much, and then out of the other side of his mouth saying we are not supporting Canadians enough. I would like him to clarify what exactly he does not support in this budget. Does he not support providing early learning and child care? Does he not support dental coverage for seniors? Does he not support other supports for seniors? We doubled the first-time homebuyers tax credit. He talks about housing being an issue and housing affordability, yet he does not support these very measures.

Which is it? Do the Conservatives support Canadians, or are they just here for political hits?

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, I am pretty sure, when we look at the budget, that the dental care plan is for people under the age of 12, and the member who asked me the question just asked it for seniors, so I do not even think she understands her own budget.

The reality is that not a single province was asking for dental care transfers from the federal government. That is actually a promise made to the NDP for continued support of a corrupt, tired government that does not have any idea how to get its spending under control.

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

The hon. parliamentary secretary is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, the member just said that the government is corrupt. Then, the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman said the Prime Minister is corrupt, in a heckle. Perhaps both members would like to apologize to the House for making such an outlandishly false statement.

The Deputy Speaker: I would suggest to the member that he maybe rephrase that.

The hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, I will just call it the “ethically challenged government”, as witnessed in “The Trudeau Report” and “Trudeau II Report”.

[Translation]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in his speech, my colleague put two words together that made me cringe. He said “clean oil”. We can agree that the oil from the oil sands in

western Canada is anything but clean. In any case, those two words, side by side, are a good example of greenwashing.

We need to leave that behind. We have nothing against the fact that we need to invest in research and development to be able to propose much greener alternatives. Did the budget not miss the opportunity to invest in helping workers and industries in western Canada get out of the oil sector and focus on much greener industries?

• (1355)

[English]

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, it never ceases to amaze me that the Bloc Qu b cois is actually here to tell Albertans how to live their lives. They seem to be more obsessed with the industries and businesses in Alberta than they are with the industries and businesses in their own province.

If the member was actually listening to my speech, I talked about carbon capture, utilization and storage. This is not oil sands development at all. This is putting liquefied carbon dioxide down into a well, a sweet crude well, to recover sweet crude. The fact that the Bloc Qu b cois member does not even understand these basic elements of the oil and gas sector leads me to believe that I should not be taking her advice at all on how Alberta's economy should work.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his brilliant mansplaining.

The member talked about a lot of the similarities between the NDP and the Liberals. The NDP has fought really hard to divest from fossil fuel subsidies. I wonder if my hon. colleague supports the Liberal government continuing to fund fossil fuel industries and put money in the hands of big oil instead of in the hands of people.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, I am a proud Albertan. I am an MP who used to work in the patch. I was a roughneck. I worked on directional drilling rigs as an MWD hand. I am very familiar with the oil and gas sector, so I am able to explain it. I apologize if it offends some people that I actually have that experience.

Nobody in Alberta and nobody in the energy sector is accusing the Liberal government and the NDP coalition partners of being beneficial in any way, shape or form. I do not even understand the context of the member's question, because not a single oil and gas company in Alberta or anywhere in this country is actually applauding, other than under duress or just trying to keep the government of the day at least reasonably happy, to do as little damage as possible.

The reality is that this government oversaw the loss of well over 200,000 jobs in the western Canadian energy sector economy. That is what it has done. If it had done that to any other part of the economy, killed 200,000 jobs in the auto sector, killed several hundred thousand jobs in the aerospace sector, killed several hundred thousand jobs off the coast in the fishing industry, this country would have been in an uproar. However, because it is just Alberta, and Alberta-bashing is popular with the Bloc, the NDP and the Liberals, it seems to somehow be okay. It is not.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, the member spoke of not only carbon capture and storage but enhanced oil recovery. We know carbon capture and storage has been demonstrated 32 times out of 40 to actually increase emissions as a result. Enhanced oil recovery, for the record, is digging to the deepest and dirtiest oil possible and using carbon capture to extract it.

Why not use those same funds to invest in workers, their prosperity, and the economy of the future, rather than digging for the deepest and dirtiest oil possible?

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, I am at a loss at the lack of knowledge that my hon. colleague has when it comes to the oil and gas sector.

This is sweet, clean crude that is in carbon capture, utilization and storage technology. This is going into reservoirs that have long since been abandoned, after the water flood and everything else that has happened, to recover oil, because liquefied carbon dioxide actually unbinds that oil from the porous structures deep in the ground and releases that easy energy that we already have from all those years ago. This is the cleanest oil that we have.

The carbon dioxide that is going down into the well stays down there. The only carbon that is coming up is from the oil that it has recovered through enhanced oil recovery. That money actually reduces the cost of the sequestration, because it is, in and of itself, providing for the cost of the sequestration. What the Liberals are doing with this budget is simply spending more money only on sequestration. There is no return on the investment at all, so it actually costs everybody more money, money that we could be investing in research and development for other clean technologies.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

HOCKEY MARATHON FOR THE KIDS

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Hockey Marathon for the Kids, also known as the world's longest hockey game, was played in Chestermere, Alberta, directly east of my constituency of Calgary Skyview, this April. Hard-working players and volunteers raised nearly \$1 million for the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation to support research on childhood cancer. They played 261 hours to break the previous Guinness world record by almost nine hours. Forty hockey players spent 10 and a half days away from their friends and family without leaving the arena.

I would like to congratulate all of the players, donors, families and friends who made this happen. A special thanks goes out to Alex Halat and Lesley Plumley from Hockey Marathon, to Saifa

Statements by Members

Koonar from the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation and to Carey Ernewein and Satvir Sahota for their contributions to this special event. I am excited to see the record be broken once again next year.

* * *

• (1400)

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DAY

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is World Intellectual Property Day, or IP Day, and in Canada we are celebrating the importance of innovation, ingenuity and invention. Without Canada, the world would not have insulin, the snowmobile, the Sea-Doo, peanut butter or the zipper.

This year's international theme is "IP and Youth: Innovating for a Better Future". Today we are celebrating our young innovators, like Chad Guziewicz from Belleville, who, at 34 years old, has already founded two successful companies, including Rentify, which provides an innovative new way to help landlords with their tenants. It is our young innovators who will develop new inventions in bio-science, clean energy, quantum computing and AI, better use Canada's existing natural resources, create wealth and new businesses and drive creation, which will kill inflation. Intellectual property is the currency of innovation, and we need to fully invest in and support the young innovators who are using this currency to innovate a better future for all Canadians.

Happy IP Day.

* * *

CANCER

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all have someone in our life who has been touched by cancer. This month, we spread hope to cancer fighters, including my mom, and we pray for those who have lost their lives battling cancer. Last month, I met Dhara Vachhani from Brampton South just weeks before she lost her battle to stage 4 breast cancer. Time is so precious and Dhara conveyed that every day.

Health care workers and organizations like the Canadian Cancer Society are leading the fight against cancer. Canada has made breakthroughs in the treatment, detection and prevention of cancer, but there will always be more work to do. Early detection is key, but too often we get so busy taking care of others that we forget to take care of ourselves. I encourage all Canadians to prioritize their health and get screenings, as well as raise awareness to support those affected by cancer.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

DAGENAIS FAMILY

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today it is my pleasure to share some good news. The Dagenais family, which has been in the hardware business in Saint-Sauveur in my riding, Laurentides—Labelle, since 1928, has been awarded two prizes. The first is the heritage prize from the Association québécoise de la quincaillerie et des matériaux de construction, and the second is the prestigious builder of success prize awarded by RONA to André Dagenais.

Together with his wife, Lise Rochon, Mr. Dagenais has worked tirelessly in the business for over 50 years, and the next generation is ready to carry the torch. His children, Annie and Martin, along with his son-in-law, Philippe, are carrying on the Dagenais family business.

I extend my hearty congratulations to them. Long live the Dagenais family, and may they and their 160 employees preserve the spirit of family and generosity they are known for in their community.

* * *

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last weekend, I had the honour of joining members of the Armenian community to mark the 107th anniversary of the genocide. We heard very personal stories about their family members who experienced and witnessed the atrocities. That pain will never go away.

On April 24, 1915, the Ottoman Turks began a genocide that resulted in the death of 1.5 million Armenians. Shedding light on the truth is an essential part of the healing process. The Armenians' determination enabled them to preserve their culture, their religion, their identity and a free country.

I will always stand with Armenia and the Armenian people, and I pledge to never forget. I ask everyone here to never forget.

* * *

● (1405)

[English]

DAVE ROZDEBA SOUTH ALBERTA FLIGHT ACADEMY

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to highlight the Dave Rozdeba South Alberta Flight Academy located in my riding. Based out of Eagle Butte High School, it is a partnership between Prairie Rose School Division and Super T Aviation.

The program consists of grade 10 to 12 students who combine their traditional high school curriculum with flight school. It provides them the opportunity to earn their private pilot's licence. Students participate in ground school, where they study everything from basic airplane parts and discovery flights in the flight simulators to detailed aviation structures and navigation. By grade 12, these students have essentially completed ground school and are preparing for their private pilot's licence exam.

What is unique is that every year each student flies within their program. One day a week, these students participate in the building of a full-sized kit-based aircraft that the academy intends on using within the program. It is inspirational to see these passionate aviation students prepare for their own futures.

I am excited to return to the academy in late June to take flight with these new pilots. Well done, everyone.

* * *

HOUSING

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it takes a village to build a community. There are five tiny homes being built in Halton as part of a pilot program to serve the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation. This means affordable emergency housing options will be available on reserve, giving community members a sense of dignity, independence, safety and so much more.

Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School is one of the schools where students have explored skilled trades and are getting hands-on experience. Over 57 students have participated in the project across two semesters, plus an additional 38 students who joined the after-school program, all led by inspirational teacher Mr. Allan Nason. Recently, I joined the Minister of Housing, the Chippewas of the Nawash chief, Veronica Smith, partners from Habitat For Humanity and Notre Dame students and teachers to tour the tiny homes and speak of the impact that these homes will have.

Congratulations to all involved in making a difference.

* * *

INCOME TAX PREPARATION

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in mid-April, I had the opportunity to visit Winnipeg on behalf of the Minister of National Revenue. While there, I met with public servants at the Canada Revenue Agency's Winnipeg Tax Centre. They have many responsibilities and I commend their dedication for their work.

I also had the opportunity to engage with local organizations that are using the community volunteer income tax program. Through this program, free tax clinics are made available to eligible members of communities with modest or low incomes. I give my sincere gratitude to SEED Winnipeg, Friends of Filipino Immigrants in Manitoba and Accueil Francophone for their work and for sharing their experiences with me. Beyond providing tax clinics, these organizations also play a vital role in helping newcomers who are filing their taxes for the first time. This important work is not only about taxation, but about facilitating integration as well.

Finally, with the deadline fast approaching, I remind all Canadians to file their taxes in order to get access to the benefits and credits that they are eligible for.

CONSERVATION IN KOOTENAY—COLUMBIA

Mr. Rob Morrison (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are celebrating National Volunteer Week in Canada, and I would like to take a moment to acknowledge and thank the many volunteers in Kootenay—Columbia who give their time for the betterment of our communities.

Recently, I had the honour of visiting the annual rod and gun dinner in Fernie, British Columbia. The event, attended by over 700 anglers, hunters and conservationists, was an outstanding success. I was pleased to meet and thank the many volunteers who contribute to ongoing conservation efforts. Established in 1899, the Fernie Rod and Gun Club is the oldest in B.C. Influenced by the conservation movement in the early 1900s, its members are passionate about protecting and conserving fish and wildlife. This important work fosters a healthy sporting life for many of the hunters and anglers who live and work in Kootenay—Columbia.

B.C.'s conservation movement started a century ago in the Kootenays, and I am proud of the dedicated volunteer families like the Roccas that continue to give their time for this noble cause.

* * *

[Translation]

HARGEISA MARKET

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the great pleasure of meeting with representatives from the Canadian Alliance to Rebuild Hargeisa Market and members of the Somaliland community.

Their presentation was very informative and taught me about the history of Somaliland, a very small country that is going through tragic times as a result of the fire that destroyed Hargeisa market.

This market is the heart of the country's culture and economy. It was home to more than 3,000 businesses, mostly run by women, employing thousands of merchants, entrepreneurs, retailers and farmers. These businesses contribute more than \$2 billion to the Somaliland economy.

I rise in the House today to draw my colleagues' attention to the repercussions of that fire, which has displaced thousands of people, many of whom have lost their main source of income.

I would also like to acknowledge the leadership of Orléans resident Roda Muse and the representatives of the Canadian Alliance in their efforts to raise awareness about the importance of rebuilding Hargeisa market. Their voices are being heard.

* * *

• (1410)

[English]

PARKINSON'S AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, April is Parkinson's Awareness Month. Parkinson's is the fastest-growing neurological disease in the world. There are more than 100,000 people in Canada living with Parkinson's, and more than 30 Canadians are diagnosed with Parkinson's every day. This number is expected to increase to 50 new diagnoses per day in the next

Statements by Members

decade. There is no diagnostic test for this disease, no treatment to stop it from progressing and no cure. It is important to reduce the waiting time for patients to receive medications, movement therapies and deep brain stimulation.

I would like to thank Parkinson Canada for committing to transforming the lives of people with Parkinson's. It is due to my friend and Barrie—Innisfil resident Greg McGinnis, who advocates for better diagnostics, treatments and a cure for Parkinson's, that this will be made possible.

We need to raise awareness for Parkinson's so that we can all work together to find a cure. Every Canadian deserves a good quality of life.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF CEREBRAL PALSY FOOTBALL

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's soccer announced the roster for the upcoming 2022 International Federation of Cerebral Palsy Football Men's World Cup in Salou, Spain. The tournament runs from April 27 to May 16. Our 13-man team will be in group A, which includes England, Venezuela and the Netherlands. A total of 15 countries will be competing at the world cup event. This continues to show how Canada has advanced in the world of football. Furthermore, it is actively recruiting for a female team.

As someone who has always been a strong advocate for participation in sport and for the inclusion at all levels of ability, I am thrilled to highlight the success that team Canada has had. I would like to especially highlight one player, Chris Fawcett, who has always been near and dear to my heart. After all, he is my nephew, and I could not be prouder and more excited to cheer him on.

I encourage all members of the House and Canadians across the country to tune in and watch these outstanding athletes as they represent Canada on their quest to winning the IFCPF Men's World Cup. Go, Canada, go.

*Statements by Members***UKRAINE**

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak about the important work that the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association is doing to support Ukraine. Earlier this month, I led a delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's spring session in Athens to discuss the assembly's response to Russia's unprovoked and illegal war against Ukraine, and to discuss the steps it is taking to address the fundamentally changed geopolitical situation. After hearing from Ruslan Stefanchuk, chair of the Ukrainian Rada, and Yehor Cherniev, Ukrainian rep to the NATO PA, the standing committee voiced its continued, united and unwavering solidarity with Ukraine.

NATO Parliamentary Assembly members also adopted the first draft of a declaration on standing with Ukraine, indicating our strong commitment to building a united global coalition to support Ukraine with all possible assistance, including crippling sanctions, military equipment and humanitarian assistance. In line with the values and principles of NATO, we will be there for as long it takes to support Ukraine's democracy and to ensure global peace and security.

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JOHN KING

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart today that I rise to honour the life and memory of John King. John was born and raised in Elmwood. It was there that he met the love of his life Linda, and there that they raised their children Bret, Ashley and Meghan.

For 37 years, John enjoyed a career with the federal government working with at-risk youth. I first heard of John when he was working with my sister Tessa and many others to save the Kelvin Community Club. That work was critical to the creation of the Clara Hughes Recreation Park, and John provided leadership the whole way through.

This was not the only mark that John left on our community. He was a founding member of the Glenelm Neighbourhood Association and a member of the Elmwood Bear Clan, the North East Winnipeg Historical Society, Juicers Hockey Club and Happy Days on Henderson. John's community activism was rooted in a love for people and a spirit of service. His presence will be sorely missed.

On behalf of all the people in our community who had the good fortune of working with John, and all the people who will benefit from his work for decades to come, I want to express sincere condolences to his family and thanks to John for his good work.

* * *

● (1415)

[Translation]

EARTH DAY

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we have been celebrating Earth Day on April 22 since 1970, but sometimes I get the impression that we are actually celebrating Groundhog Day because nothing has changed for such a long time, despite the fact that science has clearly established the urgency of the situation.

Big changes need to come from governments and private corporations, which are moving at a snail's pace, if not actually going backwards, as this government did recently with its outrageous decision to increase oil production. We need to kick up a fuss, channel our energy and take action.

I therefore invite everyone to participate in a demonstration in Quebec City on May 8. Yes, that is Mother's Day and, no, that date was not chosen by accident. Mother's Day is the perfect opportunity to unite for a noble cause.

In 1870, the American Julia Ward Howe invited mothers around the world to unite for peace. This year, on May 8, let us unite for the earth and renew the intent of Mother's Day. Let us take action to protect our present, our future and our children's future.

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[English]

VACCINE MANDATES

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on April 1, about 25 people in my riding of Saskatoon West lost their jobs because of an imposed federal vaccination requirement. Their employer, Maple Leaf Foods, is federally regulated by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, and as such must follow federal rules.

On April 4, Shawn, who lost his job, wrote to me wondering how he was going to put food on the table and provide for his family. When I originally posted about this on Facebook and Twitter, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader mocked Shawn and my other unemployed constituents: so much for Liberal sunny ways.

While countries around the world lift restrictions, here in Canada we have a government that tunes out actual science and substitutes it with its own political science. This NDP-Liberal government is creating division when it forces people out of work, making it impossible for them to provide for their families.

It is time to end the mandates, end the division and work to heal our country so Canadians such as Shawn can get back to work and support their families.

* * *

[Translation]

GUY LAFLEUR

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, number 10 streaks down the ice, fast as lightning, blond hair flying. Unleashing all his speed, skill and strength, he closes in on the net. Goal! Celebrations break out all over the street, the neighbourhood, the city, the province.

Those are the kinds of vivid memories we have of the "blond demon" whose passing has left all of Quebec in mourning. I once had the honour of meeting Guy Lafleur, the top goal scorer of his era, who won five Stanley Cups with the Montreal Canadiens. I was struck by how approachable and personable this living legend was.

His name will remain etched in our memories, not only for the on-ice exploits that inspired a generation, but also for the great man that he was.

[English]

The Flower was, and will remain forevermore, the pride of Montreal, Quebec and the entire nation.

I thank “Ti-Guy”. May he rest in peace.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we go to Oral Questions, I want to welcome everyone in the gallery. This is day two of open public gallery, and it is great having visitors today. However, that also means that they cannot participate in what happens on the floor and they should listen to the PPS members who are up there guiding them along their way.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

ETHICS

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with all these guests here, let us hope we get some answers in question period.

Fraud on the government: That is the charge the RCMP considered laying against the Prime Minister for taking an exotic holiday as a free gift in 2016. Recent documents show the RCMP knew he committed the illegal act, but it also knew there was a loophole that he could have used. As silly as it might sound, the Prime Minister could have written himself a note that gave himself permission to take the holiday.

My question is this: Did the Prime Minister give himself permission to take that free holiday in 2016?

• (1420)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no. This matter was settled years ago when the Ethics Commissioner released the report. While the Conservatives continue to focus on petty politics and on me, Liberals are going to continue to focus on Canadians, on investing in housing across the country, on \$10-a-day child care for families and on continuing to lead on world-class investments in fighting climate change. That is what Canadians expect of us. That is what we continue to do.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is no statute of limitations on fraud charges, and the Prime Minister is not above the law. The Criminal Code is clear. The only way the Prime Minister is not guilty of fraud is if the Prime Minister gave himself consent to break the law. That is in the Criminal Code.

This is a clear, straightforward question. I would like a yes or no answer. Did the Prime Minister give himself permission to get away with committing a criminal fraud offence?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no. The RCMP looked into this matter and no political interference was around it. It came to its own conclusion. There was nothing to pursue.

Oral Questions

Further, those findings were independently verified by two separate third parties. Despite what the Conservative Party appears to be attempting, politicians do not interfere with the operations of the police in this country. This matter was thoroughly reviewed and closed years ago.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. We are going to try and keep it so we can hear. We do have people in the gallery today who are watching us.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, new documents revealed that the RCMP knew that the Prime Minister took the holiday, that it was illegal, that he did it and the RCMP knew it. There was no question of that. The only question the RCMP had, according to its own documents, was whether he gave himself permission to do that.

The Prime Minister just said he did not. Is he willing to meet with the RCMP now, given that information, and it can proceed as it sees fit: yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP addressed the matters raised by the Conservatives years ago. The members opposite know very well this is the case, but the Conservative Party seems to have difficulty understanding that in a strong, democratic country, neither opposition politicians nor the government can tell the police what to investigate and what not to investigate.

The RCMP does its job. Why does the Conservative Party not believe the RCMP?

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's doublespeak is rather ridiculous.

The RCMP considered charging the Liberal leader with fraud, but it did not because, as Liberal leader, he had the authority to approve a \$200,000 gift for himself.

A few moments ago, he said that he did not do so. He said this is something that happened long ago. However, the Prime Minister has never hesitated to stand up and denounce things that happened even longer ago.

Does he know that it is never too late to report a crime?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this matter was settled years ago. Of course, we recognize the independence of the RCMP and the important work it is doing in this country.

What the Conservatives do not understand, in their eagerness to launch personal attacks and spread disinformation, is that the work was done at many levels and the matter is closed.

Oral Questions

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, from now on, the Prime Minister will never talk about things that happened years ago and that have been settled by various parties. This is what the Prime Minister is telling us.

However, he himself said just now that he did not give himself permission to accept a gift worth more than \$200,000 in the form of a private vacation for him and his family. The RCMP considered laying fraud charges against the Prime Minister but ultimately did not do so for that exact reason.

Why will the Prime Minister not acknowledge his mistake or his fault? Will he meet with the RCMP to explain?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP has been looking into such matters for years.

The Conservative Party is always trying to bring up issues to attack us and distract attention away from the fact that we presented a budget that will provide housing for Canadians, \$10-a-day child care for families across the country, and investments to combat climate change.

The Conservatives only want to play political games, make partisan attacks and try to distract Canadians from the fact that they have no solutions for the issues that matter to Canadians.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is showing a lack of respect for Quebeckers, Canadians and especially Ukrainians. When Syrian refugees came to Canada, he chartered flights and brought them coats. Everyone took a selfie, even the airport security officers.

I am not asking the Prime Minister whether there will be an airlift for displaced Ukrainians, but when there will be an airlift.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are proceeding as quickly, safely and efficiently as possible to ensure that Ukrainians are able to come to Canada. There is no limit on the number of applicants. We have given priority to the applications of Ukrainians who want to come to Canada, and those currently in Canada on a temporary basis can extend their stay.

With the Canada-Ukraine authorization for emergency travel, many standard visa requirements have been lifted for emergency travel, thus ensuring the quickest, safest and most efficient travel. Since January, we have welcomed more than 17,000 Ukrainian nationals, and others will be arriving.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, after 62 days of war, he has the gall to use the word “quickly”.

This government is unable to explain to these people how to give their biometrics and unable to collect these people's biometrics. It is telling them, “Here are some Aeroplan points”. That is not costing the government a cent. The government is not chartering flights. This is not costing Air Canada a cent, so Air Canada has simply become the publicity agent.

Will the government show some respect for Ukrainians and charter some damn flights?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the leader of the Bloc Québécois is very fond of expressing outrage here in this place. The reality is that public servants and our partners around the world are working to fast-track the applications of Ukrainians who want to come to Canada.

The reality is that we have done a lot, and we will continue to take numerous measures to expedite the arrival of Ukrainian families here in Canada. We are doing more and will continue to do more. This is a very difficult situation for these families, and we are there to help them.

* * *

[English]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, throughout this pandemic and the rising cost-of-living crisis, we see working Canadians and working class families that are hurt hard, and we see the super rich who continue to make record profits and gain more wealth and power. Another example of this is the potential merger of Rogers and Shaw. It is only going to result in massive layoffs for workers and increased costs for families.

Will the Liberals stand on the side of workers and Canadians, prevent this deal from going through and make sure we keep the prices of cellphones and cellular services low?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we well know that Canadians have paid some of the highest prices for wireless and Internet in the world. That is why a number of years ago we made a pledge to decrease average cellphone bills in this country by 25%, and that actually happened. We drove down prices by working to ensure that there was both competition and quality infrastructure for Canadians. We will continue to be there to make sure that access to data is affordable and reliable everywhere across the country, including with massive historic investments in rural broadband and cellphone access.

[Translation]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is true that cell service costs more in Canada and that this merger will make things worse.

It is clear that, if this merger goes through, the cost of cell service will go up and many jobs could be lost.

Will the Liberals stand with people and stop this merger, yes or no?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been working for years to bring the price of cell service and Internet access down for Canadians. On average, cellular phone bills are down 25%.

We know that competition, innovation and affordability are essential in Canada's telecommunications sector. That is why we are still working to improve service and lower costs, and we are making historic investments to achieve that.

Over the past five years, we have invested 10 times more than the Conservative government did during its 10 years in power to improve rural connectivity, and we will keep working on it.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in response to repeated questions about what documents would be available for the inquiry into the use of the Emergencies Act, the Minister of Emergency Preparedness indicated that documents covered by privilege, such as the advice of the justice department to cabinet, would not be disclosed.

The measures used by the government represent the most significant infringement on the civil liberties of Canadians in a generation. Canadians deserve full transparency.

Will the Liberals disclose the internal analysis that showed they met the threshold for the Emergencies Act and the justice department's private opinion, or are they just going to keep hiding this information from Canadians?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the illegal blockades forced borders to close, businesses to shut and workers to be laid off, it was Canadians who paid the biggest price. It was only after we got advice from law enforcement that we invoked the Emergencies Act. It was necessary, and it worked.

We launched a full-scale independent inquiry, appointing Justice Rouleau as commissioner. He has the power to compel witnesses, documents and information, including classified information. We look forward to co-operating with the inquiry to foster transparency and accountability and to incorporating lessons learned so that this never happens again.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives and Canada's Civil Liberties Association were disturbed to see that the Liberals are attempting to control the scope of the inquiry into the Emergencies Act by directing the commissioner to focus on the actions of the protesters and not the actions of the government. The purpose of this inquiry is not to hold Canadian protesters accountable, but to hold the government accountable when using extraordinary powers.

The government has tasked the commissioner to gather evidence against the protesters, but this begs the question that, if the government does not already have this evidence, how could it have justified invoking the act in the first place?

Oral Questions

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to encourage my hon. colleague to read the order in council, which specifically says that the judge can look into the conduct of police enforcement. I encourage my hon. colleague to read the order in council. We want to shine a light on the sober events that led to the invocation of the Emergencies Act.

I would encourage my colleague to recall that businesses were shut down, workers were laid off and residents were terrorized in their own homes. We embrace this inquiry. It is an important hallmark of our democracy, and we look forward to co-operating with the judge.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister finally called a public inquiry to look into the reasons for invoking the Emergencies Act. The public safety minister said, "Our intent is to collaborate with [Justice Rouleau] so that he has a fulsome record, so that he can do his job".

This is wonderful. We all want the inquiry to get to the bottom of the wrongdoing in this saga. Will the Prime Minister commit to giving the commissioner the power to compel the production of necessary documents and evidence, including those covered by cabinet confidence?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be clear: We are shedding light on the dark series of events that led to the invocation of the Emergencies Act.

I am hoping for closure for those who were laid off and for the Ottawa residents who were held hostage in their own homes, and I would remind the Conservative Party that hundreds of serious charges have been laid that involve guns and conspiracy to commit murder. We will work with the judge to encourage transparency.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when we were debating the Emergencies Act, there were 13 points in the order. During that debate in this place, I demolished 12 of those points because there were many things that were not clear.

Today it was announced that Justice Rouleau has been mandated to shed some light on this. Can the minister explain why the mandate is already biased with predetermined questions?

• (1435)

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would encourage my colleague to read the orders and the legislation. The guidelines are there. The conditions that apply are there for Justice Rouleau.

We will work with the commissioner to encourage transparency, accountability and integrity. We invoked that law for many reasons, and we must be fair towards all Canadians. The process must be transparent.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians need answers about the government's invocation of the Emergencies Act. The key question is whether the invocation of these extraordinary powers met the legal requirements of the act, a question Justice Rouleau and the public inquiry need to answer. In order to do that, Justice Rouleau needs access to documents covered by cabinet confidence.

Will the Prime Minister, and will the government, waive cabinet confidence?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we are prepared to shine a light in co-operation with the judge on the circumstances that led to the invocation of the act.

I would remind my hon. colleagues, particularly from the Conservative Party of Canada, that individuals were arrested as a result of their illegal conduct at borders which shut down businesses, required people to be laid off, and had members of this community right here in Ottawa hostage in their own homes.

We are prepared to go through all of that in co-operation with the judge so there is transparency and accountability in conjunction with this commission.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Let us have a little order, so we can hear the answers to the questions and so people visiting us can hear the answers as well.

The hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Emergencies Act is only supposed to be used when there is no other law in Canada able to deal with the situation. It is not clear that threshold was met. When emergency powers are used in a democracy, the question that must be answered is this: "Did the government act lawfully in the invocation of those powers?"

To answer that question, Justice Rouleau needs cabinet documents. Former prime minister Harper waived cabinet confidence in the case of retired vice-admiral Mark Norman and in the case of former senator Mike Duffy. Will the government do the same for this public inquiry?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I would encourage my colleagues to read the order in council, which specifically says that the judge has the independent power to compel witnesses, information and other documents, which indeed includes classified information.

We want to shine a light on the circumstances that led to the invocation of the act. We on this side of the House and other members in this chamber are confident that it was the right thing to do, and it worked. However, in fulfillment of our obligations under the Emergencies Act, we have launched this public inquiry so there can be transparency, accountability and integrity, and so this never happens again.

*[Translation]***CLIMATE CHANGE**

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in his report released this morning, the Commissioner of the Environment revealed that Canada's hydrogen strategy was based on unrealistic hypotheses, which of course compromises Canada's ability to meet its climate targets.

The commissioner is urging Canada to go back to the drawing board. However, the Minister of Environment is using Canada's hydrogen strategy as part of his plan to reduce emissions by 2030. We know that when it comes to hydrogen, his plan is based on unrealistic hypotheses.

Is that the only part of the plan that is based on unrealistic hypotheses?

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

I have been following the work of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development for more than two decades. This work is certainly very important to our government and should be important to all governments since it helps us to do better.

We want our climate change plan to be one of the best in the world and we want our strategy, including our hydrogen strategy, to be one of the best in the world. We will work on doing exactly that.

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to move on to another equally concerning report that came out this week on the environment, this one from the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The UN office is projecting that, by 2030, the number of natural disasters per year will reach 560. We are talking about floods, major droughts and extreme temperatures. All of these will increase by 40% in just eight brief years. The UN has called it a spiral of self-destruction.

Did the Minister of Environment consider the increase in natural disasters before approving the Bay du Nord project and its billion barrels of oil?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we take climate change adaptation very seriously, which is why last year we started working with expert panels to design Canada's first national adaptation strategy, which is expected to be adopted this year.

We are working with the provinces and territories, indigenous peoples, municipalities and other stakeholders to develop Canada's first national adaptation strategy.

• (1440)

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Earth Day was last Friday.

Oral Questions

The Minister of Environment issued a news release for the occasion, saying, and I quote, “Canadians join people around the world to...focus on everything we do to keep our shared home healthy.”

Could the minister explain and share his thought process on how approving Bay du Nord and its billion barrels of oil will keep our shared home healthy?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I suggest that my hon. colleague take a look at the latest official greenhouse gas emissions inventory report, which shows that in 2019, before the pandemic, Canada's greenhouse gas emissions went down, even though oil production increased by 700,000 barrels.

It does not end there. There were 100 measures, \$110 billion in investments and a huge number of regulatory measures to make Canada a leader on climate change.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, from the Liberal government that brought us a disastrous air passenger bill of rights, which has been panned by consumer groups as completely useless, the government now wants to do a so-called homebuyer bill of rights. Page 47 of the budget says this is under provincial jurisdiction. Could the Minister of Housing please enlighten us as to exactly how the government will protect consumers in a home sale under provincial jurisdiction when it cannot even protect a passenger from a cancelled flight under its own jurisdiction?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has always believed in collaboration with all orders of government to benefit Canadians. The member opposite should know that we have a strong track record on provincial, federal, territorial and municipal collaboration. The news flash is that we now have affordable child care in Canada. That is as a result of collaboration between our government and 10 provinces and three territories.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, rather than tackling the supply issues driving the housing and affordability crisis, the NDP-Liberal government has doubled down on its failed approach. The NDP-Liberal budget promises the same failed programs that will not see any additional houses built this year or help a Canadian family afford a home who otherwise could not. The average home price in Canada is now \$868,000, up nearly 30% in the last year alone. Canadians need help now. When will the Liberal government take this housing crisis seriously?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what Canadians do not need is a mishmash of conflicting policies from the official opposition. The leader of the official opposition believes that we should download the costs of housing to municipalities. The member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon believes that we should download the costs to provinces. The member for Calgary Centre believes that we should not ban foreign owners. The member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry believes that we should pull back from federal investments in housing. The member for Calgary Centre does

not believe in building multi-unit buildings for affordable housing. That party does not get its story straight on housing.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in Canada, as we just heard, the average price of a home is \$868,000, but in South Surrey—White Rock the average price is \$1.2 million, and that is not even for a detached home. Rather than dealing with a supply shortage, the government is doubling down on its failed policies and programs. Canadians do not want to co-own their homes with this tax-and-spend government. They do not trust the government. When is the government going to get serious, abandon its failed policies, increase supply and cut red tape?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the best way to deal with housing affordability is to increase housing supply and to do it faster. Unfortunately, if the member opposite is so concerned about housing supply, she should talk to her leader, who opposes our collaboration with municipalities to increase housing supply. She should talk to her colleague from Calgary Centre, who opposes a ban on foreign ownership. She should talk to her colleague from Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, who believes we should just download the costs to provinces. She should talk to her colleague from Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, who believes we should just get out of the whole national housing strategy.

● (1445)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Zack has a job offer in my riding of Peterborough—Kawartha, but he cannot find affordable housing. This is a common theme across the country. There are a lot of job vacancies, but no housing. How can we fix the employment crisis when we have a housing crisis?

People need a place to live. It is a basic human need. How is Zack supposed to pay off his student debt if he cannot accept job offers? Will the housing minister continue to roll out one failed program after another, and is Zack the latest victim of his housing policy failures?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talks about housing as a basic right. When we brought forward the National Housing Strategy Act to recognize housing as a human right, that party voted against it. That is not—

Oral Questions

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Are we ready to continue?

I will allow the Minister of Housing to restart his answer.

Hon. Ahmed Hussien: Mr. Speaker, the solution to housing affordability is housing supply. We are collaborating with municipalities through the housing accelerator fund to build 100,000 new homes in the next two years and double the number of new homes built in the next 10 years. We are also extending supports through the first-time homebuyer incentive and the tax-free savings account to first-time homebuyers. We are also tackling speculation by banning foreign ownership of Canadian residential real estate in the next two years, and we are building more affordable housing.

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today the environment commissioner released another series of scathing reports on the Liberals' climate failures. He showed that they are failing on carbon pricing, letting big polluters off the hook while indigenous communities pay the price, failing to reduce emissions, relying on non-existent policies that undermine their credibility, and failing on climate infrastructure. They cannot even keep track of the impacts of their projects. On a just transition, they are leaving workers and communities behind.

How can Canadians trust the government's promises when we see failure after failure after failure?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, we welcome the commissioner's latest report and thank him for his findings. I do not know what is so controversial about that.

Over the last six years, we have made major progress on everything from putting a price on pollution to protecting historic amounts of our lands and water. As we have planned in budget 2022 and the emissions reduction plan, we are transitioning to a clean economy. We are putting a cap on emissions from Canada's oil and gas sector, and we are putting a price on pollution through to 2030.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, God help our little planet with a minister like that in charge, because if he read the environment commissioner's report, he would point out that energy workers are facing a potential economic upheaval as devastating as the collapse of the cod fishery in the 1990s.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: I know the member for Timmins—James Bay has a big voice, but I am having trouble hearing it all the way up here.

This is what I am going to do. A lot of times I am getting ministers to repeat their answers. I am going to ask the member for Timmins—James Bay to repeat his question and start from the beginning.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, God help our planet with answers like that from the minister, because the environment commis-

sioner today warned that energy workers are facing a potential economic upheaval as devastating as the collapse of the cod fisheries in the 1990s. Slogans and promises about a so-called “just transition” just will not cut it. The commissioner reminds us that the government has broken every environmental promise it has made, and now it is breaking faith with energy workers and their families.

It is simple. The climate crisis is here. How can the minister stand in the House and continue to show such a dismal record of failure?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the commissioner for the report, notwithstanding some concerns with the findings. Consultations on legislation were launched while I was minister of natural resources, and I am proud to say I am continuing that work as the Minister of Labour alongside my successor and my colleagues. Recently we had a ministerial round table on sustainable jobs. We have had the relaunch of consultations on the legislation and the sustainable jobs training centre, which demonstrate our government's ongoing commitment to achieving a transition that will lower emissions, build up renewables and make sure that our workers are at the centre of it.

* * *

• (1450)

HEALTH

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, distress centres are life-saving resources in our communities, which have seen a surge in demand for their services since the onset of the pandemic. In my riding of Etobicoke—Lakeshore, the assaulted women's helpline recently received a much-needed infusion of \$250,000 of federal support. This organization operates two crisis lines. One is for women who are experiencing domestic and gender-based violence, and the other, the seniors safety line, is specifically for seniors who are experiencing all forms of abuse.

Could the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions update the House on how our government is supporting these types of critical supports in Canada?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore for his ongoing, impressive leadership and all—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Hold on. I was just making sure that the minister did not use up all of her time.

The hon. Minister of Mental Health.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, I will just thank him for his advocacy now.

All people in Canada deserve access to critical mental health resources. Yesterday, I was able to announce \$2 million for the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health to help develop resources to assist distress centres in meeting the diverse needs of disproportionately affected people, as well as almost \$1.8 million for 13 distress centres across Canada to help them better connect to appropriate supports. This funding is part of a \$50-million federal commitment to distress centres and to building a network to ensure that people get what they need when they need it.

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THE ECONOMY

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Governor of the Bank of Canada admitted that inflation is much higher than expected. When asked to explain how to protect Canada's finances, he said, "don't spend too much".

We know that the Prime Minister does not think about monetary policy, but Conservatives do and Canadians do, and Canadians are the ones paying the price for the Prime Minister's monetary illiteracy: higher grocery bills, gas bills and interest rates. Will the Prime Minister recognize that his reckless borrowing and spending is making things worse for Canadians?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is ironic that this question comes from a Conservative colleague when, in their electoral platform, the Conservatives committed to spending \$168 billion.

The IMF has just confirmed that our economy is going to see the highest growth among G7 countries, both this year and next year. Canadians have created over 3.5 million jobs. These are well-paying jobs that will help Canadians meet the cost of living that we see increasing all over the world due to the war in Ukraine. We have been excellent stewards of the economy, and the Conservatives know it.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, inflation hit 6.7% last month, a 31-year high and well above the Bank of Canada's predictions. Canadians are already struggling to pay their bills, fill up at the pump and put food on the table. Unfortunately, budget 2022 failed to provide any credible solutions, and with the extensive, unfocused spending, it is only going to get worse. The simple fact is that Canadians cannot afford this Liberal-NDP government.

When will the minister acknowledge this cost of living crisis we are living in and work on real solutions?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are seeing inflation rise right around the world, and we know that this is due to the war in Ukraine, among other things.

However, I would like to remind the Conservatives that in our budget we have put forward a plethora of measures in order to ensure that housing would be more affordable and to ensure that child care would be more affordable. Prior to that, we lowered taxes for

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the middle class on two occasions, and the Conservatives voted against it. We have helped raise 300,000 children out of poverty, thanks to the Canada child benefit, and we are supporting vulnerable seniors with an increase in our supports for them. We are there for Canadians.

* * *

● (1455)

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, inflation is at a 31-year high. Canadians are suffering under rising prices for gas, groceries and housing. A good way to help Canadians is by ensuring that the relationship with the U.S. remains strong and stable, yet the government continues to disappoint: tariffs on our lumber, threats to our auto sector and the most punishing buy American provisions we have ever seen. We know that the Prime Minister likes to fly around for photo ops and surfing trips. Maybe he could add a few flights to D.C. to the flight plan.

My question for the Prime Minister is this: When will he get to work?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is an experienced member of the trade committee. He has actually been on trade trips with the Minister of International Trade to Washington, D.C. The Prime Minister has also been to Washington, D.C. engaging with Joseph Biden.

What is very important is that we have always taken a team Canada approach, which has been encouraged to us by all stakeholders and by witnesses who have come before the committee where that member has been present. We will continue to take a non-partisan approach to continuing the dialogue with our biggest trading partner to see jobs and opportunity for Canadians and Americans, because it serves both sides of the border.

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[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with the rising cost of food, rent and gas, which are all basic necessities for Canadians, inflation sits at 6.7%, and this government is completely failing to manage its spending. Even worse, it is increasing the taxes that it created.

Meanwhile, in France, the inflation rate is 4.7%. Why? It is because the government decided to freeze price rises.

Why did the government increase the Liberal tax on carbon when it could have given Canadians a break?

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Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what will help Canadians face the increased cost of living is paycheques.

Over the past two years, 3.5 million jobs were created. Our economic growth is strong. In fact, it is the strongest of all G7 nations this year, and it will be the strongest next year as well, according to experts. We are creating good, well-paying jobs for Canadians.

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the appointment of a unilingual anglophone board of directors at CN has drawn a lot of criticism, but it is hard to believe that there will be a real culture change at CN.

Why is that? It is because the Prime Minister, who is responsible for holding CN to account, is spending his own time offering positions to people who do not speak a word of French. He did it with the Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick. He did it with the Governor General. He has done it with several ministers. What credibility does he have to criticize CN? They are like Tweedledee and Tweedledum, doing the same thing.

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

Our two official languages are at the heart of our Canadian culture and identity. All Canadians deserve to be served in the official language of their choice, and that also applies to the private sector, which includes CN.

The lack of francophone directors on CN's board of directors is completely unacceptable, and we expect the company to rectify this situation as quickly as possible.

We are very pleased with the new version of the official languages bill, as we want to equip the commissioner with the tools he needs to do his job.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Manon Tombi is a young mother seeking permanent residence who has been abandoned by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

Even as she was grieving the sudden death of her partner, she learned that, because he was the primary applicant on their file, their application was cancelled. Because her partner died, she had to go back to square one of a protracted process that had already gone on for 31 months.

Everyone agrees that this should never have happened and that the government behaved heartlessly. Will the minister make sure that Manon Tombi's file stays in the system and that she will not have to go back to square one?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Bloc Québécois member for his question and his collaboration on immigration issues.

Like him, I was informed of this situation this morning, and I extend my heartfelt sympathy to Ms. Tombi. I discussed this case with the Bloc member earlier.

Although I cannot comment on specific cases here, I can assure the House that I will be looking into this case.

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[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many Canadians, including three strong, enterprising women in my riding, have been unceremoniously put on indefinite leave without pay by the Liberals. Crystal, Angela, and Kathy lost their jobs at Canada Post because of the government's mandate absurdity. Livelihoods taken away, families going without, and for what purpose? Each of these women works in a small town. Two of the three are postal agents who work alone, and one is now not even allowed to enter the building of the business she worked so hard to build. This needs to end.

Will the minister today commit to ending these unscientific mandates?

● (1500)

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, having a fully vaccinated workforce makes our workforces and our communities safer. We asked employees of the federal public to step up, and they stepped up: 99% of the public servants got fully vaccinated. We are committed to reviewing this policy every six months, and that review is under way. Any decisions will be based on science and the advice of public health officials.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Iceland, Sweden, Ireland, France, the U.K., these are just a few of the countries that have dropped all of their mandates. However, the government, without any evidence, is continuing to bar Canadians from getting on airplanes to visit the loved ones they so want to see. It is spending \$30 million to prevent Canadians from getting on airplanes.

On what day will the minister allow people to fly and end the mandates?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for reminding Canadians of how many countries have put together a mandate to protect the health and safety of travellers and those who work in the travel sector. Everything we have done so far is intended to protect the health of Canadians, and we have always been guided by the advice we receive from our experts. I am not going to take advice from the Conservatives; I am going to take advice from our scientists and from our doctors, and we will constantly review our policies and do the right thing for Canadians.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister claimed the only way out of the pandemic was through vaccination. The point of vaccination is to induce an immune response. Immune response can also be measured through antibody testing, but the government will not accept those tests. Instead, the government continues to deny travel to those who have not had the shots but who have a strong immune response due to previous infection.

When will the Prime Minister end his cruel and inhumane travel bans on Canadians?

Hon. Omar Alhabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, talking down vaccines does not help Canadians, nor does it help our health and safety in Canada. Many Conservative Party members were against vaccines when all doctors were saying vaccines were the right thing for Canadians. In fact—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Are we ready?

The hon. Minister of Transport.

Hon. Omar Alhabra: Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the Conservatives' noise, I am going to tell members that we are going to continue to do whatever we can to protect the health and safety of Canadians, travellers and those who work in the travel sector. We are always reassessing these decisions. We do not make these decisions lightly. We know that they are important, and we will continue to be guided by science.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, the government supported the Nature Conservancy of Canada's Boreal Wildlands project, the largest single private conservation project in Canada.

The Boreal Wildlands is a project of global importance and a rare opportunity to have a direct impact on biodiversity loss and climate change.

Can the Minister of Environment and Climate Change tell the House what a crucial step this is on our path to conserving 25% of Canada's lands and waters by 2025?

• (1505)

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

Protecting and conserving nature is one of the most important measures we can take to slow biodiversity loss while fighting climate change and advancing the reconciliation process with indigenous peoples. Nature is what ties all these important causes together.

This project will protect 15,000 square kilometres of critical habitat for species at risk such as caribou. Last week on Earth Day,

Oral Questions

we celebrated the Boreal Wildlands as the largest single private conservation project in Canada's history.

This is another important step as our government works toward conserving 25% of our land by 2025.

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[English]

PASSPORT CANADA

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the last two weeks I have received call after call from angry constituents about the poor service they have received at Passport Canada offices. Our constituents are regularly lining up at four or five a.m. just to see an agent. The Government of Canada knew there was going to be a surge in applications, yet it did nothing about the expected demand.

Why is Passport Canada offering such poor service, and why does it not get its ducks in a row and give Canadians the service they expect from a key government office?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are travelling again, and a significant increase in demand for passports has resulted in long lineups and wait times for in-person service. We understand that this is difficult and stressful. We have, in fact, hired an additional 500 passport officers to help process this. We have made Service Canada available to ensure that individuals who need to travel on a non-urgent basis can deposit their applications. We will continue to work very hard right across the country to meet this increased demand.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, passport processing delays are hitting Canadians across this country, and rural Canadians, like people in Hastings—Lennox and Addington, are no different. One constituent, John, posted about his experience with his mother, trying to book an appointment. Phoning in resulted in a disconnection, the website constantly crashes, and there are ridiculously long delays at in-person offices. If this was the private sector, it would be shut down. This is unacceptable in a first world nation like Canada.

When will the government do its job and get passports for Canadians like John and his mother?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand that after two years, Canadians are interested in travelling. Many people had their passports expire during this time. Unfortunately, we have a huge surge in demand. We have hired 500 additional passport officers to help process this. We have a simplified process to replace expired passports of up to five years. We have opened more client counters in passport offices. We are operating extended hours, into the evening. Passport officers are working around the clock and on weekends to do their very best to serve Canadians.

Oral Questions

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Dr. Roopinder Kharay went to the passport office to get expedited service for her family's passports. Passport Canada made her wait four hours. It took all of the family's passport applications, but not the application for her husband, Amandeep, because he was not there in person. Amandeep was working a full day shift as a radiologist, despite having stage four colon cancer. The passports were for a final family vacation, which is now cancelled.

To the minister, government is about people, not process. Is this level of service acceptable for Roopinder and Amandeep?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to say to my colleague that that is exactly why passport officers are working around the clock. They are working late hours. We have hired additional officers. We have opened up more Service Canada centres to meet this rising demand to renew passports. We are ensuring that passport officers are working through the weekend.

We have an incredible surge in demand, unlike anything we have seen before. Despite all of that, passport officers and Service Canada personnel are working around the clock, because their number one job is to serve Canadians, and that is what they are working hard to do.

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FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Valerie Bradford (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know how important child care is for families in our economic recovery, but we know how expensive it has been for families. Parents in Ontario have been paying some of the highest fees in the country. We also know that we need to grow the number of spaces available, so that all families can benefit.

Could the minister please update the House on the government's progress toward building a Canada-wide early learning and child care system and what it will mean for Ontario's families?

• (1510)

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in just under a year, we have signed child care agreements with every single province and territory. Right here in Ontario, that means that families will see, by the end of this calendar year, savings of up to \$6,000 per child in licensed child care. That is incredible savings for a family.

It also means that we are going to increase the number of spaces in Ontario by 86,000, because we know that it is not just about affordability. It is also about accessibility. We have hired more ECEs to deliver quality child care for families in this province.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*. I spoke with Qajaq Robinson, who was a commissioner for the MMIWG. Robinson continues to advocate for the implementation of the calls to justice, which demand greater transparency and accountability from our government and institutions. However, the 2022 budget was silent

on new commitments to protect indigenous girls, women and two-spirit people.

When will the government take real action on reconciliation and fund transformative action?

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the member that there is \$2.2 billion in a federal pathway for missing and murdered indigenous women. However, when we look at the budget, we also have to look at the investments we have made toward housing, the investments we have made toward Jordan's principle and the investments we have made toward mental health. These will all help indigenous women.

Just because it is not a line item in the budget does not mean we are not helping indigenous women. We are out there making sure that they are safe and supported, and we will continue to do so as a government.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister said Afghans cannot get their biometrics completed in Afghanistan, yet he is insisting that it must be done. The lives of the family members of Afghan interpreters, collaborators, human rights defenders, women and girls are at risk every minute of the day, and the Liberals are immobilized by red tape. The government can collect biometrics upon arrival, yet it is refusing to act on this viable solution to get people to safety.

This is my question to the minister, who has the power to help: What is more important, paperwork or saving lives?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her advocacy for vulnerable Afghans. It is, indeed, the vulnerability of the people in Afghanistan that has justified such an extraordinary response by the Government of Canada, and I remind her that we have committed to making one of the most substantial resettlement efforts of any country in the world, with 40,000 Afghan refugees destined to be settled in Canada. To date, more than 11,500 are already here.

As part of that process, we want to maintain the integrity of the process, so that Canadians continue to support these massive efforts that we are making to resettle some of the world's most vulnerable, including with a rigorous security screening process. We are going to continue to do whatever we can to help these vulnerable people. It is the right thing to do, and I am proud to be a part of this effort.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1515)
[English]

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

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

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is, as always, a privilege to rise in the House to share the concerns of the people of Perth—Wellington and bring those concerns to this place.

This year's budget was the third opportunity the Liberals had to address the real concerns of Canadians. Since the election, they could have addressed the concerns of Canadians in the fall economic statement, in the implementation act for the fall economic statement or in this budget. Sadly, the issues I am hearing about every day in phone calls, emails and conversations at community events were not addressed by the Liberals in this year's budget.

Canadians are feeling the impact of inflation. I hear from families who have lost hope on ever owning their own home, and I hear from others who are struggling to find rental housing that is not only affordable but also large enough for their families. I hear from seniors who have worked hard their entire lives and who are now struggling to pay the bills. They are on fixed incomes that are stagnating while the costs of groceries, utilities and housing keep going up. Their costs keep rising, but their incomes remain that same. That is the cruelty of inflation.

No one saw any humour in the government's April Fools' Day joke to once again raise the carbon tax, which is a tax that impacts the people in the lowest income spectrum the most. These are the people who can least afford to pay it.

The government had options that could help Canadians. It could have taken the advice of our Conservative motion to temporarily remove the GST portion of the HST to give all Canadians a temporary 5% reduction on the cost of gas. Any Canadian who has filled up their tank recently knows the impact of \$1.84 per litre and the impact it has on families commuting to work or taking their kids to soccer practice or baseball practice. The government did not take our advice and our modest, common sense proposal was voted down by the Liberal government and the other opposition parties.

I am very proud to represent a strong rural and agriculture-based community. Here in Canada, one in eight jobs is linked to the agriculture and agri-food sector. This generates 140 billion dollars' worth of economic activity each and every year. In Perth—Wellington

The Budget

alone, agriculture is a billion-dollar industry, with grain farmers cultivating some of the most fertile farmland in the world. Dairy, beef, pork, egg, chicken and other farmers provide high-quality food to feed our communities, our country and the world.

Anyone who tuned in to hear the Liberal government's budget speech would be sorely disappointed to know that this economic powerhouse of agriculture was not even mentioned in the finance minister's budget speech. In her 3,000-word speech, she did not once mention agriculture or agri-food, farmers and farm families, or food processing and rural communities. Not once was this economic powerhouse of agriculture and agri-food mentioned in the Minister of Finance's speech.

When a speech is used to highlight the priorities of a government, what is left unsaid is awfully telling. Farmers and farm families quite literally feed the world. They work hard, and they innovate each and every day. Thousands of farmers are up early every morning, while most of the country is still sleeping, making sure the food supply chain remains intact.

Agriculture has always been a challenging field. There are unknowns no one can predict. What farmers do not need is the uncertainty caused by their own government. Even before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, fertilizer costs and supply issues were a problem. This included the ongoing efforts of the Liberal government to limit the fertilizer farmers use on their crops.

• (1520)

On March 2, when the government announced sanctions that were supposed to target Vladimir Putin and his thugs, it was Canadian farmers who were left feeling the greatest impact. As we approach the spring planting season, farmers and agribusinesses still do not have certainty from the government on whether the 35% tariff will apply on fertilizer purchased pre-March 2, but delivered after that date. In a case like this, the farmer and only the farmer is feeling the impact, not Vladimir Putin and his thugs.

No one is disagreeing with the need for sanctions against Putin, but those sanctions should not penalize those who prepurchased fertilizer last fall and now are being left with the bill. The budget was an opportunity to provide clarity on this issue and, once again, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and the Minister of Finance failed to do so.

The Budget

The cost of fertilizer is not the only challenge facing Canadian farmers. There is also the cost of the carbon tax, as I mentioned earlier. For farmers there are very few, if any, alternatives to the use of carbon-based fuels to dry their grain or to transport grain to elevators for export around the globe. However, the Liberals continue to unfairly and punitively charge the carbon tax in situations where there are simply no alternatives, and the cost simply accrues to those who feed our country. Canadian farmers have long used the most sustainable measures to protect and preserve our land and national resources, but while they are doing the work necessary, they do not get the credit, and they are actually penalized for their work.

Once again, there is an easy solution. My friend and colleague, the member for Huron—Bruce, wisely introduced a private member's bill that would exempt farmers for the responsible use of fuel on their farms. Bill C-234 would achieve this. In fact, a year ago, a bill similar to this one, Bill C-206, passed through this House and was well on its way to passing through the other place when the Liberals dissolved Parliament for the unnecessary summer election.

In a perfect world, we could have passed Bill C-206 a year ago, but the next best option would be to pass Bill C-234. The budget could have done this. Sadly, it failed to do so. Farmers and farm families deserve better than what they are receiving from the Liberal government. For the sake of our food sovereignty and food security, they must do better.

In the six and a half years I have been in this place, at almost every opportunity in almost every budget, I have raised the concerns about rural broadband in my riding and in rural communities across the country, but these past two years especially have shown the necessity of reliable Internet service. The Liberal government has been slower than dial-up. Every day I hear from constituents who cannot complete their education, grow their businesses, communicate with loved ones or even access mental health services because the high-speed Internet infrastructure is not there. Let me highlight that point. They cannot access mental health services because they do not have high-speed Internet.

I have heard from constituents who have had to drive to a Tim Hortons parking lot to use its Wi-Fi to access services. In 2022, this is not acceptable. In fact, yesterday in the House, we heard the Minister of Rural Economic Development highlight their plans to get Canadians connected by 2030. Eight years from now is not good enough. It is not good enough for the families in Perth—Wellington, and it is not good enough for the rural communities across this country who need reliable high-speed Internet for their families, their communities and their country.

I know my time is running thin, but I must highlight the issue of housing. In my community and in communities across Perth—Wellington, housing has simply become unaffordable. In some places we have seen an increase of 30%, 40%, 50% or more in the cost of housing, year over year. In a single year this has driven up the cost to where families are just priced out of the marketplace. There are things we could do. We could use the advice of the Ontario Home Builders' Association and its efforts. It has stated that one million new homes need to be built in the next 10 years. We need to work toward that outcome. We need to remove the red tape blocking communities and home builders so families and communities can grow.

Sadly, this budget has left out rural communities. It has left out rural communities in Perth—Wellington and across the country. That is why I will be voting against this budget.

• (1525)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in so many ways, the member was wrong in what he stated. The fact is that this government has invested more in rural broadband expansion than the previous Harper government did in its 10 years. We continue to invest significant amounts of money, recognizing how important getting those connections to our rural communities is.

I am a little confused about the Conservative approach to Ukraine and the sanctions there, so I am wondering if this is a Conservative Party position. The member, on one hand, says that we need to do whatever we can to support Ukraine and the Ukraine war effort. We are seeing the world coming onside, and Canadians as a whole want to see that. Is the Conservative Party officially saying that the fertilizing industry should be completely exempt from having to pay any tariff, specifically with respect to Russia?

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, obviously the member for Winnipeg North did not listen to my speech. What I am requesting is clarity from the government for fertilizer purchases that were made pre-March 2, before the sanctions were announced. These were purchased, and paid for in many cases, before March 2. The purchases were already made. There would be no impact on Vladimir Putin with that tariff. The only ones who would be impacted are the farmers who have paid the price for those fertilizers. Therefore, I asked for clarity from the government. Will the tariffs apply to purchases made pre-March 2? We have heard all kinds of answers from the government, but no clarity on that.

As of March 2, all Canadians are in favour of the sanctions that had to be made to combat Vladimir Putin's unprovoked, unnecessary, unlawful, illegal aggression against Ukraine. However, it is for purchases made pre-March 2 that clarity is needed from the government, and it is simply not there from the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I serve as our party's agriculture critic, and we have certainly heard in the agriculture committee many of the concerns that my friend from Perth—Wellington has talked about. I guess the conundrum for my Conservative friends is that in their belief in the free market, sometimes that market chases areas of production that are in very undesirable countries, such as Russia. Russia, for example, supplies 16% of our fertilizer market, and of course, we are now finding those prices being impacted by the war in Ukraine.

The Budget

We know Canada has vast reserves of potash, but our manufacturing capacity has been hollowed out. Would the member support our building more capacity in fertilizer manufacturing here in Canada, so we can have that resiliency and food security here in Canada, where it so rightly belongs?

Mr. John Nater: Madam Speaker, in fact, my answer is yes. What we have found out during the last two years of this pandemic is that we need to do stuff in Canada again. We need to build stuff in Canada. We need to manufacture stuff in Canada. We need to be sure that we can rely on ourselves, especially for food security and especially for food sovereignty, so we are not once again finding ourselves beholden to dictators and thugs, such as Putin and his regime.

This is not just for fertilizer. It is about so many issues that we saw over the last 24 months during this pandemic, whether it was PPE, vaccine production or anything else that we saw being outsourced, so we are reliant on foreign countries rather than producing it right here, with the bright talents we have here in Canada.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am really happy to hear my hon. colleague from Perth—Wellington speak to the issue of food security, which is not mentioned in this budget. I would have thought that after the pandemic and what we have experienced, we would be more conscious than ever in this country of the need to promote local food and local agriculture. Are there any other comments from the hon. member?

Mr. John Nater: Madam Speaker, my friend from Saanich—Gulf Islands is absolutely right. In a country that is as prosperous as Canada, with the most fertile farmland in the world and the most innovative farmers, whether they be dairy, pork, beef or grain farmers, we can do so much here in Canada. We can be an economic powerhouse, a powerhouse that feeds our communities and feeds our country, and makes sure that we do not have to rely on foreign entities to feed our country.

• (1530)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to dedicate my speech today to Tania Woroby, now retired from teaching, but who taught me my first economics class ever when I was in CEGEP in Montreal. Ms. Woroby had a gift for explaining economics with crystalline clarity.

[*Translation*]

A good economics professor can play a crucial role, as I am sure the members for Joliette and Mirabel would agree.

[*English*]

How would Ms. Woroby have graded the official opposition's response to the budget? She would have probably awarded them low marks for their partial analysis of the state of the economy. However, like a kind and patient teacher, she would perhaps have allowed them to rewrite the mid-term.

There is a real economy and a money economy, as I learned in Ms. Woroby's class, and yes, they are connected, but the Conservatives insist on ignoring what is going on in the real economy. They focus solely on monetary policy, which seems misplaced since the government does not control monetary policy, something the Prime

Minister has tried over and over again to explain in the simplest terms.

The Great Depression highlighted the potential impacts of catastrophic events in the real economy. In the Great Depression, we saw the collapse of agriculture, the hangover from industrial overproduction, the rise of trade protectionism and a general crisis of confidence, something Keynes incorporated in his analysis under the rubric “animal spirits”. All these factors combined calamitously to sink the economy against the backdrop of a shrinking money supply tied to widespread bank failures. The money supply is always the backdrop, but contrary to what the Conservatives believe, the money supply is not the main driving force behind economic activity.

As Andrew Coyne put it in a recent column, inflation is not “too much money chasing too few goods”. Rather, the price of a good or service rises when demand outstrips supply. For example, if the price of oranges goes up because of a frost in Florida that killed the crop, that is not inflation. It is a price signal that oranges are in short supply relative to demand, a gap the free market will move to fill by offering more economical substitutes.

Quantitative easing, or “unconventional monetary measures” as it has been called, did not unleash inflation in the United States between 2009 and 2015 when the Federal Reserve used it in response to the 2008 financial crisis, because the state of demand in the real economy was weak, deflationary even. What quantitative easing did was save the international financial order. Quantitative easing has been front and centre during this pandemic, but this is not what has fuelled inflation. As Ian Lee, a professor of economics at Carleton University, says, “Over the last two years people realized there's some things they don't need as badly or as much as they thought they needed.”

What is more, those who received COVID benefits did not spend more. They essentially borrowed less and saved more. Canadian household savings rates rose during the pandemic, and much of the savings are still in personal bank accounts. Bank deposits have grown by an average of around \$12,000 per household compared with prepandemic trends. Also worth mentioning is that consumers are expected to use their credit cards less in 2022 in favour of instead using cash. According to Nicole McKnight of finder.com, “Three times as many people said they would either stop using their credit card or use it less often, than those who said they would use it more.” None of this suggests a credit-driven spending spree linked to inflation.

The Budget

Quantitative easing is not the same thing as creating cash. It is not printing money, as the member for Carleton likes to tell us. Quantitative easing creates chartered bank reserves that are held at the Bank of Canada. These can be turned into loans, but this does not happen automatically. It happens only if there are profitable lending opportunities, including to businesses that want to expand capacity, something that actually mitigates inflationary pressure.

As global chief economist for Manulife Investment Management Frances Donald has said, “For the past 40 or 50 years, we’ve tended to view the economy through a demand-side lens. What is so unique about this [period today] is that it’s the greatest supply side shock since the 1970s.” In other words, to quote economist Armine Yalnizyan, “This is pandemic economics. The regular rules may not apply.”

● (1535)

We have been living in a trade globalized world for the past two decades, with global supply chains built around just-in-time delivery and thin inventories that, if they had been more robust, could have better absorbed COVID supply shocks. When confronted by lockdowns at major ports and factories, the global just-in-time delivery system simply snapped.

Pandemic economics is mostly about capacity constraints, and demand shifting from services like travel and restaurant meals to goods, mostly ordered online, and not about too much money chasing too few goods. We are talking about fewer semiconductors for cars and washing machines, the halt in housing construction for weeks, if not months, at a time during the lockdowns and even capacity limits in the oil and gas sector following a downsizing of its workforce in response to a precipitous drop in economic activity caused by the pandemic. Of course, there is a war in Ukraine that has created uncertainty in energy markets causing prices to rise, which has in turn raised the cost of food production, among other things.

Energy prices may be about to stabilize. According to an article in the New York Times on April 12 referring to the impact of world oil prices on U.S. inflation:

...it now appears that the world oil market overshot in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.... President Biden's million-barrel-a-day release from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve makes up for much of the shortfall [in Russian oil supplies]. As of this morning, [on April 12], crude oil prices were barely above their pre-Ukraine level, and the wholesale price of gasoline was down about 60 cents a gallon from its peak last month.

Then there are the impacts of climate change on agriculture. To quote from a CTV article from this past January:

A recent NASA study noted that global agriculture is facing a new climate reality and with the interconnectedness of the global food system, impacts in even one region's breadbasket will be felt worldwide.

According to Canada's Food Price Report, in 2021, Canada experienced climate change-related adverse weather effects, such as severe wildfires in British Columbia and drought conditions in the Prairies, that affected the prices of meat and bakery products.

Finally, there are the all-too-familiar labour supply constraints, including shortages of port workers and drivers, who are so vital to a functioning supply chain. Here in Canada, the pandemic depressed immigration levels in 2020 and forced hundreds of thou-

sands of women out of the workforce. That is why we are investing in immigration and child care.

To see the impact of supply-side inflation, one needs only to dissect the components of the consumer price index. The main components of a rising CPI, in February 2022 relative to February 2021, were transportation, at 8.4%; food, at 6.5%; and shelter, at 6.6%. That is not to be confused with the cost of housing, but includes mortgage interest, property taxes, fuel and electricity. If we take energy and food out of the equation, the inflation rate in February was only 3.9%. When we looked at the inflation figures for March, we saw that the price of gasoline, year to year, went up about 40%. While mortgage interest, household operating costs, rent and furnishings are included in the basket of goods that make up the CPI, home prices are not. This is because homes are capital assets.

Bidding wars have driven home prices to unprecedented levels, due in part to people moving away from core areas, shortages of new supply and cheap mortgages, clearly. However, house-asset inflation does not squeeze disposable income the same way that a rising CPI does, though it creates intergenerational inequality and this is a problem. That is why the budget is addressing housing supply and housing affordability. Independently, of course, the Bank of Canada is addressing interest rates and the cost of mortgages.

● (1540)

Monetary policy, however, can dramatically suppress economic activity. It can cause great misery for a great many. We can think of the Federal Reserve's actions during the first Reagan administration, when former Fed chairman Paul Volcker wrung inflation out of the U.S. economy through an aggressive, tight money policy that created a deep recession.

The Budget

The question for the official opposition is this: What should the Bank of Canada have done at the start of COVID-19? Should it have suffocated the economy during a global pandemic and created deflation worthy of the Great Depression, in the process destroying production capacity in a way that would have comprised economic growth across future generations? Also, what should the Bank of Canada do now that it is not already doing? Should the bank go even harder on raising interest rates, to the point of provoking house price deflation and a deep recession? Would that bring down the international price of oil and food, or would these remain a problem, especially for the larger number of Canadians suddenly thrown out of work? Would a more aggressive interest rate policy resolve supply chain issues? No, and that is why our budget is taking aim at the supply chain problem.

These are some of the questions that the official opposition needs to answer. They are answers that Canadians would like to hear.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, respectfully, the hon. member makes a fairly obvious error in his economic analysis. He is talking about the fact that the Bank of Canada controls monetary policy, but he misses the fact that fiscal policy can impact inflation as well. It is fairly well established. The first-year economics professor he spoke about at the beginning of his speech could, I am sure, confirm the fact that monetary levers and fiscal levers can both impact inflation. In fact, the expansionary fiscal policy being pursued by the government is having a significant impact on inflation.

Of course, it is also important to acknowledge that the Bank of Canada, as a Crown corporation, acts within the general ambit of established policy on things like the inflation target, which is set by government. The member and other members of the government who try to absolve the government of responsibility for inflation by saying that it is just about the independent Bank of Canada are missing the obvious fact that the fiscal decisions of the government do impact inflation as well.

Will the member acknowledge that fact and call his government to account for its fiscal decisions?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, it can in certain circumstances, but I do not think the member would like to argue that the massive amount of spending that took place during the depths of the pandemic was crowding out private investment. It is quite the contrary. It was helping to maintain private investment and was shifting the debt burden from individual Canadians to the government.

If one looks at the recent budget, it allocates only about \$31.2 billion in new spending over the next five years. That is about \$6 billion a year. That is less than what is being invested in the REM project in Montreal.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I think it is common knowledge that the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis is a champion of water and water policy in this place. I know this question might make him discomfited, but was he as disappointed as I was that the federal budget 2022 so badly ignores the previous commitments the government has made to deliver on the Canada water agency and to properly fund the neglected area of freshwater science, research and capacity in this country?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, I was happy to see an injection of about \$25 million into the Experimental Lakes Area and an injection of about \$8 million into creating the freshwater action plan.

This is one budget, but there will be others to follow, and I can assure the member that I will continue to advocate for greater and greater investments in freshwater science and protection. There is money for the Canada water agency. The agency will take a while to develop, so it is good to take a step-by-step approach to funding it.

● (1545)

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of the issues that I am quite disappointed about with respect to the budget is the lack of action by the government on its promise to deliver a “for indigenous, by indigenous” urban, rural and northern housing strategy. The budget only outlines \$300 million, which is just a drop in the bucket, truth be told, to address the crisis with urban indigenous people in need of housing. Over 80% of urban indigenous people live off reserve, yet they are 11 times more likely to end up in a shelter.

My question to the member is this. Will he take up the cause to advocate, on behalf of urban indigenous and northern indigenous people, for the government to make a substantive investment in a “for indigenous, by indigenous” housing strategy in this budget, and also with the fall economic statement coming up?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, that is an extremely important issue and priority, obviously. The government has taken housing very seriously from day one of its election in 2015. We are already on track, by 2027-2028, to deliver more than \$72 billion in financial support through the national housing strategy, which is the very first national housing strategy in Canadian history. Of course, a priority on indigenous housing is an important part of that, and it should be. It is something we need to keep an eye on in the future.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a brief follow-up to my earlier exchange with the member. I think it is clear there are a variety of government policies at the fiscal level that are impacting inflation, and that impact is especially strong at this point as we are seeing the highest level of inflation in decades. This is at a point when we have very much come out of the depths of the pandemic.

There is also a question of the target the federal government sets and how seriously it sets that target, because the Bank of Canada operates within the target that has been set by the federal government. It is ultimately the government that establishes the policy framework that governs the way the Bank of Canada, which is an independent but Crown corporation, operates.

The Budget

To re-emphasize my previous question, does the member acknowledge that the policy choices of the current government are driving inflation and making things more expensive, and that it could be making different policy choices that would address this problem of inflation and the rising prices of goods that people are seeing?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, as I recall, the framework for the Bank of Canada in terms of its inflation target has not really changed much over the past few years. It is still aiming for a 2% inflation rate, so I do not see that there has been a radical change at that level. It is very important to recognize that the Bank of Canada is independent.

I am quite fearful that private member's bills such as the one introduced by the former leader of the Conservative Party somehow try to shift the blame to an independent institution, impugn it and attack its credibility in the eyes of Canadians. I think that would be a great threat to the economic policy in this country.

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was interested in the reference my colleague made in a previous response to the national housing strategy.

Housing affordability is a huge issue in the riding of Cloverdale—Langley City, and I have been really pleased to see in this budget the commitments to housing. I wonder if my hon. colleague could speak for a moment about the housing commitments that are being made and how they will positively impact ridings such as mine.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, housing is a very complex area. We have brought in some important measures to help with housing affordability. We have a new savings vehicle. It is a very creative combination of a TFSA and an RRSP that will benefit first-time homebuyers.

There are other aspects of the housing situation that are under the control of municipal governments. I think the member has probably seen this in his area. I have seen it in mine. There is a big debate going on in my community about densification, and some amount of densification is going to be necessary if we are going to increase the housing supply in a geographic area that is already highly developed. Obviously, we cannot influence municipal bylaws and permitting, but through the housing accelerator fund we can exert a certain amount of influence, and hopefully that will be helpful.

• (1550)

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know the Liberals talked several times about this new RRSP. They talk about this program to help people who are first-time homebuyers, yet the majority of Canadians, over 50% of them, are less than \$200 away every month.

How does this plan actually help, when Canadians have no money to invest up to \$40,000, to make sure it is a secure situation? How is this really benefiting first-time homebuyers?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, by that logic we could ask how the RRSP benefits anyone or how the TFSA benefits anyone. I just said in my speech, if the member was listening, that households have higher savings than before, so if those savings can be channelled into a creative instrument such as the first-time

homebuyers' savings account, I think that would help. It will not be the solution to everything, but it is part of a bigger puzzle.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Beauce.

The Canadian dream is dying, and the Liberals are digging its grave. They put us on an economic suicide mission, and the world that millennials are inheriting will be far different, after six years of the Liberals' rule in this country, from that of the baby boomers who preceded us and that of our parents. I am very concerned about it, and very much looking forward to discussing the budget that they brought forward and the lack of vision and a positive plan to create a future that millennials can really believe in.

Let us take housing, for example. Housing has effectively doubled in price since the Liberal government took power six years ago. It is over \$868,000 to buy a house today. My generation is the most educated generation in history: We have dual-income households, with both people working full-time, yet half of us will never be able to afford our own homes. That is what the data is telling us.

In our parents' generation, let us take the 1970s, the average income was about \$25,000. A person could not have a formal, post-secondary education and earn \$25,000 a year, and the average house price was about \$50,000. A person could reasonably buy that house and pay it off within 10 years. Now, for my generation, the most educated in history with dual-income households, half of us will never own a home. Something is seriously wrong with this picture. People depend on houses for their retirement, so what is half of my generation going to do about their retirement plan?

We have not heard a coherent plan from this government, but since they took office and with their new promises in their budget, the Liberals are spending about \$74 billion on housing. One could argue that perhaps their plan is making housing more expensive, from the looks of it. We know that the Parliamentary Budget Officer himself has said that the Liberal plan for housing will only have a limited impact, so there is not a lot to look forward to for millennials.

We hear every day that interest rates are going up. What does that really mean for the average homeowner? If a person recently bought a house at the average home price of \$800,000, and was lucky to get in with a lower interest rate of about 2%, and paid 5% down, they would probably be paying about \$3,400 a month for their mortgage.

Let us say that it goes up even 3%, which does not sound like a lot. Let us say that the mortgage goes up 3% when it is time to renew it in a couple of years. That would mean that they would be paying about \$5,200 a month. That is \$22,000 more, for the year, that a family with the average home price would pay in interest. At \$22,000 a year for a mortgage, it is catastrophic. That is families walking into the bank with their home keys, dropping them on the desk and saying "Sorry, take them. We cannot afford it any more. We are going to lose our equity. We cannot afford this." It is very concerning to hear of these interest rate increases and the impact they will have on home ownership in this country.

The Budget

We know that the cost of living is going up as well. Of course, it is driven in large part by inflation. It hit 6.7% for the cost of goods in March, which is a 30-year high. Inflation has not been this bad since before I was born, to put it into context. That is what we receive as millennials and as Canadians, now after six years of Liberal rule.

If we look at food and gas, a recent survey showed that a third of Manitobans said they do not make enough to cover their bills. That is one in three, and half of Manitobans are only \$200 away from not being able to afford their bills. They are going to go bankrupt. They are \$200 away from the doors closing and being unable to pay their bills. It is pretty astounding that half of Manitobans are only \$200 away from that.

Every time my colleagues work hard to bring up legitimate grievances on behalf of their constituents who are struggling to afford food, or struggling to afford gas that was about a dollar a litre when the Liberals came in and now is almost two dollars, we get a bit of an eye-roll and hear: "Oh, we're here for the people. We take care of them. We have Canada's back." I do not think so. It does not seem that way when people cannot afford groceries.

If we go to the grocery store to pick up four modest bags of groceries, we are looking at a \$300 bill. Imagine families of four or five. How are they affording this? Interest rates are going up on car loans, credit loans, credit cards and mortgages. All of it is increasing. More money is going to just interest payments.

Prices are going up, but what is the Liberals' plan to grow the economy and to bring prosperity to the millennial generation and to all Canadians? I am really not clear after reading the budget, and that has been a common criticism across the political spectrum. What is the vision?

• (1555)

We know growth and investment have been way down since they took office. They have created an environment in Canada such that people look at Canada and say they are not investing there because the regulatory burden is too high. I was listening to a podcast of Paul Wells, formerly of Maclean's, who was saying that in the Liberal budget itself growth over the next several years is projected to be lower than in the rest of the G7. Total spending on research and development has been declining in Canada, which is the only G7 country where that has been happening. That is what Mr. Wells brought my attention to in this podcast.

That is the Liberals' record of seven years of governance.

The Financial Post said, "Manufacturing capital stock is the lowest it has been in 35 years." The Fraser Institute said that "business investment dropped in seven of 15 sectors", critical sectors. Economic engines of our country have dropped since the Liberals have been in government. Jack Mintz from the Financial Post put it quite well: "Ottawa needs to recognize that Canada's economic potential depends on private investment, not government spending". If only they would recognize that.

If we look at the country's main economic engine, what brings in the most revenue, more than any other industry, it is oil and gas. We have heard a lot about this. There were the "no more pipelines" bill

and the tanker ban. Liberals repeatedly brought in major regulatory burdens so that Canada cannot develop its natural resources and get them to market. It has been moving at a glacial pace, yet we know that oil and gas brought in \$700 billion in cumulative fiscal revenue to federal, provincial and municipal governments. That is \$700 billion made from oil and gas and given to government. That pays for health care. That pays for education. That pays for roads. That pays for our generous social safety net.

We talk about green investment. I am all for moving forward and greening our economy. I think most people are, but how are we going to get there? It is very expensive and the technology is not there yet. We need research and development dollars, which I just mentioned are declining. We need something to make the money so that we can invest in these programs, invest in making our economy greener, and that is oil and gas. That is LNG. If we would export our LNG and offset the world's dependence on coal, we could massively lower emissions, but we need a government with the will to make that happen.

We see countries like Norway leading the way, making their economy greener and also aggressively pursuing oil and gas development, working with their oil and gas for carbon capture technology. It is incredible what Norway is doing: green and oil and gas.

For six years, we have heard the government talk about green jobs. I looked on Google for quite some time to try to figure out exactly what "green jobs" means. We also heard this from the Kathleen Wynne government in Ontario, green jobs. Of course, the energy prices for households doubled during her time in the Ontario Liberal provincial government, much like what is happening with the federal Liberal government now with energy prices and household costs. I cannot seem to find any evidence of these green jobs. Maybe someone can correct me and quote some data, because I have not been able to find these green jobs that the Liberals have been talking about for six or seven years. Where are they? I would like to know, and I would like to see the data that says they are going to be as lucrative for Canada today as oil and gas has been for our social services and for our infrastructure. There is no evidence of this. Not to say it cannot happen, but they are not doing a great job.

What does this create? I think people forget, but Canada is a very difficult country to govern. We are the second-largest land mass in the world. We have two official languages. We have over 300 first nation communities. We have the east coast, the west coast, the Prairies, Ontario, Quebec and the north. It is a difficult country to govern, historically and today, but especially when the Prime Minister and his father have been in power we have seen western alienation. We have seen Quebec separatism.

The Budget

This is what we are seeing, and the Liberals know it. They know that if they can focus the votes in the Toronto area, they do not have to pay attention to the rest of the country. We can see it in their policies. They do not consider what the west needs. Gerald Butts, former number one right-hand person to our Prime Minister, said, “What you see here is a long term optimization trend.” He also said, “Campaigns are a ruthless optimization exercise: where will your incremental investment drive the maximum return in real time.” He said, “We count seats, not votes, so smart campaigns focus on delivering them.” They are winning elections on division.

I will end with this: If governments can't demonstrate that their efforts work for regular people, then people will start to look around for other, extreme alternatives. Who said that? It was the Prime Minister, at a Liberal convention in 2014. Maybe he should listen to his own words.

● (1600)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as a prairie member of Parliament, I would suggest that the member is off base on a number of accounts. When the world price of oil was going down, we were criticized because we were not allowing it to sustain itself. The Conservatives wanted it to be higher. Today, the Conservatives are criticizing us because the price of world oil is too high. When it is too low, it is the government's fault. When it is too high, it is the government's fault.

The member asked about the need for oil production. Stephen Harper brought not a drop of oil to the coastlines. At least we have put a pipeline in that is going to the coastline. Can the member take a look at the real numbers, the jobs and job growth? If we take a look at the economic activity, Canada does exceptionally well, especially if we compare it to our neighbours in the south, the United States. My question to the member—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, the hon. member has gone on, and I do have to allow for other questions.

The hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Speaker, I would say that any Liberal who suggests that they support the oil and gas industry is living in a fantasy. All they need to do is look at the electoral map. They have no seats in the areas of the country that generate some of the most economic wealth because they are consistently ignored and consistently abused by the Liberal government and its policies. Any words from a Liberal member of Parliament that indicate they support our energy sector are a farce.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to remind my hon. colleague that we continue to be separatists, no matter who is in power here in Ottawa, including the Conservatives.

I note that she spoke at length about housing. I also note that the Conservatives' housing suggestions are different from ours and the government's. This leads me to believe that the government should perhaps stop imposing conditions, like the new set of conditions in the budget, and simply transfer the money to the provinces.

The provinces are the ones that know their ecosystems and their housing markets. They are the ones that develop plans, and they should be allowed to implement the measures that they want.

Would that not be the best way forward?

[*English*]

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Speaker, I think the answer to the housing crisis is that we simply need to build more houses more quickly. We need to ensure that federal dollars are incentivizing municipalities to build homes more quickly. I think we need to be moving forward in our economy. If our economy is going to keep growing, and if our population is going to keep growing, we need to ensure that our housing continues to grow as well.

To the Liberal member, I know in his riding I am sure he is having the same problem as I am. He is a similar age to me. Half of our generation cannot afford homes. The government is spending \$74 billion on housing, yet housing prices have doubled since they have been in government. Something is going seriously wrong here. It is unacceptable.

● (1605)

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I agree that there are many challenges being experienced by many Canadians who are trying to make ends meet. Those particularly hard hit are those living with disabilities. They are being left behind. Many in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith are concerned. They are living with disabilities and trying to make ends meet, and the pandemic has made things even worse. Unfortunately, missing from the budget is the Liberals' long-promised Canada disability benefit. Another issue is the barriers for those living with disabilities and accessing the disability tax credits.

Does the member agree in the importance of this budget to not leave those living with disabilities behind and to finally implement the long-needed Canada disability benefit?

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Speaker, I certainly would appreciate a government that takes the needs of the disability community very seriously. There are many seniors in my riding who suffer from disabilities as well. What I would say is that whenever we talk about inflation or gas prices, heating prices and grocery prices going up, we have to see that it impacts those who are on a fixed income the most, such as those living with disabilities or seniors who are living on modest pension incomes.

If one only has a fixed amount of money per month to pay for rent, transportation, groceries and any increase in inflation, those folks are hurt the most. That is why we are railing on the government every day to do something about the cost of living because those who are in the lowest economic threshold are suffering the most. It is a very serious issue. That is why we continue to raise it every day in question period.

The Budget

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today to discuss the first NDP-Liberal budget in Canada.

What a year it has been. As COVID-19 continues to devastate the Canadian economy and our supply chains, many people in this country will struggle for many years to recover from the losses suffered over the past two tough years.

People are wondering what this budget does for Canadians. Well, it proposes higher interest rates, higher taxes, and more and more spending. At a time when Canadians could use a break, the bad news keeps piling up.

Liberal MPs will likely use the same talking points as usual when debating this subject, but they will probably not ask any questions about the following topics that I was very much hoping would be included in budget 2022.

First, I would like to discuss the rural-urban divide that seems to be growing in this country. My riding of Beauce is located in rural Quebec. It is an entrepreneurial and agricultural hub. Unfortunately, the latest budgets from the current government only make us feel further and further away from seeing any meaningful change in our region.

Why does the government continue to ignore rural Canada?

I was hoping to see some funding for public transit or additional funding for community infrastructure in this budget, but once again, we have been forgotten. Municipalities in my riding are trying to implement public transit, but they need financial support. This is something that needs to be addressed, but until the federal government is prepared to put money on the table this will remain a distant dream.

Cell connectivity in rural Canada is another issue that matters to rural Canadians and that was not mentioned once in the budget. How hard is it for the government to recognize that this is not only a matter of fairness but also of public safety?

Many municipalities in my riding do not have reliable cell coverage. This not only increases the probability of public safety disasters but also causes lost productivity for our businesses.

The government needs to sit down with the CRTC and the large telecom companies and find a way to finally provide affordable service to rural Canadians. There has to be a way to set a baseline for minimum coverage and a fair and equitable scale of payment for these services.

In my riding, cell phone bills are among the highest in the country even though we get some of the spottiest service. We must tackle this problem and improve high-speed Internet service at the same time, because they are both equally important in our regions.

Another issue I would like to tackle, which is probably the biggest problem in my riding, is the labour shortage. Beauce has one of the lowest unemployment rates in Canada and is constantly struggling to attract workers. In our case, the only option for many years has been to use the temporary foreign worker program. Unfortunately for us and for many other Canadian business owners, this system is broken. In recent months, the government has made

some promises and some supposed changes to the program, but nothing has changed on the ground.

Let us be frank. Our country has a lot of red tape. There is paperwork upon paperwork to be done. Departments that should work together blame one another for the delays. They also blame the provinces.

The immigration department really needs to wake up. These files should be processed much more quickly. It is simple. Many businesses wait months and months to get workers. They spend thousands of dollars in government and administrative fees only to be told that the workers may never arrive or that their arrival will be considerably delayed because of problems that the government itself has created.

Many proposals with respect to agricultural and seasonal workers were brought forward at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, of which I am a member, and elsewhere, but the situation has improved only slightly since we tabled our report.

• (1610)

We are also seeing numerous issues with non-agricultural workers, yet there does not seem to be any urgency on the part of this government to bring them in when they are needed.

I believe that one of the most effective ways to speed up this process would be to get rid of the labour market assessment for areas of the country where the unemployment rate is below 5%. As I have said many times, both here and in committee, this is a solution that would be fairly easy to implement. I will continue to hammer this point home until the government understands that this is a serious problem that needs to be addressed as quickly as possible.

A total of 60% of the businesses in my riding are looking for workers. At the same time, they are accelerating automation and robotics because they also need to stay competitive in the marketplace. The problem is that their margins are already very thin, and it is very difficult to invest in new technology right now.

I believe the government needs to implement better programs and incentives to help these companies modernize their production. However, until the government keeps its promises on high-speed Internet and steps up its fight to improve cell coverage, advancing robotics will remain difficult in rural ridings like mine.

The Budget

The last thing I want to talk about is how this government has tragically failed our agriculture and agri-food sector. There is no money in the budget to improve and secure our country's food supply. I have always said that the agricultural sector is an economic driver just waiting to be optimized. Instead of helping Canadian farmers, the government continues to create programs that plunge them further into debt. Canadians are struggling to put food on the table, yet we are importing more and more of our food products.

The government also decided to impose a 35% tariff on fertilizer from Russia without a clear understanding of whether orders placed before the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine will be exempt from the tariff or not. Spring seeding is upon us, and farmers cannot bear the burden of these tariffs alone. Obviously consumers will have to pay the additional cost.

What is more, this government continues to refuse to bring into force Bill C-208, which was passed in the previous Parliament. This bill provides for the fair transfer of a family farm or small business to a family member, rather than charging the seller unreasonable taxes that they would not have to pay if they sold the business to a third party.

This government will do everything it can to collect as much tax as possible, even at the expense of losing our family farms and SMEs, which are so important to the development of our regions. The creation of a round table for discussing this bill, which has already passed and received royal assent, will still not force the hand of these greedy Liberals.

How can a government unilaterally decide not to bring legislation into force, when the majority of parliamentarians voted in favour of it? That is not how democracy works.

In closing, this is another budget and another complete failure by this government.

I am here once again debating with my colleagues, but I cannot help but wonder when this Prime Minister will descend from his throne and finally listen to the opposition's proposals. I can only imagine that his MPs from rural ridings feel the same way.

We are all here to do a job, to represent our constituents. The government has to focus on the divide between rural and urban regions. The time where there were two classes of citizens is over.

We must unite and make Canada the economic superpower it should be. I will continue to provide a glimmer of hope for the Beauce community. I simply hope that this government will listen to me for once.

• (1615)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture and the government have been working very closely with industry on a number of different files, and over the last number of years we have seen, through a lot of federal investment, growth in the industry and of our agricultural community. If I take a look at my home province of Manitoba, I see substantial growth in industries such as our pork industry, which continues to grow. Jobs were just added in the community of Saint

Boniface, and as a direct result of those jobs, we will end up with more jobs in Saskatchewan, Alberta and even, to a certain degree, Ontario too.

Our agricultural community continues to grow, and I think the member is underestimating the value and the contributions our farmers and rural communities are making to our economy when he tries to give the impression that we are seeing shrinkage. In fact, there has been government investment, and we have seen growth in our rural sectors.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Madam Speaker, pork production has indeed come a long way, including in my riding. The largest Olymel slaughterhouse is in my riding, so I know what I am talking about. Pork production is very strong where I live.

Despite that growth, we need to make sure that, when we develop new markets, they are diversified. Consider the agreements reached with China and other countries in the past two years. We are having a hard time reopening the Chinese market, and we may have focused too much on China, which resulted in a surplus of pork.

The pandemic did not help when it came to the slaughtering of the hogs, but it is clear that pork production is a very important industry in Quebec and across Canada. We need to provide more support.

I would like to remind my colleague that the current programs—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I must interrupt the hon. member to allow time for other members to speak.

The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, I also represent a mostly agricultural riding where there are many producers and processors. My colleague from Beauce mentioned the various trade wars, a reality that I think will become more and more frequent, unfortunately. Consider China, which closed its market to Canadian and Quebec pork a few years ago.

After reading the budget and the economic statements, I feel that we are not prepared for future trade wars. Would my colleague agree to having permanent funding to ensure that we will be prepared to compensate our producers in the case of future market closures?

• (1620)

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Madam Speaker, that is really important. In the agri-food and food processing sector, we are a country that exports a lot. As I said earlier, it is important to diversify our markets, but we need programs to support our businesses in trade wars like the ones going on now. I am very comfortable with that, and such measures should already be in place.

The Budget

[English]

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, the government's emission reduction target plan relies heavily on the use of carbon capture in order to meet our climate goals. Across Canada, experts tell us that carbon capture is unproven and will not be enough to help us meet our—

Mr. Garnett Genuis: It is happening in my riding.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: —emissions reduction targets. We no longer have time for empty talk.

Does the member agree that Canadians cannot rely on carbon capture, and that we need to invest today in alternative energy sources that cause zero emissions?

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Madam Speaker, carbon capture is indeed very important. Far from ruling out this option, perhaps we should be looking at how to move forward faster. The agriculture sector can play a very important role in carbon capture, in my humble opinion.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is it for questions and comments, but I want to remind the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan that, as opposed to shouting out when people are speaking, he should wait until I ask whether there are questions and comments. It is not really respectful to be yelling when someone else has the floor.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am going to start by acknowledging that we are here on the traditional territory of the Algonquin peoples. *Meegwetch* for tolerance and patience in the path of reconciliation.

[Translation]

I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Mirabel.

[English]

I am addressing the budget late this afternoon. There are things in the budget I like quite a lot, so I am going to start with the things I like quite a lot and then explain why I cannot possibly, in good conscience, vote for this budget.

Among the things we like quite a lot, yes, is that we have the New Democratic Party's confidence and supply agreement. It has been a Green Party policy since 2015 that dental care is health care and should be part of our health care system, so we are pleased to see it in this budget.

We also are pleased there is a repetition of some sort of aspirational goal to deliver pharmacare to Canadians. There is not enough in this budget for me to believe it yet. We want to see the actual path to pharmacare clearly laid out, and fast.

I am very pleased to see a number of other items here, such as the follow through on child care. I suppose “I am old enough to remember” will be a theme in this speech. I start sentences with “I am old enough to remember”. I am old enough to remember 2005, when then minister Ken Dryden achieved what the now new government, which is not that new anymore, has done.

Ken Dryden had gotten signed agreements with every province and territory to deliver affordable child care to every Canadian. Many years later it was derailed by the decision the NDP made in those days to defeat the Liberals and put Stephen Harper in place for a very long time. We lost Kyoto, we lost Kelowna, and we lost the child care plan in 2005 and the election in January 2006.

I am really pleased child care is back. Affordable child care is going to make a difference to every Canadian family that has children and desperately needs to have child care. When I was a single mom, I earned \$24,000 a year as executive director of the Sierra Club. I spent half of it on child care. The woman who was hired to do the child care in a program in the neighbourhood is a wonderful woman who became a good friend. My salary was split in half and I paid her through a child care program. Because she earned only \$12,000, her child care for her children was free. I was making \$24,000, and half of it was going to child care. These things are sort of unbelievable to people with good incomes, like those of us in this place, all of whom are paid so handsomely as members of Parliament. I do not take it for granted.

I am pleased with much that is in this budget, and I am pleased to see the government keep its promises in a couple of areas. On housing, the thing that made me most pleased was to see co-op housing back on the agenda. It is not enough money; we need to do more, but there is \$1.5 billion to bring back one of the most affordable, socially supportive ways that we can house ourselves, which is through co-ops. That is good.

I know there are a lot of good intentions behind things like the tax measures against flipping. There are many good measures, including one of the promises, which was to bring in for the first time a searchable public registry for beneficial ownerships. Let us hope that helps deal with the problem of snow washing and of overseas interests buying up our housing.

We still really need to deal with things like Airbnbs and the ability of people to buy homes, residential properties, and take them out of the marketplace. At the same time as they are making it harder to find affordable housing for Canadian families, they are undermining the tourism business, in which hotels and real B & Bs have to pay staff, buy insurance and be regulated. We need to protect our housing market from Airbnbs, but I also think we need to protect tourism industry employees and owners from the competition of Airbnbs.

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Let me move on to areas that were token and inadequate, and where we need to do so much more. It really was a broken promise on the mental health strategies and the need for mental health and addictions. The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George has done so much good work on this. Why do we not have the suicide prevention line? Why do we not have supports for mental health in this budget? We should have seen them.

• (1625)

Another key gap is the commitment that was made in the Liberal platform to put \$1 billion toward fresh water. This budget is such a bitter disappointment. This title comes from *The Hill Times* and was signed by some of Canada's leading advocates for fresh water. Ralph Pentland, who used to run Environment Canada's freshwater programs, signed this article, as well as Oliver Brandes and Bob Sandford, who are eminent people in the field. The headline says it all: "Federal budget a failure when it comes to addressing the water crisis".

This is one of those sentences that starts with, "I am old enough to remember". I am old enough to remember that, when I worked in Environment Canada in the 1980s, the Inland Waters Directorate in Burlington, Ontario had a staff of 1,250 people who did nothing but work on freshwater science and regulatory policy work. They had an annual budget of \$60 million, so when this budget says the Liberals are going to provide \$43 million over five years on fresh water and \$8.7 million to the new Canada water agency, I would laugh if it was not so sad. It does not even begin to start adjusting dollars for inflation.

This is an abject failure, and I do not know how this has happened when there is such urgency and when the government had already pledged to do this. The promise of a Canada freshwater agency is now more than two years old, and here we are with flooding and drought and fires. Water policy is also climate policy, and I want to just take a moment to say to the people of southern Manitoba, who are right now being walloped by climate crisis events, that a Canada water agency could help anticipate, prevent and adapt. I just want to give a shout-out to those people right now, because I know that in Manitoba things are very tough for many families.

Also, in this budget there are things that are completely missing. There is nothing for ground transportation. Many people will say that is provincial jurisdiction, but so is municipal public transit. It was really great that the Harper government made the gas tax a permanent predictable fund for municipal transportation, but where are we as a federal Parliament in responding to Canadians from coast to coast who have lost their bus service, and whose service on VIA Rail is down to an occasional antique train that rumbles through? I am talking about between Vancouver and Toronto and Montreal to Halifax. We have not seen any significant investment in that ground transportation in at least a decade. All the money that has gone to VIA Rail in all these years has gone to the Windsor-Quebec corridor. That is great. We need decent train service in the Windsor-Quebec corridor, but we also need decent train service with spokes that run off this hub.

We need bus service across Canada. Again, this is more than transportation and this is more than climate policy. This is justice. One of the key recommendations of the National Inquiry into Miss-

ing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was that people need to be able to get access to safe and affordable public transit so they are not hitchhiking. The most marginalized people in our society are forced into hitchhiking because we act like there is not a problem. If people want to get from Kamloops to Prince George, if they want to get from Kamloops to Vancouver or any of these routes, or if they want to get from Moncton to Campbellton, they have almost no way to travel if they do not own a car. Also, for seniors and for a lot of us, being forced to drive on unsafe roads, particularly during hazardous winter blizzards, to get to doctors' appointments does not suggest we are a wealthy industrialized society. In fact, our public ground transportation system is worse than in any developing country I have ever visited.

Moving on to what else we need, there is nothing in here for the tourism sector, which I would submit has been the hardest-hit sector in the pandemic. What we hear is that there is going to be a tourism strategy developed, but there is no money in this budget for it. We really need to do something to make sure that since, and I will say it out loud, the pandemic is not over, small businesses in the tourism sector can survive.

Why can I not vote for this budget? It is a complete failure in responding to what, three days earlier, was laid out by the IPCC. On April 4, the lead author said it was now or never. The panel never gave the option of later. It is now or never for a habitable planet, and this budget fails in that fundamental threat to our survival.

• (1630)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, there is a lot I disagree with in my hon. friend's speech. I found, in particular, her denunciation of Airbnbs to be a little bit odd. They are a great, affordable opportunity, especially for families to travel, and they have more flexibility than hotels.

I want to focus on the issue of carbon capture and storage, because the NDP, speaking previously, said that carbon capture and storage was unproven technology. I have news for the House. There is carbon capture and storage happening as we speak in my riding, in a project called Quest.

I was at an open house last week for a project called Polaris that is entirely private-sector-funded. It benefits from credits, but it does not involve any direct spending by the government. Industry is making these investments now in carbon capture and storage, and there are carbon capture and storage projects that are up and running. They are working and they are capturing carbon.

It is bizarre that some members say that we do not know if it works. It is happening.

Could the member acknowledge the benefits of carbon capture and storage and the positive impact that it has had?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, first, in my riding, one of the reasons that local businesses have to close earlier and more often is that there is no affordable housing for workers to come in and use. A very real concern of local businesses in my riding is that places that used to rent to summer students and workers are no longer available because they are Airbnbs, so we can pursue that conversation later.

Meanwhile, the difficulty with carbon capture and storage is that it works far less than advertised. It can sequester some carbon, but in no project around the world has it ever met its goals or targets. It is about the most expensive way, and one of the less reliable ways, to do what is needed to be done reliably, quickly and affordably.

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her beautiful speech. I know she cares about the most vulnerable people in our society..

I wanted to remind her that there is a large organization in Quebec called the Fédération de l'âge d'or du Québec, which brings together all people aged 55 and over, and that means 500,000 people. The FADOQ has asked the government to increase old age security payments for people aged 65 and over. The current government plans to increase it for people aged 75 and over.

Can my colleague explain whether she agrees with the need to increase the old age security pension for seniors aged 65 and over? Why does she think there is absolutely no mention of this in the budget?

• (1635)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Salaberry—Suroît.

I voted in favour of the Bloc Québécois budget amendment specifically for the reasons she outlined in her question. The Bloc Québécois added that we must have a concrete program to combat the climate emergency. As for the question of funding for our seniors, I do not have an answer to her question. Ignoring the needs of our seniors makes no sense.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am wondering if the member could provide her thoughts. She started to talk about the child care program, and we do have a national child care program. Even though we at times see governments spend money, there are many derivatives that come out of that. That particular program will also generate revenue and it will also have a real, tangible impact on the lives of many. Can she just provide her thoughts on that?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, as I reflected on in my statement, for virtually all of my daughter's childhood, I was a single mom, and if this program had been in place, it would have been much more affordable. Early childhood education and good child

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care are not just about parking your kid somewhere. They are about actually creating an enriched, educational experience for children, and it should be available to every Canadian child, regardless of the economic status of their parents or parent, and it is about time we brought this forward. It is catching up with many other countries in terms of the social safety net. Let us make sure we continue going forward. We know this was a she-cession. We know that a lot of people who quit their jobs were not the dads but the moms. This was not always, but a lot.

We have a huge chunk of our workforce right now that is not able to go to work until they know for sure that they have reliable child care. This is something that was a long time coming, and I am really happy to see it.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague and friend from Saanich—Gulf Islands for sharing her valuable time with me.

If I had to describe the thin little budget that was tabled three weeks ago, the phrase that would come to mind would be “missed opportunity”. I am not just talking about one missed opportunity, I am talking about a slew of missed opportunities.

First, the pandemic should have alerted the government to the plight of seniors, to the fact that they are on fixed incomes and their purchasing power has been greatly eroded. I was hoping that the Liberals would understand, given that before the election, they had said it was urgent to send a \$500 cheque to seniors aged 75 and over, to win their vote. Indeed, the plight of seniors was appalling back then, when it was time to win votes.

All of a sudden, we are presented with a budget that not only contains nothing for seniors, but includes a small graph that basically tells them to stop complaining and whining, that their lives are fine, that they need to stop asking for money, and that the government is tired of them, literally.

The budget should have been an opportunity for the Liberal government to show that it understands that there are major funding problems in the health care system. We are not making this up. For weeks now, the Minister of Health has been going around bragging about how, during the pandemic, he was forced to rush tens of billions of dollars to the provinces. The provinces—underfunded since the 1990s, thanks to the Liberals—started offloading, rescheduled surgeries and ran out of space, almost to the point of leaving people to die in the streets.

Instead of increasing health transfers and recognizing that reality, the minister says we should consider ourselves lucky that he bailed us out during the pandemic and would be wise to settle for what he has to offer, which is nothing.

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We have a Minister of Environment and Climate Change who should have realized that, if he continues to allow increased oil production, it will have a negative impact on the future of the energy transition. This same minister boasted on social media last week about how Canada had lowered its emissions in 2020, in the middle of a pandemic, when cars were off the roads and planes were grounded.

The government is congratulating itself instead of acknowledging the sacrifices that will have to be made in the future to make this transition. The Minister of Environment is happy about the pandemic, the Minister of Health is happy about the pandemic and the Minister of Seniors is happy about the pandemic.

This budget is jam-packed with oil subsidies. When I checked the news and turned on my computer to see reactions the day after the budget was presented, I figured I could judge how good the budget was based on who liked it. The first reaction I saw was from the oil and gas industry, which was very happy with the budget. It obviously did not get everything it wanted, since the Liberals had to leave a little for Jean Charest and the member for Carleton, but oil companies still did well.

Legal and environmental associations, as well as the mayor of Montreal, whom the environment minister likes to quote, came to say that this is a bad budget. The organization West Coast Environmental Law told us that carbon capture is an experimental technology that could increase water and energy use, as well as our GHG emissions.

The budget includes subsidies for exactly this purpose, even though we have been calling on the federal government for years to abolish subsidies to oil companies. We are not talking about small amounts here, but about huge subsidies. For the next five years, \$2.5 billion will go directly into the pockets of the oil companies each and every year. That means \$12.5 billion in total over that period, but we have to remember that the government has no money for health care. For the next four years, \$1.5 billion per year will go directly into the pockets of oil companies, for a total of \$18.5 billion over nine years.

The government says that it is also making an effort and that it has done away with “inefficient” subsidies to oil companies. We have been waiting for many years for a definition of what an inefficient subsidy is. It is important to note here that the subsidy that the government has abolished is worth \$9 million out of a total of \$18.5 billion. Rounding up the figures, the difference between the two is therefore \$18.5 billion more to the oil companies, no more and no less.

• (1640)

To get us to buy into that, they trot out their classic excuse, which is that, in western Canada and Newfoundland, people work hard to earn a decent living in the oil and gas sector. They call it the energy sector, which sounds better. They talk about these people who earn a decent living, families with mortgages.

That is true. There are people who are stuck in this situation, who work in that industry and did not ask to be stuck in it. The problem is that, as we produce more and more oil, we get more and more families in trouble because they depend on that industry. The more

trouble they are in, the more complicated it will be to scale back the industry in the future.

From 1990 to 2010, Canadian oil production rose by 69%. From 2010 to 2015, it rose by another 31%. From 2015 to 2019—and this was under a Liberal government, our eco-friends across the way, Conservatives garbed in green—there was another 22% increase. Their recent announcement of an extra 300,000 barrels per day to save the world is another 13%. That is a 209% increase since 1990, the Kyoto protocol base year. The reason the Liberals use 2005 as their base year is to hide that.

Let us get back to the fact that the government is getting families in trouble and making the transition harder as a result. We have the numbers. From 1995 to 2012, as a barrel of oil went from \$33 to almost \$130, the number of people working in Canada's oil and gas industry and depending on it grew from 99,000 to 218,000.

We prefer a constructive approach. We believe there has to be a transition. It has to be done fast, but it has to be done right. We have not asked to shut everything down. We think production needs to be capped and there should be a gradual transition. We also think there should be green finance initiatives.

This plan has nothing but generic sentences such as, “the Sustainable Finance Action Council will develop and report on strategies for aligning private sector capital”. It is all hot air. The federal government's plan is nothing but hot air. It has no transition plan. That makes it hard to vote in favour of this budget.

There are solid proposals, like the train, the high-speed train that we have been wanting in the Quebec-Windsor corridor for years. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change has been bragging for years in interviews about not having a car and about how he likes the train. What we want is a high-speed train, a turtle that comes by twice as often.

In the budget, there is \$400 million over two years. A person might think there may be a train. However, when we ask officials what the \$400 million is for, they tell us it is to find partners. Partnership is expensive.

However, when it comes to the issue of western oil, then there is enough cash. That works.

When it comes to infrastructure, it is even worse. The government wants to again start using the Canada Infrastructure Bank to save the world. This bank was created by the Prime Minister in 2015 during the economic downturn. The bank took so long to get off the ground that when it did start operating the economy was in full flight. Today, the government wants to drag its feet a second time with the transition.

That is why this budget is against seniors, against our health care systems and against the transition. However, it is not too late to change it.

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We have a Prime Minister who travels across Canada, from coast to coast, who lectures us, who tells us that we need to purify our hearts. He tells us that we must change, and that we are to be better.

However, this budget contains irrefutable evidence that we have a tired government and a Prime Minister who does not intend to be better.

• (1645)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, far from being tired, this is a government that is very progressive, and it continues to move Canadians and this country forward.

It is interesting. The Conservatives stand up to say that we have abandoned the oil industry, and the Bloc stands up to say that we are giving too much to the oil industry. The bottom line is that we understand what Canadians want. They want clean air, good jobs, a healthy environment and a strong economy.

I have good news for my friends in the Bloc and my friends in the Conservative Party. We can actually do both, and that is what this budget does.

Does my friend and colleague not recognize that? One of the things he criticized, the Canada Infrastructure Bank, has invested hundreds of millions of dollars to get zero-emission buses in the city of Brampton. There are a lot of positive things in this budget, and the Canada Infrastructure Bank is doing a lot of positive things.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, the measures put in place by the Liberal government are brown measures disguised as green measures. The Conservatives see the green, and we see the brown. The reality is that they are only half measures. The Commissioner of the Environment confirmed it once again today.

My colleague is boasting about his infrastructure bank, which barely worked. My loyalty does not lie with Brampton, but with the Bloc Québécois. When my colleague from Winnipeg North has travelled one kilometre on a high-speed train in the Quebec-Windsor corridor, he can ask me his question again.

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it was encouraging to hear the member talk about how oil production is going up in this country. I think one of the greatest solutions to the challenges we face in energy would be to support the development of liquefied natural gas products in Quebec. I think once those products were on stream, we would see the Bloc supporting the energy sector. There are some hopeful opportunities maybe in the future.

I want to ask the member a question about subsidies because he went on about alleged subsidies. It seems to me that people looking for reasons to oppose the energy sector call any kind of incentive, any kind of tax break, a “subsidy”. They use such an expansive definition of the term. There are no real subsidies to the oil and gas

sector, but the Bloc tries to redefine the term “subsidy” to be so expansive that it includes almost anything.

Would he be supportive of applying the same definition of “subsidy” to industries that are important in his province and ending subsidies to those industries as well?

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, the Conservatives have it so easy. Their problem is that they never have enough oil, so their solution is to have more oil. There are times I would love to be in their position.

We are talking about investment credits. When an oil company invests \$1 but ultimately pays less than \$1 because the government makes up the difference, that is an economic subsidy.

I do not need any lectures from my colleague on equalization or transfers. It is like a dog chasing its tail. The Conservatives blame us for equalization and use that as an excuse to produce even more. When they produce even more and the fiscal gap gets even bigger, they will blame us even more.

The Conservatives are creating their own problems and their own solutions. Sometimes I wonder what it would be like to be in their head.

• (1650)

[English]

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member opened his comments with concern for seniors and the lack of action for seniors. One of the things the NDP would really like to see is for the government to adopt my colleague's bill on the guaranteed livable income. That would support seniors and, of course, many others as well who are living in poverty. Would the Bloc support such a bill?

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, we are debating the ways and means motion.

We have the opportunity to do something now for seniors, to increase their pensions. However, the NDP, which decided to sign an agreement with the Liberals and will therefore support the budget, is being sanctimonious here.

We will see how we vote on their bill.

However, the NDP will soon vote on a budget that has ignored our seniors, and we need to hold the NDP to account.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Vancouver East, Employment; the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Health; the hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, Housing.

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Shefford.

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I am pleased to weigh in on the budget. It will become clear quite quickly that I am going to talk about agriculture. I have a certain bent in that direction.

Many people are disappointed because there is not much in the budget for the farming community. We are hearing announcements about the obvious things, among others, as well as things that are already under way. Specifically, we are being told that negotiations will continue for the Canadian agricultural partnership. Those negotiations are under way but have stalled because some western provinces refuse to improve the AgriStability program.

The Bloc Québécois has long suggested—and this is the position of the Union des producteurs agricoles in Quebec, by the way—that the federal government proceed with the improvement it had proposed, that is, a compensation rate of 80% of the reference margin, with the provinces that are ready to move forward.

I am reiterating that proposal today. I think it is important that we improve the performance of our insurance programs, because our farmers are the ones who feed us. These programs are supposed to make our supply chain more stable. There is a lot of talk these days about the supply chain not doing well, and so on. However, we can take steps that are going to be permanent and effective time and again.

Of course, it is not as fun for the party in power, because it cannot simply come along and suddenly announce that it is going to give such a gift or create such a program, as it is doing at the moment in the health care sector. My colleague from Mirabel just demonstrated this very eloquently. Many have spoken about the \$28 billion that we need in health care, but the government announces \$2 billion and expects us to be satisfied with that. This is similar to what the government is doing with the agricultural programs. We need to act quickly on this.

The next really disappointing aspect is that we are also told that an announcement is coming about compensation for supply-managed producers in the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, or CUSMA.

I am trying to stay calm. Enough is enough. Does the government believe in our supply management system? Does it believe in our producers and does it have any respect for them? The answer is no.

In the budget, the government boasts that, thanks to international agreements, Canada has access to all the other G7 countries, but this has come at a cost. It has cost our producers a share of the market. Our producers are efficiently organized, they protect the environment on a daily basis, they control the quantity produced and the price, they give us extremely high quality products, and yet they are constantly scorned. I am fed up. That is what I wanted to say today.

Our producers should not have to beg for four or five years to get compensation for CUSMA. They have scrapes on their knees from dragging themselves through the muck. It looks like the government is trying to keep them civil, by saying that it will give them something soon and that they should behave. Enough is enough. Can we resolve this, please? It is extremely disappointing. We know that the negotiations are over and that the amounts have been

established. The money needs to be paid so that we can move on to something else.

Over time, the government is neglecting producers in supply-managed industries. This is not the first time I am saying this in the House, but I will say it again today. I feel like this government is being sneaky by chipping away at our supply-managed industry markets, letting time go by, allowing unfair competition from outside that undermines our system, and delaying compensation to harm that system so that it disappears through no fault of the government. My message to the government is that if its intention is to get rid of supply management, it needs to say so and own that politically. The Bloc Québécois has the solution. We are going to introduce another law to protect it. We are going to ask the government to pay compensation right away.

• (1655)

As usual, I can see that I will not have enough time to say even one-tenth of the things I wanted to say.

Let us talk about the next generation of farmers. In the previous Parliament, my esteemed colleague from Brandon—Souris introduced a bill that he asked me to co-sponsor, which I was happy to do. We had an excellent working relationship with the NDP folks at the time, and we succeeded in passing a bill that made it no less financially attractive to transfer the family business to one's own child as to a stranger.

At present, the situation is the same as it was before the bill was passed. It is utter nonsense for a government that claims to understand the importance of business succession, agriculture and the need to feed people. It is appalling and disgusting. I am about to say something unparliamentary, so I will stop here.

What is even more surprising is that this legislation was passed. If the government wanted to make changes to it and question it, then it could have done so in the last Parliament, which it actually did in committee and in the House. The bill was then debated in the Senate and the matter was settled. When legislation is passed in the Senate, it has to come into force.

Well, to my great surprise, last year, the Minister of Finance held a press conference the next day to announce that her government would wait six months before enacting this legislation, claiming that she was not happy with it. What does that mean? Where is the democracy? Parliament passed the bill by a majority vote because the majority of its elected members respect farmers and want to ensure their future. Can the government take action? Obviously we put pressure on the government and the government people backed off. They agreed to enforce this legislation, but very shortly afterward, they announced that they would make changes.

I am talking about it here because there are still no numbers or anything in the budget. However, it is noted that a change will be made to this legislation because “the exception [in the legislation] may unintentionally permit surplus stripping without requiring that a genuine intergenerational business transfer takes place.” Putting it in my own words, that means “we will delay the enforcement of this legislation because we suspect our small farmers of being a bunch of fraudsters”.

The Budget

At the same time, the government is doing nothing about tax havens, as has been the case for many years. It is estimated that we lose at least \$7 billion a year to tax havens in dozens of countries. Everyone is aware of this. It is perfectly legal and completely ironic, and I do not understand why people are not more outraged.

However, when farmers want to sell their farms to a son or a daughter, they are told that they may well be fraudsters and the process is delayed by getting tough and closing any loopholes. This is going to have consequences. According to the government's official line, the law is in force and transactions can go ahead. However, in reality, according to what I have been told, financial advisors, accountants and notaries are all telling our farmers that they do not know what the government is going to do with the legislation and that they are taking a very big risk if they go ahead with their transactions at this time.

They are therefore suggesting to farmers that they delay selling, which will again result in sales to strangers. However, selling to a stranger has the same effect as killing supply management. This is about land use. If a farmer sells the land to a neighbour instead of selling it to a son, there will be only two farms left in a zone that used to have 20, and the residents will complain that the town school is empty, which is obvious. This is all part of a whole. When production is stable, it keeps our economy going.

To conclude, I will say that the Bloc Québécois has done what it usually does, which is to work constructively. Last night, the House voted on our amendment to the amendment. If something is not to our liking, we do not say that everything is bad and that we should vote against it; we propose changes.

However, the House voted against our amendment to the amendment. The NDP-Liberal coalition refused to increase old age security starting at age 65. I want people to remember that when they flock to hear the brilliant speeches about how they claim to be working for everyone.

• (1700)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, for the first part of his speech, the member talked a great deal about supply management and tried to plant the seed of doubt in terms of where this government stands on supply management. Virtually from day one, going back to 2015, the Minister of Agriculture has been very clear that we support supply management. In fact, it was a Liberal administration many years ago that created supply management. The difference is that the government understands that Canada is a trading nation, and we continue to negotiate the trade agreements that provide the types of jobs that are so important to our middle class and for growing our economy.

Does the member not recognize the benefits of having these trade agreements and understand and appreciate that there is no hidden agenda here? We created supply management. We will continue to protect the need for supply management for the fine work that it does.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois has always been resolutely in favour of free trade. We have never questioned the benefits of international agreements. Here, we believe that we can do two things at the same time: protect our system under supply management and enter into good trade agreements.

If the member really supports supply management, I would ask him to explain how it is that we have had to sell it out three times when signing international agreements. Can we stop chipping away at it if we believe in it? At some point, when it hits 18% in the milk market, supply management will no longer work.

[*English*]

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from the Bloc for the passion that he brings to his work in this chamber and at committee.

I would ask him to clarify some of his comments regarding the AgriStability program. If I heard him correctly, he is suggesting that improvements can be made, which I would support, with provinces that agree to move ahead. Is he suggesting that the Canadian government should treat all farmers in the provinces equally and increase funding to 85% under AgriStability in all provinces, or just the provinces that agree? Should a federal government not treat all farmers in Canada equally?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, whom I hold in high regard, for his question

Yes, absolutely. All farmers and all provinces must be treated equally. However, when a majority of the provinces want to move forward to improve the program and make sure it works properly, all provinces should be able to choose whether to implement it. Those who want to can do so, but everyone has the same opportunity. I do not want to be misinterpreted.

• (1705)

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, whom I serve on the agriculture committee with.

When I look at the agricultural section of the budget, it is nice to finally see a reference to climate change when speaking to agriculture. He will know that our committee is currently studying agriculture's contributions to climate change.

I am wondering, based on the witness testimony he has heard at committee, what kind of recommendations he hopes to see eventually in our report that may serve as a firm basis for recommendations we can make for government policy in the future.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague for his question about a part of my speech that I did not have a chance to get to because I was so emotional in the first part.

The Budget

We are working on it. I think that agriculture can play a huge role in the environment. I think it is important to provide direct compensation for positive actions. I would say that the one positive in what was announced is the on-farm climate action fund. It is not enough money, but it is a step forward, and we will keep an eye on what is happening. I would like to work with the government to move things forward. It is very important that this money be decentralized, that positive actions be compensated and that this money be available to our agricultural entrepreneurs, because they are the only ones who know when to invest in their business.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, today I want to talk about budget 2022. I would like to thank my colleague from Berthier—Maskinong  for sharing his time with me.

Budget 2022 is, ostensibly, “a plan to grow our economy and make life more affordable”. I doubt anyone will be surprised to hear me heave a sigh of exasperation. As I will show in my speech, there are still far too many who are not getting any help to make life more affordable.

Only one of our five unconditional demands was met: housing for indigenous communities. The government is planning to invest \$4 billion over seven years starting in 2022-23 through Indigenous Services Canada and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada to accelerate work on housing.

I applaud this initiative because I know it is essential to put an end to violence against indigenous women and girls. I was just at a meeting of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, where we discussed this issue. There is no way we will be able to extricate these women from the cycle of poverty without providing them with adequate, affordable housing.

That said, the government does not understand that Canadians gave it a minority mandate, that they did not want to give it a blank cheque, and that they did not want to let it scatter money willy-nilly and in areas of jurisdiction that are none of its business.

I am forced to see the glass as half empty today and criticize what is not in the budget. In particular, I want to talk about seniors, our health care system, and economic development in areas still affected by the pandemic and recovering from the crisis. As the critic for seniors, I will begin by highlighting the complete lack of help for seniors.

We had made help for seniors one of the five prerequisites for passing this budget. To add insult to injury, in addition to not announcing anything new, they included a chart to tell seniors that they do not need any additional help. The government should tell them that while looking them straight in the eye and trying to explain why they are still being discriminated against based on their age.

For the rest of this part, I will let our seniors speak. Here are the words of those I have met over the past few weeks who are not happy: “Why do the Liberals insist on dividing us?” “I may get sick before I’m 75”; “My car will soon give out on me and I won’t be able to get around. How will I maintain my independence?”

Take Michel and his wife Jos e, or even France, for example. These three retirees feel penalized by the lack of federal govern-

ment assistance for people between the ages of 65 and 75. They tell us that they want to enjoy life, that they have needs and that they want to help restart local economies.

An organization in my riding, SOS D epannage, told me that there has been a sharp rise in the number of seniors relying on food assistance. Do we really want to reduce seniors to standing in line for food hampers?

Contrary to what the NDP-Liberal alliance is saying, it is not dental insurance that seniors want to talk to me about. Besides, this dental plan comes without any transfers to Quebec and it would not cover seniors until 2023.

Seniors need more money in their pockets now. It is not to invest in tax havens; rather, it is simply to be able to age with dignity. It is nice to have great teeth, but that means nothing if you cannot afford groceries at the end of the month. It is not a year from now that seniors will be hungry. They are going hungry now.

As I said, poverty does not wait until people reach the age of 75. In fact, a petition is currently being circulated calling on the government to reverse its decision to increase the pension of those aged 75 and over, known as older seniors, by 10%. Instead, petitioners are asking for an increase of \$110 per month in the old age security pension beginning at age 65.

People lined up at the Tim Hortons restaurant across from my office in Granby last week. People do not want this unfair two-tier senior system. I also had some nice conversations with seniors in Drummond. The meeting was organized by the Centre-du-Qu bec branch of the Association qu b coise de d fense des droits des personnes retrait es et pr retrait es. That was also where I heard many of these first-hand accounts.

Many people feel passionate about signing this petition, which I am sponsoring and which was initiated by Samuel L vesque. Petition e-3820, which can be found on the House of Commons website, aims to support the Bloc Qu b cois’s demand for a permanent and lasting increase in old age security benefits for everyone 65 years of age and older.

• (1710)

The FADOQ also said that the government broke its own election promises. There is no additional credit for home support, no tax credit for experienced workers, nothing at all. There is no increase in the old age security pension for seniors 65 and older in the budget. In fact, there is nothing. The government instead proposes the creation of a panel tasked with studying the idea of an allocation for seniors wishing to grow old at home.

Once again, if the Liberals truly wanted to help seniors stay in their homes, they would have increased health transfers.

The Budget

In the second part of my speech, I will talk about another major omission in this budget: health transfers. There is no increase in transfers to 35% of costs as requested by Quebec and the provinces. “Any conversation between the federal government and the provinces and territories will focus on delivering better health care outcomes for Canadians”. That does not mean anything. There is no commitment to the unanimous request of Quebec and the provinces to increase health transfers to 35%. This request also has the support of many seniors groups.

Quebec and the provinces do not need to be told what to do by know-it-all Ottawa. There is nothing on the increase to health transfers yet the government keeps repeating and boasting about the same points.

In the third part of my speech I want to talk to my colleagues about the recovery for some sectors that are still very much affected, because the government missed some perfect opportunities.

I know that my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé cares a great deal about the agricultural sector, because this sector is also very important to Shefford's economy. There is not much in the budget for this sector, however.

When I travel around my beautiful riding of Shefford, people often bring up the agricultural sector. People wanted to see some innovative and bold measures. At the very least, the government should have considered improvements to existing programs like AgriStability and AgriInvest. My colleague has already spoken extensively about that.

The agricultural sector also wants something like the agri-green program, which would help producers and processors improve their operations and compensate them for good environmental practices. Aside from the second investment, the government is proposing other types of investments, but it is not going far enough. The Bloc Québécois is therefore disappointed with this announcement, on which it had pinned much hope. We will see what producers and processors have to say about it. For the time being, compensation is a long time coming. The government wrote that compensation for CUSMA will be included in the fall 2022 update. As my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé stated, it seems that there are further delays for those hard hit by the repercussions of the last three trade agreements signed by Canada.

The situation is dragging on. I was told about this recently at the Agristars gala. The young people I met spoke to me about farm transfers and controversial Bill C-208, which would facilitate inter-generational transfers. The government is satisfied once again with conducting consultations and creating delays. It is a major step backwards for farm transfers, even though the bill was passed in the final days of the previous Parliament, after the Liberals dithered. Now, the government is delaying its coming into force. The Bloc Québécois co-sponsored Bill C-208. It is an extremely important issue for farm succession.

• (1715)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I must interrupt the member at this point because we are running out of time.

[English]

It being 5:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the amendment now before the House.

The question is on the amendment. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of amendment to House]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division or that the amendment be adopted on division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker, I would request a recorded vote.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Call in the members.

• (1800)

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 57)

YEAS

Members

Aboultarif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chabot	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
Desbiens	Desilets
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Fortin
Gallant	Garon
Gaudreau	Généreux
Genius	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Larouche
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lemire	Lewis (Essex)

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Lloyd
MacKenzie
Martel
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Melillo
Moore
Morrison
Muys
Normandin
Patzner
Pauzé
Perron
Poulièvre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ruff
Scheer
Seeback
Shiplay
Sinclair-Desgagné
Soroka
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Thériault
Thomas
Tolmie
Uppal
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Vignola
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Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

Liepert
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Maguire
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McLean
Michaud
Morantz
Motz
Nater
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
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Lamoureux
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
Oliphant
Petipas Taylor
Qualtrough
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sorbara
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Virani
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

Gazan
Gould
Guilbeault
Hardie
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Joly
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Lapointe
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Morrice
Murray
Ng
O'Connell
O'Regan
Powlowski
Robillard
Rogers
Sahota
Saks
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Gaheer

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Carr
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Champagne
Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier
Dabrusin
Davies
Dhaliwal
Diab
Drouin
Duclous
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fillmore
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Fry
Garneau

Nil

PAIRED

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

It being 6:01 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

NATIONAL STRATEGY RESPECTING ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ACT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP), seconded by the member for Lac-Saint-Louis, moved that Bill C-226, An Act respecting the development of a national strategy to assess, prevent and address environmental racism and to advance environmental justice, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleagues who are here this evening because this is a very important private member's bill.

[English]

I am very honoured to stand here to present Bill C-226 in the first hour of second reading. I want to begin with a very heartfelt *meegwetch* and a recognition that we stand on the territory of the Algonquin nation. It is their land.

I want to take a moment to describe how we got to where we are today, because it is rare for a private member's bill entering its first hour of second reading to have already had any parliamentary history at all, and this has a lot of parliamentary history.

I will start by saying that this bill received wide support under a different mover in the last Parliament, as Bill C-230. It was moved by the magnificent former member of Parliament for Cumberland—Colchester, Lenore Zann. Lenore was elected as a Liberal member of Parliament here, but she is quite a non-partisan individual. She also served with distinction in the legislature of Nova Scotia as a New Democrat MLA and has carried with her a concern for environmental racism for a long time. She did me the great honour of making this a non-partisan bill, and I am very honoured to have the hon. chair of the environment committee as the seconder of this bill now. We wanted to make this a non-partisan effort from its very inception as Bill C-230.

Bill C-230, with the same title, was an act to address and assess environmental racism and move forward to environmental justice. It received support at second reading and actually got to committee. Amendments were made at the environment committee, and I adopted those amendments in Bill C-226 at first reading. What we have in front of us therefore represents work already done by Parliament.

It is my deep hope and desire that all of us here, regardless of party, will find it in our hearts sometime in the near future to give this bill unanimous consent so that it can skip through stages that were already done and be sent to the other place. It would then become law, and we can start working proactively to advance environmental justice. That is the hope with which I speak to members tonight.

I am grateful for the non-partisan support the bill already has, and members will hear that in the speeches that are coming up. We also know from a question that I put to the Prime Minister in question period that the government's position is to support this bill. We feel optimistic that it will become law, but we would rather it was sooner than later.

Private Members' Business

I will now turn to the history. This is not a recent issue, and we are late to act. However, before I start on that, I need to dedicate this bill to the memory of a friend of mine: Clotilda Coward Douglas Yakimchuk. She was a magnificent woman and a hero in the community. Her parents came from Barbados in the earlier part of the last century to work in the Sydney steel mill.

Clotilda was a proud Black woman. She was the first community activist with whom I ever worked on the issue of environmental racism. Clotilda Yakimchuk died just about a year ago on April 15, 2021. She died of COVID. She was the first Black person to receive a nursing degree at nursing school in Nova Scotia. She was the first Black woman to be the president of the Registered Nurses' Association of Nova Scotia. She was aware of and fought against the pollution of the coke ovens of the Sydney steel mill and the steel mill itself, which led to high cancer rates in the community of Whitney Pier. When this bill becomes law, I hope people will remember that it is dedicated to the memory of Clotilda Yakimchuk.

One of the things I know from cleaning up the Sydney tar ponds with Clotilda is that we can recognize as a reality that toxic chemicals do not discriminate. They do not pay attention to the colour of our skin when they lodge in our body, when they pass through placenta to children, when they cause cancer and when they cause birth defects. They do not care about the colour of our skin. However, the public policy that puts indigenous peoples and communities of colour far more frequently at risk of being exposed to toxic chemicals does notice skin colour. It does notice whether we are marginalized or not. It does notice whether we have money or not.

● (1805)

Therefore, this is absolutely the case in this country, with all of the evidence that we have of racism that cannot be denied. I know this bill makes people uncomfortable. Is there racism in Canada? Yes, there is. We just had a report today about the racism that repulses people as new recruits out of our military. Every institution in our country experiences racism. Environmental racism is not something new.

Let me go through some of the history we have of that in this country. I am going to turn to books for a moment. The first book that really focused on this problem was in 1977, by one of Canada's great journalists, Warner Troyer. The book is *No Safe Place*, and it is the story of the contamination by the Dryden paper mill of the indigenous community at Grassy Narrows. We are still dealing with that mercury contamination.

Private Members' Business

Another book on the same topic of the mercury contamination of Grassy Narrows is *A Poison Stronger than Love: The Destruction of an Ojibwa Community*, by Anastasia Shkilnyk. She was one of my constituents and, also in her memory, I bring this bill forward today.

In 2000, actually, I co-authored with Maude Barlow, who was then the national chairperson of the Council of Canadians, the book *Frederick Street: Life and death on Canada's Love Canal*, dealing with the issue that I mentioned, and I referenced it. That is where Clotilda Yakimchuk and I first became friends. The contamination of the Sydney tar ponds led to the highest cancer rates in Canada. They were in industrial Cape Breton. The place that became the tar ponds was an estuary where the Mi'kmaq community had traditionally had summer fishing camps. The land was stolen, of course, and then became the worst pollution zone in Canada with the pollution from the coke ovens and the steel mill.

In between was a community called Whitney Pier, which was virtually entirely immigrant Canadians, including a lot of people from Ukraine. I mentioned Clotilda's last name was Yakimchuk. Her husband, Dan Yakimchuk, was a steelworker from Ukraine. Whitney Pier is a melting-pot community. It is a fantastic place, but the cancer rates are through the roof. The land was stolen from the Mi'kmaq. They got the contamination too. So did the only Black community in Cape Breton. As Clotilda described it to me, and I recorded it in the book, it was impossible to find housing anywhere but in that community, so the racism was enforced. We did not have Jim Crow laws in Nova Scotia in the 1970s, but we might as well have, because an experienced nurse who was Black, having moved back from Grenada with her children after her first husband passed away, could not get housing anywhere except in the most contaminated neighbourhoods. That is called environmental racism. That is what it is.

Therefore, we have a history here.

Looking at books, the most important, without a doubt, is the 2018 publication of Dr. Ingrid Waldron's book *There's Something In The Water: Environmental Racism in Indigenous & Black Communities*. It has changed the conversation in Canada. That was fortified a year later, when Dr. Waldron co-produced the film, with the brilliant Nova Scotia actor Elliot Page. They introduced people to this concept. That is part of the history.

Let us look at where else people have done anything on environmental racism. I have been a bit shocked and perturbed, as has been my friend Lenore Zann, by some of the social media reaction to us tabling this legislation, as if we are kind of weird lefties and we made it up because we just want to make racism a thing. No, this is empirically established. We know this is true.

In 1994, the U.S. government took action because it was clear on the evidence that if people lived in a community of colour or an indigenous community, they were far more likely to be exposed to levels of toxic contamination that imperilled their health and the health of their children, their family, their neighbourhood, their community and also other people who were not of colour but who were marginalized. Therefore, it has to do with a bunch of different issues. If people have power and money and they live in Shaughnessy or in Westmount, nobody opens a toxic waste dump in their

backyard. That is the reality. In Canada, as in the U.S., if people are marginalized, without economic power, if they are people of colour or indigenous, they might be much more likely to be exposed to toxic contamination. The U.S. recognized this and, since 1994, the U.S. government, through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, has had a program that is well resourced for environmental justice.

• (1810)

What does that justice look like? It looks like putting tools in the hands of marginalized people to fight for their own health, making sure there are resources for epidemiologists, making sure there are resources for toxicologists and making sure that governments spend the money to clean up the mess.

We are late in Canada. The U.S. took action. Again, I ask that members hear me: the U.S. took action 28 years ago. This is not a new issue. We are late, so we need to get this bill passed. We need to see environmental justice being championed in this country with a well-resourced program in environmental justice where we take our blinders off and say, yes, there is a thing called environmental racism. We are not going to water it down and ignore it, because it is still happening. It is happening today when they try to reopen the Pictou mill and reopen the contamination that has so affected the people of Pictou Landing.

By the way, I see the minister of immigration in the room, so I am just going to give a shout-out to him for being the first federal member of Parliament from that area, Central Nova, who was prepared to say that this mill should close because the jobs were not worth the damage that had been done to Boat Harbour, the indigenous community of Pictou Landing and the neighbourhoods in Pictou. For him just to say that was brave. They are still trying to open it again.

It is seen in Kanesatake, where there is still illegal dumping of toxic chemicals in and around that Mohawk community. That should not be allowed. It would not happen in other communities.

We are looking still at Grassy Narrows and Sarnia, at the first nation of Aamjiwnaang. I invite colleagues from any party to go to Sarnia and visit the enclaves surrounded by petrochemical plants, where the Aamjiwnaang First Nation Cemetery is. They are completely surrounded, and the industry just got a two-year extension to clean up the sulphur dioxide from that refinery. That affects settler-culture Canadians too, but in that community those toxic contaminants completely encircle Aamjiwnaang's centre.

Look at the Lubicon, and the oil sands that have contaminated the communities of Lubicon first nation now for long enough that we wrote about it in 2000, in *Frederick Street: Life and Death on Canada's Love Canal*.

Private Members' Business

We do not need to look far. We do not need to look back at deep history, but we do need to be honest about the fact that this is a pressing issue and requires action. I am sorry to say this: Liberal colleagues are supporting this bill, so I say it without malice, but it is a terrible shame that the election was called when it was because this bill, having gotten a lot of support, died on the Order Paper, so we are starting again.

I, and my friend Lenore Zann, who is here in Ottawa today as a former member of Parliament and the original sponsor of the bill, would really love to see the bill go to second reading for the second time. We would really love it. I am sure other members of every party in this place would appreciate that we do not need to take it to committee again and study it again. We cannot make the same amendments, because this bill includes the amendments the committee made last time.

Let us do something for environmental justice. Let us stand up and say there is a better way to deal with a right to a healthy environment that we actually do not have in this country. There is a way to make it real to have the right to a healthy environment for every citizen, regardless of the colour of their skin or their economic status. In the case of indigenous peoples, there is the double horror of having their land stolen and then filled with toxic chemicals. This is not something that any parliamentarian should feel comfortable allowing to continue, so I really beg this of all my colleagues, regardless of party.

• (1815)

[*Translation*]

I understand that this is an especially difficult issue because it is about racism and inequality, and it is a matter of words. I urge everyone to support this private member's bill.

[*English*]

I have, I think, 35 seconds left, so I just want to say again that this bill will be from all of us. This is not Green Party legislation. I mean, I am completely supported by my colleague for Kitchener Centre, but we do not want to own this. Collectively, all of our hands are on this baby. This bill will matter. It matters for environmental justice. It matters for our future. It matters for who we are.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my thanks to my hon. colleague for Saanich—Gulf Islands for retabling this bill. She is right: The government supports this bill. I also want to thank her for her many years and decades of activism on environmental racism because it is a thing, despite what some people, unfortunately even in the House, think.

My question to the member is this. She touched on it, but can she elaborate a little bit on the science supporting the very fact and the very existence of environmental racism?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, the Minister of Environment, for his decades of activism. I pray they are not over. I do genuinely appreciate his support on this bill and on many things.

The science is clear, but we do not have enough science. That was one of the reasons there was an amendment made at committee

that I completely supported. It was an NDP amendment that said let us make sure we are gathering the data. Let us assess. We do not save data as often as we should that breaks down, by discriminatory category, who is most exposed to toxic chemicals. We know who is most exposed to toxic chemicals: people of colour, indigenous people and people who are without economic clout from settler cultures. We know that.

The science is very clear, and a lot of it was put together empirically. Dr. Ingrid Waldron is the pre-eminent Canadian expert right now on mapping where we find high levels of toxic waste. If we map that out, lo and behold, we find that people of colour and indigenous communities are, out of any normal statistical variation, far more prevalent in the categories of people exposed to too many toxic chemicals.

• (1820)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands for her speech.

The Bloc Québécois thinks it is better to talk about environmental justice for all. Take, for example, the Mercier—Hochelaga-Maisonneuve neighbourhood next to where I live, where 77% of people are non-immigrants. They are currently living on a much lower income. A Ray-Mont Logistiques development project is set to begin, bringing with noise and dust with it, and part of the neighbourhood will be destroyed.

The population is 77% non-immigrant. If we are talking about difference, these are not people who came here through immigration. These are people who were born in Canada. The problem of environmental justice affects everyone, regardless of the colour of our skin or the country in which we were born.

What does my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands think of that?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Repentigny for her question.

I agree with some of what she was saying. As I said, it is clear that it is not just people of colour or indigenous people who are exposed to toxic chemicals. I very much appreciate my colleague's work on climate change and other important issues. She works hard for the environment. However, with respect to the bill, I disagree with the idea that it is not important to say the words. Environmental racism is now a threat.

*Private Members' Business**[English]*

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for putting forward this bill. The member briefly mentioned what the U.S. is doing, and I am wondering if she could speak a bit more about the models the U.S. has for tackling environmental racism and environmental justice and what we can learn from them.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I was remiss in not publicly thanking the hon. member for Victoria for working with me on this bill. I am very grateful for it. I drew a really good number. There is a lottery for private member's bills. Many viewers may not know that. I got a good number and that is why I am up early in this session of Parliament. We are going to get this bill passed, and I thank the hon. member for Victoria for her help.

In the U.S., at the EPA, they call it the EJ program. Everyone knows what it is. People go to the EJ program and get funding. They get support. It is a very robust, professional, scientific program within the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and it has operated for almost 30 years.

[Translation]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I, too, would like to acknowledge that we are here today on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin people.

I am honoured to rise this afternoon to speak to Bill C-226. The bill is being sponsored today by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, but it was first introduced in the 43rd Parliament by Lenore Zann, the then member for Cumberland—Colchester. It was quite a visionary bill, because the concept was not talked about at the time. I hope she will be back in the House soon.

In a way, it is indeed a new concept. The member for Saanich—Gulf Islands mentioned that environmental racism has been recognized as a problem for quite a long time in the United States, but it is still a fairly new concept.

I think Bill C-226 comes at a good time for our society, as that society is questioning the very systems it created. When we talk about discrimination and racism, whether it is environmental or otherwise, we recognize that it is not just a matter of personal prejudice, but that it exists, perhaps impersonally, in the very systems that we have built and that reflect a certain way of thinking and of ranking priorities.

This bill makes us think about that idea, which was not really well known until Lenore Zann introduced her bill. I am very grateful that she took the time back then to talk virtually about her bill to the Lac-Saint-Louis youth council, whose members were also unaware of this notion of environmental racism in the context of the concept of environmental justice.

I would like to talk a little bit about what Bill C-226 proposes.

• (1825)

[English]

The bill outlines the components that would be included in a national strategy, such as a study that would include an examination of the link between race, socio-economic status and environmental

risk. It also sets out a non-exhaustive list of measures that may be taken to advance environmental justice. These measures would assess, prevent and address environmental racism, including possible amendments to federal laws, policies and programs; compensation for individuals or communities; and the collection of information and statistics related to health outcomes in communities located in proximity to environmental hazards.

This is what it is all about at the end of the day. We want to make sure no one's health is compromised and no one's quality of life is compromised because of who they are and which group they happen to be living in proximity to. It is about quality of life and dignity for all peoples, regardless of background.

The bill would require the minister to table a report setting out the national strategy within two years of the bill receiving royal assent, publish that report on the departmental website, and prepare and table a report on the effectiveness of the strategy every five years. The bill aligns with this government's plan to develop an environmental justice strategy and to examine the link between race, socio-economic status and exposure to environmental risk.

We look forward to working with others toward not only getting this bill passed but also supporting its quick passage through the House of Commons. Supporting quick passage through Parliament is important, as the bill comes at a time of heightened awareness of systemic racism and growing concern for environmental justice among Canadians and around the world. It has become increasingly apparent that environmental benefits and harms are not shared equally among different members of society.

Certain groups and communities, namely indigenous and racialized communities and those with lower socio-economic status, often bear a disproportionate share of environmental burdens, such as environmental pollution and degradation. I think it was mentioned by the member for Repentigny that in some cases those who are disadvantaged by a government decision, at whatever level of government, are not necessarily part of racial group per se, but are actually defined by a lower socio-economic status.

Private Members' Business

I was reading the other day about an area of Montreal called Goose Village. It no longer exists. It was basically wiped off the map around the time of Expo 67. Goose Village was close to Griffintown in Montreal. It was a poor neighbourhood, but the people had their dignity and their properties were well kept. At the time it was felt by the mayor of Montreal, Jean Drapeau, and his administration that this area, which was close to the site for Expo 67, was a bit of an eyesore for those who would be visiting the city for the world's fair. This was before environmental assessments and before the kind of activism that we see today.

It was decided that this area should be razed, and they said it was because of unhealthy conditions and because public health was not good there. What I read is that when they looked at the report from the public health department of Montreal, it said that it was a well-kept community. It was of low socio-economic status, but it was very well kept. People took pride in their homes and their surroundings. Again, this was not racially motivated. It was using the power of government to suppress the rights of a lower socio-economic group.

That led me to think of the construction of the Ville-Marie Expressway in Montreal. It was not built through the highest-income area, and in this case it did displace a racialized community. It displaced a good portion of the African-Canadian community of Little Burgundy. Today, Little Burgundy is not as whole as it used to be. There is an expressway running through it, and it is at bottom of a hill in Montreal, not at the top of a hill.

This is a very historic community. Oscar Peterson came from that community. The Union United Church is in that community. Jackie Robinson, when he played for the Montreal Royals, went to the Union Church. It has a deep history. There is film footage of housing being torn down to build the expressway. It was not an exclusively Black neighbourhood, but it was a poor neighbourhood.

This makes us think that we need an approach to looking at how we make decisions that makes sure we do not have these implicit biases in the kinds of decisions that governments make. Environmental justice is a step forward for our society. It means that we are getting better at recognizing people's interests, dignity and quality of life, regardless of their background, socio-economic status or race, and that decisions need to be proper.

• (1830)

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am happy to join in the debate for this bill. I want to thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for putting forward this legislation. I know she is a passionate defender of the environment and always has good intentions when she puts forward a piece of legislation.

I share her concern with bills dying on the Order Paper as a result of an unnecessary and costly election that was brought forward by the Liberal government. Bill C-206, to exempt farm fields from the carbon tax, also died on the Order Paper. I hope members of the House, including the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, will try and help with speedy passage of new Bill C-234.

With respect to this exact piece of legislation, I certainly have some concerns. First of all, I start off with my concern in general

with national strategies. The current government has had difficulty dealing with existing pieces of legislation that it is trying to bring forward with respect to the environment. We had five reports today from the environment commissioner, and the government got zero for five on all five reports. As a batting average when playing baseball, that is a terrible day. When it is the government, it is a tragedy for our country.

When we talk about developing a new national strategy for something, we have to look at the capacity of the government to actually carry out this ambitious project. My concern is that there is not this capacity. We can look at, for example, the motion that was unanimously passed in the House with respect to the suicide prevention line, the 988. We heard about that just recently. It has been 500 days since this was passed unanimously in the House. Absolutely nothing has been done, and Canadians are still waiting for some progress.

The approach of trying to deal with this through a national strategy is not the right one. There could perhaps be ways of looking at making amendments to existing pieces of legislation. For example, the member talked about enshrining the right to a healthy environment. That is actually in the update to CEPA that is in the Senate right now. Something like that has already been dealt with in a piece of legislation.

We already have a complicated regulatory environment when we are developing projects in this country. I am unsure about this national strategy, what it will do and how it will add to the complication of these kinds of processes. When I look at the legislation and what it talks about, possible amendments to federal laws, policies and programs, that is a very broad power that is being granted here as part of this legislation. We do not know exactly where that is going to lead. Whether it will lead to more uncertainty in other things, I am not 100% sure.

On compensation for individuals or communities, there are no parameters around this statement as to what that is going to look like, how it is going to be developed and what it is going to mean. I generally do not like open-ended or blank cheques that are given to any government, and in particular the current government. Right now, we certainly have concerns with this piece of legislation, because we do not know 100% what it is going to mean.

We do, of course, as Conservatives, want to support a healthy environment. We absolutely want to combat racism. However, I do not believe this piece of legislation is going to accomplish any of those goals, for the reasons that I have been setting out. I just do not think the government is actually going to get it done, and the proper way to deal with things like this is to look at existing legislation like the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. If we want, for example, to collect information and statistics for incomes, we could look at modifying an existing piece of legislation to deal with that. If we are trying to look at information and statistics relating to the location of environmental hazards, I also think these are things that could be looked at within existing legislation if we want to add some additional protections for Canadians.

Private Members' Business

I do not think that the way to do this is to wait two years for the government to set up a national strategy. It would then be debated endlessly, and whether anything would actually be implemented, I do not know.

• (1835)

I appreciate the member's earnest hard work on this piece of legislation, but as this piece of legislation stands, we will not be in a position to support it.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I too would like to thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for sparking the discourse, the controversy and discussion. I would say that we in the Bloc Québécois have taken this very seriously. We discussed it for over an hour. However, we may not agree on everything.

There is no doubt in our minds that the federal government has a responsibility to certain populations in Canada, people who face inequalities in their relationship with the environment. The state and quality of the environment has had serious repercussions on our lives over the past two years. We know that this is of paramount importance to everyone.

The Bloc Québécois supports the intention expressed in the title and preamble of Bill C-226 when it comes to environmental justice. If Parliament is to pass such a law, we believe that the concept of environmental justice must be the be the main subject and central concept.

The living conditions that some individuals and communities in Canada find themselves in—and I am thinking here of drinking water, for one—are inconceivable and unacceptable in a supposedly wealthy G7 nation.

That is why we think the House is justified in expressing its desire to act against environmental inequality and discrimination, to study these phenomena in greater depth, to understand the mechanisms and to explore possible solutions. That is all fine.

The existence of geographical differences in standard of living and access to a quality environment is a concern. We should worry about the fact that citizens who are immigrants, who belong to visible minority groups and indigenous communities or who are socioeconomically disadvantaged are directly affected by these differences.

That is why the Bloc Québécois supports government action to address environmental inequality affecting all communities. However, we are not convinced that implementing this from coast to coast across the federation is the right approach if we want to protect the rights of all people to health and access to a quality environment.

Any action the Government of Canada takes must take into account the prerogatives of Quebec and the provinces because environmental protection, health and social services are under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. The government must therefore acknowledge Quebec's expertise in this area.

In any case, we are convinced that it would be inconsistent to claim to fight for environmental justice at the federal level while failing to advocate for the defence of Quebec's environmental sovereignty.

Some federal infrastructure is not covered by our protection laws. I will talk about a very specific case, that of the Limoilou area, which is next to the Port of Québec. Quebec's environmental laws, which are much more stringent than the federal ones, do not apply there because ports fall under federal jurisdiction. Consequently, everyone living in Limoilou, whether they are immigrants or not, are seeing the quality of their environment and their health deteriorate as a result of dust from ore transshipment. Everyone in the Limoilou neighbourhood is suffering. This is known as a low-income neighbourhood.

Nevertheless, the House rejected the solution proposed by the Bloc Québécois several times by voting against our bill on Quebec's environmental sovereignty. This is in stark contrast to the unanimous will of the National Assembly of Quebec expressed on April 13, 2022, which members will agree is fairly recent, to support the primacy of Quebec's environmental jurisdiction. Members were unanimous in opposing any federal environmental action on Quebec's territory.

In Quebec, the right to live in a healthy environment that respects biodiversity has been included in the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms since 2006.

The House of Commons will have an opportunity to follow our lead because Bill S-5, the strengthening environmental protection for a healthier Canada act, is currently being studied in the Senate. It must come back to the House, and we can only agree with introducing this right into Canadian legislation.

• (1840)

Environment-based human rights need to be developed. The best protection against inequality is Quebec's social safety net and the defence of our collective choices.

I remind the House that there is a consensus that socio-economic disparity, limited access to decision-making bodies, and a lack of political power and representation are all at the heart of this quest for environmental justice. When we talk about environmental justice, we are talking about all of this.

The factors I just mentioned cannot be ignored if we want to pursue justice. This is no small feat. We have a lot of work ahead of us.

Quebec has chosen solidarity. Quebec has the best record in North America when it comes to the distribution of wealth. This can be measured. Pan-Canadian standards and strategies often run counter to our collective choices. There are a number of examples of this in the most recent budget, which we have been debating. The federal governments' interference in social affairs is harmful and does not reflect Quebec's reality.

Private Members' Business

The Bloc Québécois works and advocates for Quebec to be its own country, a country founded on mutual recognition among indigenous nations, a country in which all citizens, no matter the colour of their skin or where they were born, are equal and entitled to equal enjoyment of the benefits of social and environmental justice.

A good policy is obviously a policy whose measures are characterized by a reasonable degree of flexibility. There are certainly extreme situations, such as unacceptable living conditions, that require an appropriate public response. However, let us remember that good policy is universal. It serves the common good and applies to everyone.

Universal public policies—and I must emphasize this—also dismantle unequal structures and discriminatory practices. Be it in Quebec, France or elsewhere, social policies that have done the most to advance rights, develop the social safety net and eliminate inequality—or, in other words, develop the welfare state—are, as I said, universal policies intended for everyone.

The Bloc Québécois wishes to emphasize its commitment to the principle of universality, which enables all members of society to pursue economic and social well-being.

If we institute new policies based on new rights, such as the right to a clean environment, everyone, without exception, should have them. If the policy is well thought out and the measures implemented have a real impact on these inequalities, those who suffer the most from injustice will receive help and support, or reparation for the harm done, from the government.

If the rights and the eligibility criteria for government protection and support are universal and their principles are applied to everyone, without discrimination, then the policy will eliminate inequalities based on differences.

I want to share some lines from a song by Gilles Vigneault, a great Quebec poet who sang *Mon pays*, which has been adopted as a Quebec anthem. This song evokes the warmth and universality of the Quebec people.

About my solitary country
I cry out before I am silenced
To everyone on earth
My house is your house
Inside my four walls of ice
I take my time and my space
To prepare the fire, the place
For the people of the horizon
And the people are of my race

The Bloc Québécois believes that these rights, and the policies that stem from them, will have to be universal. Everyone must have them, regardless of their differences.

Then we will have powerful legal tools to address inequities and discrimination, including on the basis of origin, language or cultural background, which are induced by unequal environmental factors such as exposure to pollution or lack of access to clean water or life-sustaining resources.

• (1845)

[English]

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am thrilled to support this bill. Environmental racism is a pressing issue in Canada and addressing environmental injustice is one of the reasons I got into politics. This is a priority for me and for my New Democrat colleagues.

I want to thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for bringing this bill forward and for bringing this important issue back to the House. I have followed the progress of efforts to pass a bill on environmental racism for years, starting with the provincial bill that our former colleague Lenore Zann had worked on with Dr. Ingrid Waldron and put forward when she was a New Democrat member of the Nova Scotia legislature.

Before being elected to represent Victoria, I was teaching at the University of Victoria. I taught a course that focused on environmental racism, and I got my students to read that provincial bill, which was the first of its kind in North America.

Sadly, despite several attempts, it never passed in Nova Scotia. I was so excited to see Lenore introduce a new, federal version of her bill in the last Parliament, and was deeply disappointed to see it die on the Order Paper with the last election, even though it had passed through the environment committee with support from all parties.

Environmental racism is a huge problem, but it is often ignored or, worse, denied by those who do not wish to acknowledge systemic racism in Canada. Across Canada, we know that toxic dumps, polluting projects, risky pipelines, tainted drinking water and the effects of the climate crisis disproportionately hurt indigenous, Black, and racialized communities. Systemic discrimination has been embedded in environmental policy-making.

There is uneven enforcement of regulations and laws, and indigenous, Black and racialized communities are targeted for toxic waste facilities, and the presence of life-threatening poisons and pollutants is officially sanctioned. The communities that are so disproportionately impacted are too often excluded from environmental decision-making.

This bill has strong support from civil society and environmental groups, including the support of Dr. Waldron, who has spent so many years advocating for change on this issue; the ENRICH Project; and the Canadian Coalition for Environmental and Climate Justice. I am hopeful that other members in this place will support this critically important bill and help move it forward quickly to the stage it reached in the last Parliament. I am hopeful that this time we can pass it. We need to take urgent action toward environmental justice, and this bill is an important step.

Private Members' Business

In addition to a national strategy to address environmental racism, I would also like to see the right to a healthy environment enshrined in law. I would like to see the establishment of an office of environmental justice, which could help oversee the strategy on environmental racism that this bill proposes. This kind of office could improve our understanding of the burden of preventable environmental health hazards faced by indigenous, Black and racialized communities for which data is sorely lacking. It could assess possible interventions to address those hazards and ensure that all Canadians have the opportunity to enjoy the same level of protection from environmental health hazards. It could also help with capacity and help coordinate the integration of environmental equity across governments.

Addressing environmental racism and environmental justice is a big task. Canada currently lacks that coordinated capacity to ensure racialized and marginalized communities have the same level of protection as other Canadians. Increasing evidence confirms that Black, indigenous, racialized and marginalized communities bear the disproportionate burden from the effects of the climate crisis and from preventable environmental health hazards, such as pollution, toxic substances, and environmental degradation.

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, significant health inequities exist among Canadians living on low incomes, indigenous people, racial and sexual minorities, immigrants, and people living with physical or mental impairments.

While the climate crisis will impact everyone, federal government reports repeatedly confirm that it will exacerbate these existing inequities. Government programs, policies and regulations that address environmental hazards rarely address these inequities. A federal office of environmental justice could champion efforts to advance environmental justice.

It has already been talked a bit about how the United States has models that we can look to. The U.S. has the Office of Environmental Justice. They have had it since the early 1990s, and it could act as a model. The U.S. Office of Environmental Justice is mandated to protect and promote environmental and public health in minority, low-income, tribal, and other vulnerable communities. In 1994, a complementary executive order in a high-level inter-agency working group on environmental justice was put forward and required every federal agency to make achieving environmental justice part of its mission.

● (1850)

The Green Budget Coalition recommended that the government fund a Canadian office of environmental justice and equity to support a whole-of-government approach, mirroring the governance structure in the U.S. and working actively to coordinate with other departments. This was one of its top five budget requests. Unfortunately, it was not taken up by the government and included in this budget.

I was proud to see the establishment of an office of environmental justice as part of the NDP's platform. It is something that I will continue to push the government to adopt as a way to support the work of tackling environmental racism in Canada.

Canada has a lot of work to do to address environmental racism. The systemic inequities that exist are a direct result of historic and ongoing colonization, and this is well documented.

After visiting Canada in 2019, the UN special rapporteur on human rights and hazardous substances and wastes wrote, "I observed a pervasive trend of inaction of the Canadian Government in the face of existing health threats from decades of historical and current environmental injustices". A report submitted to the UN Human Rights Council stated, "Pollution and exposure to toxic chemicals threaten the right to life, and a life with dignity". It also said, "The invisible violence inflicted by toxics is an insidious burden disproportionately borne by Indigenous peoples in Canada." Many of us recognize the names of communities that have a toxic mess dumped on them and are abandoned by the government to deal with the devastating consequences. Chemical Valley, Grassy Narrows, Boat Harbour and Africville are just a few examples.

We know that the climate crisis is disproportionately impacting indigenous peoples. Canada is warming at more than twice the global rate, and northern Canada is about three times the global rate, depleting traditional food sources, driving up the cost of imported alternatives and contributing to a growing problem of food insecurity and related negative health impacts. Canada is not adequately supporting the efforts of indigenous peoples to adapt to the climate crisis and is failing to do its part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Canada is not adequately taking into account indigenous science and indigenous knowledge in relation to the environment and its protection. It is clear that we have a problem of systemic racism that our government is doing almost nothing to address. In the absence of government action or legislation, and often excluded from the leadership of mainstream environmental movements, indigenous and racialized communities and their allies have been demanding environmental justice, demanding their rights and demanding to be heard.

I also want to mention the right to a healthy environment. Over 150 countries already have legal obligations to protect the right to a healthy environment. However, there is still no federal law that recognizes the right to a healthy environment in Canada. This is something the NDP has long advocated for. Former NDP MP Linda Duncan put forward a bill to establish a Canadian environmental bill of rights, a bill that has been reintroduced in this Parliament by my NDP colleague, the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay. The Canadian Environmental Protection Act does not currently include any reference to environmental justice or human rights and is 20 years out of date. While I welcome Bill S-5, currently in the Senate, there are troubling limitations being proposed by the government. I look forward to debating that bill, strengthening it and ensuring that Canadians have the right to a healthy environment.

I want to end by once again thanking the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands and expressing my strong support for this bill. I also want to once again congratulate Dr. Ingrid Waldron for her tireless work to bring attention to environmental racism. We need to take urgent action to address the disproportionate environmental impacts felt by indigenous, Black and racialized communities and to advance environmental justice in Canada.

I look forward to supporting this bill and continuing to work with colleagues to tackle environmental racism, but also to establish an office of environmental justice and ensure the right to a healthy environment for all Canadians.

● (1855)

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I cannot express how happy I am to talk about this bill.

I would like to congratulate Ms. Zann, because her leadership on environmental racism and justice is exemplary. She started the fight as a provincial member and continued her advocacy so fiercely and so strongly, and I had the honour and the pleasure, along with my colleague over there who spoke earlier, to learn from her and Dr. Waldron how pressing an issue environmental racism and environmental justice is in this country for Black, indigenous and racialized communities.

We should congratulate all of those who have advocated and fought for this. We are, in this moment, able to bring this back to the table, where it belongs. We need to celebrate that leadership and honour the importance this moment holds with this legislation, because systemic racism is a fact in Canada and around the world.

One of my Conservative colleagues questioned earlier the ability of the government to even do this and whether it would be able to act and respond to this. I will dig a little into my Jewish roots. We have a beautiful expression in Hebrew that I will share:

[Member spoke in Hebrew]

[English]

“It is not upon you to finish building the kingdom, but you are not allowed to step away from the opportunity to start the work.”

[Member spoke in Hebrew]

[English]

“You are not free to release yourself from beginning this work.”

This work has been waiting for over 70 years. For 70 years, communities across this country have suffered. Their socio-economic status and health and well-being have been impacted in ways that we do not even begin to understand unless we pass legislation such as this and until we begin to dig into the science and the data to truly understand the harms that have been done.

I am so happy to support this legislation as it comes into the House and the work that needs to be done, because I worked on it already. I want to thank again Dr. Ingrid Waldron, Ms. Zann and all of those champions. We have so much to learn and we also have so much to fix and heal. We need the understanding, the data, the knowledge, the legislation and the framework in place so we can

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learn, ask the questions and be challenged on those answers to know how to move forward.

The tide rises, but it is not equal for everyone. That is what we know about environmental justice and environmental racism. Not everyone is in the same boat and not everyone has had the same experience, and we have an obligation to make sure all Canadians in this country have a healthy and safe environment to live, to grow, to thrive and to succeed in. Unless we ask those tough questions in a framework such as this national strategy, we are not able to give them the answers they deserve.

I would challenge my colleagues who question our ability to do this not to question the ability to do it, but just to do it. We do not need to ask why, maybe, if or if it is possible. It is possible, because we choose to make it possible. For the sake of marginalized and racialized communities, we absolutely have the obligation to do it.

To each and every one of us in the House who has fought for the principles of climate change, such as my colleague from the Bloc, whom I sat at the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development with, and so many others who understand that this is the moment, we need to move forward with asking these questions and putting these types of bills forward to make sure we get the right answers for all Canadians.

● (1900)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, the findings of a recent damning report by the Auditor General exposed the Liberal government's failure to ensure the health and safety of temporary foreign agricultural workers, where ESDC provided little assurance that workers were protected during the 2020 and 2021 growing seasons, yet the minister announced that he will further expand the temporary foreign worker program.

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It is so disappointing that the Liberal government has chosen to perpetuate a system that favours abuse and exploitation by increasing its reliance on temporary foreign workers. There is no denying that there is an imbalance of power in the temporary foreign worker program that has resulted in many migrant workers being exploited, including being subject to wage theft and poor working conditions. We have seen the horrors of how TFWs are put in substandard housing, unable to isolate in dense living quarters and unable to speak up, until their health was affected, during the worst of the pandemic.

This highlights the ongoing, deeply seated problems with the temporary foreign worker program. The sad reality is that even though the Liberals promised that they would take action to address this blatant violation of the workers' rights in 2020, the quality of the inspections has actually gotten worse. By continuing to add more TFWs to the system, ESDC will struggle even more to ensure their safety. It is clear that the Liberals are disregarding the rights of migrant workers.

There is this acceptance that the only way to solve the labour market challenges in Canada is to open the floodgates to temporary foreign workers. We need to abandon that concept immediately. We need to start looking at permanent immigration, while at the same time properly investing in domestic labour sources as part of a larger strategy. We need to acknowledge the failures of this policy and reject the approach of successive Liberal and Conservative governments of moving away from a balanced immigration system with a full range of skills. If Canada has a labour skills shortage, people should be allowed to immigrate to Canada with full status. We should, of course, invest in domestic training as well to ensure that locals are afforded every opportunity to fill Canada's labour market needs, including access to employment training.

Historically, TFWs were used to fill in positions that were truly temporary, for example visiting professors, specialized doctors, film crews, etc., people who have no intention of moving to Canada permanently, but the principle is long forgotten. We have steered away from that, and there are more temporary foreign workers coming to Canada than there are immigrants. This is simply wrong. The reliance on temporary foreign workers to meet the labour skills shortage means we are opening up the door for human rights abuses. The people whose rights are being robbed are essential workers. They are the people who help fuel Canada's economy. They are the people who take care of our loved ones. They are the people who help put food on our table. They are people who risked their lives during the worst of the pandemic to support Canadians. This exploitation has to stop, plain and simple.

Just 20 years ago, there were 60,000 temporary work permits in Canada. Since then, there has been a 600% increase to where it stands now, at over 500,000 people with temporary status.

• (1905)

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the safety and well-being of all workers, including temporary foreign workers, are of utmost importance to our government. As the member of Parliament for a region that hosts 10,000 temporary foreign workers each year, I can say emphatically that temporary foreign workers deserve to be safe.

They deserve to be treated as any Canadian worker would expect to be treated.

When the pandemic hit, the Department of Employment and Social Development Canada, ESDC, quickly strengthened conditions for the temporary foreign worker program and introduced stronger penalties for employers who fail to comply. In fact, throughout the 2020 and 2021 seasons, ESDC hired more inspectors, enhanced its tip line service by including live agents, invested in migrant worker organizations to support vulnerable workers and worked closely with partners to keep workers safe.

Let us be clear. The government agrees with the Auditor General's recommendations and recognizes their seriousness. That is why we took steps to address the recommendations to improve the quality and timeliness of inspections, reduce backlogs and increase resources. ESDC is also continuing to expand its partnerships and work with employers to encourage compliance through education and awareness. We are already seeing the results, and they are overwhelmingly positive. Since July, we have seen a marked improvement in the quality of ESDC inspections and a significant reduction in the inventory of active inspections. These are important steps, but we know we have more work to do. That is why ESDC is rebuilding the TFW compliance regime. The Auditor General's recommendations are helping to guide that work.

While we recognize that the vast majority of employers care for the well-being of their workers, we also recognize that temporary foreign workers can face unique challenges. Given the question posed, let me very clear on the steps ESDC has been taking. We have ensured all staff responsible for inspections received supplementary training, which was completed last month. It implemented renewed guidance to ensure that if a worker's health and safety is at risk, necessary action is to be taken within 24 hours and no later than 48 hours, including the notification of appropriate stakeholders, authorities and jurisdictions. We developed a plan to target higher-risk areas, to reduce backlogs and ensure inspections are timely. We also reached 80% of inspections files without substantive errors by last month, March 2022, with progress in place to reach 90% by no later than September 2022.

We recognize the challenges temporary foreign workers face and have faced, especially during the pandemic. That is why the government has created special pathways to permanent residency so that eligible temporary foreign workers can remain in Canada for the long term. As I alluded to earlier, we have expanded relationships with key stakeholders, including federal, provincial and territorial partners, international law offices and employer groups, to help protect the health and safety of workers.

These working relationships are key to ensuring that the foreign workers so vital to our food supply will be welcomed into significantly safer working environments as we enter into the 2022 agricultural season.

• (1910)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, there are 1.6 million people in Canada. One in 23 are non-permanent residents. Let me repeat, that is one in 23. They range from students to migrant workers to those who are undocumented. Many would be able to fulfill the labour skill shortage here given a chance. The NDP believes that the immigration system is about nation building. It is based on the principle that, if people are good enough to work or study here, they are good enough to stay.

To build our nation, our immigration policies need to be fair and equitable, and value the contributions of all workers from different social and economic classes. Landed status on arrival should be the standard of practice, and immigration streams should be made available to the full range of workers required in Canada's robust economy. It is not good enough to say we will do inspections. What we need to do is ensure that their full rights are respected when they land in Canada.

Let us do it right. It is time to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for her excellent work on this incredibly important issue and file.

The government agrees with the Auditor General's recommendations. We are rebuilding the temporary foreign worker program compliance regime, and the Auditor General's recommendations are helping us to guide that work. We have already implemented improvements to ensure we can better support our inspection staff. These measures have improved the quality and timeliness of our inspections, and backlogs have been reduced.

We remain committed to protecting the health and safety of foreign workers. In the longer term, we know that improvements to foreign workers' living conditions are paramount. To achieve these necessary improvements and to meet the goals we have set, we are working diligently with stakeholders, including federal, provincial and territorial partners, international offices and employer groups, to provide safe environments for temporary foreign workers, especially in the agricultural sector.

HEALTH

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am here tonight to give the government an opportunity, and I am pleased to speak di-

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rectly to all of those who have recognized that this is such an important issue for them to be seized with. It is time to end the unscientific mandates. Of course, I am talking about the federal mask mandate and the federal proof-of-vaccination requirements.

As we have seen across this country, every province has signalled a plan to do just that. With dentists, we see on the commercials that “four out of five dentists agree”. In the provinces, nine out of 10 of the top doctors have agreed that it is safe to lift their vaccination and mask mandates. This is exactly what the federal top doctor and the Minister of Health need to be looking at. We know that it is safe to do this. With the impacts mandates are having on people's federally regulated employment, our public service and our RCMP, it is too important for the government to continue to delay. This is based on science the Liberals have not revealed and science that differs from that of all of the chief medical officers of health across this country. They have said it is safe.

What we have asked of the government over the last number of months is to provide us the information we are looking for and explain to us the benchmarks that, once hit, will cause the mandates to be lifted. What are those benchmarks? Would they be based on waste-water surveillance? Would they be based on hospitalization rates? Would they be based on vaccination rates?

We do not know the number that, once hit, will trigger the lifting of the mandates because they have not set a target; they have not determined what it would be. That is because what we are seeing is that this is largely a political decision: one of political science and not of medical science. If we were doing this based on the targets that could best be hoped for with vaccination, as one of the most vaccinated countries in the world we have hit that benchmark. That is what we have seen.

When case rates largely decoupled from hospitalization, the chief medical officers of health across this country said that it was time and that it was safe to gather, safe to remove mask mandates and safe to end the proof-of-vaccination requirements. That is what we are looking for the government to do. It should follow the science, tell Canadians the thresholds that need to be achieved and end the unscientific mandates.

We have given the government multiple opportunities through opposition days requesting that it sets a deadline. We are going back almost a couple months since we first asked for a plan, so tonight is another great opportunity for the government to provide us with a plan that would see the end, as I said, to what has proven to be mandates based on political science, not based on medical science.

I will ask the parliamentary secretary this. Are the Liberals ready to end the mandates?

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• (1915)

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as the provinces and territories ease public health measures, we need to recognize that COVID-19 has not disappeared. COVID-19 continues to circulate in Canada, with hospitalization trends still elevated in some parts of the country.

Provincially and territorially, vaccine mandates were implemented in the summer and fall of 2021 for the federal public service, Crown corporations and federally regulated air, rail and marine transportation sectors to pursue key objectives, including to ensure the safety and security of the transportation system, passengers, transportation employees and the public, delivering immediate protection from infection and severity of illness in workplaces and for travellers; to increase uptake to provide broader societal protection, including within the federal public service; and to play a leadership role in protecting the health and safety of our workplaces, our communities and all Canadians.

Provincially, vaccine mandates were implemented across the country in the fall of 2021 to support higher levels of vaccination. At the time, uptake rates had plateaued, and a fourth wave was upon us.

[Translation]

Following mandatory vaccination, vaccination rates in Canada increased. This has contributed to the public health goal of minimizing serious illness and death overall.

[English]

This situation is not unique in Canada. A recent comparative study revealed that Denmark, Israel, Italy, France, Germany and Switzerland saw significant increases in vaccinations 20 days before mandates were implemented with lasting effects up to 40 days after. Eighty-five per cent of the eligible population in Canada has received two doses.

Studies have shown that vaccine effectiveness against the circulating variants omicron and BA.2 is lower than against previous variants. However, two doses continue to give good protection against severe disease, against omicron, but protection decreases after several months. Evidence indicates that a third or booster dose moderately increases protection against infection, to about 60%. It also increases protection against transmission and offers very good protection against severe disease, upward of 90%.

[Translation]

While the duration of protection from a booster or third dose varies and is expected to decrease over time, it is nonetheless important for Canadians to keep their vaccines up to date and get their booster shot when eligible. This will help them protect themselves and others.

• (1920)

[English]

When considering mandates, several factors should be considered, including the global and domestic epidemiological situation and the benefits and longer-term consequences of those measures.

The Government of Canada COVID-19 vaccine mandate for the federal public service was implemented in October 2021 to help protect workers, their families and their communities. The mandate remains in place, and the government has committed to review the ongoing need for the policy based on evolving science and evidence and in the context of a multipronged approach to help protect Canadians against COVID-19.

[Translation]

Given the uncertainty and the ever-changing nature of the variants, as we learned from omicron and now its subvariants, an agile approach will be needed.

[English]

We continue to monitor the emerging evidence around vaccine effectiveness, and the spread and impact of COVID-19 in Canada, to inform our vaccination strategy for the coming weeks and months to ensure that we continue to protect the health and safety of Canadians. Vaccination is an important layer of protection that, when used with other measures such as masking, testing and distancing, can protect us from COVID-19.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for his response, but the question we are left with is whether the intent of the vaccine mandate for federal public servants was to drive up the vaccination rates. They have largely plateaued across the country, so the primary objective has been achieved and the mandates are not going to get any closer to their end goal by being maintained.

Unless the parliamentary secretary is prepared to offer to the House tonight that boosters will be mandated for federal public servants, and I would encourage him to bring that information forward if that is the case, the government needs to let us know, and let the public service and all federally regulated employees know, when it will end those mandates.

In my community, vaccine uptake is over 91.5%. It is the highest in the province of Ontario and one of the highest in the country, but it is not going to get any higher because of the vaccine mandates that are in place.

If the mandates have achieved their objective, what are the epidemiological or other factors that will need to be met before the parliamentary secretary and his minister will lift the mandates?

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Madam Speaker, the Public Health Agency of Canada continues to examine vaccination strategies in the short and long term, including opportunities to build vaccine confidence and reduce barriers faced by individuals and communities across Canada. Canada has benefited significantly from COVID-19 vaccination efforts that include vaccine education, outreach and accessible programs with provinces, territories and indigenous partners. Vaccines, including boosters, will continue to be key to Canada's long-term recovery. They will be important to manage emerging variants, prevent severe illness and death, support our health systems and continue the path to living normal and full lives.

HOUSING

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Madam Speaker, the line I use very often is that a week is an eternity in politics, and for the past five years it has become increasingly difficult and more stressful for anybody buying a home or looking to rent anywhere.

In Cornwall and my riding of SDG, the average price of a home is now \$430,000. In the province of Ontario, last month the statistics showed the price was over \$1 million on average to purchase a home. It was \$800,000 across the country. Those are the average prices. I hear stories repeatedly of how rents are skyrocketing, the supply is low and young people living in their parents' basements are giving up on the idea of ever being able to save up enough money to buy their own home. These stories are heartbreaking, and what has happened over the course of the past few years is extremely frustrating.

I have to admit I do not think the Minister of Housing likes me too much. He references me in response in question period quite often because the last time we had this debate on housing a few months ago, I spoke about the Liberals' failed approach when it comes to housing. It is clearly broken when the housing minister sees prices that have doubled in the past five years and claims that the government's plan is working and is a benefit to Canadians.

I criticized the shared equity program, but not just for myself. I shared examples from stakeholders and proof from Canadians that they do not support that program. The minister then twisted my words. He could not even get my riding name right, but suggested that I was somehow against homelessness funding or doing anything in that regard. I will be blunt. That is pathetic and desperate.

The line I used was "desperate people do desperate things." The minister is getting increasingly frustrated because Canadians are seeing the frustration they are facing in every single part of this country. It was also revealed in some documents recently that the minister authorized bonuses for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Organization, which has the simple and pure mandate of making housing affordable for Canadians. With all the stats that I just showed and the frustration in the air in every part of this country, the minister deemed in his judgment that it was appropriate to give \$40 million in bonuses to an organization and team that is responsible for affordable housing. He did not like that very much, and continues to cite it.

I can say that in the city of Cornwall, the challenge of both hidden homelessness, which is what we call it, and also visible homelessness has shaken our community in the past couple of years. We

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actually have homeless encampments now near the port of entry under the international bridge going to Cornwall Island and into the United States.

The approach from the government needs to change. The shared equity program is broken. Members do not need to take my word for it. Mortgage Professionals Canada, which represents mortgage brokers, lenders and insurance and service providers, said last month that the federal government has failed to address Canada's housing affordability problem. When it came to the first-time homebuyers' incentive program, it said that it is "simply failing". That is the part that needs to end. The spokesperson said that "almost all clients dislike the idea of becoming a co-homeowner with the government, if they can avoid it."

That says it all. The fact that we are at a point now where the government believes it needs to put out money to help people contribute toward the equity in their homes speaks volumes about how our system and housing system are broken.

My question to the parliamentary secretary is this. Will the government finally change course?

• (1925)

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this government recognizes the housing affordability challenges that Canadians are facing today. Too many in this country are struggling to meet even their most urgent housing needs, and as my colleague points out, too many are struggling to achieve their dream of buying a home. However, unlike what my colleague said in the House earlier this year when he said that we should be done with the issue, we believe that the federal government needs to do its part. In fact, I think he owes Canadians an explanation for why he opposes investment in affordable housing and opposes supporting those who dream of owning a home.

Our government has prioritized housing since the beginning of its mandate. My colleague mentioned earlier that the system is broken, but since 2015, we have invested nearly \$30 billion to support, create and repair 440,000 homes across the country from coast to coast. We launched the national housing strategy in 2017, the first of its kind. Is it broken? It helped over two million Canadians across the country. We have made housing affordability a central pillar of our new budget, pledging billions to boost supply and put housing within reach of everyone in this country. That includes expanding and extending programs with proven records of success, such as the rapid housing initiative to quickly build more affordable housing and the first-time homebuyers program.

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My colleague's constituents are well aware of the impact the first-time homebuyers incentive has had, as 24 families in Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry alone are now homeowners thanks to funding from that initiative. Other federal programs have funded nearly 1,000 new units in his own riding, and those successes are repeated across the country.

Our new budget proposes a new tax-free first home savings account. This would allow people to save up to \$40,000 for the purchase of their first home. We will also work to develop a homebuyers' bill of rights to protect homebuyers. Our plan includes support for people across the housing continuum, especially the most vulnerable in our country.

The member should tell Canadians now if he believes, like many of his colleagues, that the government should not play a role in making housing more affordable. Does he not believe that housing is a human right? Canadians deserve a clear answer from him and his party.

Meanwhile, our government believes that we can and should be in the business of helping Canadians meet their housing needs. Canadians expect us to get the job done. We hope that he and his colleagues will get their story straight. Do we need to make sure that housing is a human right? Do we need to give support to homebuyers regarding affordability? On this side of the House, that is what we are doing and that is what we are going to do.

● (1930)

Mr. Eric Duncan: Madam Speaker, the very reason I am standing in the House talking about affordable housing is that I care. We care about it across the country.

I will never challenge the intent of the government and say that it does not care about housing affordability, homelessness or helping first-time homebuyers. This is about the approach it is taking to try

to get there. The Liberals have had seven years. They claim they have done a, b, c, d and e, and in that time, housing prices have doubled. More people are walking away. We have more homelessness present in our communities, and we have more people requesting social housing because they cannot afford rent and cannot afford to buy a home. There is a lack of supply, and the challenges go on.

My argument continues to be about the direction the government has taken. I will give the Liberals the benefit of doubt that they mean well, but this is about actions and results. I will ask my constituents in Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry and all Canadians to reflect on the past five to seven years under the Liberal government. Is housing more affordable for them? Are they further ahead? The answer is clearly no.

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Madam Speaker, our government is proud of its record on housing. We are proud to have helped hundreds of thousands of Canadians find a safe and affordable place to call home, and we are proud of the plan laid out in our new budget to continue helping Canadians find a suitable and affordable home.

I hope the member will support our budget. It may not be perfect, but we are more than trying. We have helped get over 400,000 homes repaired, created and protected. We have helped over two million Canadians with their housing costs and helped them to buy a house. I hope the member opposite will support the measures in the budget in the next voting session.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:33 p.m.)

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