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(HANSARD)

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

The House met at 10 a.m.

[English]

Prayer

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)
[English]

AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the 2019 spring reports of the Auditor General of Canada. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(g), these documents are deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

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GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to two petitions.

* * *

[Translation]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE ACT

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-98, An Act to amend the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act and the Canada Border Services Agency Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

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

* * *

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the International Executive Committee meeting held in Port Louis, Mauritius, from March 20 to 24, 2018.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 21st report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, entitled “West Coast Fisheries: Sharing Risks and Benefits”.

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SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN ACT

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-446, An Act to develop a national school food program for children.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to introduce my bill, the school food program for children act. I would like to thank the hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé for seconding this bill.

This proposed legislation would require the Minister of Health, in consultation with the provincial and territorial governments and other relevant stakeholders, to develop a national school food program to ensure that all children in Canada have access to healthy food. The program would operate at little or no direct cost to children or their families, build on existing school food programs across Canada, use best practices from other jurisdictions and promote evidence-based healthy food education.

In a country as prosperous as Canada, no child should have to struggle through the school day on an empty stomach. However, today, more than one and a half million children live in families who have difficulty putting food on the table. Canada remains among the few industrialized countries without a universal school food program. A national school food program will not only give every student in Canada access to nutritious food; it will make healthy eating a daily lesson for our kids.

I hope all parliamentarians will support this important health and social justice initiative.

Routine Proceedings

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

* * *

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC) moved:

That, at the conclusion of today's debate on the opposition motion in the name of the Member for Carleton, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred to Wednesday, May 8, 2019, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[English]

PETITIONS

FALUN GONG

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to present a petition today especially knowing that we are approaching Falun Gong international day. It will be the 20th anniversary this week. The petition is signed by over 100 Canadians.

The petitioners are asking the government to use the Magnitsky act, which we passed in this Parliament, to sanction individuals responsible for extrajudicial killings and organ harvesting from Falun Gong participants in China.

The motto of Falun Gong practitioners is truthfulness, compassion and tolerance. Unfortunately, they are not experiencing that in China, so we need to take action against those who are responsible for their persecution.

PENSIONS

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present two petitions on the same subject.

The petitioners point out that before the 2015 federal election, Canadians were clearly promised in writing that defined benefit pension plans, which have already been paid for by employees and pensioners, should not be retroactively changed into target benefit plans.

They also point out that Bill C-27, tabled by the Minister of Finance, permits precisely this change, thereby jeopardizing the retirement income security of Canadians who have negotiated defined benefit plans as a form of deferred wages.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to withdraw Bill C-27, an act to amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act.

● (1010)

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present this morning.

The first petition is from citizens who are concerned about the international trafficking of human organs that are removed from victims without consent. There is no legal prohibition on Canadians travelling abroad to acquire or receive such organs.

We are aware that Bill S-240 is now back in the other place, and we certainly look forward to the petitioners' concerns being met.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS INITIATIVE

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the other petition is from Canadians who continue to call on the Prime Minister to defend the freedom of conscious thought and belief and withdraw the attestation requirement for applications to the Canada summer jobs program, including this year 2019. The program still exists, and the petitioners consider the attestation to be discriminatory.

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a petition signed mainly by people from Quebec City, Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean and eastern Quebec who are calling for universal access to employment insurance. As members know, only 35.2% of unemployed women are eligible for regular EI benefits, compared to 52% of unemployed men.

The petitioners are calling on the government to ensure universal access to employment insurance by lowering the eligibility threshold to 350 hours or 13 weeks, establishing a minimum threshold of 35 weeks of benefits, and increasing the benefit rate to 70% of salary based on the best 12 weeks of salary. The petition also proposes other measures. I am pleased to table it in the House.

[English]

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and present this petition from 60 or so concerned residents of the greater Toronto area.

The petitioners urge the Parliament of Canada and now the other place to move quickly on the proposed legislation to amend the Criminal Code and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to prohibit Canadians from travelling abroad to acquire human organs removed without consent or as a result of a financial transaction, and to render inadmissible to Canada any and all permanent residents or foreign nationals who have participated in the illegal trade of human organs.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to stand today and present a petition in support of Bill S-240, which is back in the other place today.

The petitioners come from a wide range of regions within Canada, and all of them support the petition for one single, solitary reason, which is to combat the scourge of forced organ harvesting.

The petitioners call upon the Senate to act upon this legislation as quickly as possible, because it has been before this place on several previous occasions.

Mr. Earl Dreesen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present today that has been signed by nearly 70 people who want to make sure we are all aware of the scourge of international trafficking in human organs, which are removed from victims without their consent. Bill S-240, which is in the Senate, would place a legal prohibition on Canadians travelling abroad in order to acquire or receive such organs. It is incumbent upon all of us to make sure we recognize that.

With that in mind, I am proud to present this petition today.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this petition is in regard to Bill S-240. The signatories to this petition want to see the bill progress through the Senate relatively quickly.

I cannot think of a more disgusting trade than the trade of human organs. That people would travel abroad to take an organ from somebody who has been forced to give it up or who has given it up through a financial transaction is just unthinkable. We would like to see this trade stopped. We are looking for this petition and this legislation to move forward so that it will do just that.

The petitioners call upon the Senate to move quickly on this bill; they hope it comes back to this House relatively quickly and that we can deal with it relatively soon.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like many others, I too bring forward a petition in regard to organ harvesting.

I applaud all those individuals who took the time to sign these petitions in support of such an important cause. It is encouraging that the House of Commons has responded, at least in good part, to the petition.

* * *

●(1015)

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 Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC) moved:

Business of Supply

That the House call on the government to stop raising the price of gas by clearing the way for pipelines and eliminating the carbon tax on fuel.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

If there were an energy paradise in the eyes of the Liberal Prime Minister, it would be Vancouver. There gas prices are higher than at any time anywhere in North America.

Recently the Prime Minister visited Vancouver, and a reporter asked about the then \$1.69-a-litre price. He said that this “is exactly what we want”. He was thrilled to see high gas prices, because he believes that high gas prices are the only way we can save our environment.

Of course, he inherited a massive family fortune. He is a multi-millionaire. He drives around in a taxpayer-funded limousine, as he did for most of his childhood. He has no worries whatsoever about paying bills. Because he has never had to worry about money, he does not worry about Canadians' money. As such, he has admiration for high gas prices in British Columbia in general and in Vancouver in particular.

The Prime Minister's admiration for B.C.'s high gas prices is not new. It did not manifest itself only in that famous “exactly what we want” comment. Rather, it is the basis of his entire carbon tax program.

As the Prime Minister was beginning to roll out his plan to hike taxes on gas and other energy sources, he consistently pointed to British Columbia as the ideal model to replicate. He wants to do across Canada what the carbon-tax government has done in that province. That province has its own carbon tax regime, one the Prime Minister supports and one that he requires through a new federal law that mandates that provinces institute their own tax on gas and other fuels. The only difference between B.C.'s carbon tax and the one the Prime Minister is imposing in Ontario, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Manitoba is that B.C.'s is a little further along. The tax rate in B.C. is about \$40 per tonne of carbon dioxide, whereas the Prime Minister's carbon tax this year starts at only \$20.

Right now we can look to British Columbia to see the Liberal future. The Prime Minister has admitted that he plans to raise Canada's national carbon tax by 250% if re-elected. That is just by 2022. In the year 2023, which is not far off from now, it could go much higher than that. Internal government documents show that it could go as high as \$300 a tonne, which would be more than 10 times higher than it is right now.

I say all of this as background, because British Columbia's tax rate is in line with where the Prime Minister wants to take the other provinces on which he has imposed the carbon tax in the next several years.

What has that meant? British Columbia now pays \$1.79 a litre for gasoline. According to the records, this is the highest price per litre of gasoline ever recorded anywhere in North America. That is exactly what the Prime Minister wants.

Business of Supply

We see this reflected right across the country. Carbon taxes have raised prices already in Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta, New Brunswick and elsewhere. These higher gas prices are only the beginning. The Prime Minister has made it clear that they will have to go up, up and away. Canadians will be paying the same \$1.79 a litre right across Canada that British Columbia is experiencing right now.

• (1020)

That sounded wonderful to the Prime Minister in theory, but now, in practice, we see what it means. Single mothers who cannot afford to get to their jobs are going to struggle to feed their children. Seniors on fixed incomes who have to drive to get groceries are struggling to make ends meet. Small businesses, which enjoy no rebate of any kind for the carbon tax they pay, have no choice but to cut the wages or jobs of their workers. I had two of them in my office a couple of weeks ago. They lay foundations for homes. They said very clearly that they cannot pass the carbon tax cost along to their customers, because people cannot afford to pay more. Housing prices are too high already. These two gentlemen do not know what they are going to do. Right now, these two very middle-class guys are paying a heck of a lot more for a tax the Prime Minister has imposed here in Ontario.

Back to the British Columbian example, the Prime Minister claims that his tax will make Canadians better off, that somehow they will get more from paying the tax than it will cost them in the first place. He wants us to believe that if we give him our wallets, he will put more money back into it than we had before. When we ask where this has ever been done, he says, "In British Columbia". That is where the whole idea of the so-called revenue-neutral carbon tax was first invented. Now we know that this was a fraud. Subsequent studies have shown that British Columbians are now paying more in carbon taxes in B.C. than they are getting back in any other form of compensating rebate or tax relief. In fact, of all the jurisdictions that have introduced their own carbon tax in Canada, in all those cases, the government has won and the taxpayers have lost. That is true not only in British Columbia but in Alberta, formerly in Ontario, under the previous Wynne government, in Quebec and in any Atlantic province that has its own tax. In every single case, the government is taking more and the taxpayer is keeping less. These are not opinions; these are mathematical facts. The reason is that politicians are with money the way bears are with honey. Once they get their hands on it, they just cannot stop.

The Prime Minister's strategy is a good one. It is a good electoral strategy. He gives us a small cheque before the election and a massive bill after the election. He gives a few hundred dollars in enticements before people vote and many thousands of dollars in costs after they vote. We know this because the Prime Minister is running out of money. He has a \$20-billion deficit. The cost of government has risen by 25% in just over three years. There is no way he can keep paying the bills without collecting more taxes. Therefore, he will raise taxes. He will ensure that he collects more than taxpayers keep. However, he will do it after the election, when he no longer needs voters but still needs their money.

Another way he is costing British Columbians is by having blocked pipelines. Most of the gasoline British Columbians use

comes through the Trans Mountain pipeline, which was supposed to triple in capacity but for his bungling and obfuscation.

We will clear the way for pipelines. We will axe the carbon tax to make life more affordable, not just for British Columbians but for all Canadians, so that people not only get by but get ahead.

• (1025)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canadians have been waiting very patiently, for well over a year now, since the current leader indicated that he has a plan. The problem with his plan is that he does not want to share it or let Canadians know what the plan is. I suspect that he does not have a plan. The only thing we hear from the member opposite is that the plan is going to axe the price on pollution. That is the Conservative Party's plan to date.

There are four provinces this actually applies to. His whole speech was centred on the province of British Columbia, implying to the citizens of British Columbia that if the Conservatives win, they are going to get rid of the carbon tax. How is the Conservative Party going to get rid of a carbon tax in the province of British Columbia that is going to result in lowering the gas price? Can he give a specific answer as to what the Conservative Party is going to do for the residents of B.C.?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, yes, I can give that answer. Right now a coalition of the high-tax NDP premier of B.C. and the high-tax Liberal Prime Minister of Canada have imposed this joint carbon tax on British Columbians. British Columbians are making clear that they no longer want to pay this tax, but here is the bad news for now. Even if their provincial government were to flip-flop and eliminate or reduce the tax, the Prime Minister has passed a law allowing him to reimpose it. Right now British Columbians do not even have the freedom to get rid of the carbon tax until they get rid of the Prime Minister.

Our plan is to get rid of both.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and commend him for his ability to throw political darts at his opponents.

Business of Supply

However, I would like to ask him a much more serious question that goes beyond partisan games. According to the IPCC, we have 12 years. The planet has 12 years to see us dramatically reduce our greenhouse gas emissions; otherwise, global warming will exceed 2°C, 3°C or even 4°C. That will increase the number, intensity, frequency and scale of natural disasters and the damage they cause. It will cost Quebeckers and Canadians a fortune. We will see more and more droughts, forest fires, floods and hurricanes, which will hurt the economy. The cost of inaction on climate change will be much higher than the cost of taking action to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

How does the Conservative Party intend to reduce greenhouse gas emissions if it wants to increase oil and gas production? That does not make any sense.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, we will do it with technology, not with taxes.

Let me give the member an example of the Liberal Party's flawed logic. The carbon tax will be levied on CO₂ that a farmer in my riding emits to grow tomatoes, even though all that CO₂ is absorbed by the plant. That farmer is paying for CO₂ that will not even enter the atmosphere. As a result, Canadian tomatoes from my riding will be more expensive than Mexican tomatoes. Transporting tomatoes from Mexico to Canada will pump greenhouse gases into the atmosphere so Canadians can buy a Mexican tomato in Canada for less than they would pay for a tomato from my riding. That is bad for the economy and the environment.

That is just one example of how the carbon tax will harm the environment and the economy. We will replace it with technology.

• (1030)

[English]

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise this morning to call on the government to stop raising the price of gasoline by clearing the way for pipelines and eliminating the carbon tax on fuel.

The Liberal government has entirely missed the boat when it comes to fighting climate change. It talks a good game. It gloats about its environmental plan, but in truth, this is not an environmental plan; it is a tax plan. It is a punitive tax plan that is increasing the cost of living for every single Canadian, including driving already skyrocketing gas prices even higher.

It is a pointless tax. It is not changing Canadian habits and it will not impact climate change one bit. It is an unfair tax plan that targets rural Canadians disproportionately. Rural Canadians have no other choice but to use their vehicles to drive their kids to after-school programs, to go grocery shopping and to get to work so they can pay for increased heating and fuel costs while the big polluters get exemptions.

I will share a quick story from my own riding. It is a very rural riding, so we have a couple of options. When there is no natural gas, people will usually use propane or oil. If they are being forced, through the carbon tax, to pay increased costs for that and go to electricity, for those who have enough money to change over their furnaces and boilers into electric baseboard heating, here in Ontario

we have some of the highest electricity rates anywhere in North America, thanks to the failed policies of Dalton McGuinty and Kathleen Wynne. Either way, taxpayers in rural Canada are being punished because of these bad Liberal policies.

Instead of going after the big polluters, the Prime Minister has made rural Canadians his foil. Over the last two years, Conservatives have asked the government dozens of times how much it will cost a middle-class family in new taxes, and each time the Liberals have refused to tell Canadians. We are now getting the picture of this, and Canadians simply cannot afford it.

Several provinces have recognized the Liberals' tax scheme for what it was and prepared their own locally developed environmental plans, only to have the Prime Minister impose his tax anyway. Prince Edward Island had a plan. In fact, it demonstrated that its carbon emissions had already dropped by 14%, which is better than half of the Canadian provinces. The Prime Minister rejected that plan and imposed the tax anyway. Why? It is because P.E.I. said that it would meet its emissions reduction targets without a carbon tax.

The government cannot possibly start having rogue provinces showing it how to actually reduce carbon emissions without taxing Canadians to death. That does not meet with the Prime Minister's narrative. The idea that the carbon tax is revenue-neutral is laughable. Everyone knows what is going to happen when the Liberal government starts seeing new tax dollars coming in: The temptation to spend them on another pet project is just going to be too hard to resist.

The B.C. Liberal government, which brought in a provincial carbon tax in 2008, promised that every dollar raised would be returned to the people of B.C. in the form of lower taxes. For a short time, it appeared that it would be just so. However, former Liberal premier Christy Clark could not resist all that B.C. taxpayer largesse. The B.C. Liberal government began spending the money on, among other things, tax goodies to encourage filmmakers, filmmakers who, I am sure, fly in electric jets as they criss-cross the continent.

The current New Democrat premier, John Horgan, quashed the whole idea of a revenue-neutral carbon tax from the get-go, treating it as another source of government revenue to be spent on whatever priorities the government of the day deems necessary.

In Alberta, former NDP premier Rachel Notley promised revenue neutrality, but never delivered it. At least here in Ontario, former premier Kathleen Wynne never made any pretense of returning the tax and was rewarded by being fired by Ontarians for wasting billions of taxpayers' dollars and refusing to come clean with the cost of an unrealistic energy plan and a poorly considered carbon tax scheme.

Business of Supply

Make no mistake, Madam Speaker, this carbon tax ruse will raise the price of everything for Canadians. The Canadian Transportation Agency just raised the Prairie grain freight cost index, which represents hikes of 1.82% for CN and 3.7% for CP. The changes stem mainly from increases “in the fuel and material components”. Specifically, the CTA forecasts fuel price increases of 2.25% for CN and 2.79% for CP, taking into account increases in “fuel-related taxes”. I am sure the CTA made a mistake and actually meant to say, “fuel-related prices on pollution.” This increase in costs will be transferred to consumers on food, manufactured goods, fuel and anything transported by rail in this country. The cost of food at the local food truck is going up.

● (1035)

New Brunswick's Bangkok Food Truck manager, Adam O'Brien, says the federal carbon tax is already affecting the company's bottom line, and the burden of higher fuel prices and food costs will be passed on to consumers. O'Brien said it is unfortunate that customers will bear the brunt of higher food and fuel costs, but someone has to eat, no pun intended, that extra cost. “We don't want to raise the prices,” he said. “We don't want to do that, but unfortunately, dollars and cents, we have to make a profit, so we can keep our staff employed.” O'Brien expects each plate of food to increase by between \$1 and \$1.50. This is happening to chip trucks all across the country.

In Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, the Prime Minister's carbon tax is being felt in education budgets. In its recent budget deliberations, the Greater Saskatoon Catholic school board is estimating a \$200,000 hit to its budget because of the carbon tax. Saskatchewan's education minister said that the province had to introduce \$14.5 million in inflationary funding for school divisions for this exact reason. Once again, taxpayers are on the hook to ensure that their kids can get to school and that they will be warm once they get there.

Despite B.C. having the highest carbon tax in Canada, emissions have continued to rise in British Columbia. As a result, British Columbians now pay more for gas than anyone else in North America. B.C.'s carbon tax is not helping the environment, either; it is just costing people more to get to work and to take their kids to hockey and soccer practice. At least they have the fitness tax credit to ease this; oh wait, the Liberals cancelled that too.

With gas breaching \$1.70 per litre, it is not hitting just the wallets of average Canadians, but local government fleets of vehicles as well. Engineering, sanitation and parks departments, ambulances, fire trucks and police cars are costing cities and towns more money, which means they are costing taxpayers more money. The City of Surrey anticipates that taxpayers could be on the hook for an additional \$150,000 to \$180,000 to fuel its fleet in 2019, compared to 2018. A Metro spokesperson said that if gas prices stay at \$1.68 a litre, taxpayers will contribute about \$200,000 more to fuel its fleet in 2019. BC Ferries, which Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands residents depend on for access to hospitals, food and pretty much everything, spent just over \$100 million on fuel in fiscal year 2018 and can simply pass along tax increases to its customers via fuel surcharges.

The Prime Minister and his Liberal government have further exacerbated the situation as anxiety continues to mount between

Alberta and B.C. over the Trans Mountain pipeline. Alberta's premier, Jason Kenney, proclaimed legislation that would allow his province to turn off the taps on gas shipments to British Columbia. Alberta supplies as much as 80% of B.C.'s domestic fuel needs. Demand for fuel is high in British Columbia, and supply is limited because of the region's limited pipeline and refining capacity, issues that could be resolved by building the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, and yet the Prime Minister continues to delay any announcement on exactly when shovels will finally get in the ground on a pipeline approved years ago.

The B.C. NDP has stated that high gas prices can be resolved by having more refining capacity to meet demand. I am not sure who would actually invest billions of dollars to build refineries in B.C. when its government will not allow crude oil to be transported through its province. This sounds like the perfect investment for the current Liberal government. The truth is that none of this would be an issue today if the Trans Mountain pipeline were being built by the private sector. Private sector investment for refineries would be there and not fleeing to the United States, if it were not for the current Liberal government. Canadian taxpayers would not own a \$5 billion-plus pipeline to nowhere.

If the government would simply recognize, as province after province in this country has recognized, that its carbon tax is a tax and not a plan, it could provide real relief to Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

● (1040)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the independent office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer has been very clear on the issue of what is going to happen with the price on pollution, particularly in the four provinces where it is being put into place. In fact, this independent office has made it very clear that 80% of people, and I would suggest it could be even higher for the residents I represent, will actually see a net gain because of the climate action incentive.

The Conservatives have no plan whatsoever to deal with climate change and have not shared that with Canadians. The Conservatives attack the current plan, which is going to have a real, tangible, positive impact for Canada's environment, and they say they would get rid of it. Does the member realize that a vast majority of the constituents I represent actually get a net financial benefit? Is he telling the people in Winnipeg North and in regions all across the country that the individuals who were getting that incentive would have it taken away by a Conservative government?

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to respond to my friend.

Business of Supply

I have a couple of things to say. First, it is Canadian taxpayers' money. The fact that the government is going to take it from them and redistribute it on a program it believes will actually change the climate is absolutely ridiculous. The Liberals have a tax plan, not an environmental plan. That is point number one.

Second, we have unveiled different parts of our environmental plan, and more will be coming. What we will be doing is showing leadership that will show actual, concrete and tangible results to help the environment, including not allowing raw sewage to be dumped into our lakes and rivers by municipalities.

I will also talk about a local issue in my region. The Lake Simcoe cleanup fund, which the Liberals cancelled, actually saw federal dollars given to local decision-makers to fix the Lake Simcoe local problem. This is something the Liberals cancelled when it had tangible results. We were seeing results in water quality and shoreline improvements. The Liberals took it away and replaced it with a tax plan, not an environmental plan.

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Madam Speaker, at times the truth can be a little elusive within these hallowed halls. I just want to set the record straight for British Columbia and then ask the hon. member a question.

British Columbia has had a carbon tax in place since 2008. I live in British Columbia. In 2007, we received a cheque from the government. In 2008, the carbon tax kicked in under a Liberal government. By the way, many B.C. Liberals are card-carrying Conservatives federally; I just want to make that very clear. It was brought in by the Liberal government at the time.

For the last 11 years, British Columbia has had one of the strongest economies in Canada. I am vice-chair of the environment committee. We were studying climate change, and we had a number of witnesses come forward. These independent witnesses verified that having a carbon tax in place in British Columbia did reduce GHG emissions.

Could my hon. friend explain the fact that British Columbia has had a carbon tax for 11 years and the sky has not fallen and the economy has done very well? Where is your climate change plan?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member that he is to address the questions to the Chair and not the individual member.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question from my friend.

I would show the hon. member the Sierra Club BC website, which I am looking at right now. It actually shows that emissions have gone up, despite the carbon tax. I would also say that paying \$1.80 per litre for gas, for people trying to get to work or take their kids where they want to go, is not an actual plan. Punishing people without options is not a plan. In rural areas, people do not have a variety of options.

I will tell my friend from the Liberal Party how we are going to get there. We are going to do that by incentivizing the private sector to do what it does best, and that is coming up with the newest and greatest products in an open, competitive market that allows companies to compete for the best product, the best service and

the best price, giving consumers a variety of choices based on market demands to choose what they feel best suits their lives.

As the market grows toward more environmentally friendly products, vehicles and such, people will make that decision based on a variety of options. That is done by having lower taxes, less government and reasonable rules, regulations and red tape.

• (1045)

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the Conservative opposition for giving me and other members the opportunity to highlight the two different approaches that are before Canadians, between the Liberal government and the Conservative opposition.

There are two different opportunities for the future. One is from the opposition where the government would take a step back, leaving Canadians without a real plan to deal with climate change or the rising cost of living. The second opportunity is where the government would take a step up, becoming a leader in both supporting affordability for the middle class and protecting our environment.

As members have heard today and in the last couple of months, Conservatives want to make pollution free again and make life less affordable for Canadians. They want to take money away from their constituents. However, we are fighting climate change and making life more affordable for Canadians.

I want to be clear that affordability is at the forefront of everything that our government does and has done, from the middle-class tax cut to the Canada child benefit, to the CPP expansion and new benefits for seniors and working Canadians. Our focus is always on creating more jobs and helping Canadians save and spend on the things they care about.

The motion put forward today shows us that the opposition does not care about our environment and has no plan to confront the very real dangers that climate change poses to Canadians' future, nor do they want to show any attention to middle-class Canadians, just like they failed to do during the decade they were in power. Instead, they want to block the plan that our government has put together, which is a plan that will protect Canadians, our economy and future generations.

Where the opposition's motion is blind to the effects of climate change, we are not, and Canadians definitely are not, because they see these effects every day. They see them when extreme weather events threaten their safety or their family's safety and when their business or livelihoods are at stake. We just have to look at what happened this past week in Ontario and Quebec where flooding has forced people from their homes and businesses.

Business of Supply

Canadians are already paying the high price of pollution in structural repairs, lower property values and insurance premiums, not to mention the cost in emergency services. In fact, climate change is expected to cost Canada's economy \$5 billion every year by 2020. We do not think that Canadians should be faced with these costs. However, we cannot wait. It has been over a year since the party opposite promised a climate plan, which they still have not delivered, yet it is now that we need action.

Our plan to put a price on pollution and give the money back to Canadians is based on scientific consensus and the advice of Nobel Prize-winning economists. It is based on an agreement with our international partners and years of co-operation in building the foundations for an effective and coordinated global approach to stopping climate change before it is too late.

There is consensus that carbon pollution pricing is the most effective and economically efficient way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with climate change. It is why many provinces and territories have already implemented or are on track to implement a carbon pollution pricing system. However, in communities that do not have a system that meets the federal standard, we are not turning our backs on those Canadians. We are discouraging pollution in the place they call home and reinvesting all the money collected back into their province. Canadians can then use this money to make cleaner and more environmentally sustainable spending choices.

As we have been saying from the very beginning, this is not just the right thing to do for our future, but it is the right thing to do for our economy. Our plan is not just the right thing for the future for the environment, but as was so eloquently mentioned by my NDP colleague from British Columbia, in the provinces that have had a price on pollution for some time now—in the case of B.C. since 2008 and Quebec since 2013—those economies have been growing steadily. Life has not been made less affordable because of it. Under the federal backstop, I would argue it makes life even more affordable for 80% of Canadians, as the PBO has reported, and it also helps to fight climate change.

Putting a price on carbon pollution signals to big business that it is time to innovate. It is time to invest in clean technologies and long-term growth opportunities that will pay off. As more and more countries realize that climate change is real, man-made and is happening now, we want them to turn to Canada to find the tools, the talent and the ideas they need to transform their own economies.

● (1050)

Already the global market for low-carbon goods and services is estimated to be worth \$5.8 trillion. That is a lot of potential for Canada, but only if we can help businesses to make the smart investments now. For Canadians, we are taking the same approach. We are giving every dollar collected through the price on pollution back to Canadians, encouraging them to use that money to make more sustainable purchases.

Middle-class Canadians will get more money back through the climate action incentive rebate each year than they would ever have to pay. This is something that the Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed in his latest report, as I have mentioned.

Rather than telling Canadians how to spend their money to reduce emissions, the carbon price allows them to make those decisions in a manner that best suits their needs. That will lead to more demand for sustainable alternatives, turning into even more profits and incentives for companies and entrepreneurs developing new ways to produce goods or provide services at reduced emissions. Helping Canadian businesses stay competitive has always been in mind when we designed our plan to fight climate change.

It is why in provinces that do not have their own plan for reducing carbon pollution, we are giving a portion of the funds raised to businesses. That is on top of the steps we have already taken to reduce the small business tax rate and help businesses of all sizes write off capital investments faster.

[*Translation*]

When we took office, it was our firm intention to help hard-working Canadians tap the benefits of a strong and growing economy. That is exactly what we have done. For a decade, this country's prosperity was not inclusive, but now it is.

We asked the wealthiest 1% of Canadians to pay a little more so that we could give the middle class a tax break. That tax break is helping over nine million Canadians.

We created the Canada child benefit. This summer, it will be indexed two years ahead of schedule, as it was last summer. Compared to the previous child benefit, this one is simpler and more generous and targets the families that need it most. Unlike the former child benefit, this new benefit is tax-free.

With the Canada child benefit, nine out of 10 Canadian families are getting more in benefits than they did under the previous system, and Canadian children are better off as a result. The Canada child benefit has helped lift hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty. A few weeks ago, Statistics Canada reported that, under our watch, overall poverty in this country has been reduced by 20%, and child poverty is down nearly 40%. All Canadians should be proud of that. It certainly would not have happened if the Stephen Harper government were still in power in this country. Reducing inequality was not particularly high on its list of priorities.

The additional support provided by the Canada child benefit is making a big difference for those working hard to make ends meet. This additional support helps pay for the things that can make a real difference in a child's future, like nutritious food, sports activities or lessons.

Yesterday we announced that we are increasing the Canada child benefit for the second time as of July 20, putting more money in the pockets of middle-class families.

Business of Supply

Thanks to the tax cut and the Canada child benefit, a typical family of four receives, on average, around \$2,000 more a year, according to the OECD. That money helps families provide for their children, save for the future, and grow our economy, which benefits everyone. These two measures help families across the country. A couple with two children and two incomes—one an average salary and the other two thirds of that salary—now gets to keep nearly 85% of their gross income. For a single mother or father earning an average income with two kids, or for families with two children where only one parent earns an average income, the benefits are even greater. These families pay an effective tax rate lower than 2%. That is how it should be. In other words, these families get to keep 98% of what they earn.

For Canadians working hard to join the middle class, we also replaced the working income tax benefit with the Canada worker benefit, which is more generous. The Canada worker benefit puts more money in the pockets of low-income workers by encouraging more people to enter the workforce and stay there, since it provides real help to more than two million workers across the country.

In addition to being more generous, the Canada worker benefit will be more accessible than the program it replaces, since the Canada Revenue Agency will be able to calculate the Canada worker benefit for anyone who did not apply for it in their tax return. Canadians will start receiving improved benefits under the new Canada worker benefit in early 2020, when they file their 2019 tax return.

• (1055)

That is what we have done for Canadians just through the tax system. We have also done much more to help Canadians keep more money in their pockets and especially to reduce inequality across the country, with the results we have seen.

[*English*]

We know, for example, that buying a house or a condo is probably the most important investment that most Canadians will make in their lifetime. Aside from the fiscal plan that we have put forward, this is where we have come a long way in helping Canadians who need it most. Unfortunately, for too many hard-working Canadians, especially young people, the current market makes them feel like home ownership is beyond their reach, especially in larger cities.

To help, budget 2019 builds on our national housing strategy with new actions to improve housing affordability, especially for first-time homebuyers. To start, we are creating the first-time homebuyer incentive to give first-time homebuyers greater flexibility, both in purchasing a home and in managing its ongoing costs. It would allow eligible first-time homebuyers to finance a portion of their home through a shared equity mortgage with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, CMHC. With a shared equity mortgage, first-time homebuyers would save money every month, leaving them with more money to pay down their traditional mortgage sooner or to spend on other priorities. All told, the first-time homebuyer incentive will help make the dream of owning a home a reality for many more Canadians and make the overall experience easier on the pocket-book.

Budget 2019 also plans to provide first-time homebuyers with greater access to their RRSP savings to buy a home, raising the

withdrawal limit from \$25,000 to \$35,000, all while increasing housing supply by making significant investments in building and repairing homes across the country.

Our efforts to help Canadians with the cost of living do not stop there. As with housing, we know that the price of electricity is leaving less and less money in people's pockets. We see rates rising, outpacing salary increases, making it more and more difficult for many to make ends meet.

Our government believes that more needs to be done and can be done to make sure that hard-working families can afford their monthly electricity bills. That is why budget 2019 proposes to invest \$1 billion to increase energy efficiency in residential, commercial and multi-unit buildings. This support would go a long way to making Canada's homes and buildings more energy efficient, which will help reduce Canadians' electricity bills, whether they are homeowners, renters or building operators. It is the sort of investment that pays dividends today and for the long term. Like carbon pollution pricing, these measures are the right thing to do for Canadians and for our economy. Even when you do not take into account all the benefits of a greener Canada, like healthier communities, better technology and protected wildlife, the economic benefits are expected to be significant.

The opposition would prefer to ignore the pollution problem and hope that it goes away. Canadians know where that approach leads, and they know that we do not have a choice at this point. We cannot ignore the problem anymore. We can pretend that pollution is free and climate change poses no threat to our health, our communities and our economy. However, we must face the problem in a way that not only creates a positive impact, but also creates jobs and grows the economy.

During the last election, Canadians chose between the Conservative plan for austerity and cuts, and the NDP's plan which would hurt business growth. Our government came with a plan that can invest in the middle class, create jobs and build an economy that works for everyone. The results are quite telling. With a strong and growing economy, middle-class Canadians are seeing first-hand that our plan is working. Canadians have created hundreds of thousands of new jobs, pushing unemployment to 40-year lows and giving Canada one of the strongest records of economic growth in the G7.

Business of Supply

Middle- and low-income Canadians have significantly more support. As I have mentioned, according to the OECD, a typical family of four is \$2,000 better off today than they were four years ago under Stephen Harper's Conservatives. There are 825,000 Canadians who have been lifted out of poverty by things like the Canada child benefit. That is a 20% reduction in poverty in Canada in a short three and a half years. Nearly 900,000 low-income seniors have received more from the guaranteed income supplement. One of the first things we did when we took power was to increase by 10% the guaranteed income supplement for low-income and vulnerable seniors. More than two million working Canadians will benefit from the new Canada workers benefit.

During their mandate for the country, the Harper Conservatives ignored the needs of the middle class, and failed to fight inequalities, failed to fight climate change.

● (1100)

Today, more Canadians are working, families have more money in their pockets, and we are doing our part to fight climate change and protect the environment, so I call on all members in today's debate to join Canadians, make the right choice and reject today's motion.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to hear the member's response to the response from the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to a question I posed from a home builder in my riding, who indicated to me that because of the carbon tax, the cost of his product—homes—was going to go up significantly in our province and make it harder for young people to purchase a home.

The minister's response to me was that business was very much on board with the government's plan. She quoted a company named Vari-Form, which had reduced its carbon footprint by 80% on its own initiative and increased its bottom line by \$1 million, giving this as evidence that the plan was working. However, what she failed to mention was that this took place in 2014, under the previous Harper government, so I would like to know why the Liberals see the carbon tax as so crucial.

Clearly she was very proud of the efforts of this particular business. I can assure the member that there are many more that are innovative and working hard to take care of our climate as they produce products in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that in spite of the previous Conservative government's total unwillingness to do anything to protect the environment or tackle climate change for a decade, there are Canadians and businesses across the country that have taken advantage of opportunities and decided to innovate and reduce their environmental footprint. Even if the federal government did not show leadership, the provincial governments did and the private sector most definitely did.

Putting a price on carbon has been found to foster growth. That is also what we heard from experts in committee, the Parliamentary Budget Officer and the media. Carbon pricing had a positive impact not just on the environment, but also on the economy, particularly in British Columbia and Quebec, where it has performed very well. It also encourages entrepreneurs to innovate.

That is why it is hard to understand the Conservatives' stubborn refusal to face the facts while major corporations and business associations across the country support this price on pollution.

[*English*]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I must say I am a little dismayed here today with yet another debate in which the Liberals and Conservatives are trying to outdo each other with respect to how fast they can build pipelines or make it easier to burn gasoline when we have had year after year of forest fires and floods in my riding and throughout British Columbia and floods for the third year running in eastern Canada. Canadians want a really bold plan to allow us to meet our Paris targets and meet meaningful targets, yet we are just spinning our wheels here.

Last year I was down in Argentina with the Minister of Natural Resources at the G20 energy meeting, which was all about the grand transition to a low-carbon future. What did he report to the world? It was that we bought a pipeline for \$4.5 billion and we wanted to sell fossil fuels to China. Every other country there had a bold plan to make this transition, and we did not.

I want to ask the parliamentary secretary this. Why does his government continue to give billions of dollars in subsidies to the fossil fuel industry when we clearly need to move in the other direction?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. It is refreshing, compared to the Conservative Party motion before us today. The Conservatives are really sticking their heads in the sand when it comes to combatting climate change. I commend the NDP for its work on these issues. I think the New Democrats are on the right side of history here, unlike the Conservatives.

In response to my colleague's question, I would say that we have to look at the government's actions overall. No federal government has ever been as ambitious and had such political will to combat climate change as this government. I agree with my colleague; it is mind-boggling that in 2019 we are debating a motion like this in the House of Commons and that the Conservatives are so stubbornly refusing to put a price on pollution, which is a good, effective measure that is good for the environment and the economy.

We have started to reduce tax credit support for the fossil fuel sector. This is being done gradually, as is the case for any transition.

Business of Supply

• (1105)

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I do not agree with my colleague's claim that the Liberals have started to reduce their support for fossil fuels. In the last year they handed out \$19 billion in support to the oil industry, by offering tax credits, buying a pipeline and renovating pipelines. That claim could not be further from the truth.

Meanwhile, as the media have reported, Dominic Champagne and some 60 organizations are urging the government to take action, proposing a green new deal. They are proposing strong measures to transform our economy and make the green shift.

Is this government prepared to adopt the green new deal? The first step would be to cancel the announcement of \$19 billion in support for Canada's oil industry.

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Madam Speaker, I would like to clarify a few things.

In budget 2016, we announced the expiration of the accelerated capital cost allowance for liquefied natural gas facilities. In budget 2017, we announced the elimination of certain tax credits related to exploration expenses in the oil and natural gas sector. Together with our G20 partners, we committed to phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies by 2025. That commitment stands.

I fully agree with the member that we have a lot of work to do on the environment front. I will always be an advocate for that in government. Our actions matter.

I have heard people such as Équiterre's Steven Guilbeault and Sidney Ribaux say that if we look at what government as a whole is doing, it is clear that no other federal government has ever been this ambitious or had as much will to fight climate change as our government. One look at the Conservative Party and Conservative leaders across the country, who are completely out of touch with reality, proves that the work we are doing, though not easy, is important.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, my riding is a very rural riding. At this time of year, farmers are beginning to plant new crops. Hopefully they have nothing to say about the weather and the rain, but they are very conscious of the input costs that they have to deal with, such as the cost of fertilizer and the cost of seed. This year farmers in my riding are talking about the cost of fuel, which is a massive issue to them, but it does not really stop there.

A number of individuals have referred to other countries around the world and the taxes they put in place to curtail the use of fossil fuels, but many of these countries have a small land mass. I look at Germany as an example. Some provinces in Canada are larger in area than Germany, although it has 80 million people. It is not just the planting of the crop that is of concern to farmers; the cost of transporting grain, of transporting the harvest, is also a concern.

What is my colleague's answer to this massive increase in transportation costs? Farmers need to get food products to cities and across this large country, so what is the government's answer to the high cost that farmers are expecting?

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Madam Speaker, the hon. member was so elaborate I thought he was starting a speech. I missed part of his question. I apologize for that. It was not intentional.

The hon. member talked about the cost of living in Canada. I would say to him that there has never been a government that has done more to reduce inequalities, unlike the Stephen Harper government.

As I said in my speech, according to the OECD, a typical family of four in Canada has \$2,000 more in their pockets than they did under the previous government. While the Conservatives gave handouts to the wealthy, we chose a different approach. They doubled the TFSA limit, sent cheques to millionaire families, and voted against raising taxes on the wealthiest 1%. That was their focus. I am not sure what they will campaign on in the upcoming election, but their 10 years in power were disastrous when it comes to reducing inequalities and helping the middle class in Canada.

• (1110)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I wish to inform you that I will be sharing my time with my distinguished colleague, the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to the official opposition motion. It saddens me that the Conservative Party has this tendency to try to politicize the debate and play partisan games with an issue as important as our collective ability to take responsibility and fight climate change and rising global temperatures.

Unfortunately, it looks like the debate may turn into a battle between the Liberal government and the Conservative opposition. They have blinders on that keep them focused on a single issue. They are either for or against pollution pricing, which the Conservative opposition calls a carbon tax and the Liberal government calls putting a price on pollution.

We in the NDP have a much more holistic, comprehensive and broader vision of all the actions that need to be taken to successfully tackle the challenge that our generation and we, as politicians, are now facing.

I think the amount of populist rhetoric and demagoguery surrounding pollution pricing is unfortunate. The NDP thinks pollution pricing is a valid yet inadequate tool, because it is too little, too late.

The Liberal government has dragged its feet for the past three and a half years and has an utterly pitiful record. Now the debate is turning into a clash between the two main political parties, exclusively centred on pollution pricing, taxes, costs and so on, even though there are many other things that could and should be done. The progressive and environmentally conscious NDP is going to expand the debate. We are going to open up new horizons and examine the full suite of measures that must be taken to effect real change.

Business of Supply

Putting a price on pollution is obviously a good idea. Pollution should never be free, but will this measure be enough to help us meet our national emissions reduction targets? The answer is obviously no, it is not enough. The clock is ticking and we must act now. We are missing our targets. We are betraying our children and grandchildren, leaving them a planet that will be much warmer. A warmer planet has serious consequences on ecosystems and also experiences more natural disasters. I will talk more about this later.

This Liberal government's failures are overwhelming. The Liberals are great at breaking out the violins and delivering beautiful, teary-eyed speeches about future generations and our responsibility to the future of the planet and life on Earth, but then they turn around and do the complete opposite, making things worse and setting us back. This Liberal government is missing the Conservatives' greenhouse gas reduction targets. It's unbelievable.

With each passing year, we are falling further and further behind. In December 2017, Environment Canada said that we were going to miss our 2030 greenhouse gas reduction targets by 66 megatonnes. In December 2018, the same department confirmed that we are going to miss those targets by 79 megatonnes. In other words, this Liberal government is not even capable of meeting the Harper government's greenhouse gas reduction targets. That is nothing to be proud of or brag about.

That is not even the worst of it. The icing on the cake came when the government bought a pipeline. The Liberals never mentioned during the 2015 election campaign that they were going to use public money to buy a pipeline that was so risky that even private investors did not want it. The Liberals are shifting the risk onto all Canadians in order to increase, to triple even, production of the dirtiest oil in the world.

• (1115)

How are we supposed to reconcile that with speech-making about being responsible, taking care of the planet and meeting our Paris commitments to limit global warming to 1.5°C? It is completely hypocritical. The Liberals are literally saying one thing and doing the opposite.

The NDP does not accept that. We will keep reminding the government about it in the months leading up to the next election. We paid \$4.5 billion to buy a 65-year-old leaky pipeline, and we will put another \$9.7 billion into its expansion; these are huge sums of money. Despite the opposition of British Columbia, indigenous communities, environmentalists and community groups, they want to force the pipeline down people's throats. About \$15 billion in taxpayers' money, our money, will be invested in yesterday's energy, which is not going to stand the test of time. Even from an economic and financial point of view, it is a bad investment. Massive investments are being made in renewable energy by countries around the world, whether it is the United States, in spite of Trump, China or Europe. We are behind the times. We should be investing this \$15 billion in good jobs for Canadians. We should be able to harness geothermal energy, tidal power, wind power and solar power. Instead the government used taxpayers' money to buy a pipeline. It was not even debated for one minute in Parliament and the House. The Minister of Finance issued an order in council, spent \$4.5 billion and that was that, no problem.

When global demand for oil plummets, which is inevitable given the massive investments the rest of the world is making in renewable energy, investors will not be interested in the oil that costs the most to produce. That is what the Liberal government did with the Trans Mountain pipeline. In 20, 25 or 30 years, investors will stop buying oil because it will be too expensive. Saudi Arabian and Venezuelan oil will be much cheaper for those who still want to use this energy source.

We have a responsibility. That is what our children are telling us. Young people have taken an extraordinary stand. Unfortunately, the Liberal government is not listening to them. It is doing the opposite of what our children and grandchildren are asking it to do.

In March, the whole world took a stand. Millions of people in hundreds of cities around the world participated in a march to call for an emergency plan to deal with climate change. As a member from Montreal, I am proud to say that the biggest demonstration took place in Montreal, where 150,000 people took to the streets. High school, CEGEP and university students marched to tell us that we are not doing enough and that they are the ones who are going to have to live with the consequences. Meanwhile, the Liberal government has been all talk. Its track record is an absolute disaster. Greenhouse gas emissions have increased every year since the Liberal government took office. The Liberals took three and a half years to put a price on pollution and then used taxpayers' money to buy a pipeline.

Urgent action is needed. The IPCC report has told us so. We have maybe 11 and a half or 12 years to rethink our economy and the way we consume energy, the way we produce goods, the way we use the things we buy, the way we travel and the way we build and heat our homes.

That is why the NDP will have a big-picture vision for all actionable sectors. We need to invest in renewable energy, public transit and transportation electrification for zero-emission vehicles, rethink our buildings and create sustainable buildings that are made of reusable construction materials and will have a long useful life.

We need to act on that big-picture vision, a comprehensive vision that will enable us to overcome this challenge. Unfortunately, neither the Liberal government nor the Conservative official opposition has a concrete, achievable plan that will meet the challenges of global climate change.

• (1120)

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, again, I thank the new member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

Business of Supply

I disagree with most of what he said, but he did make one extremely important point: the Liberals say one thing and do another. The Liberals got themselves elected because they promised people the moon, but as it turns out, they do not keep their promises. We saw that yesterday in British Columbia. The public wants frank and honest opinions, not flip-floppers who change their mind like they change their shirts.

All the same, I would like my colleague to clarify a few things. He said that greenhouse gas emissions have gone up over the past three years on the Liberals' watch. Would he tell us more about that?

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. I also thank him for his honesty. At least we know where the Conservatives stand. For them, there is no problem. They want to foster the oil and gas sector and invest in it. They are open to the idea of running the energy east pipeline through Quebec.

The NDP does not support that. However, the hon. member is right when he says that the Liberals' record of the past three years is absolutely atrocious. The Liberals do not keep their promises. Even the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development said in her last report before she retired that she was particularly concerned about the Liberal government's inaction and inadequate measures. We need drastic action to turn things around and the Liberal Party cannot get us there. People cannot trust the Liberal Party; it campaigned on one thing and did another when it got to power.

I think we can put a price on pollution. Quebec did it, and British Columbia did it a long time ago. It works, it is going well, but it is not enough to help us fulfill our responsibilities and meet our international commitments. The NDP will remind voters of that in the coming months.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I disagree with the member opposite, to no one's surprise, no doubt.

This is a government that has developed a national program for a price on pollution. All signs indicate that the Conservatives, the official opposition, are resisting it at all costs. We heard earlier from the member who introduced the motion that they not only want to get rid of it at the national level but that they are going to do whatever they can to get rid of it at the provincial level.

We have a national government that has done more in recognizing the importance of a price on pollution than any national government in decades. We have the Conservative Party saying that we are going too far and the NDP saying that we are not going far enough.

I believe that this government is listening to what Canadians want and expect of the government, and that is the reason we continue to push on the need for a national price on pollution.

Will the member opposite at the very least recognize that it is important to have a national government that continues to fight for a national price on pollution from coast to coast? This is something I believe Canadians want to see.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, the Liberal government's plan is not working at all. Not only did the Liberals drag their feet for three and a half years before putting a price on pollution and not only did they use billions of dollars of taxpayers' money to buy a pipeline, but they also gave Loblaw's \$12 million to buy fridges as part of their fantastic plan. Wow. A company that made \$1 billion in profit last year and hid \$400 million in tax havens is getting gifts from the Liberal government. I think Canadians will be wondering whether the Liberal government's plan was to use taxpayers' money to buy new fridges for billionaires who need no help from the government.

What could the government have done with that \$12 million? It could have funded a lot of worthwhile local projects, whether in my riding, in Montreal, or in Quebec. However, the Liberals would rather buy fridges for billionaires. That is the Liberal government's plan and it is shameful.

• (1125)

[English]

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, who is very clear and definitive on this point. What really troubles me is the change in language by the Liberals. It is no longer "put a price on carbon"; it is "put a price on pollution". Guess what. Two years ago, the environment committee finished a study on the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. That is the act that regulates toxins. The Liberals have done absolutely nothing with that report.

One of the reasons Alberta shut down those coal plants sooner was because of the health impacts. There are lots of reasons we need to reduce the use of fossil fuels and the production of electricity with fossil fuels, one of which is that they have major health impacts.

I wonder if the member would like to speak to that.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her excellent question and for her well-established expertise on environmental matters.

The Liberal government did indeed drag its feet on all kinds of issues connected to the environment and health. This is why there is yet to be a review of the Hazardous Products Act. This is why products like Roundup, which contains glyphosate and is banned in most countries around the world, is still available on our shelves. Here, in Canada, it is still allowed. This product has health impacts because it can cause cancer.

I think several aspects of the Liberals' environmental record are shameful, and we have not even spoken about biodiversity or the increase in natural disasters, which have an impact on people's lives. I am talking about forest fires and floods, like we saw recently in Quebec. Things could get worse, and the Liberal government shares some responsibility in that.

Business of Supply

[English]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the House of Commons.

For Canadians who do not understand how the process works, we allow opposition parties to propose a few motions per year. The motion from the Conservatives today asks the government “to stop raising the price of gas by clearing the way for pipelines and eliminating the carbon tax on fuel.” This is weak sauce, as we say in politics, simply because while the Conservatives claim to Canadians that they understand how the oil and gas industry works and how the price at the pump works, they put forward motions like this that clearly show their unwillingness to think about the issue fully.

I will give members one example. In 2006, the NDP, then in opposition, asked the then Conservative government to establish a gas ombudsman, someone who would look at the price of gas at gas stations across the country. We have all had the experience that just prior to a long weekend or a significant date, suddenly the price at the gas pump accelerates dramatically. We told the then Conservative government to be consumer friendly and look at how the agencies were sometimes colluding and at how the stop in production at various times throughout the year caused prices to spike, which was fortuitous for the gas companies but a great disadvantage for working-class Canadians.

During their 10 years in office, the Conservatives were not preoccupied or at all concerned about the price at the pump. Now they see a political opportunity to bash away at the current government, which has lost a great deal of credibility as climate champions. I do not think anyone believes the Prime Minister anymore, even if he puts his hand on his heart, that the Liberals truly believe in fighting climate change, because actions speak much louder than words.

It is important to start where the Conservatives and the Liberals have common ground on this issue, because there is actually more common ground than I think Canadians realize.

The Conservatives and the Liberals both believe in Stephen Harper's climate targets. The Conservatives brought them in, and the Liberals are maintaining them as the targets for Canada through the Paris Agreement. As the Auditor General and the commissioner of the environment have pointed out, the Liberals are failing to meet even the Stephen Harper climate targets. In fact, just last year, our carbon footprint went up by 12 million tonnes under the government.

The Liberals keep claiming that they are fighting climate change and are doing all these great things, but the evidence shows that not only is the curve not bending down, it is continuing to turn up. Liberals say do not worry, we will get there.

Another point of agreement is oil and gas subsidies. As members know, again according to the Auditor General's reports, we give the oil and gas industry about \$1 billion to \$2 billion, depending on the year, in direct subsidies. A lot of Canadians ask why that is. In times of profitability, which is most of the time, this sector makes a lot of money. Why are we subsidizing it?

That is a good question. When Stephen Harper was prime minister, he told the OECD, with hand on heart, that Canada would

get rid of them as a country by a particular date. He then did nothing about it.

In the last election, the Liberal Prime Minister told Canadians not to vote for the Conservatives, because they do not believe in climate change. He told Canadians that the Liberals did believe in it and would get rid of subsidies to the oil and gas sector. It is three and half years later. We just saw the last federal Liberal budget, and the oil and gas subsidies remain. The Conservatives and the Liberals are in total agreement.

We asked the federal government, given how much it is spending on subsidizing the oil and gas sector, how much it is spending on the so-called alternatives, which are increasingly cost-efficient, such as wind energy, solar energy, tidal energy and geothermal energy. For three years I have been asking the government for the numbers. What is it spending and encouraging on that side of the ledger? We know what it is spending on oil and gas, but what is it spending on the alternatives. The government will not tell us, and I suspect that the number is not very good.

The last important point for today on which the Liberals and the Conservatives agree is on the expansion of the pipeline sector in Canada for the export of diluted bitumen, particularly with the hope that it will move to Asia.

We export diluted bitumen off the west coast of British Columbia right now. One may think that the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion was for opening up the Asian market, because we cannot get any oil to the coast. We do get oil to the coast. About 330,000 barrels of oil will go there today. People might think that Asia is grabbing up that oil, thereby increasing the price for all Canadian producers and bringing in more tax. That is not the case. Where does all that oil go?

● (1130)

It goes to the United States. Virtually 95% of the diluted bitumen that hits the west coast goes to the United States. Clearly, expanding that is going to solve, exactly what problem?

Not only are the Liberals and Conservatives in violent agreement on the issue of expanding diluted bitumen exports, which is the lowest, rawest form of oil, the least valued form of oil that we can get for the Canadian economy because it produces the fewest jobs—there is no valued added whatsoever—but the Liberals went out and bought a 65-year-old pipeline for the golden price of \$4.5 billion of our money. I love when Liberals say that it is turning a profit, without doing the full accounting of the pipeline. I love that they do not include any of the risk factors that normal business people who do things like accounting normally would.

The Liberals bought a 65-year-old pipeline with the plan to spend another \$10 billion to \$15 billion. It is such a great pipeline that no one else wanted to buy it. There was not a single oil and gas company anywhere on the planet, not the Americans, Chinese, Brits or the Dutch, that wanted it. It was such a fantastic deal.

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Can members imagine wanting to sell their old used car? There is simply no one who wants to buy it except the Canadian government, which says that it got a deal. The beat-up old wreck is one of the best ever, and it is going to keep pouring more money into it.

Imagine that the Liberal government is in the rental movie industry and saying it is going to have better DVDs. Never mind Netflix, it is going to get better signage for its Blockbuster outlets. The Liberals say, "Trust us. This is how it is going to go. We are going to spend your money wisely."

On all of these things, the Liberals and Conservatives agree. In fact, they have the same targets. They believe in subsidizing the oil and gas sector consistently. They want to increase diluted bitumen to the coast at great cost to our climate. They talk about a carbon price, which is an element of a plan, but it is not a plan in and of itself. We know about this in British Columbia. The B.C. government, back in the Gordon Campbell days, did not just bring in a price on carbon, it brought in a whole bunch of other initiatives.

The Liberals will not tell us how they are going to meet even the Stephen Harper climate targets, because they cannot. They have been in government for three and a half years, and what the Liberals said they were getting elected to fix has become worse by the numbers. There was an increase of 12 million tonnes of carbon into the atmosphere last year under the so-called climate-fighting government.

When Canadians pull back, they get very concerned. They read the same reports that we all do. There is the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, talking about how, if in 12 years we do not bend the curve dramatically, we are not only headed to 2°C or 2.5°C of warming, but we will go way beyond that tipping point. We know about the effects on the Arctic. We know the effect of melting ice in the north. We know the effects of increasing intensity of forest fires.

Allow me to speak for a moment directly of my constituency, Skeena—Bulkley Valley in northwestern British Columbia. We broke the record for forest fires two years ago. It was unprecedented. We had never seen anything like the intensity of the burns. We had almost every fire region in the province alerted with fire emergencies. The scope of it was something we had never seen before. Then, we broke the record again last year.

We have some very resource-dependent, hard-working, quite conservative communities in my riding. We had forest firefighters who had been in the business for 30 years, not exactly the tree-hugging David Suzuki types, coming to me and saying that these fires were different. They had been fighting these fires for three decades, and they had never before seen the intensity that they were seeing. They said that the normal patterns of the fires were different. The scale and speed and scope of what they were seeing was different, and it is the climate.

Farmers are not understanding how the precipitation works anymore, because we do not get the snowfall we used to get, or the consistent patterns.

We have seen flooding. The City of Ottawa, where Parliament exists, declared a state of climate emergency. We are watching flood

patterns change. The 100-year floods, 500-year floods, are happening every two years.

This is exactly what was predicted. The only thing that the global climate scientists were wrong about is that they thought it would not start happening until 2030 or 2040. Here we are, not even in 2020, and it is happening now.

If members want to debate gas prices, that is fine; we can talk about that. Let us talk about companies that gouge Canadians at the pump. If members want to talk about carbon pricing, that is fine; we can talk about that. However, it has to be in a plan that gets us to where we need to go. As we know, Canadians use more energy per capita and produce more greenhouse gases per capita than any other country in the world.

• (1135)

We have a lot to account for. We cannot continue to stand on the world stage, waggle our finger at other countries and say to be more like Canada. That is not a solution today. However, it should be a solution for the future, and I think the NDP will bring forward that green and bold new plan that will fulfill that promise.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there are a number of so-called facts that the member opposite has put on the record this morning that I would call into question. Unfortunately, I do not have that much time in terms of my question.

Having said that, I believe the debate that is going to be talked about at great length over the summer and into the election in October is on one of the most significant environmental policies that has been debated over the last year or so. The Conservatives have yet to come to the table with their ideas and action plan. What we have put in place is a national price on pollution. It is a significant policy, which will have a profoundly positive impact, not only today but into the future on the Canadian environment. This is a government that is not only listening to what Canadians are saying but is in fact acting on it.

I wonder if my colleague across the way can recognize the importance of this one initiative. Many other things he has raised are somewhat debatable, but at least on this initiative, what would he and the New Democratic Party do? Would they want to increase or decrease the price on pollution? What are his reflections in terms of the official opposition, whose members are saying that they will get rid of it?

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Madam Speaker, we can see how the member does this. He said that I have a number of facts wrong but will not tell me what they are.

Business of Supply

I talked about the IPCC report, the Auditor General of Canada, and the commissioner of the environment, which has audited the Liberal performance on climate and found it disastrous. I was able to say that the Stephen Harper target in the Paris Agreement is the same one that the Liberals are maintaining but cannot meet. I have laid out some facts, which he says are wrong or disputable but does not name any of them. He does not present his own facts. To the hon. member, I will say the statement again, which is so often apt for him: He is entitled to his own opinions but not his own facts. The fact of the matter is that this is the Liberal record on climate. Own it.

These guys want to have a culture war in the next election about climate change, but only about the carbon tax. The Conservatives want to say no, and the Liberals want to say yes, as if that were the only thing we needed to wrestle with in this country. How much of a failure of ambition that is from the Liberal government, which came in with such a strong mandate to do something about this. A carbon price is important but not the only thing, obviously, because the Liberals are failing on their own weak promises at the Paris climate agreements.

• (1140)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on his speech advocating for the environment and against pipelines. Could he tell us what led to the change in his party's position in that area?

During the last election campaign, that party's position was more ambiguous. When NDP members were speaking English, they were often pro-pipeline, but in French, it was the opposite. This led the member for Berthier—Maskinongé to say that, on the contrary, they were neither for nor against energy east. Then their position changed. Some people even said that Thomas Mulcair quit the position of leader because he was not pro-oil enough.

I would like to know what led my colleague's party to change its position.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I am a little surprised to hear him say that an NDP candidate was in favour of pipelines and energy east. Maybe he was talking about the leader of the Liberal Party or the leader of the Conservative Party. The Conservatives are decidedly in that camp. One need only look at their plan, which is not really a plan at all.

If we want a stable economy that does not solely benefit Alberta, Canada or Quebec, building another pipeline is not the solution. We do not export enough crude oil, not to mention the labour shortage and tariffs. If we want to improve the overall economy, we need to focus on all of our natural resources, and not just build another pipeline to China or the U.S. That is not the solution.

It is said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. It does not work, but that is the Liberal Party's approach.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to this official opposition motion concerning gas and natural resource development. I am also very pleased to inform the House that I will be splitting my time with the member for Lakeland, who I am certain will give a passionate

speech like the ones we have become accustomed to hearing from her over the past three years.

Everybody gets up in the morning saying that we must stop polluting, we must save our planet and the future of the environment is important. The difference is that some believe we must tax people to reach this objective while others believe that we need to help people so we can get there.

The Conservative Party's policy is to help people and businesses pollute less. Just 10 days ago, in Victoriaville, our leader stated that he will soon unveil our environmental platform to Quebeckers and Canadians. We already know that this platform will focus on technologies and on exporting Canadian hydroelectricity know-how and other innovative technologies developed in Canada. Most importantly, concrete and positive measures will be introduced to help Canadians and businesses pollute less.

This government prefers to keep piling on the taxes instead.

The Liberal policy is not environmental policy, it is tax policy. Instead of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, it raises taxes on Canadians. Later on, I will come back to the highly questionable theory that taxing what they call pollution could substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The Liberal plan, which was released two years ago and has been in effect since April, creates a tax on pollution, but not on all forms of it. For some reason, the big companies emitting the most pollution are exempt from the Liberal carbon tax. However, parents who have to drive their kids around, people who need to drive to work and people who do not have access to public transit because of their daily routine, their activities and their geographic location are not exempt. Quebeckers are also feeling the effects of the Liberal carbon tax, because all goods brought in by truck or other means of transportation are getting more expensive. The Liberal carbon tax is fuelling higher gas prices, and this has a direct impact on how much consumers have to pay for products.

What is more, the price that is currently being taxed could go up significantly. When we were in power, we called for a study to determine what the real cost would be to the public if there was a carbon tax. Their document was supposedly made public when this government was sworn in. We wanted to obtain that document. When we get to the details of the results, they are redacted. We see nothing at all. The reality and facts about how much the Liberal carbon tax would cost consumers were totally obscured.

The fact that major polluters will not have to pay this tax is another display of this government's hypocrisy. It makes no sense. In fact, the only environmental plan the Liberals had to offer was to buy the Trans Mountain pipeline at a cost of \$4.5 billion.

There are two things I never thought I would see in my lifetime. First, I never would have imagined that the Liberals would cancel the credit that we Conservatives had created to help people use public transit. I never would have guessed the Liberals would do that. Second, I never would have thought that a government with the least bit of intelligence would take \$4.5 billion of taxpayers' money and hand it over to an American company in Houston for a pipeline. It is an idea so ridiculous that only the Liberals could have cooked it up. That is the legacy associated with those folks across the aisle, who, let us hope, will no longer be in government six months from now.

As for taxation, the Liberals keep saying that it is the best way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but that is not true. The facts speak for themselves. It does not work. Look at Quebec, where, for the past three or four years, we have had what is known as a carbon exchange, another form of the Liberal carbon tax.

The carbon exchange has been in place in Quebec for some time now. An analysis of it was done, based on real, concrete results, using real people in real life, in a real situation in an actual Canadian province, Quebec.

● (1145)

What were the results? The document I have here was tabled in the Quebec National Assembly on November 29 by the Premier of Quebec. The Standing Orders prevent me from showing it to members, but it is entitled "Inventaire québécois des émissions de gaz à effet de serre en 2016 et leur évolution depuis 1990". It is a report on Quebec's environmental footprint, particularly as it pertains to the carbon exchange, which is a way of taxing pollution. What were the results? I would like to quote the Premier of Quebec, who said the following before the Quebec National Assembly on November 29:

...the only numbers we have right now are those for 2016. They show that, over the past two years, from 2014 to 2016, there has been no reduction in GHG emissions. On the contrary, GHG emissions have increased.

He went on to say:

This report shows that Quebec produced 78.4 megatonnes of emissions in 2014, 78.55 megatonnes in 2015 and 78.56 megatonnes in 2016, so we can see that emissions are rising.

The Premier of Quebec said this based on a report on Quebec's carbon exchange prepared by the Quebec Department of the Environment. The result is that there has been no drop at all in GHG emissions.

Now the Liberals want to lecture us, saying that we are against putting a price on pollution and that we want to continue polluting everything. First of all, they are hypocrites, since they are not taxing the biggest polluters. Second, pollution pricing has no effect on reducing greenhouse gases. Quebec's experience speaks for itself. On May 5, 2015, when he was leader of the second opposition group, the current Premier of Quebec published a news release calling the carbon exchange a new \$100 tax on the middle class.

That is why we believe that taxing people to reduce pollution is not the right thing to do. It does not work. If we want to reduce pollution, we must implement incentives to encourage people to pollute less, such as the tax credit we created for bus riders. The Liberals abolished that initiative. We must help people manage their pollution better. That is a smart solution. We must help businesses

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pollute less instead of taxing them. That is an effective solution. At the very least, we should not say that we want to put a price on pollution and then avoid taxing the biggest polluters.

That brings me to the whole pipeline business. As I said earlier, the Liberals' expertise in pipelines amounts to taking \$4.5 billion of taxpayers' money and sending it to the United States. It is ludicrous. It is patently ridiculous and unacceptable.

Quebec knows about pipelines. There have been pipelines in Quebec since 1942. The first was built between Montreal and Maine to export oil in order to help defend Europe against the Nazi menace. There are currently 2,000 kilometres of pipeline in Quebec. Nine pipelines run under the St. Lawrence River. In 2012, we built and inaugurated a brand-new pipeline between Lévis and Montreal. It is 248 kilometres long and pass through one of the most densely populated areas in the province. It runs under 630 lots and 26 waterways, including the St. Lawrence River, but it works. There are 2,000 kilometres of pipeline in Quebec. Nine pipelines run under the St. Lawrence. We built a 248-kilometre pipeline just a few years ago, and it works.

The planes in Dorval use four million litres of fuel every day. How does the fuel get to Dorval? It is not transported by train or by truck, but by pipeline. Yes, we have pipelines in Quebec, and no one has been killed. We are aware that things need to be done properly, and we are capable of doing that.

I would like to point out that, in our opinion, the energy east project is dead and buried. Building pipelines is not the government's job. It is up to private companies to build pipelines in a respectful way. That being said, the energy east project is dead, and we need to be clear on that. We are not afraid of pipelines, and we certainly do not try to frighten people over them.

● (1150)

[*English*]

No, my main issue is that in Quebec we have experience with putting a price on so-called carbon pollution, experience with what I would call the Liberal carbon tax.

We have a cap and trade system in Quebec, which has existed for four years, and we have data on that. The data was tabled by the Premier of Quebec on November 29, a few months ago, at the National Assembly, and it is crystal clear. I cannot show the document to the House now, but I will table it after my speech if members would like me to.

The document is published by the environmental ministry of Quebec, the Quebec government. It is crystal clear regarding the real effects of the cap and trade system we have in Quebec. The results for 2014, 2015 and 2016 show zero lowered greenhouse gas emissions. This is the reality.

We are not talking about a study by people who think they are right because they are right; no, we are talking about reality. We have experience with the cap and trade system in Quebec, which is like the Liberal carbon tax, and the reality is that there has been no decrease in pollution.

Business of Supply

Our plan is very clear. It will help people reduce their pollution and it will help businesses reduce their pollution. Based on our technology and our Canadian experience in exporting our knowledge, we will do that six months from now when people realize we need a strong Conservative government in Canada.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have a government that is committed to sustainable development. It understands and appreciates that they go hand in hand. If we want to move forward on healthy economic growth, we need to take into consideration the importance of our environment and working with the many different stakeholders. That is something this government has been committed to doing.

On the price on pollution, I believe it is really important for the Conservative Party to realize this is not absolutely new. The concept of a price on pollution comes from the Paris agreements, and many other countries around the world have recognized the value of putting a price on pollution.

It is interesting that when Doug Ford became the Premier of Ontario, it gave new life to the Harper Conservatives here in the House of Commons. It is almost as if they have been inspired by Doug Ford to ignore the environment and deal only with the economy and leave it with the economy.

Does the member opposite not recognize that if we want to advance the economy, there is a responsibility on our part also to take into consideration the environment? Having a price on pollution is the way many other countries around the world are taking action. Why should Canada not have a national price on pollution?

• (1155)

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, it is a real pleasure to respond to my friend from Vancouver North. I deeply appreciate his passion, even if yesterday was not very passionate for the Liberals, especially in British Columbia.

Let me make this point: It does not make sense to put a price on pollution to reduce pollution. What is that based on? It is based on the Quebec experience. We are not talking about another country somewhere else; we are talking about the other side of the Ottawa River. That is where I live. Quebec has had a cap and trade system for the last four years. Based on the Quebec government's document, which was tabled by the Premier of Quebec on November 29, the results for greenhouse gas emissions for the years of 2014, 2015 and 2016 were zero lower emissions. There was a 0.1% increase in emissions. Therefore, without a shadow of a doubt, based on the Quebec experience, taxing pollution does not reduce pollution.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, almost four years later, all Canadians are waiting with bated breath for the Conservatives' climate plan. We are wondering if it is going to be exactly the same as the Harper carbon control plan, which was through the use of regulation. However, can we guess which sector they never got around to dealing with? It was the oil and gas sector. Can we guess which is the greatest source of greenhouse gases and pollution, including benzene, mercury et al.? It is the oil and gas sector.

I wonder if the member could speak to this aspect. The Conservatives are fine with speaking against the carbon tax, but

today we have not heard them speak to the matter my colleague spoke to, the escalating price of fuel for our cars, which has nothing to do with the price of carbon, even in Alberta. Whatever happened to that proposal to regulate the emissions from the oil and gas sector?

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent has one minute to respond.

[English]

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, when we were in office it was a real pleasure to address this issue. We had policies that directly affected the oil and gas sector and were in fact more severe on that sector.

However, let us look at the future. Our party will table a plan. We will emphasize helping people instead of taxing them. The Liberal approach is to tax people, not the big polluters. The best way to help reduce pollution is to help Canadian families reduce their footprint and help businesses to pollute less.

Based on our experience, especially with hydroelectricity in Quebec, we achieved great things. We want to export it worldwide.

Let us see what the plan will be. People will support it.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, the current Liberal government is making life more expensive for middle-class Canadians at a time when the majority of families can least afford it. The average middle-class family is already paying over \$800 more in taxes because of the Liberals' tax hikes, while the wealthiest 1% of Canadians, of course, pay less. Almost half of Canadians are currently within \$200 of not being able to pay their bills at the end of the month, and now the Liberals have decided to increase the cost of everything with their job-killing carbon tax.

When asked if Canadians were going to pay higher costs for fuel, the Prime Minister said that was "exactly what we want", because of course he does not have to worry about money. It does not matter if they are talking about fruit or vegetables, meat, dairy, diapers or formula. Every single product in Canada is going to be more expensive because everything is shipped on planes, trains and transport trucks that use fossil fuels.

Canadians, particularly rural Canadians, do not have alternatives to paying the carbon tax, so life just gets more expensive. That is why the Liberals have a tax plan and not an environmental plan. They tax Canadians who have no other real options. The Liberal carbon tax is universally regarded as too low to actually reduce emissions or cause a wholesale transition, but high enough to make Canada less competitive, to drive jobs and businesses to other countries without carbon taxes, and to be yet another layer of costs and red tape the government is imposing on families and on the private sector in Canada. Who is going to pay this tax? Everyone will pay it, and it will hurt middle-class families, Canadians with low and fixed incomes, the working poor and rural Canadians the most.

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The Parliamentary Budget Officer pointed out that major emitters will pay only 8% of the total revenue collected by the Liberal carbon tax, leaving the remaining 92% for families and small businesses to pay through higher gas, grocery and home heating costs. Thankfully, a Conservative government would give every single Canadian a 100% exemption from the carbon tax by cancelling it.

If the carbon tax does not hike gas and diesel prices enough, then Canadians will be shocked to hear about the potential costs of the new Liberal fuel standard. That new policy will force refineries and natural gas suppliers to incorporate higher percentages of renewable fuels or to provide credits to electric car owners for reducing emissions. In short, it will increase the price of gasoline, diesel and natural gas for cars, trucks, homes, businesses and factories.

I asked both the environment minister and the natural resources minister just last week how much the clean fuel standard, CFS, will raise the cost of a litre of diesel, but neither of them had an answer. The environment department's website confirms that there are "no models within the Department designed to model emission reductions, credit supply or economic impacts of a CFS policy in detail". Therefore, just like with the carbon tax, the Liberals cannot say if their fuel standard will actually reduce emissions. They do not know how much damage this policy will do to the Canadian economy and how much it will cost individual Canadians. However, they are still moving forward with it and planning to announce regs this spring.

The kicker is that the Liberals' own analysis showed what Conservatives have been warning for years: that their carbon tax will kill jobs and businesses in Canada. Big companies' operations are emissions intensive, and they cannot pass through their carbon costs while they compete internationally. Therefore, the Liberals have provided them with 80% to 95% exemptions from the \$20-a-tonne carbon tax, so that these businesses can, in the environment minister's words, stay competitive and keep good jobs in Canada.

Even so, not a single Canadian refinery in provinces where the Liberal carbon tax backstop applies can meet the 20% reduction standard set by the Liberals. In fact, of the 200 refineries in OECD countries, only 10% would be able to meet the standard. Canadian refiners will simply all be forced to increase the price of fuel in order to purchase credits, because the Liberal approach is not an environmental plan; it is a tax plan.

However, there is no exemption for these same businesses from the Liberals' fuel standard. The Chemistry Industry Association of Canada says it will be the equivalent of a \$200 a tonne carbon tax. Other private sector proponents and economists warn it will be anywhere between \$150 and \$400 a tonne combined with the carbon tax. It is the first of its kind in the entire world, because the Liberals aim to apply it to solid and gaseous fuels and to industry buildings and facilities, not only to transportation fuels. It is a reckless, risky experiment that the Liberals are rushing through, with consultations actually taking place now, five months after they announced the policy. The reality is that the Liberal fuel standard will potentially cost 10 times the full price of the Liberal carbon tax, which the Liberals have already admitted will kill jobs and businesses in Canada.

More and more Canadians are beginning to realize the importance of the oil and gas sector for every community across the country. It is in fact the largest private sector investor in the Canadian economy. Canada's responsible resource development is the major factor behind closing the gap between the wealthy and the poor in Canada.

● (1200)

Energy in the form of oil and gas is Canada's top export, at \$125 billion in 2018. To put that in context, that is 65% more than the value of automotive exports. Electricity exports were \$3 billion, almost a rounding error compared to oil and gas exports.

Just this month, Canadians found out that because the Liberals cancelled the energy east and northern gateway pipelines and are delaying the Trans Mountain expansion, oil producers lost \$20 billion in sales this last year alone. Over 115,000 oil and gas workers have lost their jobs, in addition to the tens of thousands of family businesses and individual contracting jobs that have collapsed. Another 12,500 jobs will be lost this year, and over \$100 billion in energy projects have been cancelled since 2015.

Canada, literally the world's most responsible energy-producing country, is now the only top 10 oil producer in the world with a carbon tax. Under the Liberals, more energy investment in Canada has been lost than at any other time in more than seven decades. This is a result of policy, not external factors.

The consequences for the entire Canadian economy, for every government and for every community across the country will be significant. It will mean less money for pensions, health care, schools, social programs, charities and recreation. It will mean fewer jobs for highly skilled young Canadians and experienced industry leaders, and fewer opportunities for indigenous communities. It will have especially detrimental impacts for rural and remote regions, where economic opportunities are limited and where natural resources development is often the only source of income.

The Conservatives know how to set the conditions for the private sector to develop major energy infrastructure. Under the previous Conservative government, the only two proposals for pipelines exclusively for export beyond the U.S. were proposed because companies had confidence in investing in Canada. As well, four major pipelines were constructed under the previous Conservative government.

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The reality is that when the Liberals took office in 2015, three companies wanted to build major pipelines in Canada, and today every single one of them is gone. The Prime Minister outright cancelled northern gateway, even though he had the option to redo indigenous consultations and get it right. Then he imposed delays and a double standard on energy east, which were deliberately designed to force the private sector builder to back out. TMX, of course, remains stalled because of Liberal mistakes.

The lack of pipeline capacity is related to increased gasoline prices in British Columbia. B.C. refineries cannot get enough crude or refined petroleum through the existing pipelines, which is, in fact, why British Columbians are facing record prices at the pumps. This is the obvious and logical result of blocking pipelines, and the Liberals want to replicate it across Canada.

Canada has never had an anti-oil and gas government like the current Liberal government. There is the ban on shipping oil on B.C.'s north coast, which the Liberals announced a month after the 2015 election. There is the power they gave themselves just before Christmas, to do the same thing on every other coast in Canada. There was the removal of the new oil and gas well exploration and drilling tax credit during the height of catastrophic oil and gas job losses, while allowing the foreign funding of anti-energy activists to stop Canadian resources and block Canadian pipelines. There was even the funding of these activists with Canadian tax dollars through the Canada summer jobs program last summer on top of the government's "no more pipelines" Bill C-69, and, finally, the virtually unilateral banning of offshore oil and gas exploration and development just a couple of weeks ago. These are all examples of the layers and layers of Liberal anti-energy policies that are causing such uncertainty and killing businesses and jobs.

It makes no sense whatsoever, because the International Energy Agency predicts that global oil and gas use will climb for decades. We are home to the world's third-largest crude oil reserves, and we are the fifth-largest producer of natural gas, with enough supply to meet our own needs for the next 300 years. It makes no sense whatsoever for Canada not to be able to produce all sources of energy and ship it to global markets, because, by all measures, Canada is and has long been the most environmentally and socially responsible oil and gas producer in the world. Every time a resource project or a pipeline is cancelled in Canada, that money and those jobs go to other countries with much lower environmental, consultation, transparency, safety, labour, and civil and human rights standards than Canada.

Canada's energy industry is an environmental leader. The intensity of emissions from Canada's oil sands has fallen significantly over the last several years and will continue to decline. In fact, half of the commonly traded crude oils in the United States have the same or higher emissions than the average Alberta-produced crude oil. The increase in Canadian oil and gas production will actually lower predicted global emissions growth if Canadian oil can displace higher-emitting sources of oil and gas around the world.

In short, the world needs more Canadian energy, not less. The question for Canada is whether our country will continue to be a world-leading resource and energy producer. Do we want to play a leading role in that responsible production or allow countries like

Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, China and Russia to supply the world's increasing energy needs?

● (1205)

The choice is clear. The responsible development of Canada's oil and gas is good for Canadian workers and it is good for the planet.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, I always find it interesting, when we have the debates on pipelines and the environment, that we often see a consistency coming from the Conservative Party. Its members are very critical and say that we are never doing enough to build pipelines, and then we have the opposite criticism coming from the New Democrats, who are saying we are not doing enough on the environment. We need to recognize that the environment and economic development, particularly with our commodities, go hand in hand. This government has recognized it and understands that we need to work with the many stakeholders.

It is also important to note, after listening to the speech of the member opposite, that for the 10 years during which Stephen Harper was prime minister, not one inch of pipeline was actually constructed that would take our product to tidewater. That is the reality. When he was prime minister, over 99% was going to the United States, and when he ceased to be prime minister, over 99% was going to the United States. Therefore, Conservative governments talk a big game, but when it comes to turning that talk into reality, they fail to do so.

Why does the member opposite believe that the Harper government was unable to get a pipeline constructed in any fashion that would take the product to tidewater or to new markets?

● (1210)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that, because it is simply not true. Of course, the Anchor Loop, which expanded the existing Trans Mountain pipeline, was approved and constructed under the previous Conservative government and increased access for Canada to the Asia Pacific. Keystone I, which was approved and constructed under the former Conservative government, took Albertan and western Canadian crude oil to the Gulf. Also, the only two recent proposals by the private sector to diversify Canada's market beyond the United States were made under the previous Conservative government. They were the northern gateway pipeline, which Conservatives approved and then the current Prime Minister killed, and the application for the energy east pipeline, which was going through the approval process during the switch of government.

Business of Supply

However, the Liberals, for all their talk about evidence, science, facts and regulatory experts making decisions, campaigned on attacking both Canada's world-renowned National Energy Board and Canada's track record as the most environmentally responsible and highest-regulated energy producer in the entire world. They froze all of those applications, disbanded the National Energy Board, and then meddled, interfered and created a double standard on the energy east pipeline, killing the opportunity for Canada to have a west-east pipeline across this country that is built by, operated and maintained in the private sector.

Therefore, the track record of the Conservative government is very clear: economic growth with the highest environmental standards in the world, and major energy infrastructure being completed and continuing to be proposed.

The track record of the Liberals is exactly the opposite: nothing for the environment, and bad for energy and the hundreds of thousands of Canadians whose livelihoods depend on it. There is also the loss of major opportunities for—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I am going to have to cut the hon. member off, because other people want to ask questions.

The hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is a very strong consensus among the people of Vancouver Kingsway, whom I have been honoured to represent for over 10 years, that we are extremely concerned about climate change. We saw the recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which puts it in stark terms. We have 11 years to make a 45% reduction over 2010 levels. I think we can all remember how much carbon we were putting in the air in 2010. We literally have to halve that in the next 11 years, or we face catastrophic effects. We face the melting of the polar ice caps, and we face the loss of 99% of the world's coral reefs. Just last week we saw a report come out that said the world is facing the extinction of one million species.

Placed against that context, we have the Liberals and the Conservatives fighting over who is going to get a pipeline built to triple the bitumen exports to China more quickly. The Liberal government keeps saying there is no contest between the environment and the economy. I agree with that, but there is a contest between reducing carbon emissions and expanding fossil fuel infrastructure. Therefore, I would ask my hon. colleague how she proposes to meet those Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change targets, make those reductions and at the same time expand Canada's fossil fuel infrastructure.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Mr. Speaker, here is the reality. There is no border on emissions. This is a global challenge. It makes no sense for Canada to hamper itself and to destroy our economy while major emitting and irresponsible energy producers around the globe continue to ramp up.

That is exactly the choice. If we care about action on the environment and reducing emissions, Canada must and can play a major role in making that contribution federally. The keys will be technology, innovation, private sector investment to stop the brain drain, conservation and real environmental measures to protect the air, water and land, about which every single Canadian agrees.

What does not make sense is the Liberal approach, which is a tax plan, a revenue generating plan and no real environmental action at all.

● (1215)

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in this chamber to offer my thoughts on the motion before Parliament. Today's motion purports to be about the price of gas, and connects it to our environmental plan and pipeline capacity in Canada. I am sure that the member who put the motion forward understands that regulating the price of gas is not within the federal government's purview and notwithstanding the recent debates we have dealt with on our plan to put a price on pollution.

However, what the motion is really about is affordability, our environmental plan and pipeline capacity. I hope to address each of these issues. I will start first with a subject that is very important to me, which is the need to have an effective plan to combat climate change and ensure that Canada does its share to help reduce its emissions to prevent some of the catastrophic consequences we have heard about.

It is perhaps trite to begin by saying that climate change is real and we have an obligation and an opportunity to do something about it. We see extreme weather events across Canada and around the world. Whether it is the recent floods in eastern Canada or forest fires in the west, we have a number of consequences being felt very directly in our country.

We know from a recent Environment Canada report entitled "Canada's Changing Climate" that Canada is experiencing warming at twice the global rate. I do not mean to suggest that this has to be a story of doom and gloom, because there is a light at the end of the tunnel. We know that if we adopt smart policies today, we can achieve reductions in our emissions that will prevent the most severe consequences from coming to pass. It is in that spirit that I would be happy to outline some of the measures we are implementing to ensure Canada does its part in the global fight to combat climate change.

The plan we have put forward and have been working on for the last numbers of years, implementing piece by piece, one after the other, has over 50 measures. We are going to have 90% of our electricity generated from clean resources by 2030. On that same schedule, we will have phased coal out as a source of electricity in Canada. We are making investments in energy efficiency for small organizations, homeowners and large organizations to help everyone in Canada pull in the same direction to bring their contribution to our emissions level down.

Business of Supply

We are investing in green technology and green infrastructure. We are making the largest investments in the history of public transit in our country, to encourage more people to ride mass transit in order to take more cars off Canadian roads. We are making electric vehicles more affordable with recent measures included in budget 2019. As well, we are investing in helping to train the workforce in industries that are converting toward cleaner technologies, for instance, coal workers.

Of course, we are moving forward with a plan to put a price on pollution, which I have talked about at length in this House on a number of occasions. I want to take this opportunity to help educate the public on what this policy does. We hear a lot of noise coming from one side and the other, and I find we are in this bad habit of talking past one another rather than engaging in the merits of the policy in a substantive way.

What we are planning is not some policy idea that came out of an exclusively Liberal room. We have engaged with experts to figure out the most effective thing we could do in order to reduce our emissions. I point members to the winner of last year's Nobel Prize in economics, who won the prize for developing a plan that more or less mirrors what we are trying to do. It is one that would put a price on pollution but return the revenues collected directly to residents in the area where the price applies. Relying on advice of folks like the winner of last year's Nobel Prize in economics, we have moved forward with a plan to do just that: put a price on pollution and return the revenues to Canadians in the jurisdiction where it applies.

We started out by trying to negotiate with the different provinces and territories to find a plan that would work for them. Where the provincial or territorial government would not play a leadership role and enforce a minimum standard of price stringency, we said that a federal backstop would apply. This path is one that has garnered support from folks who are usually on the opposite side of the aisle from the Liberal Party of Canada. It has garnered support from the likes of Mark Cameron, Stephen Harper's former director of policy, who has been advocating for a fee and dividend system for some time.

• (1220)

It has garnered the support of one of Doug Ford's advisers, although it has been walked back a little. If we look at the testimony of one of Doug Ford's budget advisers who testified before the Senate, he said that the most effective thing we can do to transition to a low-carbon economy is to put a price on carbon emissions.

We can look at Conservative stalwarts like Preston Manning, who is urging his colleagues to stop fighting progress on the environment and adopt a market-based model to bring emissions down.

I would also like to draw attention to the recent decision of the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal. It did not deal with the political issue but dealt with the legality and constitutionality of our plan. In identifying it as a national concern, a minimum standard being applied by the federal government and provinces that would not come to the table, it spoke to the effective and essential nature of GHG pricing in the global effort to reduce emissions.

What it said was that carbon pricing is not just part and parcel of an effective plan to reduce emissions but an essential aspect. It put

that in italics to draw the attention of the reader, that it is an essential aspect of the global effort to reduce emissions to prevent the consequences of climate change. It went further to explain that because of the global nature of the problem, it requires countries like Canada to engage on the international stage to adopt international agreements that would identify a strategy to bring our emissions down.

It pointed to the Paris Agreement. It stated that in a country like Canada, it would obviously be difficult to meet the targets outlined in an international agreement like the Paris Agreement if some provinces refused to put forward a minimum pricing standard. It surveyed the evidence, and there was no question that the record before the court demonstrated that GHG pricing was both effective and essential if we are going to achieve meaningful reductions in our emissions.

It is important to recognize that our plan does not simply put a price on pollution, but it makes life more affordable for a vast majority of Canadians. In provinces where our plan applies, namely Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick, because big emitters also contribute to the revenues that are collected, families are left better off. In Saskatchewan, through the climate action incentive this year, when residents of that province filed their taxes, they would have received \$609. That would more than offset any costs associated with our price on pollution. In Ontario, the number is a little more than \$300. In New Brunswick, it is a little more than \$250. In Manitoba, I think the number is \$339. That goes directly to families.

We have a plan that has demonstrated an essential aspect of the global effort to reduce emissions. We have found a way, based on expert evidence such as the plan put forward by last year's Nobel Prize winner in economics, that will leave families better off at the end of the day. This is a win-win situation. Despite some of the noise that we hear from opponents of the plan who are trying to grab lightning for political purposes, when we dig into the facts, it is impossible to ignore that this is an effective policy. It is going to do the right thing for our environment and reduce emissions as well.

One of the things I am concerned with is that we have spent so much time on this one policy that Canadians may not understand it is one of 50 policy planks we have implemented to help reduce emissions. As I mentioned, 90% of our electricity will be generated from clean resources by 2030. We are phasing out coal and making a large investment in public transit. There are a number of different investments and initiatives we have undertaken that will have a meaningful impact.

The effects of climate change also have a very serious impact on nature and wildlife. I know during one of the questions from an NDP colleague during the previous speaker's turn, he drew attention to the recent UN report that indicated we are facing a potential mass extinction of one million of eight million species in the world. If members look at recent data, they will see that on average about 60% of different vertebrate species have been lost in the last half-century.

Business of Supply

Canada is one of five countries in the world that has three-quarters of the world's remaining wilderness. We have an opportunity and an obligation to do whatever we can to protect nature and to fight climate change so we can preserve our natural environment for future generations.

The motion also addresses the issue of pipeline capacity. One of the things I want to draw attention to is that the previous government had a very difficult time getting major projects built, because it did not have an effective environmental assessment process to properly consider the impact of projects. It ended up fighting projects in court rather than building them in the ground.

● (1225)

What we have done is ensure that there is a little more work done at the front end but the timeline is not extended. It gives certainty to businesses, but it also allows environmental considerations and the perspective of indigenous people to inform the process so that we are less likely to be fighting about projects during and after the approval process and can move forward with them.

For example, we are seeking to move forward in the right way on the TMX project, taking in the perspectives of indigenous communities and those who are concerned about the environment to ensure that we can get our resources to market and Canadian producers do not have to consistently take a haircut on the price they get when they export or sell to the United States rather than to customers all over the world.

One of the things I want to focus on during the time I have today is that this motion is really about the affordability of life. There is no concern that is potentially more important to many of the people I represent. I come from a riding where the median income is somewhere in the range of \$22,000. Getting by on that kind of income is exceptionally difficult to imagine.

One of the things we have focused on from day one is growing the economy and making sure that the economy operates in a way that works for everyone, not just the wealthiest Canadians.

When we look at our record of economic growth, the results speak for themselves. The Canadian economy since we took office has added over 900,000 jobs, primarily full-time, private sector jobs. Our unemployment rate across the country and in my home province of Nova Scotia is at an all-time low. It is at the lowest level in over 40 years, when we started to keep track of those statistics.

There is something special happening in the Canadian economy today, but it is not happening by accident. It is happening because Canadians are working hard, they are working together and they are benefiting from policies that have created an environment that encourages economic growth.

When I look at the investments we have made in infrastructure, I see that we are building out communities to strengthen them, put people to work and create opportunities for growth in the future.

If I look at the twinning of Highway 104, in my own backyard, between Sutherlands River and Antigonish, what I see is a project that will have 500 people working at peak construction and that will make for safer and more effective transportation for people and businesses going forward.

When I look at investments in things like the Pictou Campus of the Nova Scotia Community College, where we helped build a new trades innovation centre, I see the 125 people who were working onsite at peak construction. It is also going to educate the next generation of skilled workers.

When I see investments in the Halifax Stanfield International Airport and a new logistics park and cold storage facility, I know that it is going to help get our products to new markets so that our fishermen can put more money in their pockets and keep rural communities alive.

I see trade deals that create opportunities for local exporters in my community that are actually having a real and tangible benefit for families. There are a number of policies I could point to, examples in my own community, through which people are better off.

On the efforts on international trade, it was not long after we secured market access to our largest trading partner, the United States, that Michelin announced that it would be adding or making permanent a total of 350 jobs at its tire production facility in Pictou County, Nova Scotia.

The fact is that we are creating an environment in which the economy can thrive, and Canadians are taking advantage. However, left unchecked, economic growth may not benefit everyone equally. It tends to favour the richest members of society. As the rich get richer, it is important that we put checks and balances in place to ensure that most Canadians are not left behind. That is why we are moving forward with programs like the Canada child benefit. This plan has been a remarkable innovation in social policy that has helped lift over 800,000 Canadians out of poverty, 300,000 of whom are children.

This plan changed the previous government's approach to child support. It puts more money in the pockets of nine out of 10 Canadian families and stops sending child care cheques to millionaires. The people who need the most, get the most, and the people who have the most, do not need it, so they do not get it.

Frankly, it is not families like mine that need the extra support at the end of the month. I earn a good salary working as a member of Parliament. It is families like the ones I speak to when I knock on their doors who tell me that the cost of food is getting too high, and they are eating less healthy because of it.

When I talk to my constituency staff and they tell me that people have called because their power is about to be shut off in the middle of winter, I know that it is those people who could use a little extra help.

● (1230)

It is not just the Canada child benefit we can point to that is actually helping people who are more vulnerable, ensuring that everyone benefits from the economic success our country has been experiencing. If we look at the support we have added for seniors living in Canada, the beefing up of the guaranteed income supplement is going to help the most vulnerable low-income single seniors by putting almost \$1,000 more a year in their pockets.

Business of Supply

I spoke to a senior during the last campaign, and she told me that she received an update to the amount she was going to receive. She got a raise of 44¢, and she wrote to the previous prime minister and asked, “Should I save this up for a rainy day, or should I spend it all in one place and host a party for my friends?” To know that individuals like her are going to have up to \$947 extra at the end of the year is meaningful, because I know it is going to go to a person who could use the help.

We are looking at programs like old age security. We reverted the age of eligibility from 67 to 65 to ensure that we did not screw up the plans of seniors who have been scheduling their retirement for some time. To ensure that the next generation of seniors can have a secure and dignified retirement, we beefed up the Canada pension plan as well to ensure that their needs will be met after their careers are over.

We can point to investments in the Canada workers benefit that will help Canadians who are working but are struggling to get by because the cost of living has gone up.

These are not the only reforms I can point to. We have made changes to the EI system around parental leave. We have introduced proactive pay equity legislation. We have made investments in health care by transferring more money to the provinces than has ever been transferred before, with carve-outs for mental health and in-home care for seniors. The fact is that we have created a circumstance that not only spurs economic growth but ensures that the most vulnerable Canadians are not left behind in the process.

When I see protests bubbling up around the world in the spirit of the French Revolution, which tried to take down the aristocracy, I know that people are frustrated, and the frustration is real. It is one thing to talk about the number of jobs that have been created in the economy, but unless the people living in my neighbourhood are better off, it does not mean too much.

When I see families that are benefiting from a tax cut, I know that they are doing well, because they are spending it on things like a new outfit for their kids for the first day of school that they may not have been able to afford before. I know that they are spending it on signing their kids up for swimming lessons. I know that they are taking their kids to join the soccer or basketball team, things I benefited from growing up that I took for granted, not realizing that the kids who may have lived next door to me could not afford to take part in those organized sports.

Our entire focus as a government is to help protect the environment and create an economy that is growing and working for everyone, not just the wealthiest Canadians.

I will not be supporting the motion on the floor, because it seemingly is an attempt to mislead Canadians about the economic impact of our plan for the environment. At the same time, the opposition refuses to produce one of its own, and it suggests, somehow, that Canadians are worse off and unable to afford the cost of living, despite the fact that the investments we have made leave them objectively better off.

When it comes to this fact, people do not have to take my word for it. We have an officer of Parliament, the Parliamentary Budget Officer, whose job is to ensure that there is transparency in government spending and to explain to the public the real impact of

the measures the government has implemented. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has indicated that families under our plan across Canada will be \$2,000 better off, and when it comes to our price on pollution, eight out of 10 families will be better off, and the families that will pay more will be restricted to the wealthiest 20% across Canada in the first year of this plan, maxing out at \$50 a year for the wealthiest 20% of Canadians.

We are moving forward with a plan that is going to protect our environment, grow the economy and make sure that everyone has a chance to succeed, not just the wealthiest.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will start off where the hon. member ended his speech, with reports that there are Canadians who are at least \$100 short by the end of the month.

The member mentioned something very important, which is that it is important to lower taxation for Canadians, but the government has been raising taxes for Canadians. Payroll taxes are up. Every tax is up. The carbon tax is in place. How can the Liberals expect to make life comfortable for Canadians when taxes are on the rise all the time?

The problem is that the government does not realize what it is doing. Liberals are just telling Canadians how good they are and how well they are doing, but the million-dollar question for a government that has been spending billions of dollars since 2015 is where the money is coming from. Where are the Liberals getting the money to give to Canadians? Are they just bribing Canadians out of their own pockets? That is the question for the government.

• (1235)

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, there is a fundamental assumption built into the submission the hon. member just made that is completely false. I believe it was designed by the opposition to mislead Canadians.

Unequivocally, the vast majority of Canadians are paying less tax and are better off today than they were when we took office in 2015. There is absolutely no way a person can honestly dispute that fact.

With respect to the economic growth that has taken place, more Canadians are earning an income. That is great. The measures we have put in place demonstrate that Canadian families are better off.

We implemented a middle-class tax cut for Canadians, which reduced income tax for nine million Canadians and raised it for the wealthiest 1%. The opposition voted against that. We also implemented the Canada child benefit, which put more money in the pockets of nine out of 10 Canadian families and stopped the sending of child care cheques to millionaires. The opposition voted against that too.

Every time we seek to implement a measure that helps the majority of Canadians who may not be at the top of the food chain, the opposition votes against it. Then its members have the courage to stand up in the House and tell us that Canadians are somehow worse off, which flies in the face of every piece of objective evidence, whether coming from federal departments or the Parliamentary Budget Officer. It is ludicrous.

Business of Supply

In my riding, the Canada child benefit puts an average of \$6,800 in the pockets of families who receive it. This is a meaningful change, and it makes a difference. Canadians are better off.

[*Translation*]

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

Since we are talking about facts and reality, I have a few figures I want to remind him of. The Liberal government weeps crocodile tears whenever it talks about children, the fate of the planet and future generations. Unfortunately, its track record on the environment is nothing short of a disaster. In 2016 and 2017, under the Liberals' watch, greenhouse gas emissions increased by 8 million tonnes. Every year, we get further and further away from the GHG emissions reduction target set by the Harper government. Two years ago, we missed that target by 66 megatonnes. Now the gap has grown to 79 megatonnes, according to the Environment Canada report. The government says it takes this issue seriously, but it took three and a half years for it to put a price on pollution. Meanwhile, GHG emissions continue to go up, and the oil and gas subsidies are still in place.

Why are the Liberals giving \$3 billion a year to oil companies? Why are they giving Loblaw's \$12 million to buy new fridges?

[*English*]

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, our record on emissions is trending in the right direction.

I want to point out one fact that I think is important for Canadians to appreciate. In one year, there was an anomaly because of the delays in production after the forest fires in Fort McMurray. This set an artificially low level. However, we are moving in the right direction.

When we implement our measures, we model where we are going to be. I am confident that we are going to meet our Paris Agreement targets. We do not have an option. The targets are set for 2030, and we are going to get there, because frankly, failure is not a consequence I can personally accept, nor can this government.

The hon. member referred to our investment in energy efficiency. I will sometimes sit on a panel on CPAC or CBC with an NDP member of Parliament who says that the NDP supports energy efficiency. However, when we actually make those investments, the NDP members cry foul and find an excuse to argue against them.

We had the officials in the Department of the Environment and Climate Change analyze what applications through the low carbon economy fund would provide the greatest return on investment and the greatest emissions reductions per dollar invested. They highlighted 54 projects. One of them is going to greatly reduce emissions of hydrofluorocarbons, or refrigerants, as most people know them. They are the fastest-growing contributor to greenhouse gas emissions across the world today.

This is a serious issue, and we are not going to rest until we have a plan that will have a meaningful impact on reducing our emissions.

● (1240)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague just said that the government intends to comply with the Paris Agreement adopted by COP 21.

Since the last election, oil sands development has increased by 24%, and the investments that have been announced show that it will continue to grow by 8% a year. A year ago, the government announced \$19 billion in aid for pipelines and oil production.

I would like to ask the member if this is part of the government's strategy for meeting the climate targets set by COP 21.

[*English*]

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we committed to in the last campaign—and remain committed to—is phasing out ineffective, non-tax fossil fuel subsidies by 2025. We have eliminated a number of those measures to date, but we know that there is more work to do. We are in the middle of a consultation process right now to get the help of Canadians to identify which policies are not having a positive impact in reducing our emissions.

However, we need to be careful here. Many people view fossil fuel subsidies as a cheque that is being sent to a corporate executive sitting in a big tower somewhere, when in fact if we look at some of the investments that have been made at a university in my community, we see that the subsidies are helping a university develop a technology that can detect methane leaks in oil and gas infrastructure. This technology is potentially going to help bring those emissions down by 20%.

If it is the most effective thing we can do to reduce emissions, then it will have my support. If we are going to be subsidizing oil and gas companies in an ineffective way that is going to boost production and continue to pump up our emissions, then of course that is nonsensical.

We have a plan that will help us achieve our Paris Agreement targets. It has over 50 measures in it, and I would be happy to table a report in Parliament later today if the hon. member would like to see it.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite talked about how it was false to say that Canadians were better off. We have seen it time and again in recent weeks and months. Most recently we saw on April 22 that a survey conducted by Ipsos had found that the number of Canadians who are \$200 or less away from financial insolvency every month has climbed to 48%, up from 46% in the previous quarter. We are not talking about Stephen Harper, which the Liberals like to do in a negative or derisive way; this was under the current government. That is under this Prime Minister. That is their record.

Business of Supply

What I am hearing from my constituents in Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes is that they are having a tough time. People do not understand how they are going to be able to farm the land, how they are going to be able to heat their homes and how they are going to be able to get around with this disproportionate burden being placed on them by the current government.

There is no transit that people are going to be taking in North Grenville or Edwardsburgh Cardinal or Prescott or Augusta or Elizabethtown-Kitley or Merrickville-Wolford. In the Rideau Lakes, in the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands, there is no public transportation available.

There is no bad behaviour to be connected to them. They are good Canadians. They work hard. They drive only when they need to. They are doing their part for the environment every single day, and they do not need more of a burden put on them by the current government that cannot control its spending.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, this is a very good example of one of the points I tried to make during my remarks. It is an example of the opposition trying to mislead Canadians. In this case, the member has cherry-picked data from a survey that does not actually touch on the issue of whether Canadians have more money in their pockets today than they did before.

I know Canadians are struggling. They are in my community too. I have gone to gas stations that have put home heating fuel in gas pumps because people cannot afford to buy an entire tank. That is why we are making investments such as a middle-class tax cut that has reduced income tax for nine million Canadians and raised it on the wealthiest 1%, which every member of the Conservative caucus at the time voted against. That is why we are putting more money in the pockets of Canadian families with plans like the Canada child benefit, which leaves nine out of 10 families better off. As I mentioned in a previous answer, the average recipient in my riding is getting \$6,800 a year tax-free. It is pumping \$48 million into the communities I represent each year. It is having a meaningful impact on affordability.

The hon. member tries to address transit. I also live in a community that does not have public transit, but I see that I must wrap up very quickly

If people take steps to make their homes more efficient through investments in energy efficiency, with the support that we have made available, not only will their costs be covered by the climate action incentive, but they will also be able to save additional money by bringing their power bills down because of the investments we have made.

• (1245)

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

There are many Canadians from coast to coast who are excited about October 2019. In my travels across the country, I have talked with many who are excited about the opportunity to elect a government that will stand up for their needs as Canadians. These are people of all ages and from a variety of backgrounds, but they are

saying the same thing to me: They want to see people put first. I agree with them that it is time for a government that will do that.

One might ask what it means to put people first. It is a great question.

In the fall, I found myself in eastern Europe. I was there as part of a delegation representing Canada at the Council of Europe. During my time abroad, I engaged in bilateral meetings with my counterparts from Georgia, Ukraine, Romania, Armenia, Germany and the U.K. Here is what was top of mind for all of these countries: the rule of law, border security, the safety of their citizens and the economic well-being of their countries. These issues should in fact be top of mind for all of us, but here in Canada they are not. In fact, under the current government, we are struggling in all of these areas. To put people first would be to return these priorities back to Canada's repertoire. Sadly, this is not the case in Canada, but it is time to return.

We have a Prime Minister who is more concerned about maintaining his appearance and pursuing his own agenda than he is about acting in the best interests of Canadians. Though there are many examples from which I could draw today, there are two specific scenarios I will discuss: energy development within Canada and the carbon tax that is being imposed.

With respect to energy development, we currently have a Prime Minister who cares more about appearing to consult with first nations people than about actually consulting with them in order to move forward with building the pipeline. In the effort to maintain his appearance, he is ignoring their voices and what would benefit them and the entire Canadian population. Instead of taking a stand for unity, the Prime Minister is creating disunity in this regard.

We have a Prime Minister who purchased a pipeline with the money of Canadians in order to appear as if he is committed to developing Canada's energy sector. Meanwhile, he is ramming through Bill C-69, which will block all future pipelines. Again we see a Prime Minister who wants to save face in one area, but is doing a completely other thing on the side.

It should be noted that Canada has the most environmentally sustainable oil and gas production in the world, with the highest standards and strictest conditions for environmental remediation and water usage, but rather than develop our own industry, the Prime Minister would rather bring blood oil in from places like Venezuela or Saudi Arabia, where people are treated inhumanely.

In my travels I have seen a number of Alberta bumper stickers. That is the province I am from. The bumper stickers say, "Please God, give us another oil boom; we promise not to waste it away this time." This bumper sticker causes many people to chuckle, but it is certainly more than a funny quip; it communicates an urgent need not only for Albertans but for all Canadians.

We all know that the development of the oil and gas sector results in job creation, but there is much more to the story that must be considered. Canada needs pipelines because we are competing with countries around the world to be the first to find a buyer for our product. Without pipelines, this process is significantly thwarted.

Business of Supply

Furthermore, let us consider the fact that pipelines are the most environmentally safe and sustainable way to transport our commodity to market and generate revenue, which results in provincial and federal tax dollars. Canadians know those tax dollars are exactly what pays for the hospitals we visit when a loved one is sick, the schools our children attend in order to be educated and the roads on which we drive in order to commute to work.

Oil and gas development has created high-quality, good-paying jobs for Canadians from coast to coast and helps our country as a whole. Much of the prosperity Canada has traditionally enjoyed exists because of our commitment to responsibly developing the natural resource sector. We need the Trans Mountain pipeline and we need it built now. It is time for the Prime Minister to stop his commitment to his appearance and start defending the needs of Canadians.

● (1250)

Despite the fact that the Trans Mountain pipeline received government approval in 2016, it should be noted that Kinder Morgan, the company building the pipeline at the time, announced that it could not proceed with construction in the spring of 2018 because of regulatory uncertainty. The government simply was not willing to give it the provisions it needed in order to go forward with the project. As a result, it pulled out and took its investment south. This only hurt Canadians. It certainly did not serve us.

However, in an effort to save the project, the Prime Minister actually bought the pipeline, to the tune of \$4.5 billion, and that money came from taxpayers from coast to coast.

It was then reported by the Parliamentary Budget Officer that the Prime Minister and the Liberal government had overpaid for the pipeline. It was not worth the amount they put on the table.

Not only that: It is clear to the House and to Canadians that the Prime Minister has actually been dishonest with them, that he has spoken untruths. He promised that he would get this pipeline in the ground and act in their best interests, but when he put up the \$4.5 billion, it was again for the sake of appearances. Meanwhile, in the background he is working very hard through legislation in the House to stop that pipeline and any other pipeline that this country might require in the future for its well-being.

It should also be noted that under the former government, there were four pipelines that were successfully built without using a single dollar from Canadian taxpayers. That is what a government does. It puts people first by drawing in investment and by being true to its word.

It must be understood that Canada's energy industry holds a ton of potential, and not only prosperity, which is important, but it can also be used as an instrument of peace, freedom and security around the world, and this point must not be lost on Canadians. For this reason, it is important to note that the leader of the opposition has announced a plan where he will be undoing this damage and moving us forward as we create a prosperous Canada.

On the carbon tax, again we have another example of the Prime Minister being more concerned about looking as if he is doing something for the environment than actually doing something for the environment. How do we know this? We know this because the

Prime Minister is imposing a carbon tax on Canadians from coast to coast, but he is allowing the largest emitters off the hook. They are only paying about 20% of the total revenue that will be generated from the carbon tax. Meanwhile, soccer moms, farmers and everyone else in this country are going to be paying their fair share.

We also know that in Canada we are not going to stop heating our homes, driving to work, putting clothes on our back, glasses on our faces and contacts in our eyeballs. However, all of these things are somehow related to fossil fuels. We are not going to stop living life. Therefore, let us be realistic for a moment and acknowledge our current reality, because overnight it cannot switch. Our current reality is that we are reliant on fossil fuels, so, yes, let us hold in hand the desire and ambition to turn towards greener technology. Let us advance in that direction and let us care for our environment. However, let us also acknowledge the real life that we live and keep the lights on.

The real life that we live does require the use of fossil fuels. That said, our behaviour is not going to change because of a carbon tax, which is the stated intent by the Liberal government. As a result, we know that with the largest emitters being let off the hook and the fact that our behaviour is not going to change because of basic necessities of life, that this is in fact just a desire to collect extra revenue. It is a tax on everything, but not an environmental plan.

Meanwhile, here is what we are committed to going forward. We do believe that our planet should be stewarded. We do believe that our environment should be looked after. I am extremely proud of calling Canada my home. I believe that this includes conserving our land, protecting our waterways and natural habitats, investing in green technologies and making sure that we recycle and reduce waste wherever possible. It means scrapping one-time-use plastics and working with other countries from around the world in order to better take care of the environment. This is a positive plan for Canada. This is a plan that puts Canadians first. This is a plan that the Conservative Party of Canada endorses. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister is simply concerned about his image and generating revenue.

● (1255)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who is an independent officer of Parliament and is very much apolitical, did an analysis of the price on pollution. Through that analysis, we know that 80% of the citizens in those provinces, including my home province, Manitoba, are going to be receiving more money than they are paying into it. This means that more than 80% of the residents of Winnipeg North, for example, would have a net financial benefit because of the price on pollution.

Governments around the world are recognizing the value of a price on pollution, but the Conservatives' position is to get rid of the price on pollution. Does the member believe that the net financial gain to my constituents will be taken away by the Conservative Party if, heaven forbid, it were to form government? Why would it take the money away from the residents? That also applies to the constituents the member represents.

Business of Supply

Ms. Rachael Harder: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for proving exactly my point and for admitting that this is, in fact, just a plan to cycle revenue around. For those who need clarification, basically what he is saying is that the government is going to take money in the form of a carbon tax; it is then going to put that money through the cycle of bureaucrats, and then the money is going to filter back to Canadians, from whom it originated.

Somehow, magically, as that money filters through bureaucracy, he is saying that 80% of those people are going to receive more money. I would like to know in what world, through this loop of bureaucracy, money increases by 80%. In what world does that happen? Somehow there is this grand investment scheme where it cycles through a bureaucracy and comes back with an 80% return. Sign me up; I would love to invest in that. It is just not possible. It is a falsehood.

At the end of the day, let us acknowledge that this is exactly what the member opposite is declaring it is, which is a revenue scheme. It is a tax scheme; it is not an environmental plan.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week we had record flooding. We watched houses in the Ottawa area being lifted off and dumped into the river, and then Jason Kenney came to town. To introduce himself to the rest of the country, he threatened British Columbia and said he was turning off the taps. He threatened Quebec and said that it had to shape up. He then threatened to separate. I do not know where he is going to build his pipeline. Is it going to run around the interior ring of Alberta? I am asking myself what kind of disconnect this is from the Conservatives in Alberta, to think that if they huff and puff, the rest of Canada is going to say, "What an excellent idea."

We never heard anything from Jason Kenney about his environmental plan. In my region, which is resource-based, we are seeing record forest fires year in, year out. We are seeing dramatic changes in the climate. We want to know that we have a partner who is taking this seriously. I have yet to hear anything from Jason Kenney.

When I hear the Conservatives talk about their plan when there is no plan, it means nothing to people in the rest of this country. We see Jason Kenney threatening to separate and run his pipelines within his own province unless he gets his way. That is not how this country operates—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Lethbridge.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Mr. Speaker, Jason Kenney no longer serves in the federal government or on the side of opposition. In the House of Commons in the nation's capital, Ottawa, we debate federal issues.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased to stand and speak to what is a two-part motion. One part is about the carbon tax, and the other is about getting the Trans Mountain pipeline built.

As I give my comments, I am going to put a British Columbia lens to it, because I think a British Columbia lens will be very important. We often hear members in the House hold up British Columbia's carbon tax as this great example of something that has been in place

for a number of years. However, they do not tell the whole story. A part of the story is missing.

British Columbia introduced a carbon tax, and at that time I reluctantly decided to watch and see how things would go with this particular carbon tax. I have a few things to say about it. First, it certainly did not do exactly what the government said it would do, in terms of reducing the emissions. However, the government did say that it was going to make the tax revenue-neutral. There was a small decrease in rural property taxes. There was some money that flowed back to the citizens. There was a process to audit that money and how it was returned to the citizens to prove that revenue neutrality was maintained.

This went on for a few years. When the NDP government was elected, the first thing it did was to take the revenue neutrality away from the carbon tax. All of a sudden, it became a tax grab for the province. There was no more offsetting in terms of money in, money out. It became a tax grab, pure and simple. The government was going to spend it wherever it wanted.

That is a cautionary tale for Canadians. In Ontario, Alberta and the other provinces, right now people are being told by the government that this is a great deal and that they will get more money back than they spend. Canadians should remember the example of British Columbia that the government holds up so often as the way to do things. What is going to stop the Liberal government when it starts to realize that its spending is so out of control that it cannot afford to send out those cheques for carbon tax rebates anymore? Quickly, the citizens of this country will have been hoodwinked into another tax grab by the Liberal government, because there is nothing that compels the government to keep it the way it is right now. That is a lesson from B.C., that it will take nothing for the government to change what it is doing.

On top of that lesson, in my opinion British Columbia has the worst kind of carbon tax, in terms of its not providing offsets. What British Columbians also have right now are some of the highest taxes in the country, in terms of the highest gas prices in the country. This is what the provincial NDP government says it wants. It wants gas prices high, and it wants people to change their behaviour. The Prime Minister said that this is what a carbon tax is for: to raise the prices so people change their behaviour.

I want to give a couple of examples of people who are having to change their behaviour, but perhaps not in the way the Prime Minister anticipated. Someone I know fairly well was laid off from her job a number of years ago. She took her severance money and took a big risk. She put her severance money into starting up a small business. It was enough to keep her going, to pay her bills, to have some success in running her own show.

A few months ago, she was diagnosed with cancer and was going to need treatment. When small business operators have cancer, they are suddenly not bringing in any money. In Kamloops, when people need cancer treatment, they have to go to Kelowna. Not only does she not qualify for employment insurance and has meagre savings, but she has to travel back and forth to Kelowna to deal with radiation therapy. That is a two-hour drive every time, and she has had to do this for weeks and weeks.

Business of Supply

•(1300)

Every time she goes, she fills up her gas tank and wonders how she is going to deal with this, as it is costing her more and more. Maybe she will find some program someday that will reimburse her for those costs. In the meantime, she is struggling every minute, every day, to simply fill up her gas tank to drive a couple of hours to Kelowna to get the radiation treatment for her cancer. Can my colleagues imagine the stress that this adds to her life?

During this time, when she was dealing with record sky-high prices for filling up her tank, she noticed something about the Prime Minister. No one begrudges holidays for the Prime Minister, but when she saw him fly from Ottawa to Tofino and back to have a holiday, she said, "He is trying to change my behaviour. I don't see him trying to change his own behaviour for a minute." I just had to tell members how that made her feel, when she could barely afford to put gas in her tank, that the Prime Minister wants her to change her behaviour but he is not doing a thing in terms of his carbon emissions.

I have another example. In rural Clearwater, there was a shutdown of the mill for six weeks over the Christmas period, and another shutdown has just been announced. It is going to be only for a week, maybe two weeks, but there are continually shutdowns. What happens when a mill shuts down is that the employees do not get paid for six weeks. They might get a bit of EI, but they do not get their pay for one week. They live in a rural community and lots of them need trucks to do their jobs. They are going into the bush. As they see gas prices hitting \$1.60, \$1.65, \$1.70, they are saying, "Oh my goodness, I am not going to be getting a paycheque for next week. The mill is closed down. There is no money coming in." How does that change their behaviour? They are having to make decisions in terms of not being able to buy meat for their families and having to use rice and do other things, simply to fill their trucks with gas. They do not have choices as people do in Vancouver, where they can make decisions around public transit. They are people who have to live with the carbon tax creating increased challenges in their lives.

I think colleagues can see that the carbon tax is creating huge challenges, especially at the gas pump. Certainly, a small measure of help would be for us to look at whom it is really hurting and how it is hurting them.

The other part, of course, is the Trans Mountain pipeline. I talked about Clearwater. The people in that community have been looking forward to that pipeline going through the community. Maybe the mill is going to be shut down for a week or two, but they saw other opportunities. They saw that there would be potential work digging to put the pipeline in. There were local contractors and restaurants all looking forward to this construction season happening right now.

As we look at the Trans Mountain pipeline, that is another important piece of the puzzle. I think that some analysts say it would give increased capacity. That would help with the shortage issue in B.C. and actually help with gas prices in B.C. However, the other, more important thing is that it would provide an opportunity for all Canadians.

This really is a motion with two parts that go very well together. It talks about the carbon tax on the one hand, and it talks about the Trans Mountain pipeline on the other.

I toured the Trans Mountain pipeline in the winter. It was a wonderful opportunity. I toured it looking for the stories that were positive, because we hear too many negative stories. I talked to first nations, who saw a huge opportunity. I talked to communities and mayors. There are enormous opportunities.

Members should really think about this motion and think about the people who are being impacted, and how the carbon tax and the Trans Mountain pipeline need to go hand in hand in terms of this motion. Hopefully, they will think of that cancer patient I just talked about or the mill worker who is really struggling with decisions about how to put food on the table.

•(1305)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the examples that the member opposite has given. I want to remind her that this government has taken a holistic approach to dealing with Canada's economy and has made very solemn commitments to focus our attention on Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be part of it.

We brought in many different programs that allowed hundreds of thousands of people to be lifted out of poverty. We have a growing economy, with over 900,000 new jobs created over the last few years. In a very tangible way, the government is putting more money in the pockets of Canadians.

The member opposite chooses to share some of her concerns, but I would ultimately argue that our government has taken into consideration the environment, the pipelines, and many positive social policies, and when all is said and done, average families are seeing a net benefit of \$2,000 more a year. Does the member not think that will be of help to many constituents who are in need?

•(1310)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the only thing the Liberals have done for the lady I was talking about who has cancer treatments and is having challenges with the cost of filling her gas tank is call her a tax cheat.

She has a small business. That is the legacy of the government for our small business entrepreneurs who are trying to get ahead. The Liberals changed the rules to make it more difficult for them. They do not have the benefit of pension plans and they do not have the benefit of health insurance to see them through. They work hard, day to day, and she certainly is not any better from any of the decisions the government has made.

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in October of last year, the United Nations released a report from climate change scientists that said we have 12 years to take serious action if we are going to try to combat climate change. Yesterday the United Nations released another report; it said that one million species of plants and animals around the world are at risk and that one of the reasons is climate change.

Business of Supply

Across the world, including in my riding of Kootenay—Columbia, students are walking out of school on Fridays because of their very serious concern about climate change and whether they will even have a future.

I realize the best defence is an offence, so the Conservatives' attack on a carbon tax or a price on pollution is understandable from a political perspective, but if the Conservatives are really serious about the environment and the future of our children, where is their climate plan?

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the environment is absolutely important. My colleague might be aware that we have committed to releasing a comprehensive environmental plan within the next few weeks, but is not going to be a plan that is simply a tax grab. It is going to be a plan that is effective and practical.

With regard to the last Parliament, the report that came out yesterday about diversity of species talked about Canada and how it has done pretty well because of the targets that we had set and the areas we had set aside as protected areas.

I can look at the history of our Conservative government previously and say that we did many things in terms of protecting the environment, because it is absolutely complex and comprehensive. It is more than just emissions. It is about the sewage that is being dumped into the oceans and many other things.

[Translation]

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Winnipeg South.

I would like to thank the hon. member for Carleton for his motion. Unfortunately, I cannot support it. Canadians expect more than simplistic solutions to the complex problems that they are facing, that we all are facing, and that we must address together.

Instead of proposing simplistic solutions, we have a climate plan with more than 50 measures. These measures include putting a price on pollution, accelerating the phase-out of coal-fired electricity while ensuring a fair transition for workers and communities, and making generational investments in clean technology, green infrastructure and Canadian ingenuity.

[English]

I am an Albertan. I am an Edmontonian. I know first-hand that the previous government's approach to pipelines hurt workers, communities and, frankly, all Canadians.

When the Federal Court of Appeal made its decision on the proposed Trans Mountain expansion project in August 2018, we had an important choice to make. We could have gone along with the failed approach that the Conservatives touted, an approach that disregards the courts, has no plan to protect the environment and coastal communities and has no meaningful two-way dialogue with indigenous communities, but we knew then, as we know now, that Canadians are counting on us to get this right so we made a decision: We committed to doing the hard work necessary to move the process forward in the right way on the Trans Mountain expansion project.

●(1315)

[Translation]

In particular, we must act in accordance with the directives handed down by the Federal Court of Appeal. However, we have heard very little about that today.

Instead, we have seen a lot of finger pointing, expert assessments swept under the rug and history being rewritten. We have also heard attacks against our energy sector. The Conservatives are trying to disparage our energy sector. In fact, in recent weeks and months, a final decision was made to invest \$4.5 billion in a petrochemical facility in Sturgeon County, not far from Morinville, where I grew up. This project will create jobs for 3,000 workers at the peak of construction, as well as several hundred permanent jobs once the facility is operational.

Inter Pipeline announced two new \$3.5-billion facilities in the industrial centre that will create more than 2,000 direct full-time jobs at the peak of construction and more than 200 full-time jobs once all the facilities are operational.

Moreover, Nautical intends to develop a \$2-billion methanol plant south of Grande Prairie, which will create 1,000 direct construction jobs. These projects add value to our products, and innovation in the sector will help fight climate change.

[English]

The motion states that we should be clearing the way for pipelines to be built. The fact is that the previous government failed to do exactly that. It failed to get our oil to new markets. This is a Canadian resource that supports communities across Canada, including that of my own family, and supports good, middle-class jobs in my home province.

When the Conservatives began in government in 2006, 99% of Canadian oil went to the United States. When they finished in government in 2015, 99% of Canadian oil was still heading to our greatest and best customer, the U.S., until it was no longer our greatest and best customer. This has led to our resources being sold at a discount, a discount so deep that it counts in the billions of dollars per year, and all Canadians, from coast to coast to coast, have seen and felt the impact.

The Conservatives and the conservative press have tried to refute this, but the facts speak for themselves. The Conservatives boast about a pipeline flow reversal and a connection to an existing pipeline, but it is an empty boast and it does nothing to help workers in our energy sector and the families that depend on those workers to have well-paying, middle-class jobs. This includes my constituents and their families and friends and my family and my friends. These are jobs that build strong communities. They are jobs that keep our economy going.

If we had not lost a decade under the previous Conservative government, we would not be in the situation we are in today, and in 2015, Canadians rejected that failed approach.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

We have listened to Canadians. Our government is committed to developing Canada's abundant resources the right way.

The environment and the economy go hand in hand.

[English]

That is why we approved the Line 3 replacement project. It is because the environment, the economy and energy all go hand in hand.

Line 3 is almost complete on the Canadian side. It will add 370,000 barrels of new export capacity for our oil, and it has created thousands of jobs during construction.

That is why we have always supported the Keystone XL project. Keystone XL is moving forward here in Canada. Our Minister of Natural Resources continues to strongly advocate on behalf of this project south of the border.

That is why these projects are not happening in isolation. They are moving forward in tandem with a comprehensive climate plan. It is the strongest climate plan Canada has ever had.

Of course, the Conservatives think we should simply put our heads in the sand and hope for the best. They believe the planet is not going to warm up that much. They say it is only water vapour. The science has to be wrong. It is only thousands of scientists; there are probably three in the world who disagree with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, so the Conservatives want to focus on those three.

Canadians expect and deserve better. Future generations are counting on us to get this right.

• (1320)

[Translation]

With respect to TMX, we followed the recommendations of the Hon. Frank Iacobucci, the former Supreme Court of Canada justice who was appointed as a federal representative to oversee the consultation process with indigenous peoples and provide guidance during the process.

We listen to what the consultation teams hear on the ground, and we respond accordingly. These teams now have about 60 members, which is twice as many as they had initially.

We have made it clear that a final decision on the project will not be made until we are satisfied that the Crown has adequately fulfilled its duty to consult and that we have mitigated and taken into account any impact on indigenous communities. We will then make a decision on the project based on the National Energy Board's reconsideration report, strengthened by our draft principles, which now guide major review projects.

[English]

Unfortunately, the Conservatives voted to defund and kill this very reconsideration process.

Let us be clear. We will do the right listening. We will do the accommodations needed. We will proceed at the right time in the

right way so that the Trans Mountain expansion can unfold in the right manner.

The Conservatives have shown their complete disregard for this process. To kill the NEB's review of marine shipping and to end our consultation with indigenous communities would have stopped the project outright. We knew that, and we are proceeding with a better way.

[Translation]

In 2019, the approach needed to develop resources is a detailed approach that takes into account both the environment and our constitutional duty to consult indigenous peoples. In fact, that is the only way to proceed.

[English]

The motion before us today needs us to make sure that we do this right. The motion today would have us skip crossing our t's and forgetting to dot the i's when dealing with major resource projects. It would bring us back to the old ways of barging ahead without taking the time to do things right. It would try to short-circuit the courts, disregard our constitutional duty to consult and ignore the urgency of a changing climate.

That is not the way our government is going to proceed. It is not the way Canadians need us to proceed. They told us they want a better way forward. We have listened to Canadians and we have heard Canadians and we are now acting.

We are putting in place a system in which Canadians can have confidence, a system that will allow great projects to be built across this country. It is the right time and the right way to do this. It is a system that will create good, well-paying middle-class jobs. Our environment and our economic health depend on it, and so does our future.

That is why I call upon members of the House to reject this motion and for all of us to work together to build a better Canada that works for everyone.

Mr. Jim Egliniski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals talk about all the good they are going to do for the people of Canada and how they are saving them money. Could the member tell me what his government is going to do about the fact that in North America, the largest number of vehicles sold in any given year are large, full-size pickup trucks. Small compact cars amount to about 14% of the total vehicles sold in Canada. The rest are large vehicles. Has the member's government taken that into account?

What is his government going to do to try to change the attitude of the people of Canada, or is his government just using its carbon tax as a tax grab?

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, I love pickup trucks. My first vehicle was a pickup truck. My whole family drives pickup trucks.

We need good, well-paying jobs so that people can pay what they need to pay to keep those trucks running, while also ensuring that we are respecting our international climate change obligations through the Paris Agreement.

Business of Supply

That is why we need a climate action plan that puts a price on pollution. Over 85% of Canadians want to see a price on pollution.

Doing the right thing and choosing the vehicle of one's choice when one has a well-paying job is something that all Canadians can do and are welcome to do.

Hon. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on a couple of themes that have been raised by the official opposition, and that is the question of pricing emissions. I take my inspiration from Preston Manning, Stephen Harper, Brian Mulroney and Ronald Reagan, all good Conservatives who argued for 30 years that the best way to move forward when it came to the greenhouse gas emissions challenge was to put a price on emissions. That is why Brian Mulroney and Ronald Reagan negotiated the cap and trade system to reduce sulphur dioxide and other gases that were polluting our lakes and creating acid rain. That is why Mr. Harper previously planned on putting a \$60-a-tonne price on a cap and trade system he was designing to effect that exact change.

Therefore, for us on this side of the House, we are wondering how it is that the Conservative opposition has lost its way. It has been the Conservative Party over decades that has been leading the discussion. Now that we are implementing that pricing mechanism, whether it is through pricing emissions or using a cap and trade system like some provinces have done, we are a bit bewildered on this side of the House as to why the Conservatives have abandoned the very principles they have been pushing for 40 years.

• (1325)

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, I come from Alberta and I am a Liberal, which puts me on the blue spectrum of where Liberals reside in the first place. I am a social progressive but also a fiscal hawk, and I want to see us manage things properly. However, I have to say to my hon. colleague that I think the progressive Conservative Party is gone. We now have a Conservative Party in this country that was taken over by the Reform Party, rebranded a couple of times and mishmashed in different ways. It has now abandoned the fundamental Conservative principles of preserving the only planet we have and using the market to price pollution. If someone dumped a whole bunch of garbage on our lawn, we would want them to pick it up. That person would have to pay for it. That is what we are doing when we pollute the environment. There needs to be a price on pollution. It is a Conservative theory. The fact that the Liberals are advancing it tells us just how far the Conservatives have lost their way.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 31 indigenous partners were counting on the northern gateway pipeline before the current Liberal Prime Minister outright rejected it, instead of redoing the consultations and getting it right. There are dozens of indigenous communities who were not consulted over the shipping ban, Bill C-48, robbing their communities of future opportunities. Hundreds of indigenous-owned businesses and dozens of indigenous communities oppose the no more pipelines bill, Bill C-69. Indigenous, northern and Inuit communities were not consulted about the government's unilateral ban on offshore oil and gas drilling in the north.

How can the member possibly ask anyone to believe a single word he says when he talks about consulting indigenous communities and

people on major resource projects, given the Liberals' own record of running roughshod over indigenous communities that support it?

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that we have 60 people on the ground meeting full time with indigenous stakeholders. The Minister of Natural Resources has met with over 120 first nations organizations not only to listen but to make sure that we accommodate them.

We will take no lessons from 10 years of failed governance in the area of pipelines and energy management from the old Conservative government on this side. The Liberals are going to get this done in the right way.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.):

[Member spoke in Cree as follows:]

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[Cree text translated as follows:]

Mr. Speaker, to all my relations, I say hello. I am very proud to be here.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour for me to have the opportunity today to speak about how we must invest in the middle class and build an economy that works for everyone, an economy that provides more good, well-paying jobs for the middle class and helps those working hard to join it, an economy where everyone, no matter their age, can live and work with pride.

At the same time, people across the country want to protect their children and grandchildren from the dangers of climate change. They want to invest in technologies that will help us lower the cost of living and reduce the emissions that cause climate change.

[English]

A Canadian green deal is based on balance. Failing to invest in a cleaner more sustainable future threatens the things that Canadians rely on for their success: an affordable cost of living; good, well-paying jobs and resilient communities. It would make it harder to help those who are poor, because it would make it difficult to ensure that we have those things to pay for those services.

Climate change, as we know, is real, and we need to take action today. Budget 2019 made significant investments to protect Canada's environment while also creating new jobs and making life more affordable for Canadians. These investments go hand in hand with efforts to help more people find a home, find and keep good jobs, retire with confidence and get affordable prescription drugs when they need them. The budget also delivers on a promise of a stronger middle class, and advances the plan to protect the health of all Canadians, the health of our economy and the health of future generations.

Business of Supply

During their 10 years, the Harper Conservatives ignored the needs of a better future for all, the needs of the environment, of the middle class, and especially the needs of those who are most poor in our society who want government to work for them. Today, more Canadians are working, more families have more money in their pockets and Canada's middle class is growing.

The current leader of the Conservative Party, as well as Ford and Harper, all spent time cutting services and are cutting services today, like local library services, day care centres and even tree planting. This is absolutely unconscionable. The priorities of Ford and the current leader of the Conservative Party are about slashing funds for city services while moving forward with a pricey campaign promise to bring beer into convenience stores. They want to make it cheaper and more affordable so that we can drink beer. "Where is the sense in that?", said Mayor John Tory. "Cutting public health programs and daycare programs to find the extra money to pay the Beer Store to change their contract?" That is what he said.

In Manitoba, in alliance, the leader of the Conservative Party and Pallister continue to cut services, including emergency services at a hospital in my riding, the Misericordia Health Centre. They are about to cut it at the Concordia Hospital. Gone. They have been reducing services in health care right across the province.

In fact, Premier Brian Pallister is leaving money on the table, including \$547 million for public transit, which is important to having a good climate change program to ensure we protect the environment. The Manitoba government left \$451 million of green infrastructure dollars on the table. Where is the Canadian green deal in that, a deal based on balance? It is not with the Pallister government. It left \$61 million behind for community, cultural and recreation infrastructure. We need more good programming to ensure we do not have the meth crisis we have in Winnipeg right now, and to ensure that young people do not have to join gangs in order to find something to do. The government also left \$112 million of rural and northern programming on the table. It is absolutely unconscionable.

On this side of the House, we have taken action to ensure there is a price on pollution right across Canada in 2019. We have implemented a federal backstop system in jurisdictions that do not have a standard that meets that standard at the federal level. As part of this plan, the federal government will be returning the bulk of the direct proceeds from the fuel charge in the form of a climate action incentive payment directly to individuals in the provinces, meaning it is costed so that those dollars are going back to the citizens. The residents of Ontario, New Brunswick, Manitoba and Saskatchewan have a government that is looking out for them and for all citizens. Their families can claim that climate incentive on their personal income tax returns. The remainder of the direct fuel charge proceeds will be used to support small and medium-sized businesses and other particularly affected sectors in these provinces.

The Canadian green deal is about balance. It is balanced to help reward good behaviour that will have an impact in protecting the environment and stop, or even at some point reverse, climate change.

As the Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed last week, most households will receive more in climate action incentive payments than their increased costs resulting from the federal carbon pollution pricing system. People are going to be better off under this plan.

● (1330)

[Translation]

We know that climate change is not just an environmental issue but also an economic and social issue.

Our government's plan will grow the Canadian economy, build a nation of innovators and create good, well-paying jobs that strengthen the middle class.

Budget 2019 proposes significant investments and, above all, enables the government to implement new measures to help Canada's middle class and all those working hard to join it.

● (1335)

[English]

In budget 2019, our government announced several actions that build on our plan to help Canadians and support our communities. For example, we intend to lower the energy costs of Canadians by investing \$1 billion to help increase energy efficiency in residential, commercial and multi-unit buildings. The budget also proposes to provide new infrastructure to help build cleaner and healthier communities through a major municipal infrastructure top-up investment of \$2.2 billion. We are helping communities. This will double our government's commitment to municipalities and help communities fund their infrastructure priorities, including public transit, water and green energy projects. However, this is not all that we are doing.

[Translation]

We asked the wealthiest 1% of Canadians to pay a little more so that we could give the middle class a tax break. That tax break is helping over nine million Canadians.

[English]

We have also created the Canada child benefit, or the baby bonus. This baby bonus is important to the people of Winnipeg Centre. In 2018-19, every month, on average, we make 8,490 payments of the baby bonus to citizens in Winnipeg Centre, helping 15,510 children. It is helping to lift thousands of children out of poverty. It is \$790 on average, which is \$6,733,000 a month directly into the economy of the people of Winnipeg Centre.

Business of Supply

This is not all that we have done. We have also helped seniors in my riding. We have made 9,580 payments under old age security, for an average of \$6,520 under the guaranteed income supplement; 4,620 payments for an average of \$6,490; as well as our top-up, which came in the last budget, of 2,620 new payments, for a total of \$1,040 a month, to seniors in Winnipeg Centre. That is \$96 million which is going to help Canadians advance in life.

[Translation]

In closing, I would like to say that Canadians want a plan that will enable them to prosper in a world where the climate is changing. Our government is investing in a cleaner and healthier future for all Canadians.

[English]

We have made a lot of progress since the fall of 2015, since the decade of darkness. However, we know there is more work to be done, and we are not going to lose sight of that goal. We will keep helping the middle class and those working hard to join it. Our government will work hard for Canadians to build an economy where everyone has a fair and true chance of succeeding, lifting thousands of Canadians out of poverty. We will ensure that our government works, not just for the few as under Harper, not just for those who might vote for them, but for all Canadians no matter what their political stripe, so that we ensure we are all better off in the future.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have been hearing all day from the government members touting their so-called accomplishments throughout their speeches. However, what we are talking about specifically with this motion is the issue of gas prices and the impact it is having on Canadians right across the country, and not just in B.C., which I know is very high.

We are asking the government to put a specific focus on ensuring that those gas prices are brought down and that Canadian energy can get to those markets, where they need them, to reduce the price of gas. I would like to hear from the hon. member on what his government's plan is to do that.

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, I am quite proud of the four years of hard work that we have done on this side to actually improve the lives of Canadians, lifting children out of poverty. That is why we want to talk about it, because that is something to be truly proud about.

It is four cents on a litre of gas. It is important. It does have a great impact on people's bottom line, but that money also goes directly back to Canadians in the form of the climate action incentive. Canadians are receiving it back. What this plan hopes to do is modify people's behaviours so that we do not have forest fires across the country, so we do not have major flooding and so we continue to have snow. The climate is changing in such drastic ways across the country.

Let us talk about more things we are proud of. Under the Harper Conservatives, in 2013, garbage was sent to the Philippines. I am proud to say, working with the member of Parliament for Winnipeg North, that we are going to make sure that garbage comes back, that we do not send garbage to poor countries and developing nations, that we actually spend time ensuring that we look after our

environment here and that we look after the garbage we produce here.

We should be very proud about that. That is why we talk about it. That is why I am proud to serve with people like the member for Winnipeg North who cares about those things and who will make sure that we get our garbage back from the Philippines, unlike the Harper Conservatives who sent it there in the first place.

• (1340)

Hon. Kent Hehr (Calgary Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to applaud the member for his speech and in particular for his referencing things we have done to make life more affordable for Canadians, such as the Canada child benefit, our infrastructure investments and our national housing strategy, which is going to see \$40 billion invested in affordable housing to reduce homelessness by 50% and also has green components to make our economy stronger.

Could the member comment on the fact that we are not only bringing in a price on pollution but we are ensuring that we move forward in the right way on the Trans Mountain pipeline to ensure big projects get built? Could the member just comment more on that balance, on how we are going to do that to move forward through to a better Canada?

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, it is extremely important to have a balance in the economy, working with indigenous communities and making sure we can get it done in the right way, but that takes a lot of effort.

We have seen 50,000 consultations on this side by the government contacting individuals and first nations, talking with people directly—Canadians, indigenous people, environmentalists—ensuring that environmentalists can actually give their opinion when we are building this to make sure it is done in a good way.

This works to ensure that indigenous peoples can also see a profit from this, that they can have sole-sourced revenues, so that they can fund their own programs.

Not only that; it is also about ensuring that we invest in those things that sometimes people do not see, like the aboriginal centre on Higgins and Main in Winnipeg Centre, which has received money to retrofit its windows, so that it can have less heat loss, so that the building costs less to heat during the winter, which is sometimes very long in Winnipeg.

We have also been spending lots of money ensuring that indigenous communities do not have to truck in thousands of tons of diesel fuel to run electrical generators, that we hook communities up to the actual hydro being produced on their territories. That sounds like equity.

Let us talk about Shoal Lake and building the Freedom Road so that indigenous peoples can actually access their community, and then we can actually start building a new water treatment plant, which supplies the city of Winnipeg with its clean water. These things are concrete actions that we have been taking day in, day out, year after year for the last three years, which have started to make a significant difference in people's lives.

Business of Supply

I hope we do not stop, because if this stops, if we do not have the opportunity to continue, we are going to set back reconciliation and we are going to set more Canadians back into poverty. That is not what we should be about here in this country. We should continue investing in all Canadians, making sure that all Canadians have an equal opportunity, an opportunity to succeed in this country, our nation.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to speak in the House on an issue of importance to my constituents. I want to let you know that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove, and I know we are all very anxious to hear from him after question period.

The previous Liberal speaker led quite nicely into what I wanted to say. He proved once again how out of touch the Liberal government is with the everyday needs, the everyday concerns of average British Columbians and of average Canadians. For those just tuning in, he said in his speech that if people are worried about high gas prices, they should just change their behaviour. In my riding, gas is \$1.52 for a litre of fuel. It has been up to \$1.80 plus in metro Vancouver, but we can just modify our behaviour.

If construction workers are driving a pickup truck full of drywall to go to work to feed their family, they should just modify their behaviour—stay home that day and maybe do not go to work. Maybe they should be hauling drywall on top of an electric vehicle. Maybe they should be driving a Prius when they have to do heavy construction labour building homes in my riding of Chilliwack—Hope. Just modify their behaviour.

If people need to take their mother to the doctor's office in my riding, which has limited transit options, maybe they should tell her to wait in the rain for the bus if she can get it, or tell her she can get her prescriptions next week; she does not need to go to the doctor. Why are people complaining about the high price of gas? They should just modify their behaviour. If they want to take their kids to school, why do they not just modify their behaviour?

Has the member ever been outside of Winnipeg Centre to a rural community? Do any of the Liberals represent rural Canadians who have to drive to work? They have to drive to school. They have to drive to get to doctor appointments, but for the Liberals, people are just exhibiting bad behaviour. People made a bad decision when they decided to live in rural Canada in one of the most rural countries in the entire world. That is a bad decision, and people should modify that decision.

It is an outrageous attack on rural Canadians to have that kind of attitude from the Liberal government, to tell them to modify their behaviour as if everyone lives within walking distance of a SkyTrain. That is the Liberals' attitude. They also have the attitude that everyone can just pay for it, that everyone has the ability, because that is whom they are connected to. That is whom they listen to.

We saw it with their \$12-million gift to a multi-billion dollar company, Loblaws, a company that has more money than most Canadians can ever imagine having. The government took money from average, everyday Canadian commuters and gave it to a multi-billion dollar company—\$12 million for something that Loblaws would have bought on its own.

That is whom the Liberals look out for. We saw it with SNC-Lavalin. Liberals look out for the big corporate interests and their big wealthy friends. In British Columbia, the person driving a luxury SUV whom Liberals are looking out for can peel off another \$20 when the gas price goes to \$1.75. It is nothing to them. They just reach into their wallet and peel off another couple of twenties and say they are doing something for the environment while they do not change a single behaviour.

The people I represent have to make choices and do not have hundreds of dollars left over at the end of every month and are struggling every month to make ends meet under the government. They do not have the option to just reach into their pockets and pull out another couple of extra twenties. They reach into their rainy day fund. They reach into the money they might have put away in an RRSP. They reach into the money they might have put into their children's future education fund. When people do not have that money available to them because of high gas prices, because of the increased cost of living, they do without, something that the Liberals have never understood.

My colleague, the member for Carleton, referenced again today that it is clear that the Prime Minister does not have the faintest clue what it is like to sit down at the kitchen table and try to balance a budget for a family. He has never had to do it. He has never had to run a small business where the cost of fuel determines whether he will make a profit from month to month.

● (1345)

There are now non-profit, volunteer organizations in British Columbia that drive people to cancer appointments and are seeing their operations devastated by this increase in the cost of fuel, and the Liberals say that they should modify their behaviour. I guess maybe they should go to one fewer chemo treatment. What is being said is that people should modify their behaviour. People are polluters if they go to work, go to school or take their children to activities that help them become better rounded individuals.

I have to touch on this. In British Columbia, we have a provincial government that has completely failed its people. First of all, it has taken Alberta to court to stop it from building a pipeline into the province. Now it is going to court to insist that Alberta continue to send oil and gas to British Columbia. It is outrageous. We know that the pipeline, if it were built, would reduce the price of wholesale fuel, refined fuels, in the Lower Mainland by about 20¢ a litre. If we combine that with the carbon tax in British Columbia, which is 9.8¢ when we add the GST, it is 30¢ a litre right now as a result of the Liberal government's inability to get the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion built and the NDP's carbon tax.

The NDP has a carbon tax that was brought in by the B.C. Liberal government, and it has now made it completely revenue-neutral to the government. The government gets all the money now. There is no rebate in taxes. This is a preview of exactly what will happen across the country if these Liberals are re-elected. People should not fool themselves. The \$1.75 prices we are seeing in British Columbia are coming right across the country, as well as the fact that the government will see that revenue pool and take it all.

Business of Supply

Right now the Liberals are saying things like they are going to give it all back, which is a great scheme. If we give them our wallet, there will be more left over when they give it back to us. What a great scheme. That is how it always works with the government, is it not? It always gives back more money than people give it on the front end. Just pay the government and trust that we will get more afterward.

We know what happened in B.C. With the stroke of a pen, the NDP government took all the money for itself. It took all the money for itself, and it is forced to have a carbon tax by the federal government. Therefore, we have a two-step process in British Columbia that needs to be undertaken. The first step is to get rid of the federal government that requires a national price on carbon. That is job number one. Given the results in the by-election last night, I would say we are off to a good start, because after the next federal election, there will not be many Liberals left in British Columbia because of the attitude we have seen here today—things like telling people to modify their behaviour and that they are bad people if they use their vehicle, even though they have no other options. Then we will work on getting rid of the provincial carbon tax.

On the Trans Mountain pipeline, this is something that the government has bungled from day one. First of all, it added on 10 months' worth of additional hearings, which were supposed to ensure that this pipeline met the requirements for consultation with indigenous communities. We were told that it had to be pushed off almost a year so that the government could meet the requirements of the court. Of course, it held those expensive hearings and did not change a single recommendation. The only thing it did was delay the decision.

Does that sound familiar? Again and again, the government has delayed and delayed the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion decision. That now is coming home to roost. For a pipeline that was supposed to be in service this year, not even a shovel has turned this year. Another construction season will be missed this year.

British Columbians know more than most what it is like to live in a very unaffordable region. The government has done more in three and a half years to make life less affordable than any government in history. That is why job one is to replace the government with one that understands the needs and the concerns of everyday Canadians and does not think they are bad Canadians for driving their kids to and from sports or going to work to feed their families, that does not think they need to modify their behaviour and that thinks they are doing their jobs and looking out for their families. That is job number one. We will help them get ahead when we replace the government in October.

• (1350)

Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in answer to this, the hon. member will talk about similar themes to those he just talked about, but before he does that, I would like him to address one very important thing. He has been here a while. Several years ago, as a commitment to the people of Canada, it was stated that a re-elected Conservative government led by Stephen Harper would “reduce the federal excise tax on diesel and aviation fuel by half, from four cents per litre to two cents per litre, reducing the price of transportation”.

Why did the former Conservative government not do that?

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, I will tell colleagues why we did not do that. We instead reduced the GST from 7% to 6% to 5%, which resulted in an across-the-board reduction in more than just the cost of fuel. The cost of fuel was reduced because of the actions that Stephen Harper and our government took. We did all of that while returning Canada to a budgetary balance in 2015. That is what we did.

Yes, we made some tough choices. We made the choice to reduce government revenue so that we could leave more money in the pockets of everyday Canadians. That is the difference between Conservatives and Liberals. The Liberals always believe that the government in Ottawa has a much better plan for our money than we do. That is why they want to take more and more and more of it. Even today they are saying, “Look, just give us more and more. Trust us. We'll give you some back.” What a great plan.

How about if we left more money in the pockets of Canadians so that they could make decisions about how they would like to support their families? That is our philosophy on this side of the House. It is too bad the Liberals have abandoned it.

• (1355)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, governments around the world are recognizing that something is happening in the environment. One of the solutions is a price on pollution. Canada is not alone. Other governments around the world are recognizing the value of a price on pollution. The Conservatives do not have any plan. For over a year they have said nothing in terms of what a Conservative government, heaven forbid, would actually do to deal with the environment. We wait and wait and wait.

Now we have a member who made a statement today. He said that plan one is to get rid of the price on pollution, and plan two is that if there is any province that has a price on pollution, the Conservatives are going to go after that province.

My question for the member is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I believe there is an apology owed. I heard a word that was not exactly appropriate or parliamentary.

An hon. member: I apologize.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Apology accepted.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am looking for an answer from the Conservative Party. If Conservative members do not support the price on pollution and if they want to be a minority in the world, then they are entitled to that position. However, would you please share with Canadians what the Conservative Party plan is on the environment?

Statements by Members

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I think it is very unfair that the member for Winnipeg North is asking our Speaker to justify his plan. He is not to ask you for what your plan is. That will be you as a candidate in an election. He should have been asking the Conservatives to explain their plan.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I appreciate the intervention by the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

I want to remind the hon. members that when they ask a question, they are to ask it in the third person through the Speaker, not to the Speaker. The Speaker remains perfectly neutral, as I want to remind them.

The hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope.

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, British Columbia has had a carbon tax for a number of years and the carbon emissions have continued to go up. It is not working. The only thing it has done is to raise taxes on British Columbians and provide a bonanza of revenue for the provincial government to spend on initiatives as they see fit.

Actually, the environment minister of the Government of British Columbia had this to say, which was very interesting. He is a member of the NDP government. He said, “Greenhouse gases do not respect provincial boundaries or international boundaries for that matter.” He also said that the B.C. government would argue in court that there would be harm to its competitiveness “if other provinces do not put a price on carbon”.

This is the argument that Conservatives have been making for years. Greenhouse gases do not respect international boundaries, yet the Liberals want to put us at a huge economic disadvantage when it comes to our competitors. They might be willing to put our competitiveness into the toilet, and they might be willing to take more and more and more money from Canadians and say they are making bad choices. They might say they are bad Canadians for choosing to live in rural areas and for driving to work and school. That is never the approach that a Conservative government will take.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the price of gas has jumped even further to \$1.43 in Montreal. The Conservatives' solution is to cut the carbon tax and build more pipelines. Quebec does not have a carbon tax, yet gas is still expensive.

In December, their leader even admitted that the lack of new pipelines was keeping gas prices low. If we build pipelines to increase demand, gas will just cost more.

Instead of wasting billions of dollars on the oil industry, we should be investing in green public transportation. That is how we will lower demand for oil. We can also combat climate change and keep gas affordable for consumers at the same time.

That is what it means to act responsibly.

● (1400)

[*English*]

JOANNA WARDLEY

Mr. Joe Peschisolido (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Joanna Wardley, who passed away in March.

When Joanna's son, Steve, was suffering with HIV/AIDS nearly 20 years ago, Joanna and her husband, Brian, felt they had nowhere to turn for support. She vowed that she would help others when she retired, and she stayed true to her word.

Joanna and others founded the Heart of Richmond AIDS Society in 1997, and later the Gilwest Clinic at the Richmond Hospital. Thanks to Joanna, Brian and other like-minded advocates, Richmond residents living with HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C now have treatment and support closer to home.

I wish to extend my sympathies to Joanna's husband, Brian, and their family. May they find comfort knowing Joanna leaves a legacy of love and compassion.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, three years ago, Clark and Kimberlee Moran began the process of adopting a Nigerian orphan by the name of Ayo. They did everything by the book. They used a reputable adoption agency, checked out the orphanage where Ayo lived, and complied with all the laws of Nigeria and British Columbia.

Nine months ago, the Morans travelled to Africa to pick up their son, and that is where the story took a terrible turn. The Minister of Immigration refused to issue travel documents for Ayo. The Morans have done everything right and provided this Liberal government with copious evidence proving that they are the rightful parents of Ayo. However, for almost a year, the Morans have been separated from each other, living thousands of miles apart as they trade off being parents to their child.

They are among the many Canadian families who have felt the cold shoulder of this immigration minister. How heartless. Is this what the Prime Minister meant when he promised sunny ways? When will the minister do the right thing and bring Ayo home?

* * *

RAMADAN

Hon. Mark Holland (Ajax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thousands of residents in Ajax and across Canada are observing Ramadan, and to them I say *Ramadan Mubarak*.

For the fifth year in a row, I am going to be fasting in support of a phenomenal charity that is blowing up across the world, called Give 30. We fast and then take the money we save from fasting and give it to local food banks to help those in need.

Statements by Members

Ramadan is a powerful tool that connects us, through fasting, to the suffering of others. Unfortunately, here in Canada, we still have those who are suffering, but we have made remarkable progress. We are three years ahead of our targets on poverty reduction, having lifted 300,000 children out of poverty.

As we observe Ramadan, this is an excellent opportunity for us to say, “*Inshallah*, we can get rid of poverty in this country altogether.”

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MENTAL HEALTH

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week is CMHA Mental Health Week, and I want to “get loud” about mental health care in northern Saskatchewan.

In my riding, getting the help one needs can be complicated. Mental health workers are hired by tribal councils, by reserves and by the Athabasca and Saskatchewan health authorities to work in clinics and hospitals, always motivated by the fact that they are helping the elders and youth in our communities to live better, one day at a time.

Talking about what one is going through can be hard, but it is only through sharing one's experience that one can get help. We all deserve to feel good and to live with dignity, and mental health care workers in northern Saskatchewan are helping their communities do that every single day.

I thank all the mental health workers across northern Saskatchewan.

I also want to wish a happy birthday to the Petit triplets from Buffalo Narrows, who are celebrating their 52nd birthday today.

* * *

LGBTQ2 COMMUNITY

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to thank and congratulate OUTSaskatoon for its leadership in supporting LGBTQ2 Canadians on the Prairies and across the country. Its response to high levels of LGBTQ2 youth homelessness led to the building of Pride Home, a five-bed home that gets kids who have been kicked out of their home simply for being LGBTQ2 into a safer space so they can finish school and build their lives. OUTSaskatoon is also a driving force behind Enchanté, Canada's new national network of LGBTQ2-serving organizations.

Recently, I announced \$1.1 million in funding to OUTSaskatoon from the Ministry of Women and Gender Equality and from the Public Health Agency of Canada. It will use this funding to get to the roots of gender-based violence in our community and to train officials to make sure we put an end to this violence.

I thank the whole team at OUTSaskatoon. They inspire, save lives and make us Prairie proud.

● (1405)

[*Translation*]

REGIONAL ECONOMY

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has politicized the fighter jet procurement file. Three and a half years later, nothing is happening. The Liberals' improvisation, political interference and schemes are motivated by their naive and reckless election promise to not buy the F-35s.

Our relationship of trust with our main allies is crumbling. The Liberals' political interests do not prioritize defending our territory and maintaining relations with our allies. The government is jeopardizing thousands of jobs in the aerospace industry. The Liberals' 2015 platform said, “Government should base its policies on facts, not make up facts to suit a preferred policy”. A fact-based policy would take the Auditor General's comments and recommendations into account.

Today, the people of Chicoutimi—Le Fjord are calling on the government to base its policies on facts so that we can maintain and improve our regional economy, which greatly benefits from CFB Bagotville.

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PORT OF MATANE

Mr. Rémi Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I want to applaud members of Matane's business community for the amazing way they joined forces to save the port of Matane.

It was one minute to midnight; the community was running out of time to find a solution that would maintain the commercial wharf's operations until its reconstruction. Our people rolled up their sleeves. Instead of giving up, they got busy. They were creative and ingenious. Today, I am proud to say that the solution, which was developed by one of Matane's own businesses, Construction CEG, will keep the port of Matane up and running until reconstruction is complete.

I am proud of our government's \$1.5-million contribution to this project. I have always said that we have everything we need to create growth right here at home. This solution is proof of that. The port of Matane has always been one of my priorities. I would like to thank the business people, the Coalition urgence port de Matane, elected officials and the Minister of Transport and his team. Together we have taken concrete action for our businesses and workers.

* * *

POVERTY

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Outremont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, as I have done many times, I joined the Cafétéria communautaire MultiCaf team to serve food to hundreds and hundreds of residents in need. At the other end of my riding, the Mile End Community Mission prepares 10,000 bags of groceries for families that do not have enough to eat.

[English]

No child in this country should go to sleep hungry. No child should go to school hungry. Our government has already lifted over 800,000 people out of poverty, including more than 300,000 children. We have just increased the Canada child benefit. It is working, and we want to help families even more. Under the leadership of the Prime Minister, we are tackling childhood poverty and we are making real progress.

* * *

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has let down Canadians who voted for him in 2015.

He promised the budget would balance itself. It has not.

He promised huge investments in infrastructure. It turns out the money is stuck in Ottawa.

He promised real action on climate change. Instead, Canadians received more taxes.

He promised transparency and open government, and then he was personally accused of politically interfering in the justice system behind closed doors. Now one of the members of his own Privy Council will be testifying against him.

He lost the ambassador to China. He embarrassed Canada during his trip to India. When welcoming the Prime Minister of Japan, he confused Japan with China.

He pledged \$50 million to a celebrity's cause in a flippant tweet.

He said oil workers have “social impacts” in the communities they work in.

He forgot to mention Alberta in his Canada 150 speech. He spends more time on the beaches of Tofino than in his own office.

I am running out of time here, but it is clear that the Prime Minister is not as advertised.

* * *

THAIDENE NĒNÉ NATIONAL PARK RESERVE

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has introduced amendments to the Canada National Parks Act in budget 2019 to take steps to establish the Thaidene Nënë national park reserve.

I want to acknowledge the work done by our Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the community and people of Lutselk'e, the Dene and Métis in their historical territory.

Thaidene Nënë is a sacred place to the Lutselk'e Denesoline people. Fourteen thousand square kilometres will be designated as a federal national park reserve. The park reserve, near the eastern shores of Great Slave Lake, encompasses vast and extraordinary terrain, ranging from forests to tundra. There are cliffs and islands, lakes, rivers and waterfalls, and it includes the deepest fresh water in North America.

Statements by Members

Thaidene Nënë is also a culturally rich area, including the traditional and present-day hunting, fishing, gathering and spiritual places used by various aboriginal peoples.

Congratulations to Lutselk'e and Chief Darryl Boucher-Marlowe.

* * *

●(1410)

MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week is mental health week, and we need to get loud about what mental health is. We need to look beyond moments of crisis and consider our mental well-being on a day-to-day basis. We need to talk about the real-world health impacts of having a sense of purpose, strong relationships, feeling connected to our communities and being well equipped to cope with crisis.

This past month, the parliamentary mental health caucus brought together advocates, researchers and Canadians with lived experience to discuss the gaps and deficits in mental health services from a wide range of perspectives, seeking consensus on the path forward.

I would like to thank all participants for being part of the conversation. I encourage them, and all Canadians, to get loud this week and take that conversation to the national level.

* * *

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I could talk about the massive deficits or the many ethical breaches, and I could go on about affordability or the lack of leadership, but now everyone has seen the Prime Minister's true colours and his questionable governance.

The Liberal governance has never been reliable or effective, even though the Prime Minister promised a new way of doing things. Worse still, the very person who portrayed himself as a different kind of politician has been embroiled in one scandal after another since 2015.

He promised to balance the budget in 2019, but we still have a massive deficit. We deserve better.

He promised to reduce the tax burden, but the deficit and the carbon tax will make life even harder for Canadians. We deserve better.

He promised to be ethical and transparent, but he is hiding things and has no qualms about cheating. We deserve better.

This Prime Minister does not and will never measure up to the challenges facing our country. Let us give Canadians something to be proud of again. We deserve the best.

Statements by Members

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 2015, Canada has re-emerged as a significant contributor to the international community. Canadians across the country know how essential the brave members of the Canadian Armed Forces are to the collective security of our allies. They speak to me about our support for Ukraine through our renewal of Operation Unifier, about our work on peacekeeping training in Poland and about Canada's role as the leader of the multinational NATO battle group in Latvia as part of Operation Reassurance.

We continue to work toward a strong NATO alliance that will ensure peace in eastern Europe and deter the rising tide of aggression perpetuated by Vladimir Putin.

The first Latvian to sit in the House was an MP for Parkdale—High Park, Sarmite Bulte. It is therefore with great honour that today I, alongside the Minister of National Defence, have the privilege of welcoming Latvian defence minister Artis Pabriks to Parliament.

Canada stands with the minister, with Latvia and with our eastern European allies.

* * *

[Translation]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I will be delivering my statement on behalf of Éloïse, Maude, Étienne and the other members of the environment committee at École secondaire des Pionniers who wish to deliver a message to the elected members of the House about the urgent need to address climate change.

As young people who are aware of the climate crisis, we do not understand why you are reluctant to take action. Be aware that your decisions are putting our lives at risk.

You are still not listening to the cries of scientists who, for decades, have been telling you to go completely green.

Our concerns are being dismissed outright, but they are very real. What good will your departments be if our earth becomes uninhabitable.

We have reached a point where the economy is far from being our priority. Without nature, we see no value in our future.

We hope that today you will finally hear our voices.

We want the environment to be at the heart of every decision you make.

We want you to stop putting everything off until tomorrow.

We want the right to have a future.

Mr. Prime Minister, whether out of concern for Canadians or out of love for your children, please take action.

I would like to tell each of these—

● (1415)

The Speaker: I would remind the hon. member for Trois-Rivières that he must address his comments to the Chair.

The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

[English]

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, sometimes politics can feel like online dating. In 2015, many Canadians were wooed by the Liberal leader. He had a convincing profile. He looked hip. He wore nice clothes. He hung out with all the cool kids. He went to all the best parties. He has that hair.

However, the guy who showed up to the date was not quite who we thought he would be. The guy in the profile turned out to be arrogant, self-involved and out of touch. He stood us up to take an illegal vacation—

The Speaker: Order. Members know that the rules do not permit language that is insulting. That is very clear, and I have made that very clear. I would be more than happy to refer members to the page in the book on procedure that says so.

The hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst.

* * *

[Translation]

LOBSTER AND SNOW CRAB FISHING

Mr. Serge Cormier (Acadie—Bathurst, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, crews have weighed anchor and set their traps. I am very proud to announce to the House that lobster and snow crab fishing season has officially begun in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence and in my riding of Acadie—Bathurst.

[English]

Do members know that Canada exports over three billion dollars' worth of snow crab and lobster each year? Do they know that over 73,000 Canadians make their living working in the fishing industry?

[Translation]

As the son of a fisher, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all those who work in the fishing industry an excellent season.

I would like to thank the fishers, plant workers, producers and aquaculturists for their ongoing efforts to ensure the prosperity of this important industry. Thanks to their respect for the environment and their commitment to sustainable, responsible fishing, we will be able to pass on a healthy fishing industry to the next generation.

[English]

I would also like to thank the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard. Under his leadership, our government found a balanced solution that reduced the size of the restricted fishing zone while maintaining the utmost protections for the North Atlantic right whale.

[Translation]

I wish everyone a successful season.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at Library and Archives Canada, 34 people with developmental disabilities were earning an honorarium of \$1.15 an hour to sort and shred some papers. They were told most recently that their program was going to be cut and they were going to lose their jobs. Families of people with developmental disabilities are very concerned and they are asking the Prime Minister to reverse the cut. Will he do so?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, people with disabilities remain under-represented in the workforce. Working with partners to address the challenges they face in securing gainful employment is important to us. That is why we are taking action to help people, regardless of their disability, to fully participate and be included in society and in the Canadian economy. We moved forward with the historic accessible Canada act and significant investments, taking the lead in advancing inclusion for persons with disabilities.

As for the program the member opposite mentioned, the existing contract has been extended and we are working with the organization to find meaningful—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Milton.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the most difficult thing for families dealing with developmental disabilities is being told that their loved ones are not wanted. In fact, what the government said is that they are no longer operationally required, so I hope it will do better in dealing with this going forward.

Another problem the Liberals have is the fact that the immigration system is broken. We heard that today, from the Auditor General himself. I wonder if the Prime Minister can tell us whether he will be accepting the recommendations of the Auditor General, implementing them and fixing this problem that his government caused.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we thank the Office of the Auditor General for the report, and we will of course be looking carefully at all the recommendations. What the report clearly demonstrates is how inefficient and poorly resourced the asylum system was when it was left behind by the Conservatives. We committed to fixing the underfunded asylum system, and work is already bearing fruit.

Budget 2019 includes the largest investment in the history of the IRB, to help it make fast, fair and final decisions. We have also cleared the legacy backlogs where Conservatives had people waiting up to eight years for a final hearing.

• (1420)

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on February 21, 2017, the official opposition started asking questions about the Roxham Road illegal express entry that the government had opened up through Twitter. It has taken over two and a half years to actually admit to the fact and be told by the Auditor General that there is indeed a problem, and what do the Liberals do? In a complete lack of

leadership, they blame something from somebody else's regime five years ago. They take no responsibility themselves, and it lies at their feet. What will they do to fix this system?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again we see the Conservatives attempting to stir up fears among Canadians about things that they do not need to be worried about. We have made sure that every single person crossing our borders, whether legally or illegally, gets processed according to all our rules. We have seen over the past years, all around the world, an increase in migration and in asylum seekers happening everywhere, and Canada is not immune to that. However, we have a strong immigration system that continues to apply all its steps to everyone crossing the border.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, the Auditor General was scathing in his explanation of how the Prime Minister allowed people to abuse our once fair and compassionate immigration system.

The Auditor General's findings were damning. They clearly show that the system is broken because the Prime Minister allowed people to cross the border illegally at Roxham Road.

When will the Prime Minister apologize to Canadians and the entire world for normalizing the abuse of our immigration system?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Office of the Auditor General for its report.

The report clearly demonstrates how inefficient and underfunded the asylum system was when we inherited it from the Conservatives. We committed to fix the problem and that work is already bearing fruit.

Budget 2019 includes the largest investment in the history of the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada to help it make fast, fair and final decisions.

We have also cleared the backlogs left by the Conservatives, who had people waiting up to eight years for a final hearing.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, everything the Prime Minister said is completely false.

In 2012 the Conservative government implemented rules to speed up the process. Who tweeted in January 2017 inviting everyone to come to Canada? In the past two and a half years, 40,000 people have illegally crossed our border. The system is broken, and the Auditor General agrees.

Will the Prime Minister stop talking nonsense and fix the problem?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the Conservatives are attempting to stir up fears among Canadians, but Canadians know that our immigration system is strong and that it applies to everyone crossing the border, legally or illegally.

We live in an age when people all around the world are more frequently crossing borders in search of safety or a new life. This affects Canada as well, but we have a strong, robust system that applies to everyone.

* * *

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the new UN report on biodiversity concluded that a million species are facing extinction. We are losing natural habitat and marine diversity at an alarming rate. According to UBC professor Kai Chan, who helped write the report, we need fundamental and structural change.

Canadians rejected the Conservative approach. The Liberals have delivered more words than action. Will the Liberals now support our environmental bill of rights, which enshrines healthier environments as a right, protects habitats and compels government action?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the NDP proposes more words, we are actually taking real action.

Our actions include putting a price on pollution, phasing out coal, investments in public transit and green infrastructure, cutting methane emissions, reaching our targets for protecting biodiversity, and protecting marine and land ecosystems.

The NDP and Conservatives continue to pick between the environment and the economy. We are always going to build both for Canadians.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Liberal real action was buying a pipeline.

[Translation]

The report clearly states that we are at a real risk of losing over a million plant and animal species. However, the authors also note that better outcomes can be achieved if we make different choices.

We have a plan to protect our environment while ensuring that not a single worker or community is left behind. The Liberal plan is disastrous for our planet.

What will the Prime Minister do to truly protect our habitats, our ecosystems and marine diversity?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is proud to be reaching our terrestrial and marine area protection goals. Protecting biodiversity is very important, and we are taking steps to do just that.

We have actually done more than that. We have put a price on pollution. We are phasing out coal-fired power plants. We have invested in public transit and green infrastructure. We have cut methane emissions. We are offering a rebate to those who purchase

electric vehicles. We are working with the provinces to invest in greener technology.

We know that building a strong economy means investing in the future and protecting the environment.

* * *

PHARMACARE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the experts all say that the Liberals' actions fall short.

In Ontario, a young family does not have the means to pay \$250,000 for the medicine their son needs to survive. A universal pharmacare program would go a long way toward helping that family and other families from coast to coast to coast.

Evidence in favour of a universal pharmacare program is clear. What is the Prime Minister waiting for?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously no Canadian should have to choose between medicine and food.

Through budget 2019, we are laying the foundation for a national pharmacare program. We created the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health, which works with the provinces and territories on negotiating drug prices for all Canadians. This helps reduce costs by \$3 billion a year.

We also invested \$500 million to establish a national strategy to access high-cost drugs used in the treatment of rare diseases. We know it is important and that is why we will continue moving forward.

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for the parents of six-year-old Joshua, suffering from cystic fibrosis, it is clear that Canada's funding system for medication is broken. For so many families, needed medicine is out of reach.

Experts say Canada is an "outlier" internationally. The Liberal agency will have limited effect, and it proposes little more than a band-aid. New Democrats are listening, and we have proposed a bold solution.

Will the Liberals adopt our pharmacare for all plan, and bring life-saving medicine within reach of every Canadian family?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no Canadian should ever have to choose between paying for prescriptions and putting food on the table. With budget 2019, we are laying the foundation for the implementation of a national pharmacare program. We have created the Canadian drug agency that, working with provinces and territories, will negotiate drug prices for all Canadians. Unlike what the NDP is actually suggesting, it will reduce drug prices by around \$3 billion a year, which is not nothing.

On top of that, we are moving forward with half a billion dollars for a national strategy—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Durham.

*Oral Questions***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in a speech highlighting risks in the Arctic from Russia and China, the U.S. Secretary of State questioned Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic. This is a direct result of the weak leadership of the Prime Minister and our deteriorating reputation around the world.

What is the Prime Minister prepared to do to demonstrate to the international community Canada's sovereignty over the Arctic?

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Passage is a Canadian passage; it is internationally recognized. Our government is standing up to defend our interests. Our Minister of Foreign Affairs reasserted that today. Canadian sovereignty in the north is long-standing and well established. It is where Canadians live and work. I lived there for six years. We will continue to defend our sovereignty, the peoples and the communities in the north and our national interests.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been long-standing until the Prime Minister. He has hurt our reputation around the world, and Liberals claim to be calling other countries for help in our dispute with China, but as this Arctic slight shows, friends and foes alike do not take the Prime Minister seriously. He is too weak to appoint an ambassador. He is too weak to bring a WTO trade challenge. He is too weak to even pick up the damn phone.

Canada has never been so alone. When is the Prime Minister going to start restoring Canada's international credibility?

• (1430)

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Conservatives who offer only divisive ideas and try only to divide Canadians, we are taking our relationships in the world seriously. We build allies, we build relationships and we are constructively engaging in the world.

The decisions the member talks about are life-threatening decisions. These are arbitrary decisions by a Chinese government. We are working hard in a very concerted and organized way to address these deeply concerning decisions. We want to thank our allies like Australia, the EU, France and Germany for standing with us—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's Arctic is a strategic region with immense potential.

Yesterday, the U.S. Secretary of State described Canada's claim to the Northwest Passage as “illegitimate”, casting doubt on Canada's Arctic sovereignty.

The Liberals lost control over our southern regions, they are weakening our relations with our allies, and they could not care less about Canadian sovereignty in the North. What is the Prime Minister prepared to do to show the international community that this part of the Arctic is Canadian?

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. member if he has ever been to the Arctic. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs clearly stated today, Canada is very clear about the Northwest Passage being Canadian. Our Arctic sovereignty is long-standing and well established. The minister attended the Arctic Council meeting in Finland this week to reiterate this and to advocate for Canadian interests. Canada remains committed to exercising the full extent of its rights and sovereignty over our territory.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I am sure hon. colleagues have confidence in the ability of members to answer arguments here, on both sides, within the rules.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Carleton will come to order and show respect for the direction of the Chair.

The hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord.

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[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every passing day brings new Liberal failures.

The conclusions of the Macdonald-Laurier Institute report are scathing. The report found that the Liberal government's decisions around replacing Canada's fighter jets were purely based on reasons of political interest and were not in the national interest.

What does the Liberal government plan to do to resolve this latest fiasco?

[*English*]

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure all members in this House, and indeed all Canadians, that our process to procure 88 fighter jets will be open, fair, transparent and indeed competitive. Unlike the previous Conservative government, which could not even sole source a jet, we are determined to deliver for the men and women in the air force to ensure that they have the equipment they need to do the hard job we ask of them.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all we have so far from the Liberals is a bunch of worn-out Aussie jets.

The Macdonald-Laurier Institute report says:

As a result of this government's policies, its ability to conduct its most basic function, the defence of Canadian sovereignty and that of our allies, is diminishing rapidly.

When will the Prime Minister stop putting his own partisan interests ahead of Canada's national security?

Oral Questions

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to put our record on defence procurement against the Conservatives' record at any time. We have fully costed the defence policy. We have launched the future fight procurement of 88 jets. We have had the delivery of our first interim jet. We have the first large vessels in the water designed and built under the NSS. We have the first OFSV. We have the first AOPS, with two more in the works and steel for the fourth was just cut last week. We have a contract for fixed-wing search and rescue aircraft, and of course, the Canada surface combatants. There is a lot more after that.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I guess she is the architect of this fighter jet fiasco.

The Liberals' excuses for betraying our armed forces will not fix the bridges they have already burned with our allies. The letters in the report prove that the Prime Minister has betrayed Canada on the world stage. To quote the report, "the present government's policies have dealt a blow to Canada-US defence relations, the bedrock of the country's security".

When will the Prime Minister stop undermining Canada's relationship with our closest ally and defence partner?

• (1435)

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the relations we have built with the United States. The NORAD mission we have with the U.S. is the cornerstone. We have actually put this into our defence policy.

One of the most important aspects would be that where the Conservatives could not even replace our aircraft, they actually wanted only 65. We conducted a thorough analysis, and we will be purchasing 88 aircraft that will meet the needs for North American defence.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, can members believe that over eight million Canadians cannot talk to a real person when they call government call centres? Whether it is about their EI, their pensions or immigration matters, call centres are a dead end. It is so bad at IRCC that over 70% of the callers could not even get through. That is 1.2 million people. No wonder. There are no service standards: no standards on access, no standards on timeliness, no standards on accuracy. Do the Liberals not believe that Canadians deserve the most basic level of service from their government?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we welcome the recommendations from the Auditor General's report. Budget 2019 provides over \$42.9 million in investments that will allow IRCC to more than fund 170 full-time agents over two years to respond to people's questions. We have already extended hours in our call centres. We have introduced access to people in our call centres on Saturdays. We are introducing more help through email, social media and a chatbot that learns as it proceeds to answer all the routine questions. We are committed to doing better.

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 2017 the Auditor General called out the Canada Revenue Agency for its poor management of its call centres. Today we learned that the CRA is not the only organization hanging up on people, but apparently all government service offices are doing so. Come on.

Why is it that when SNC-Lavalin, Loblaw's or Mr. Bronfman calls the Prime Minister, he picks up immediately and will move heaven and earth for them, but when average Canadians need assistance from their government, half of their calls are dropped?

This government does not serve the people. This government serves the friends of the Liberal Party of Canada.

It is really not all that complicated. When will the government answer the phone?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government remains committed to improving the CRA's services to ensure that they meet the needs of Canadians.

Unlike the Harper Conservatives, who decided to reduce the number of agents and the operating hours for call centres, our government chose to invest in infrastructure.

I am very pleased to say that we have migrated to a new, modern telephone platform in recent months. The results are encouraging. I will have more to say on this in a few weeks.

* * *

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, high gas prices are hurting the most vulnerable across British Columbia. This week we learned that cancer patients are having services cut, and that is because volunteer drivers cannot afford to drive them anymore. In my riding in British Columbia, people have to drive sometimes six hours for their radiation therapy. Canadians suffering with cancer are paying the full price of the Prime Minister's carbon tax and failure to get the Trans Mountain pipeline built.

When the Prime Minister said that he wanted high gas prices, is this what he meant?

Oral Questions

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the hon. member to the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report, which confirmed exactly what we have been saying the entire time: our plan to put a price on pollution is not only going to reduce emissions, it is going to make life more affordable for eight out of 10 Canadian households.

At the same time, we are moving forward with a theme of our government to ensure that the economy works for everyone, not just a wealthy few. We cut taxes for the middle class and asked the one per cent to pay more. We introduced the Canada child benefit, which put more money in the pockets of nine out of 10 Canadian families. We are ensuring that our government works for everyone, and it is disappointing that the Conservatives vote against us every step of the way.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, throughout Canada, people are suffering because of the failures of the Liberal government. Over and over again, it has taken actions that raise the price of gas, which is deepening the Liberal affordability crisis. In my province, we are forced to rely on American fuel because of the failure by the government to approve the Trans Mountain pipeline. It is time to stop punishing Canadians.

When will the government revoke its carbon tax and approve the pipelines we need to ensure that Canadian fuels can get to consumers affordably?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member and his party were really serious about moving forward on the Trans Mountain pipeline process in the right way, they would not have voted to de-fund and kill a process that will get us to a decision.

We are moving forward on this process with meaningful consultation with indigenous communities. We are engaged with them, we are offering accommodation on the outstanding issues and we are scheduled to make a decision on this. Our hope is to make a decision on this project by June 18.

* * *

• (1440)

CARBONE PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when we first raised concerns about the carbon tax, the Prime Minister said, "Don't worry, look how successful it has been in British Columbia." Then he travelled there and said that \$1.69-a-litre gas is exactly what we want. Now British Columbia has the highest gas prices in the history of North America.

Is this what the Prime Minister wanted to replicate when he announced his new carbon tax?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I trust that the hon. member knows that our plan to put a price on pollution simply does not apply in British Columbia, because it implemented its own plan several years back.

What I am curious about is whether the hon. member, like his Conservative colleagues, is misleading Canadians by refusing to advise them that, in fact, they can claim the climate action incentive? I am also curious about whether the hon. member will be claiming his own climate action incentive, which is going to put \$307 in the pockets of an average family of four in Ontario? The fact is, 80% of Canadians can expect to have more money in their pockets after this plan is implemented. I do not know why he is campaigning on a promise to take that money away.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, actually, the federal carbon tax rules do apply in British Columbia, because if the province wanted to cancel its carbon tax, the Prime Minister would reimpose it. Furthermore, he has used the Liberal carbon tax from B.C. as the model for the whole country, where the tax will rise another 250%.

Why will he not admit that the consequence will be the same right across the country as it has been in B.C.: \$1.80-a-litre taxes on their gas and higher prices for Canadian families?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is using twisted logic in an attempt to mislead Canadians, which should not be surprising, because the only climate plan the Conservatives put forward has been to misrepresent our plan, because they simply do not have one of their own.

The fact of the matter is that people do not have to take my word for it. The Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed that eight out of 10 Canadian families who are subject to the federal backstop will have more money in their pockets after the climate action incentive. It is disappointing in the extreme that the Conservatives will not put forward a plan of their own and instead are campaigning on a commitment to take money away from their constituents.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last year, the Prime Minister visited Saguenay to offer reassurance to aluminum workers about Trump's protectionism. One year later, the tariffs are still in place, and the new Canada-United States-Mexico agreement will not eliminate them.

Yesterday, the municipal council of the City of Saguenay passed a motion demanding that the tariffs be lifted. The NDP's position is clear. The agreement must not be ratified until the tariffs are lifted.

Can the government confirm today, before the House, that it will not ratify the agreement until the tariffs are lifted?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the illegal and unjustified U.S. tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum have to be lifted. That is a message we are delivering to the U.S. constantly, and it is working. Both Republicans and Democrats in the U.S. Congress have called for the removal of these tariffs. Senator Chuck Grassley, the Republican chairman of the senate finance committee, said recently in *The Wall Street Journal* that the U.S. administration should “take the lead by promptly lifting tariffs on steel and aluminum from Canada and Mexico”.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the Liberals' definition of “working” is. The Liberals promised to defend the Canadian steel industry when they signed the new NAFTA, but the number of layoffs we have seen over the past six months tell a different story. There were 12 layoffs at Nova Tube in Montreal, 50 layoffs at Iavaco Rolling Mills in Ontario, 228 layoffs at EVRAZ in Calgary and 230 layoffs at Tenaris in Sault Ste. Marie.

These are not just numbers. These are real people, and they are struggling to make ends meet. How many more Canadians will have to lose their jobs before the Liberals take action to end Trump's tariffs on steel?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear in supporting steel and aluminum workers. We took immediate action when unjust and unfair tariffs were imposed by the Americans. It was dollar-for-dollar retaliation. We also introduced safeguards. Above and beyond that, we introduced a \$2-billion support package for steel and aluminum workers.

We are going to continue to support those in the sector for years to come. We have their backs.

* * *

● (1445)

HOUSING

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, by introducing Canada's first-ever national housing strategy, this government has demonstrated an unprecedented commitment to giving more Canadians a place to call home. Since taking office in 2015, we have invested more than \$7 billion in housing and have helped more than one million Canadians find safe, affordable places to call home.

Could the minister responsible for housing tell the House how the recent agreement between Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador will help more people across our province have access to affordable and dignified housing?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Avalon for his hard work.

We believe that every Canadian should have access to a safe and affordable home. That is why we were so proud in November 2017 to introduce the first-ever national housing strategy, which is going to lift half a million Canadian families out of housing conditions that are unsafe or unaffordable.

That is why we were proud to sign, just a few weeks ago, an agreement with the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador for \$270 million, which will give the province more help to lift more people in the province out of housing conditions that are unacceptable in 2019.

* * *

*[Translation]***CARBON PRICING**

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal carbon tax imposed by the current government has a direct and tangible impact on the cost of transportation.

In practical terms, that means that Quebec families are paying more for fruits, vegetables and other groceries because transportation in Canada costs more. That is the reality. What is more, the Liberal carbon tax is doing nothing to lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Do the Liberals understand that their tax is a fiscal measure not an environmental one?

[English]

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on his final point, I direct the member to the decision of the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal. It confirmed that because revenues go directly to residents, this is a regulatory charge and not a tax.

With respect to his allegation that the cost of goods and services is going to somehow increase, again I will refer to the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report. The Parliamentary Budget Officer corrected certain Conservative MPs by pointing out that his analysis factored in goods and services. He confirmed that eight out of 10 Canadian families would have more money in their pockets after the year had ended.

This plan is going to have a meaningful impact on emissions and make families better off. It is disappointing that the Conservatives will not do the right thing and are campaigning to take money from their constituents.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is all very interesting to hear about Saskatchewan, but my question was about Quebec.

Speaking of which, Quebec's experience has shown that carbon pricing does nothing to lower greenhouse gas emissions. A report tabled by the Premier of Quebec a few months ago shows that Quebec's carbon exchange did nothing to lower greenhouse gas emissions in 2014, 2015, or 2016.

I will ask my question again. Will the Liberals finally understand that the Liberal carbon tax is a fiscal measure, not an environmental one?

Oral Questions

[English]

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find the hon. member's fascination with our plan curious, since he knows that it simply does not fly in Quebec. One thing I can confirm is that Quebecers know that climate change is real. They believe that we have an obligation and an opportunity to do something about it.

We know what the solutions are in facing the greatest challenge of our time. We know that the most effective thing we can do to transition to a low-carbon economy is to put a price on pollution and return revenues to Canadian families.

If members do not believe me, they can look to Mark Cameron, Stephen Harper's former director of policy, or Preston Manning. They could even look to Doug Ford's chief budget adviser, who actually testified to that in the Senate in 2016.

This time—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, people in my riding are paying over \$1.50 a litre for gasoline today, with prices nearing \$1.80 in metro Vancouver. These prices are fuelled by the government's insistence on a carbon tax and the Liberals' inability to get the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion built. These high gas prices are making one of the most unaffordable regions in North America even more expensive. When the Prime Minister was asked about gas prices like these, he said this is “exactly what we want”.

Why does the Prime Minister continue to celebrate every time the price at the pump goes up, leaving Canadian families with less money in their pockets?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been taking questions in this chamber for a number of months from the Conservatives, and not once have they asked us a question that indicated they were willing to do more to protect our environment.

The fact is that climate change is an existential threat, not only to Canada but to the entire world community. The fact is that we have put forward a plan that has 50 measures that are going to combat climate change.

The Conservatives are trying to grab lightning and campaign on misinformation that they think will pander to the masses. They do not have any ideas, so they mislead Canadians about ours. It is time they took climate change seriously, because that is what Canadians want us to do.

With respect to our plan, we know it is going to leave them—

• (1450)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal member has just made it clear that he thinks consumers in my riding, the people who have to drive to work, drive to school, drive their parents to doctors' appointments, need to pay more.

I have news for him. I do not work for wealthy Liberal elites who have money to just throw around at high gas prices. Every extra

dollar that my constituents spend at the pump comes out of their pockets—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. Order on both sides. I am sorry. Members know they cannot be heckling throughout question period and then insist on the application of the rules strictly toward somebody else. Let us have the conclusion of the question.

Order. I asked both sides to come to order. The member for Newmarket—Aurora will also come to order. No more outbursts from him.

The hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope.

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, my constituents do not have an expense account. They do not have a trust fund. They do not have a motorcade to take them anywhere they need to go.

When will the Liberals stop punishing middle-class Canadians and raising the price of gas at the pump?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's feigned sanctimony and frankly his hypocrisy are disappointing in the extreme. He knows that in provinces where our plan applies, eight out of 10 families will be better off at the end of the year.

What is extraordinarily disappointing is that when he had the chance to support the middle-class tax cut for nine million Canadians that raised taxes on the wealthiest 1%, he voted against it.

When he had the chance to support the Canada child benefit, ending sending child care cheques to millionaires so we could put more money in the pockets of nine out of 10 Canadian families, he voted against it.

When he had the opportunity to support vulnerable low-income seniors, he voted against it too.

Now he stands up and has the audacity to lecture me on—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Windsor West.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the United Nations report on endangered species hits close to home in my riding, Windsor West.

The Ojibway Shores, the last remaining stretch of natural shoreline on the Detroit River and home to over 160 species, has been at the centre of a battle to protect our environment. We stopped the clear-cutting of trees and dumping on this pristine piece of nature. I have asked the government many times to protect this public property, and all I have received is excuse after excuse, no real action.

The UN was clear: Different choices get better results.

Why will the Prime Minister not protect Ojibway Shores? Why is the real action zero?

Oral Questions

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Ojibway Shores is property of the Windsor Port Authority. I would encourage the City of Windsor to speak with the Windsor Port Authority with respect to the future of Ojibway Shores.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the way the Liberals are talking, one would think that they are really concerned about global warming and the environment. The problem is that the reality suggests otherwise.

We are supposed to be reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, but from 2016 to 2017, they rose by eight million tonnes, and likely even more. A recent study shows that oil sands emissions were up to 37% higher than reported.

When will the Liberals stop giving millions of dollars to rich oil companies and force them to be transparent with Canadians?

[English]

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect, I trust the hon. member knows that there was an artificial suppression of emission levels as a result of the forest fires in Fort McMurray. It is disappointing that we rely on these kinds of anomalies to try to make a political point.

When it comes to the issue of fossil fuel subsidies, when it comes to tax measures, we have actually phased out eight tax measures to date, and we have launched a consultation to identify further ineffective, non-tax fossil fuel subsidies by 2025.

We are going to move forward in that direction. Our climate plan has over 50 measures that are going to help reduce emissions. We have become a global leader when it comes to protecting the environment, because we know that climate change is real and we have an obligation to do something about it.

* * *

• (1455)

JUSTICE

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, the Prime Minister used political interference to help his friends at SNC-Lavalin, and now he is politically interfering to punish those who get in his way.

The former parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs has resigned and will testify against the government for Vice-Admiral Mark Norman. What will he say that is so damaging that he had to resign to say it and he needs a lawyer, paid for by the Crown, to advise him on how to say it?

What are the Liberals hiding? When will the Prime Minister provide all unredacted documents and allow Vice-Admiral Norman a fair trial?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the prosecution in question is being handled by the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, which operates independently from the Department of Justice and independently from my office.

Counsel to the Attorney General of Canada has been fulfilling all of its obligations before the court with respect to third party records applications. When counsel is needed, those decisions are made according to the rules and regulations in the justice department.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, May 3, we learned that a Liberal MP would be testifying against the Liberal government in the trial of Admiral Mark Norman.

The Liberal government is doing everything it can to discredit the Davie shipyard, including political interference by influential cabinet members. The Davie shipyard is capable of doing the work on time and on budget. Quebec deserves better.

Why did the Liberals try to deny Davie a contract?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the prosecution in question is being handled by the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, which operates independently of the Department of Justice and my office.

Counsel to the Attorney General of Canada has been fulfilling all of its obligations before the court with respect to third party records applications. As I just said, this matter is before the courts, and it would be inappropriate to comment further.

[English]

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us review the Liberals' political vendetta against Vice-Admiral Norman: obstructing subpoenas, clear political interference; refusing to cover his legal costs, pushing him towards bankruptcy, unable to defend himself; will not release documents critical to his defence; demoted the former foreign affairs parliamentary secretary because he will testify for Vice-Admiral Norman, against the government.

Why are the Liberals so intent on denying a fair trial for a Canadian who served Canada so honourably?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Public Prosecution Service of Canada has itself said, "The PPSC has not sought or received instructions in respect of the prosecution of Mr. Norman from the Privy Council Office or any other government department or body."

The Public Prosecution Service of Canada is independent of the ministry and the Attorney General. It is independent of the Department of Justice. It makes its decisions independently and will continue to do so.

*Oral Questions***HEALTH***[Translation]***STATUS OF WOMEN**

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every 17 minutes today, CALACS francophone d'Ottawa is sharing sexual assault survivors' stories as a reminder that a woman is sexually assaulted every 17 minutes in Canada.

[English]

The strength and resilience of survivors have led to a renewed commitment to end gender-based violence. Unfortunately, organizations like CALACS are asked to do more with less resources after the Ford decision to cut their funding.

[Translation]

Can the Minister for Women and Gender Equality tell the House what our government is doing to support victims of sexual assault?

[English]

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of International Development and Minister for Women and Gender Equality, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of cuts by the Harper Conservatives, organizations serving women and girls were destabilized.

Our government listened to Canadians and invested in ensuring that survivors of gender-based violence have the supports they need. It is unfortunate that even in the wake of #MeToo and evidence that has been shared again and again, we see the Ford government repeat the Harper playbook, and we see our Conservative colleagues and even the NDP voting to de-fund women's organizations.

Canadians deserve a government committed to ensuring that survivors have a place to go when they need the supports they need. We are committed to that work.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier in question period, the Prime Minister tried to blame his illegal border crossing crisis on Stephen Harper. In 2015, there were 10,000 pending cases at the Immigration and Refugee Board, up from a peak left under the previous Liberal government. Today, according to the Auditor General's report, there are 71,000 cases, with another 50,000 on the way. When will the Prime Minister clear this backlog, or will Conservatives once again have to clear a 120,000-case backlog at the IRB?

● (1500)

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here are the facts. The party opposite cut refugee health care. The party opposite left the IRB without the funding necessary to deal with the volume it had. The party opposite is intent on getting away from the record that it has, but facts are stubborn things and the Conservatives cannot get away from that record.

The fact is that we are reinvesting in the border, and we are reinvesting in the Immigration and Refugee Board. To make sure that the refugee system works, we are making sure that the vacancies left behind by the previous government—

The Speaker: The hon. member for London—Fanshawe.

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while the government announced free menstrual products in federally regulated workplaces, product cost and access in remote and northern communities are prohibitive and unacceptable. Because of that high cost and lack of government action, organizations like women's shelters are left to collect donations of products to distribute to women and girls in the north and in our communities. In fairness to disadvantaged women and girls in the north and everywhere, when will the Liberal government extend the provision of free menstrual products to women and girls?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is fantastic that we are having a conversation about menstrual products here in the House of Commons. I agree with the member opposite that we need to make sure that women can take care of their health and dignity no matter where they are. That is why we are taking these steps to ensure that menstrual products are available in bathrooms and washrooms of federally regulated employers. It is an important step, and I look forward to hearing from stakeholders about how we do this in an effective way.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, nearly seven years ago, the Harper Conservatives made irresponsible and shortsighted changes to the asylum system that forced tens of thousands of refugee claimants into limbo for years. Thirty-two thousand people who were seeking Canada's protection were denied a timely hearing and spent as long as eight years with uncertain status, unable to move on with their lives. Davenport groups like FCJ Refugee Centre have been advocating on their behalf. Can the minister update the House on what has been done to address the legacy refugee backlog?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that, due to the half-baked measures introduced by the Harper Conservatives, the IRB developed a backlog of 32,000 refugee cases. We promised that we would do better for those people, some of whom had been waiting for a hearing for as long as eight years. One of the first things we did was to launch a legacy refugee task force. I am happy to update this House that we have cleared that backlog as of last week. We will make sure that the refugee system works the way it is supposed to.

*Oral Questions***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has a long record of torturing, jailing and murdering Iran's own citizens and exporting terror throughout the Middle East and across the world. The threat to Canada and our allies is crystal clear.

Last year, the Liberals voted in favour of our motion to hold the Iranian Khamenei regime accountable and list the IRGC as a terrorist entity. Is the government starting to cozy up to Iran again, or is it finally going to list the IRGC as a terrorist entity?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman, being a long-standing member of the House, knows that there is a very specific legal procedure that is undertaken with respect to listings under the Criminal Code. The system in Canada is strong and credible because of the integrity of that system. The government is pursuing all of the steps that are laid out in law to make the appropriate decision. In the meantime, the member will know that a number of the surrogates of this organization have already been listed.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, management of the migrant crisis has been a disaster, as the Auditor General has shown. Criminal background checks are inadequate. There is departmental overlap. Two-thirds of the hearings are postponed indefinitely.

If Ottawa stays asleep at the switch, it will take five years for asylum seekers to find out whether they can stay in Quebec or not. The system is broken.

When will the Liberal government finally wake up?

• (1505)

[English]

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to advise this House that, so far this year, we have achieved a 47% reduction in the number of people crossing our border irregularly.

In budget 2019—and I understand the member opposite may have missed this because of all the noise going on that day—our government has committed \$443 million to increase IRCC's capacity. It includes \$375 million to restore the CBSA's ability to increase its asylum system to implement border enforcement strategies, which includes better border management, security screening and enforcement operations.

Our plan is working, and we are making progress.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, things are not improving. The situation is getting worse.

It is inhumane to make asylum seekers wait for years to find out whether they can stay in Quebec. People are going to end up starting a family and laying down roots only to be deported in five years.

Who is going to pay for all this during those five years? Quebec will end up footing the bill for housing, health care, education, and social assistance.

Will the Liberal government reimburse Quebec for the \$300 million it has already spent and will it ensure that claims are processed in a timely fashion?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to answer that question.

As everyone knows, Quebec has a remarkable history of being welcoming and open. It all started in my own riding in 1535. When Jacques Cartier arrived he asked Donnacona, grand chief of the Huron-Wendat nation at the time, where he was. The grand chief responded that he was in Canada, a welcoming, open, supportive country.

In Quebec City and Quebec we are proud to be part of that great tradition.

* * *

[English]

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, CCF): Mr. Speaker, as the independent whip, it falls to me to congratulate Paul Manly on last night's byelection win in Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

Including him, we will have 21 independent MPs sharing only 14 weekly spots in question period. Would the Prime Minister support reallocating more questions to independents so that Mr. Manly and all of us can better represent our constituents?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all MPs are elected to this place to represent their constituents, and question period is 45 minutes of the day to do so. There is a formula to determine the number of questions for each party and for independents.

Mr. Speaker, you ruled that the current allotment of 14 questions per week for independents maintains the appropriate balance with respect to management of time, the rights of independent members and the long-standing practice of this House. We will respect that ruling, and we know that we have seen the number of questions for independents increase since we took office.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Dr. Artis Pabriks, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the Republic of Latvia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Business of Supply

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order, but first let me just recognize and appreciate the support from the member for Elmwood—Transcona.

There has been discussion among the parties and, if you seek it, I hope you will find unanimous consent for the following motion: that the House of Commons recognize the historical significance of the Winnipeg general strike of 1919, in particular on workers rights, human rights and social advocacy for over the past 100 years.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Mr. Speaker, I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion: That this House oppose the construction of new pipelines because they would harm the environment, and as the Leader of the Official Opposition said on December 2, 2018—

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: I am sorry, but it is already quite clear that the member does not have the unanimous consent of the House.

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During question period, I referenced the Macdonald-Laurier Institute's new report. I believe I should table that report. If you seek it, you might find unanimous consent to table "The Catastrophe: Assessing the Damage from Canada's Fighter Replacement Fiasco".

• (1510)

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Montcalm.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. If the Conservatives are going to heckle, the least they could do, in a self-respecting Parliament, is wait until the last sentence or word of a motion.

The Speaker: Unfortunately that is not how the rules or procedure work in the House. When a member seeks the unanimous consent of the House and there is clearly no consent, the matter is over and we move on. This has been well established.

I have heard enough on this matter and I have already made statements on this.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I referred to a document twice during question period. This time, I truly hope I have unanimous consent to table the document entitled "GES, inventaire québécois des émissions de gaz à effet de serre"—

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: I have already heard members saying no. One again, sadly, there is no unanimous consent. I can see that the member is very disappointed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—NATURAL RESOURCES

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my birthday.

[*Members sang Happy Birthday*]

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, I was in the hospital recently for 15 days, and I had zero interest in politics, since I was in the hospital and possibly facing the end of my life. In just a few minutes here in Parliament, I am interested in politics again.

I am not running again; I announced that. However, I wanted to make a farewell speech. It is tradition in this House to be able to say goodbye and thank members of this House. I have surgery for colon cancer coming up on May 22, and my only opportunity to say goodbye is this week. I am here to give the House an update and thank members.

I was an election observer with a colleague, and I had to come back early because I was turning yellow. I was very jaundiced. I came back, went to the hospital after a few days, and doctors found that I had a pancreatic tumour. They then found that I had colon cancer, and that the pancreatic cancer, which is the same as what Steve Jobs had, had spread to my lungs. The prognosis from the doctors is not great. However, I have a strong faith in God; and the God, who created me can heal me.

I want to share a little about my life. Throughout my life, there have been some wonderful little God moments, nuggets and interventions of guidance.

People ask me why I became involved with politics in the first place. It started with a dream back in 1990. I had a dream that there was an upcoming municipal election and that I was elected. This was out of the blue; I had no interest in it.

Later that day, somebody came up to me and said that they had a dream about me. "Oh, really?" I asked. "What did you dream?" The person dreamed that I ran in the election and was elected. When those little nuggets happen, one has to listen. So often we get busy and do not. I put my name on the ballot and, surprise, I was elected. That was in 1990.

I served on the Abbotsford council with the wonderful, intelligent, good-looking member for Abbotsford. I served there for 14 years, and what an honour it was.

Business of Supply

Then there was another God moment. I was with my beautiful wife, Diane, and we were going out for our anniversary. I said to her that one day, before I retired, I would love to get into managing or owning an auto body shop. I had just sold a business and everything, and she told me not to start a new business. I told her that I was just thinking out loud, because I loved cars and would like to do that. That happened on Saturday. On Monday morning, the phone rang and this fellow said that he was Gary down at the so-and-so avenue body shop. He said that he was looking to retire and asked if I would be interested in managing his auto body shop.

From that, I then went to ICBC, brought money into Langley and started fixing up things. I became known, and the next thing I knew, I was running for federal politics.

Again, there are these little voices, these little nuggets in our lives where we need to listen and follow God's leading. That is why I am here. I am just an average guy who has had an incredible honour serving with members and serving our community.

I want to thank God. I want to thank my family.

● (1515)

Diane and I were married in 1972, almost 47 years ago. She is my best friend. We have five kids and 10 grandkids. We are so blessed.

My passion has always been the environment, justice, family, seniors, children's issues and respecting life right from beginning to end.

Diane and I met at Trinity Western University. On the weekends, as I did not have a lot of money as a student, I would take her on a date to a seniors place, where we would play the guitar and sing. We just loved dealing with seniors. We did not have to be great singers for the seniors to like us.

We are so blessed with our kids and grandkids: Jon and Jen with Carrington and Rich; Ryan; Eric and Carolyn with Christian, Jonah, Jeremiah and Jakob; Nathan; and Kristen with Russel, Mya, Mark and Will.

I have always been involved with sports over the years, and I know the importance of teamwork. One cannot get anything accomplished as a lone wolf; we have to be part of a team. I understand the importance of this in politics as well, and I have this incredible team that I get to work with, my staff. I could not have accomplished anything without them: Annette, Kim, Jane, Liat, Monique, Megan and Rebeca.

As members all know, the best part of the job is being able to help people, and it has been such a blessing. We love our community, and it has been an incredible honour.

When I announced that I was not going to be running again, I felt that God was creating a new chapter of my life. I was preparing to be a chaplain giving pastoral care to seniors. I was doing this studying and reading, and, lo and behold, I got sick. I was reading all these case studies about whether to operate or whether to give palliative care, and I was honoured by our leader to be given the responsibility for palliative care. Then I found myself in the hospital, a surprise, and experiencing what it is like to face end of life. With all that reading and preparation, maybe it was not for me to administer to

others but to prepare myself for this trial. I want to thank everyone so much.

When someone is first given the diagnosis that there are some serious problems, doctors are dealing with the physical person, but there is more than just the physical to us. There are the spiritual and the emotional sides, the psychosocial, but that was left unadministered to. While the doctors were looking at my physical condition, that was being ignored. This is tremendously important. Doctors give a diagnosis and look at how they are going to fix a patient, what kind of operation is needed or what chemo, but what about the person? What about the family and the distress? We need to encourage our medical system to make sure that they are providing a ministry for the rest of the person.

I was at the Vancouver General Hospital, which is an incredible hospital with incredible physicians and surgeons, but that need was left unmet.

I asked for palliative care. I was there for 15 days. Of the thousands of doctors, there are two palliative care physicians at VGH, and I never saw them. They came once while I was recovering and groggy and sleepy, so that need was unmet, unfortunately.

I have experienced first-hand the difficulty of accessing palliative care. We know from statistics that it is not available to 70% to 84% of Canadians, a tragic number. Our system is not designed to meet that need. We are trying to fix the body, but in some cases it is better not to do the heroic thing, not to remove the organs or use chemo and that sort of thing. Science has shown us that people can live longer and have a better quality of life, in some cases, if they are given palliative care, but those options were not provided to me. Why is that?

● (1520)

The system is broken and needs to be fixed. We passed Bill C-277. This Parliament is coming to an end, but I hope that the next Parliament will make a commitment to fix that and provide leadership in Canada, maybe through a university chair or something, so we can fix this situation. People are left in despair, emotions are raw and family support is not there, but they are not given the opportunity for palliative care. What is the only remaining option? If it is not surgery, it is maybe that they should consider MAID, medical assistance in dying. I was on the legislative committee when we discussed that proposal and passed it. We had to, because of the Carter decision.

We have a situation in Canada of basic needs not being met, and out of desperation people are saying that the easiest way is to end their life through an injection. They are saying that this would be the humane thing to do, but we cannot force people into that kind of a choice. We have to provide palliative care.

It has been such an incredible honour to work in this House. I was first elected federally in 2004, and 15 years went by just like that. It has been such an honour.

None of us are here by accident. I believe that strongly. I have a strong faith in God. If we are not here by accident, then what is the responsibility for each of us that goes along with that?

To whomsoever much has been given, from him much will be required.

Business of Supply

Therefore, we have a responsibility to do what is right, to be truthful, to be people of integrity in making Canada better and working with one another when it is appropriate to do so.

I have not always done things right. I have a very mischievous nature, as chairs of different committees can attest, so I would like to apologize for some of the problems I created.

Death does come to each of us, and to some very early. We just said goodbye to a very dear friend. He had an aneurysm and he was gone. God has given me some time. I may be around for a long time or I may be around for a short time. We do not know.

This is the most important part: I want to encourage you all to love one another, to encourage each other, because God loves us. Pray for another. Pray about what is really important. Help one another. Seek God's will for you each day. Do what is right. Be honest.

We read in Galatians:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

It is all legal. It is all good.

Life is precious. Life is sacred. I have been reminded very freshly of how valuable and precious life is, from beginning to end.

God bless you. I love you all. I will look forward to being able to serve. Until October, it will likely be out of my constituency office, but to God be the glory.

● (1530)

The Speaker: I know the hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove loves vigorous questions and comments, but I am not sure he will find them quite as vigorous today as he might have on other occasions. However, we will have to wait and see for that.

I know the member will appreciate that some members have had to leave to go to the Holocaust memorial, which I know he would want us to attend. I am going to be attending that this afternoon, so before I go to questions and comments, I would like to just say a word now.

I had the pleasure of serving with you, Mark, on the natural resources committee, and it was a great pleasure. I found you extremely collegial. Yes, you could be mischievous, but so could I, sometimes, and so could most members. We did have a lot of fun on that committee, and I really appreciated your camaraderie and the fact that you could put partisan stuff aside when the television cameras were off. We became friends, and I really appreciate that friendship.

It is a shock for all of us to learn that you are dealing with a difficult matter of cancer right now. I know you have the thoughts and prayers of all of us, and we hate to see you leaving under these circumstances. We wish you and your family all the very best in the coming weeks, months and years. You leave here, sir, with our love and admiration.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Abbotsford.

● (1535)

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, you will pardon if I find this very difficult to get through. I ask for just one very

special dispensation, that I be permitted to use the member's real name so that Canadians across the country know whom we are speaking of. He is not only the member for Langley—Aldergrove. I see you nodding. Thank you.

We are speaking of Mark Warawa, our dear friend Mark, and it is his 69th birthday today. Thanks, colleagues, for singing *Happy Birthday*. I know he very much appreciated that.

Of all the members in the House, I probably have known Mark longer than anyone, because we have both spent a lot of time in the beautiful city of Abbotsford. I first came to know Mark when he was the proprietor of Warawa's vacuum shop in downtown Abbotsford, and it was renowned because it had the big mechanical gorilla outside. That gorilla would scare all the kids when they walked by, but he sold a lot of vacuums because of that gorilla.

Later on, he and I participated in provincial politics. We worked hard to get him elected provincially. Thank goodness that did not work out, because he ended up in this august chamber. He went on to serve on a city council, and I followed him a few years later. We had such wonderful time serving our community as fellow brothers working hard to grow a community that was prosperous and compassionate. I remember there were three of us on council who were often referred to as the three horsemen. We did not know if they were referring to an apocalypse or not, but that was what they called us.

Then Mark was elected to this august chamber in 2004. Two years later, I followed him, so for the last 14 to 16 years, he and I have been able to serve our communities together here, crafting policy for our country, making sure we continue to be prosperous, kind, gracious, loving and outward-looking.

I know that Mark has an incredible heart for this country. He has an incredible heart for his family as well. He is a man of deep faith. I have known that because he and I are brothers in arms. He has a deep faith in Jesus Christ, and we got to live out that faith even here on Parliament Hill when he, Chuck Strahl, Randy Kamp, the member for Battle River—Crowfoot and I were part of something called the MP5. Five of us sang together, mostly gospel music. I was the guy who did not have the voice, so I played keyboard, but they sang their hearts out, and the pinnacle of that was when we sang at the National Arts Centre. We were a walk-on. We had a cameo appearance at the National Arts Centre, the five of us, of which we were quite proud.

He has been a friend to all of us, but I know he has been a best friend to Diane, his wife, who is in the gallery. He is retiring, so Diane will now have him back full time, and I know she will really appreciate that.

Let me close with a couple of poignant comments. Mark, we know that you have a deep and abiding faith in Jesus Christ that has driven your life. You have a deep confidence in the providence of God, that he knows best for your life even as you walk through this very dark path. We are praying for healing for you, Mark.

Business of Supply

●(1540)

Mark, I think I speak for all of us in this House when I say you will be sorely missed. You are leaving an incredible legacy behind. That legacy includes kindness. You have been kind to the opposition members in this House over the years. You have understood the role that we play here as representatives of the Canadian people. You just understood that, more so than most of us, probably.

Our thoughts and prayers are going to be with you as you face this challenge head-on. We are praying for healing. I know the thoughts and prayers of every single member of this House are going to be with you in the coming weeks and months. We wish you the very best, Mark, as you embark upon this new journey, this new season of life.

I just want to say we all love you. God bless you.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Abbotsford. I truly did enjoy working with him, both in the local and in the federal government. I went on a trip with him in the last Parliament—we went on a trade mission—and I was worried because he worked so hard. He pushed himself and did such an incredible job for this country as the trade minister. I want to thank him for all his efforts. However, I also want to encourage him to take care of himself.

We sometimes in this place ignore the importance of taking care of our body. Sometimes our families are not given the time. It is a priority. You do not realize this at times until you find yourself in a hospital room. The priorities of what is important in life suddenly became very real to me when I was in the hospital. I encourage each of us to make sure we are taking time to take care of ourselves and spend time with our families, because when you are gone, you are gone and it is over, so make sure that is a priority in your life.

The comments and all the compliments have been so kind. To God be the glory. If you see any good in me, hopefully you are seeing Jesus.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have my Kleenex at the ready, in case I cannot get through this. I want to continue the theme that the hon. member has spoken about, which is that this is a God moment. Seldom do we hear a speech in this chamber that is filled with such honesty, such directness and such frankness. There was such candour that I actually looked up the definition of “candour” in the dictionary while he was speaking. It said “he spoke with a degree of candour unusual in political life”.

Indeed, the hon. member's speech was unusual in the political life of us all, because we do not speak with candour, as we should. That is the tension of people of faith who work in this chamber. The priorities and beliefs of faith do not always line up with the needs and desires of being a practising politician. I know that the hon. member has faced that tension. I know that many of us in this chamber face that tension. I would say that the hon. member has navigated that tension about as well as any of us, because his candour in his admission of his faith in Jesus Christ is not something we hear every day in this chamber. In some circles, frankly, it is frowned upon.

The hon. member has, from time to time, joined us all at the prayer breakfast. It is probably the one hour in the entire week when we are no longer Liberals, no longer Conservatives, no longer NDP; we are just members of a faith community. Then as members of a faith community, we actually pray for each other. I know the hon. member has been a subject of our prayers in the last while, as have others, to be frank.

I would ask the hon. member how he has navigated that tension, but I would also ask him whether he has sung with his singing colleagues the song with the lyric “thou hast taught me to say...it is well with my soul”?

●(1545)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a distinct honour for me to rise today to address my friend, the member for Langley—Aldergrove, and Diane, his wife, to say a few words.

First of all, I want to wish my friend a happy birthday.

The humour, strength and courage with which he came to the House today are remarkable, for those who do not know him. However, for those who have been blessed to have had time with him, it is no surprise and only confirms my feelings and thoughts toward him.

I am not sure I have ever liked someone so much with whom I have agreed so little over the issues of the day and what we have grappled with. We first came to know each other when he was the parliamentary secretary to the minister of environment under Stephen Harper and I was NDP's environment critic. We agreed on little, and our relationship of respect and mutual admiration was based on our ability to disagree without being disagreeable toward each other.

We are the class of '04. We have spent some time traversing this country, from British Columbia to Ottawa and back again. In some of those moments, we have been able to share the costs, not to us but to our families, of being away and being apart. I have taken my friend's counsel over the years on this.

Although I am not sure he will remember it, I will reflect on a time when a constituent of mine, Mark Penninga, who was running ARPA at the time, invited me to an ARPA meeting on the Hill. It was here in West Block. We had been here a long time, and we knew West Block before this.

I recall that the meeting was at the end of a long hallway. I bumped into my friend at the very beginning of the hallway, and we exchanged pleasantries as we were on our way to the ARPA meeting. ARPA is a Christian group that represents Christian values. There were many meeting rooms along the way, and I felt that my friend expected me to peel off at some point and go to some other meeting. I knew where he was going, and I was going to the same place. He said, “Well, have a nice evening” and I said, “You too. Let's go in.” Seeing the shock on some of the faces of colleagues from various parties in the House that I had entered that room for that conversation was quite pleasurable, actually. I quite enjoyed the conversation and the shock.

Business of Supply

We come from opposite sides on many debates and many issues, but he has always approached those conversations with deep honesty and respect. I have taken exception to some of his ideas on things, and I will take exception to his assessment regarding the good looks of the member for Abbotsford. I worry about him and his ability to see clearly. However, I understand that emotions take over at certain points, so I will allow him that clear mistake in judgment regarding the good looks of our friend.

It has been said that politics at its best is a vocation, a true calling. Those who enter politics merely for ego, personal ambition or power often do it badly. Those of us who seek office as a calling have a better shot at doing well by the people we seek to speak on behalf of.

We all know that the member squeaked by in his five elections, with only, I believe, the support of 53% of his constituents, which is incredible. I think he represented them well. I think he represented them with integrity.

To Diane, his five children and 10 grandchildren, whom he refuses to ever shut up about, constantly telling us what is going on in their lives, we owe a great debt for the time we have had with Mark.

I hope my friend understands that the shortness of my words here is in direct contrast to the depth and length of my admiration and love for him.

Thank you, Mark.

• (1550)

The Deputy Speaker: I thank all hon. members for their interventions. It has been a real privilege to be here today and a real privilege to serve with the hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to rise today. I am also very pleased to see the hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove. He has been a mentor to all of us who were voted into Parliament in 2015. His passion, his conviction, his integrity, his honesty and certainly his faith, as well, have been an inspiration to us all. I wish him all the best.

I also want to advise, Mr. Speaker, that I will be sharing my time with the member for Beauport—Limoilou.

I want to remind the House that we are here today debating an opposition motion that was put by the member for Carleton. Having gone through a lot of emotion and a lot of discussion, I want to remind the House what the motion is about:

That the House call on the government to stop raising the price of gas by clearing the way for pipelines and eliminating the carbon tax on fuel.

The carbon tax is an issue that has dominated the House for a number of years. I will say right off the bat, as the Conservative member of Parliament for Barrie—Innisfil, that as I go around the riding and I talk to our constituents, I can say that they do want to see action the Canadian government can use to combat the issue of climate change and greenhouse gases. However, I can say unequivocally that there are many people, a majority in my riding, who do not believe that a carbon tax is the right method to achieve our goals.

The other thing constituents would like to see is Canada taking a role in terms of global leadership on the issue of climate change. I know that it is well documented that our emissions are significantly

low, and that is not to diminish the issue or the challenges with respect to this. However, if this is a global problem, then it requires global leadership. There are countries around the world, four combined, that make up almost 60% of global greenhouse gas emissions and impact climate change. It is indeed a global problem, and we, as Canadians, have a role to play in mitigating the impacts of global climate change.

On the issue of the gas tax and the carbon tax and the fuel tax, one of the challenges is that there are many people, particularly in my riding, who feel that this is not a true environmental plan. What the government and the Liberals have proposed is, in fact, a tax plan.

There has been a lot of mention today during debate of the fact that B.C. has instituted a carbon tax. While sincere in its intent in terms of being revenue neutral, the evidence suggests otherwise, and it is now a strong revenue generator for the B.C. government. There has been a lot of talk around here about the potential of that happening in the future.

This year, the price is \$20 a tonne. We know, through the government's own documents, that the Liberals are going to be raising it to \$50 a tonne. In fact, there have been suggestions that it could be as high as \$300 a tonne, so make no mistake that it is the intention of the government to continue to raise the carbon tax and the price per tonne, meaning that Canadians will pay more with respect to higher fuel prices.

They will pay more not only for the price of gas but for heating homes. In fact, it will have a cascading effect across the economy as manufacturers and producers who are now paying the carbon tax will pass that tax on to consumers. It will impact the price of everything: the price of groceries, the price of clothing, and the price of any consumable product that exists.

Recent polling suggests that 58% of Canadians cannot meet their obligations. In fact, they are \$200 away from insolvency every month, and 24% of Canadians cannot meet their obligations on a monthly basis.

• (1555)

Any suggestion that imposing a carbon tax is going to somehow make people better off when that cascading effect go down the line and ends up impacting the necessities of life, which they can barely afford now, is disingenuous.

The government has, of course, talked about a carbon tax rebate. I can use a very practical example in that regard. My elderly parents, who filed their taxes recently, got back \$260, but what are they going to do with that money? They are not going to change their habits. They are not going to heat their home any less. They are not going to pull back on their obligations, because living in Barrie, they do have to travel places. That \$260 rebate will be eaten up very quickly. In fact, the price for them to survive is much greater than that.

Business of Supply

The funny thing about this carbon tax rebate is that the government gave this back in an election year. In my parents' case, it was \$260. If the stated purpose of a carbon tax is to, as the Prime Minister has said, and as we have heard Liberal members debate today, change the habits of Canadians so that they use less carbon in their daily uses, how is it an incentive? This is the thing I have not been able to reconcile in my mind, and I know that a lot of Canadians across the country are questioning this in terms of government policy. How is paying people back money going to change those habits?

I have spoken to my parents, and they are not going to do anything differently. They still have to drive their car. They still have to get to their doctor's appointments. People who live in areas outside the inner cities, and I talk specifically about the 905 all the time, are not going to change their habits. They are still going to have to drive to work. In some cases, if people live in Oakville and work in Mississauga, they have to drive to work. If people live in Barrie or Innisfil and work in Mississauga or Markham, there is no public transit system in place at this moment that would cause people to change their habits. Any suggestion at all that this is going to change the habits of individuals is foolhardy and is not truthful.

As I said earlier, the issue here is that it is a global problem, and it requires global solutions. It requires global leadership. I believe that Canada has a role to play in that. Recently I was in Taiwan, which held a referendum. They are looking at moving away from coal-fired generating plants. They are looking to move away from nuclear because of living in the region they do. There was a company, Northland Power, here in Canada, that was awarded an \$8-billion contract to provide offshore wind turbines.

Canada has a role to play, with our technology, with our ingenuity and with our innovation, on the global stage. However, we also have an obligation to build pipelines. That is the basis of the debate today. My worry, and I have said this publicly and to my colleagues when the Trans Mountain pipeline was built, is that having lived through the experience in Ontario, where gas plants were cancelled and \$2 billion was wasted, my fear on the Trans Mountain pipeline is that the Liberal government bought the pipeline to control it and eventually kill it.

I say that because, as I have said publicly before, the Liberal government playbook for Ontario is the same Liberal government playbook that is being used at the federal level. We saw it with the gas plant scandal, and I fear that we are going to see it with the Trans Mountain pipeline.

I look forward to our leader presenting an environmental plan to Canadians, an environmental plan that will be presented well in advance of the next election. What I look forward to the most is Canada's role, not only to address the situation here domestically, and there will be a strong emphasis on that, but to initiate global leadership on the part of Canada to work with those that are the biggest emitters in the world.

• (1600)

The Prime Minister himself said that even if Canada were to shut down everything tomorrow, we would have no impact on global greenhouse gas emissions. I suggest that we have an opportunity,

and Canada's Conservatives will present that in advance of the next election.

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member talked about a price on pollution not making a difference in lowering our GHG emissions. We have an example here in Canada, British Columbia, which has not only had one of the fastest-growing economies in the country but also one of the fastest-growing populations in the country. However, since it has brought about its price on pollution in 2008, it has lowered its GHG emissions. As importantly, it has lowered its GHG emissions intensity substantially.

The member talked about the affordability of a price on pollution, yet I do not know if he has looked at the report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, an office that was appointed by the previous Harper government. It stated clearly that the vast majority of Canadians will benefit from the rebate we will be giving back to the citizens who live in the provinces in which the revenue was generated. I would like to ask him if he is aware of the rebate and aware of the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report stating that it is going to benefit those who are the most vulnerable in our society.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I think there are diverging facts with respect to British Columbia. In fact, we now know, as I stated in my speech, that the B.C. government is using all of the revenue for its own purposes; it is not in fact revenue neutral. There are also indications as well that emissions have started to go up in British Columbia. As well, as we heard from the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent several times in this House, it is also the situation in Quebec, albeit marginal, but emissions are going up there as well.

Therefore, I would ask the hon. member a very simple rhetorical question. We know that in other areas of Canada it is going to cost a lot more than people will get back. I used my parents' situation anecdotally as evidence; they are getting \$260 back. This is the problem for those people who live outside of those main urban areas, like the member who asked the question. The difficulty is that they are going to be disproportionately affected because they do not have access to mass transit. They have to drive, and it is going to cost them more. They are going to continue to heat their homes and buy the necessities of life. That is the difficulty with the math in the equation on the other side.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, getting back to some of the conversation over the last couple of minutes regarding B.C. and greenhouse gas emissions, B.C. is in a unique situation because of its ability to generate hydroelectric power. There have been incredible investments made by BC Hydro to improve the production of hydroelectric power through the hydro generating stations there. Revelstoke Dam is one example. Improvements were made in the flow systems and the turbines in multiple situations there. That is where we can find reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. It is not going to come from a carbon tax. Everyone in B.C. still needs to drive to get to work, although there are a few in certain areas who have access to public transit.

I would like to ask the member for Barrie—Innisfil if he feels it would make much more sense to get fuel to our markets and keep our prices low so that we can be competitive and also drive those incentives for lower emissions through hydro generation and so on.

Business of Supply

●(1605)

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, there is no question on our side that we believe that getting our product to refineries and to market will certainly help reduce the price of fuel.

The member also brings up an interesting point, the fact that Canadian ingenuity, technology and innovation are world-class and world-leading. An example is carbon capture technology. These are the things we can do.

Canadian companies are already doing a lot. Canadian families are doing a lot. Everybody recognizes their own obligation to leave a better planet and a better world to our children. However, we as Canadians also have an obligation. We understand that this is a global problem, and sometimes we feel guilty for not doing enough when we are doing a large part. As we go forward, the challenge for us as Canadians is to make sure we ensure through our technology, our interventions and our bilateral and multilateral arrangements with other countries that they do their part. We have a role to play on the global stage, and Canada and Canada's Conservatives will make sure that we do.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I did not think the time was opportune earlier, but I am rising on a point of order coming out of question period.

A number of members commented that recognition of speakers is dependent on some kind of a formula. As you know, Mr. Speaker, recognition of speakers rising to speak in the House of Commons is a matter of members' catching the eye of the Speaker, not a matter of lists or formulas, according to the Standing Orders. This is an important point of order to put on the record.

If the Chair has something to clarify for members who misstated that process during question period, I think it would be worthwhile.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan for his additional comments on an earlier point that was raised. He is not incorrect in saying that in fact members are recognized by getting the eye of the Chair. Members also recognize that although it is not formally the case, it is the practice generally that there is a list around which the Chair does operate. That is in accordance also with the wishes of the parties and the usual channels here in the House.

In a way we are saying that both are correct, and Chairs are certainly persuaded when members ensure that they stay within those practices.

I thank the hon. member for his additional comments on the matter.

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—NATURAL RESOURCES

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as always, I am very honoured to rise in the House today. I would like to say hello to the many people of Beauport—Limoilou who are watching. I saw them late last week at the Grand bazar du Vieux-Limoilou, the Patro Roc-Amadour community centre and the 52nd Salon de Mai craft fair, which was held at Promenades Beauport mall. Congratulations to the organizers.

I would also like to say that we are all very sad to hear that our colleague from Langley—Aldergrove is fighting a serious cancer. He just gave a powerful speech that reminded us how fragile life is. I even spoke to my wife and children to tell them that I love them. Our colleague gave a very poignant speech about that. I thank him for his years of service to Canada and to the House of Commons, and for all the future years that he will devote himself to his community.

Before I say anything about the Conservative Party motion now before us, I would like to say a quick word about what U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said yesterday. At a meeting of the Arctic Council in Finland, he had the gall to say that Canada's claim of sovereignty over the Northwest Passage is illegitimate. He even compared us to Russia and China, referring to their behaviour and their propensity to annex territories, like Russia did in Ukraine. Personally, I find that shameful.

I would like to remind the U.S. government that we have been their allies for a long time. President Reagan and Prime Minister Mulroney reached an agreement, which both parties signed, and which stipulated that Canada indeed has sovereignty over the Northwest Passage. In the 19th century, we launched a number of expeditions and explorations supported by the British Crown, and Canadian sovereignty over the Northwest Passage and in the Arctic Archipelago is entirely legitimate.

Today we are discussing the importance of the oil industry and the importance of climate change. These two issues go hand in hand. They are key issues today and will continue to be in the future. Of course, I believe that the environment is extremely important. It is important for all Conservatives and for all Canadians. I remember collecting all sorts of bottles and cans along the roadside as a boy. I often did that with my father. He is an example for me in that respect. Throughout my life, I have always wanted to be a part of community organizations where people pick up garbage.

I am also very proud of most Canadian governments' environmental record. They have always endeavoured to meet the expectations of Canadians, for whom the environment is extremely important. Most of the time, the Liberals try to paint the Conservatives as anti-environment. I can assure my colleagues that I have never seen anything to support that in the Conservative Party. On the contrary, under Mr. Harper, we took important steps to lower greenhouse gas emissions in Canada by 2.2% between 2006 and 2015. I will come back to that later.

Business of Supply

There are two approaches being proposed in the current debate on climate change. This applies to several western countries. I say western countries because those are the countries affected, given that our industrial era has been well established for two centuries. There are some industries that have been polluting rather significantly for a long time. We have reached a point in our history where we realize that greenhouse gas emissions from human activity are playing a very significant role in climate change.

Yes, we must act, but there are two possible approaches. One is the Liberal Party approach of taxing Canadians even more. The Liberals are asking Canadians to bear the burden of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. The approach the Conservatives prefer is not to create a new tax or to tax the fuel that Canadians put in their cars to go to work every day.

• (1610)

Our approach is rather to help Canadians in their everyday lives and to help the provinces implement their respective environmental plans.

For example, I always like to remind the Canadians listening to us, as well as all environmentalists, that we set up the Canada ecotrust in 2007-08. This \$1.3-billion program was meant to allocate funds to the provinces so that they could deal in their own way with the major concerns associated with climate change and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. That is a fine example of how we want to help people.

Jean Charest was premier of Quebec at the time. We provided \$300 million to help Quebec implement its GHG emissions reduction plan. Mr. Harper and Mr. Charest gave a joint press conference, and even Mr. Guilbeault from Greenpeace said that the Canada ecotrust was a significant, important program.

We did the same thing for Ontario, British Columbia and all the other provinces that wanted to join the ecotrust. It is very likely that the program allowed the Government of Ontario to implement its own program and close its coal-fired power plants.

As a result, under the Harper government, GHG emissions in Canada dropped by 2.2%. It bears repeating, since that is the approach we will adopt with our current leader, the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle. In a few weeks, we will announce our environmental plan, which has been keenly anticipated by all Canadians, and especially by the Liberal government. It will be a serious plan. It will include environmental targets that will allow Canada and Canadians to excel in the fight against climate change. In particular, we will maintain our sound approach, which is to help the provinces. By contrast, the government prefers to start constitutional squabbles with them by imposing taxes on Canadians, overstepping its jurisdiction in the process, since environmental matters fall under provincial jurisdiction.

I would like to use Quebec as an example, as my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent did this morning. I have here a report on Quebec's inventory of greenhouse gas emissions in 2016 and their evolution since 1990. It was tabled by the new CAQ government last November, and it is very interesting. In 2016, greenhouse gas emissions increased in Quebec, despite the fact that the carbon exchange made its debut in 2013. That is ironic. Despite the

implementation of a fuel tax to cut down on fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, emissions actually went up.

The same report also indicates that between 1990 and 2015, greenhouse gas emissions in Quebec decreased even though the carbon exchange had not been fully implemented. The conclusion explains how this happened:

The decrease in GHG emissions from 1990 to 2016 is mainly due to the industrial sector. The decrease observed in this sector resulted from technical improvements in certain processes, increased energy efficiency and the substitution of certain fuels.

That is exactly what we, the Conservatives, want to do. Instead of imposing a new tax on Canadians, we want to maintain a decentralized federal approach. We want to help the provinces adopt greener energy sources to stimulate even greener economic growth and the deindustrialization of certain sectors, create new technologies and increase innovation in the Canadian economy. That is the objective of a Conservative approach to the environment.

• (1615)

The objective of the Conservative approach to the environment is not to come down hard on the provinces and impose new taxes on Canadians. As we saw with Quebec, that did not have the desired effect. Our objective is to provide assistance while ensuring that our oil industry can grow in a healthy way. That is what Norway did. If I had 10 more minutes, I could talk more about that wonderful country, which has increased its oil production and exports and is one of the fairest and greenest countries in the world.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my opposition colleague for his very interesting speech.

I am very happy to hear that the Conservative Party generally acknowledges that climate change exists, that it is a big problem and that we need to find a way to fix it. I think the debate is about which approach is best.

I agree that there are various approaches, and I am far from an expert on this issue. Quebec, British Columbia and other places like California have had a carbon exchange for many years. This is clearly a very market-based approach. It seems like the approach that best aligns with the Conservative ideology, which is true. That said, another approach is to put a price on pollution. In any case, we need to find a solution. That is what Canadians want.

Could my colleague tell us what he thinks is the best way to combat climate change?

• (1620)

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Châteauguay—Lacolle for her question. I sat with her on the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates. I have a great deal of respect for her.

Business of Supply

Yes, the carbon exchange is a market-based approach. However, as we have seen, Quebec has not achieved the desired results. The purpose of the Canada ecotrust program created under Mr. Harper was to give the provinces a budget and allow them to come up with their own plans to tackle climate change. Canada's greenhouse gas emissions then dropped by 2.2%, a concrete and historic reduction.

What I find unfortunate is that the carbon tax is currently priced at \$20 a tonne. It will go up to \$50 a tonne by 2020. It seems likely that the Liberals will want to raise it even further if they stay in power in a few months.

What is even more unfortunate is that this tax will not apply to Canada's major emitters, big industries like cement, concrete and coal. They will pay only 8% of the total revenue from the carbon tax, while families and small businesses will have to pay the remaining 92%.

It has been said that it will not apply in Quebec because Quebec already has a carbon tax. However, as we have seen in recent weeks, the price of gas has gone up across Canada, including in Quebec and British Columbia, which already have carbon exchanges.

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech given by my colleague, with whom I have the honour of working on the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

The only thing that bothers me is that he did not read the environment commissioner's reports carefully enough. She said that any reduction in greenhouse gas emissions during the 10 years that the Harper Conservatives were in office was purely due to the provinces' efforts and the economic recession. It had nothing to do with anything the federal government did. On the contrary, the federal government did not do anything it should have done. Scientists from around the world said that, in order to fight climate change, we had to put a price on carbon, implement a carbon tax.

In his speech, the member also failed to talk about one very important thing. The word "pipeline" is found throughout the motion. Basically, the Conservatives want more pipelines, and they would have us believe that pipelines are part of a plan to fight climate change. They want to bring back the energy east project in Quebec.

How will the energy east pipeline help in the fight against climate change? That makes about as much sense as a pyromaniac firefighter.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Mr. Speaker, what my colleague said about energy east is totally false. Energy east is dead and buried. However, he did say that the commissioner of the environment suggested the results might be due to the provinces' efforts. That is exactly how the Conservatives want to approach this. We think the provinces are in the best position to set standards for their industrial sectors and make appropriate changes based on their population, their industries and the environment.

That is exactly what we did. Under the ecotrust program, we transferred funds to the provinces so they could finance certain portions of their climate change programs. My colleague was right when he said the provinces did the work, but it is important to

acknowledge that the federal government helped by doing exactly what the founding fathers intended back in 1867.

• (1625)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, earlier this afternoon a previous speaker talked about the importance of global solutions and global leadership. I would like to cite a couple of very specific examples that a good number of my constituents and, I would ultimately argue, all Canadians can sympathize with.

When I think of global solutions and leadership and look at what is happening around the world, there are a couple of examples that come to my mind offhand. Members will be familiar with the story of the Canadian garbage that was sent to the Philippines. That is something that occurred a number of years ago, when Stephen Harper was the prime minister. At that time, the approach was to see if it could be resolved. The garbage would stay in the Philippines, but they would try to work it out.

It then went through a court process, which was fairly exhausting. It has literally taken years to get it to where it is today. There was then a proclamation by President Duterte of the Philippines, one I thought was quite fitting given the importance of our environment. He made the very powerful statement that this garbage from Canada needed to go back to Canada. When the president became engaged, it raised the profile of the issue. As a government, we have responded to that call for action. We believe those 69 containers of garbage should be here in Canada, and we will work to facilitate that.

When we talk about the issue of global solutions and global leadership, it means recognizing the important role Canada has to play, as well as the importance of the way Canada is perceived around the world. The perception of Canada was not positive when there was Canadian garbage in a place it ought not to have been. I am glad we are working the issue through and that those 69 containers will be coming back to Canada.

When we think of leadership, we need to look around at what the world is actually saying. We can see that from the Paris conference. When the Liberals were first elected back in 2015, the Prime Minister, the environment minister and many different provincial governments participated in that Paris climate change conference. One of the leading recommendations back then was to put a price on pollution. That is something that is tangible and real, and that will have an impact in the world, with more and more countries recognizing the value of doing so.

It did not take long for Canada and this current Prime Minister to put into action the ideas that were flowing from there and the ideas that were being talked about during the last federal election. We know how important it is, because we are being told and reminded by Canadians on a daily basis that they want to see action on the environment.

Business of Supply

We worked with the different provinces and came up with a formula. We came up with what we believe was a good national program to ensure that it would not be only half the provinces that would have something in place for a price on pollution, but that there would be an obligation for all provinces and territories in Canada to have a price on pollution. We even afforded those provinces that did not have something in place a window of time to put something into place, believing that at the end of the day, like the national government, those local governments would be listening to what the citizens want and expect of government.

• (1630)

Let there be no doubt that Canadians, no matter which region in this beautiful country they are from, support the need for government to take action. I believe the action this government has taken, not just on the price on pollution, although I will focus my attention on that for now, is something Canadians accept.

It is interesting how the politics are ramped up and how much misinformation is out there in the community. The price on pollution will actually be a financial benefit for the residents I represent in Winnipeg North. When the Conservatives spread misinformation on this issue, I would refer Canadians to the independent Parliamentary Budget Office. It is truly independent. There is no partisanship in that office. It is well respected, not only within Canada in terms of the issues it enunciates on, but even beyond our borders. It is genuinely seen as independent.

That office makes it very clear that 80% of Canadians will benefit financially by the climate action incentive. I would suggest that a vast majority of the residents in Winnipeg North will be further ahead financially. Putting the price on pollution is something that is needed today.

Some provinces have it and other provinces do not. Some provinces have set it higher than other provinces, and so forth. From a national perspective we are saying that all provinces and territories need to get engaged on this very important file, and that for provinces that choose not to, there will be a national program.

When members say it is a cash grab, that is absolute, total hogwash. The monies being generated are going back to the provinces with the national program, and 80% of my constituents are going to get a net benefit. It is going right back into their pockets. However, the heavier users, the ones who are causing the larger issue of pollution in our environment, are going to be paying more.

The Government of Canada is not making money from this. We are ensuring that there is a price on pollution in every region of our country, because not all provinces have implemented it. The Conservatives talk a lot about the province of British Columbia and the price of gas. The national program from Ottawa is not being applied in the province of B.C., yet that province is the focus of 85% of the criticisms that are being levelled at this government. When we question members on that issue, they say to get rid of the government in Ottawa and then they will get rid of any other progressive governments in the provinces. Are they going to penalize provinces that are doing good for Canada's environment?

The old Progressive Conservative Party of Brian Mulroney and members of the previous Conservative government of Stephen

Harper advocated for a price on pollution, but we are seeing Doug Ford's influence within the national Conservative caucus today. Canadians should be concerned that Doug Ford seems to have more influence in the Conservative caucus in Ottawa than their own leader.

• (1635)

Canadians should be concerned about that. Take a look at what is taking place in the province of Ontario and the backward stepping in terms of the environment. It is being put onto the back burner.

For over a year, Conservatives have been saying they have a plan and will share it with Canadians in due course. That was over a year ago. The days, weeks and months have gone by, even though the environment is an important issue to Canadians. The Conservative Party continues to ignore this very important issue. Rather, the Conservatives choose to take a look at one aspect of our plan and be critical of it. They spread misinformation about it, whether in emails, interviews or words inside this chamber. They have no qualms about misinforming Canadians.

The price on pollution is a good, solid social policy that has been accepted in most provinces and territories, because they have their own. It has been accepted in other countries around the world, and some, even some American states, are working towards it. It seems to me that it is Doug Ford and the Conservative Party here that are so focused on spreading that misinformation, and I find that to be a great disservice.

I said the price on pollution was one aspect. It is one part of some of the things we have been doing. However, the government has been criticized because of the Loblaws issue.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I see at least one Conservative member applauding the criticism that the government has been receiving.

However, members should know that the low-carbon economy challenge fund, which was \$450 million, was established by this government. It supports and funds actions by provinces, territories, municipalities, indigenous communities, businesses and non-profit organizations all over the country. It is a challenge to come up with ideas that will make a difference on the environment.

There were 54 successful proposals selected, but opposition members singled out only one of those examples, the Loblaws example, in which the Government of Canada is contributing 25% of a \$48-million project. This will have a huge impact on the refrigeration industry here in Canada, on the manufacturers and the IT people in Mississauga, where jobs are going to be created. More importantly, there is the actual impact of saying yes to this proposal, the direct result of which is equivalent to taking 50,000 vehicles off Canadian roads annually. This is equivalent to all the vehicles in the city of Brandon, which happens to be Manitoba's second-largest city.

Business of Supply

However, the Conservatives and NDP are saying, “Heaven forbid that we work with the private sector.” They take it to the extreme and say that the company is owned by a billionaire or a multimillionaire, so we should not have given that support and possibly the company should not have been eligible.

It seems to me that those members are being selective. Are they trying to say that the Government of Canada should not work with the private sector, that we should not promote, encourage and at times provide the incentives that are necessary to have an impact? Are they going to exclude the private sector? Is that really part of the policy that the Conservatives will come out with?

Some day, hopefully before October 21, we will hear something regarding the Conservatives' environmental plan. Are they dropping a hint by saying on this particular policy that the government has no role working with the private sector and should not be investing public tax dollars in the private sector at all?

● (1640)

Is that really going to be the official opposition's plan going forward?

By the process of elimination, maybe we can narrow it down. We know the Conservatives do not support a price on pollution. They think pollution should be free. I am now beginning to believe that they do not believe government should actually work with the private sector on it.

The Conservative Party is selling Canadians short. Our constituents are saying that there are initiatives we could do as a government that would have a positive impact and a positive outcome: the price on pollution, programs like the ones I just listed, working with different non-profits, governments and the private sector. Those types of initiatives can make a tangible difference.

The Conservatives are critical. It is always interesting to contrast how we are criticized by the New Democrats with how we are criticized by the Conservatives when it comes to pipelines.

For many years, I sat in opposition. I hope to spend just as many years on the government side as I did on the opposition benches. When I was in opposition, Stephen Harper never built one pipeline that went to our coast so we could sell our commodity to different markets. When Stephen Harper first became prime minister, 99% of our product went to the United States. Fast-forward 10 years, and it is still 99%.

One of the reasons why Alberta's oil industry has been hit as hard as it has been over the last couple of years is that Stephen Harper did not get it right. Stephen Harper did not work with indigenous people. He was not sensitive to the needs of the environment. Our courts have clearly demonstrated that to be the case. Members can contrast that with what we have been able to accomplish.

The Conservatives criticize us because of the pipeline purchase. We made a solid commitment to do what we can to move things forward on the issue. We cannot do any worse than Stephen Harper. We just need to look at what he accomplished on that particular file in his 10 years in government. I have no problem with that comparison.

In today's motion, the Conservatives say it is taxes. Again, I would challenge that.

Let us talk about Winnipeg North. With the price on pollution, according to the independent office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, 80% or more of my constituents are going to be further ahead financially.

My constituents are also going to be further ahead because our government gave a tax break to Canada's middle class. The Conservatives voted against that.

My constituents are going to be further ahead because our government instituted a Canada child benefit program that is bumping over \$9 million a month into Winnipeg North alone.

My constituents are going to be further ahead because our government upped the amount of money, in the neighbourhood of up to \$900 a year, going to the poorest seniors in our country, many of whom live in Winnipeg North.

The opposition says that our government needs to give more of a break to Canadians. Time and time again, through budgets and through legislation, that is exactly what we have done and what we will continue to do going forward into the next election.

I eagerly await the comparison between the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party because of our record.

● (1645)

The Deputy Speaker: 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 Essex, International Trade; the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, National Defence; and the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan, Rail Transportation.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting how this MP, who is supposed to be representing Winnipeg, prides himself on his apparent knowledge of Ontario provincial politics, but nobody would ever accuse him of deviating from the talking points, I am sure.

What is striking to me about the Liberals' message on the environment is that they say to everyday people, people who are struggling to get ahead, that they have to pay more because of the environment. That is their way to help the environment, to make people pay more. Then they say to big successful companies that they will give them money as a way of helping the environment.

Taking from those who are struggling and giving to those who are doing well is the reverse Robin Hood strategy, all in the name of the environment. I wonder if they could devise an alternative, which is to actually provide incentives and support to everyday people. That is what we did. We had things like the home renovation tax credit. We did not use the environment as an excuse to take money from everyday people. We actually provided support in the context of environmental incentives.

Business of Supply

Why will the member not consider that policy and stop using the environment as an excuse to take more money out of the pockets of hard-working Canadians?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the price on pollution is one aspect of good social policy that is going to be making our environment healthier at the end of the day. There are other initiatives that the government has, in fact, taken.

We have invested literally hundreds of millions into looking at infrastructure for public transit and improving it. We are also, through that funding, seeing everything from bus shelters, which does help because more people will use and access buses, to having more efficient buses being purchased. There are many different aspects. I believe the parliamentary secretary to the minister of the environment made reference to 45 or 50 different actions that this government has actually taken.

I suggest to the member opposite that he might want to take a look at what other countries are doing and focus his attention, at least for this debate, on the price of pollution. That is the real challenge. Why is the Conservative Party working along with individuals like Doug Ford to try to say no to a price on pollution when so many other countries around the world are recognizing it as a good thing?

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have some questions with regard to part of the parliamentary secretary's intervention. He mentioned the good-news story of the Philippines, raising the fact that they called the government out for not acting on environmental contaminants in containers that were shipped to the Philippines. I would like him to explain that, because here is what happened.

Dozens of containers of used diapers and other types of contaminants were sent to the Philippines. They were sent in shipping containers and left there. There have been massive protests and civil disruption and a number of other things. President Duterte threatened to take Canada to war because the minister of the environment promised to clean it up and did nothing for a year and a half.

How is it a good news story that it took the Philippines threatening to go to war with Canada because of another Liberal broken promise? It is embarrassing. It is not a moment of pride.

• (1650)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it was a private company that dropped trash off in the Philippines many years ago, just so that the member is aware of it. There is a thing called a court process. There were a number of things that were at play. I believe that President Duterte did a big favour, no doubt, in raising the profile of the issue. This is something, at the end of the day, to which our government actually responded.

It is unfortunate that the NDP want to try to make this an issue where, I believe, it is a good news story that the issue is, in fact, being resolved. If the member would like to have a further discussion as to why it has taken this long, I would be more than happy to explain it in more detail to him.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was really glad to hear the parliamentary secretary bring up the gift to Loblaws to upgrade its refrigerators. This company

makes billions in profit, yet the Liberal government is giving it a handout to upgrade its refrigerators. Meanwhile, people at home in my riding of North Okanagan—Shuswap have approached me to ask how the government could be so arrogant and ridiculous to provide this company with millions of dollars to upgrade its fridges, when they are struggling to get by with the new taxes that have been put on by the government.

In the latest budget book, entitled “Investing in the Middle Class to Grow Canada's Economy”, a couple of pages describe what I believe is the carbon tax. The Liberals have hidden the tax under “fuel charge proceeds”, and they start out at about \$2.1 billion this year. However, on the expenditures page, there is a matching line noting \$2.1 billion going out. With respect to projections down the road, the number reaches about \$5.6 billion coming in, in these fuel charges, and there are \$5.6 billion going out.

How can the government possibly imagine that it can manage \$5.6 billion, give out more to the public than it is taking in and still balance the books? The budget is simply not as advertised.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, when I used the example of Loblaws, I put it in the perspective of a \$48-million proposal. There was a competition in which the private sector was allowed to participate, and through that competition, Loblaws was one of the 52 or 53 applicants that were approved.

As a result of that particular \$48-million investment into refrigeration, I believe incredible work will be done in IT. A company located in, I believe, Mississauga will benefit. More importantly, through that one program, the equivalent of 50,000 vehicles are being taken off the road.

This program is open to provinces, territories, indigenous people and non-profit corporations. This is the real question: As part of their future plan, whenever it comes out, are the Conservatives going to allow the private sector to participate in—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. We are going to try to get one more question in before we finish up the remaining 10 minutes.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Châteauguay—Lacolle.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers are very proud of our leadership on climate change. For one thing, we have a carbon exchange, but people want us to do much more. We are very happy with the electric vehicle rebate program.

Can my colleague tell us more about that program, which is now available to all Canadians?

• (1655)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, the government has a number of different initiatives related to the environment. My colleague and friend is right to point out that, in the province of Quebec, for example, those purchasing an electric vehicle are eligible for a Quebec grant. This will now be complemented by a federal grant.

Business of Supply

Interestingly, last Saturday someone came up to me at the local McDonald's to ask whether Tesla vehicles qualify. I believe there is a story noting that Tesla is now reducing the price of one of its cars so that it can meet our requirement in order to get the incentive that is being provided to Canadians to be able to purchase an electric car.

Helping the environment is not just one thing. There is a multitude of different things that government can do to make a difference. To me, one of the most significant things it can do is to put a price on pollution, and I suspect we will hear a lot more on this in the months and weeks ahead.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Drummond.

I want to touch on a couple of things. I am going to focus some of my remarks on some of the consumer pricing issues that we have with regard to gasoline and fuel that have not been touched on enough in this debate. Outside of building pipelines and the related infrastructure issues, there are things we can do that could bring greater accountability for consumers and address the rip-off taking place at the pumps, where there is not enough accountability. I am going to lay out three different things.

There are also a couple of things I want to talk about in the context of the previous discussion we had about the Philippines. We had a so-called good-news story from the parliamentary secretary that a nation we have a strong historic relationship with had to threaten to go to war because over 100 contaminated containers of human waste and other trash was sent to their shores and stayed there.

The Minister of Environment promised to take care of it but never did anything, making that another broken Liberal promise. The Liberals finally decided to act on it, but ironically, just as an update, there are 69 containers left. Canada has said that we will finally take them back. Apparently the good news is that we are actually going to take them back. However, there is a complication, because some of them are infested with termites.

That is apparently a good-news story from the parliamentary secretary. I am not surprised, because the Liberals have had very few environmental victories that are reality.

I asked a question today in question period and never got a response. It was about Ojibway Shores, where we have over 100 endangered species, and the Liberal government has yet to act to protect that area after the community fought to save it from being bulldozed to the ground. It would take a simple transfer of that land to the Minister of Environment, who will not answer or do anything on it to this day. Real action, a simple process could take place to create a national park, but more importantly, it could protect over 100 endangered species on the Great Lakes. The Liberals have refused to do that. It is a transfer on paper, from one department to the next, and the government has refused to do it. That is unacceptable.

I will also touch briefly on the issue the parliamentary secretary just raised with regard to the incentive for electric vehicles that has been put in place. First and foremost, my riding of Windsor West, which has been producing the minivan for generations, was left off the original list. The only Canadian-built electric vehicle was left off

the Liberal list, pointing everybody away from domestic manufacturing despite the company and the workers, most importantly, providing taxpayer money through taxes day in and day out and making sure that they produce award-winning world-class products. They were left off the list by the government.

Second, the Liberals will not even respond to the fact that the incentive program is not even matching the one that was just killed in Ontario. The Minister of Innovation came to Windsor basically saying that it was going to be put on the list and that people should not worry about it. Then he criticized Doug Ford, just like the parliamentary secretary did, for killing the Ontario program. Doug Ford's program was \$10,000 and up to \$14,000 for those vehicles. The parliamentary secretary should know that his government will not even match that.

The minister came to Windsor. The fact is that this is the only Canadian-built electric vehicle and it is multi-passenger. It would get more vehicles off the road than smaller vehicles, but it is not going to get an incentive based on that. It is basically going to get the \$5,000, after we actually had to bring the Liberals in, kicking and screaming, to fix it. Ironically, this is a plant that the Prime Minister toured less than a year ago.

My advice to anyone who has an auto plant is they should not have the Prime Minister tour it, because obviously it will not do any good. He will be on the assembly line for a photo op, and later he will say to the workers that there is \$300 million for incentives for vehicles with low emissions and for electric vehicles, but by the way, we do not want domestic ones, the ones from Canadian auto workers; we want them from overseas, from Mexico and China and the United States.

Those things the Liberals are doing right now are unacceptable. There are practical, real things that could help. An important point that we could discuss today is how we want to reduce dependency on the oil and gas sector. This incentive program that the government has put in place is not sufficient for that. Ironically, the Liberals want to get up and criticize others, but they will not even meet the makers at the table and actually lead by example. It is unacceptable.

• (1700)

There are a couple of things that are interesting with respect to this motion. One of the reasons I cannot support it is that it does nothing for consumer accountability. The motion simply reads, "That the House call on the government to stop raising the price of gas by clearing the way for pipelines and eliminating the carbon tax on fuel." It does nothing to reverse some of the attempts in this House over the past decades to bring some consumer accountability to the price at the pump as well as knowledge of the product consumers are buying at the pump, and more importantly, of the gouging that can take place. There have been several attempts in this chamber.

Business of Supply

When I came here back in 2002, I learned of some of the good work of the Liberal member Dan McTeague, who did a lot of work on the industry committee. We had hearings and several proposals, including from the Paul Martin administration, to bring in some changes for consumer accountability and tracking. It promised that and never delivered. It was another broken promise.

I want to highlight a couple that are important, because they are still happening today and were not resolved. We can do some of those things today by bringing greater accountability at the pump.

The first one that took place was a Conservative bill, Bill C-14, which was an act to amend the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act and the Weights and Measures Act. The late Jack Layton looked into this. I would give credit to the late former minister Jim Prentice. It is sad that I am talking about two individuals who have passed from this place and our country. What they did was bring to light the fact that Canadians are being overcharged at the pump by tens of millions of dollars. At one point, from 1999, when they looked at some of those things, to a decade later, there was approximately \$240 million worth of so-called phantom gas. That is gas one pays for at the pump that is not measured by the flow metre correctly and a person is charged for it. At any given time, an average of 4% of these pumps do not work properly. If they are off by 0.5% to 1.5% with regard to the charges, they must be fixed within 14 days, which can add up. The sad thing is that the Conservatives privatized the inspections of those, and we have fewer inspections. Usually they are done every two years. I would say that if we want to give rebates to consumers more quickly and bring greater accountability and confidence regarding the price of what they are paying for, we should increase those inspections to once a year.

Another thing we can do is create an oil and gas ombudsman's office. That is something that was recommended at committee and in Parliament going back to 2002. As I mentioned, it was subsequently one of the things the Paul Martin administration was supposed to bring in. It promised to do so, and it did not. What it would do is investigate complaints independently. It would also have the ability to gather information. One of the key elements we are missing in Canada on accountability, versus the United States, is that the U.S. has the Department of Energy's weekly petroleum status report, which gives weekly updates on refining oil and petroleum production. That alone would create more transparency and accountability so that we would be able to track our gasoline to the pump at that time and know whether there was gouging taking place. The office would have some teeth and would be able to investigate that properly. It would produce and maintain data. It would also make sure that big oil companies allowed the office of the ombudsman to provide objective answers free from industry bias so that we could have more consumer confidence.

● (1705)

The third thing we can do is have a petroleum monitoring agency. We looked at the price spikes with regard to Katrina and other types of natural disasters, human disasters, trade issues and different production problems. We could have a greater impact there.

In conclusion, it is about more than just what is in the future with regard to these things. There are also things we can enact right now

to ensure consumer accountability and more money in people's pockets right now.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, actually, Paul Martin did bring in an oil and gas office. I am not sure if it was the exact description that the member liked. It was done for the exact reasons that he stated, such as investigating to ensure that everything is on a level playing field. However, the Conservatives closed that office.

Could the member comment on the closing of that operation? I agree with him; it was a good idea and it had been started.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, it was in the process of being created, but it was never actually fulfilled.

Second, the deal we made with Paul Martin was a Jack Layton deal with regard to the \$4.6 billion. Paul Martin never actually followed through on the money for students and student debt that was part of that arrangement. Unfortunately, what happened was that some of the work that was done was talked about but was not put into full application, which is similar to what happened with a lot of other work. That is why Paul Martin was known as the "ditherer" when he was prime minister, because things never came to fruition or they took too long to do so.

[Translation]

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Windsor West for his excellent speech.

I want to come back to what was said earlier about the Liberals and the Conservatives. There has been a lot of talk about fighting climate change during this debate. I would remind members that scientists have said that we must not allow temperatures to increase by more than 1.5°C or 2°C, preferably 1.5°C, in order to limit dangerous climate change.

To do that, scientists said we should set a target of reducing emissions by 45% by 2030, not the weak 30% target set by Stephen Harper and adopted by the Liberals. If the Liberals are serious, then why are they settling for Stephen Harper's weak 30% target, which will do nothing to limit climate change?

Why do they continue to subsidize the fossil fuel industry to the tune of \$1.5 billion or \$1.7 billion a year? Why did they buy a pipeline that costs \$4.3 billion a year? How does this help fight climate change or lower prices at the pump? It is no help at all. On the contrary, it hinders the fight against climate change and does nothing to lower prices at the pump.

Business of Supply

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, why have the Liberals not acted on anything? Quite frankly, from what I have seen over the last few years, the government has been pretty much lazy. The Liberals have had a significant majority in the House for the last four years, and what we have now seen is a rush to get routine legislation through this chamber through omnibus bills and larger pieces of legislation, which was not even necessary when they had support and working groups from all parties on different things. It is unfortunate, because it is a missed opportunity in many respects.

As far as the subsidies are concerned, this is a good example of the lack of political will necessary to redirect those funds to better and greener opportunities. What is even worse than buying the pipeline and the continued subsidies is the fact that we are in massive deficits right now. The Liberals have done this. We are borrowing money and paying interest on that.

This was one of the concerns and criticisms I had of the previous Conservative government when it brought in the HST, which should not be forgotten, because that was actually an issue with gas pricing before. The fact of the matter is that until we pay that off, the borrowed money incurs interest.

I had the Library of Parliament, which is independent of Parliament, do an economic analysis of the situation, and it is billions and billions of dollars more of borrowed money. Therefore, the real cost of the pipeline is more significant than the purchase price. It is as if we borrowed the money on a credit card, and the credit card has significant rates.

• (1710)

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Before resuming debate and giving the floor to the hon. member for Drummond, I must inform him that he has just four minutes remaining for his speech.

The hon. member for Drummond.

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House to speak to the motion before us today. This afternoon, we have heard a lot about combatting climate change, even though the motion is primarily about pipelines and oil. Nevertheless, it was interesting to see how the Conservatives wanted to present this motion. They want more pipelines. They want to bring back energy east in Quebec. That pipeline was shut down because it was not financially or environmentally viable and because it does not contribute to the fight against climate change. The pipeline also did not have public support, yet the Conservatives want to bring it back.

The Conservatives are kind of funny. They are like firefighters who start fires. They say that they are going to present a plan to combat climate change, yet today they mostly talked about pipelines. Strangely enough, I do not understand how more pipelines will help us combat climate change. I think they would do the opposite.

Most members of Parliament are not scientists. Some of us are, but we do not carry out studies on climate change on a daily basis. However, hundreds of scientists around the world did carry out climate change studies this year and last year. They say that climate action is necessary to avert disaster.

Just this year, the floods in Quebec, Ontario and New Brunswick reminded us just how important climate action is and showed us the very real impact of climate change. Drummondville, in Drummond, went through multiple freeze-thaw cycles, which was very hard on the roads. The potholes are unlike anything we have seen before. This shows just how serious climate change is.

Scientists are telling us the opposite of what the Conservatives are saying. The first thing to do is put a price on carbon, but not the way the Liberals did. They decided it should not apply to the major greenhouse gas emitters because that would have an impact on the economy. Come on. It takes pressure on the economy for it to make the transition to a green, low-carbon economy. It is important that everyone, including major emitters, pay a price on carbon. That was one Liberal mistake.

Still on the topic of carbon pricing, scientists are also saying that the oil and gas industry must be integrated into our climate policies. The Liberals did exactly the opposite by purchasing a pipeline for \$4.3 billion, which runs directly counter to the fight against climate change. On top of that, they continue to subsidize pipelines to the tune of over \$1 billion. Subsidies to the fossil fuel industry are worth between \$1.5 billion and \$1.7 billion annually. This flies in the face of any efforts to combat climate change.

Scientists tell us we need an ambitious target. Unfortunately, our target is the weak goal of reducing our emissions by 30% by 2030. What is more, we will not achieve it. The commissioner of the environment says that it will take us hundreds of years to achieve that target. None of this makes sense. The Liberals went to Paris to sign the Paris Agreement on behalf of Canadians, but the feeble 30% target they cribbed from Stephen Harper will not enable them to keep the promise they made when they signed the agreement. For that, Canada would have to reduce its GHG emissions by at least 45% by 2030.

Building more pipelines is not going to help us fight climate change. We need an ambitious plan, and the NDP will soon be unveiling just such a plan.

• (1715)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 5:15 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, all questions necessary to dispose of the opposition motion are deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred to Wednesday, May 8, 2019, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

[English]

I see the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader on his feet, perhaps on a point of interest to the House.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, if you were to canvass the House, I believe you would likely find support to have unanimous consent to call it 5:30 at this time so we could begin Private Members' Business.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Private Members' Business

Some hon. members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

The House resumed from February 7 consideration of the motion.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always wonderful to see you in the chair, especially when we are talking about issues that really matter to constituents, because I know how much you care about these issues.

Today I will be speaking to Motion No. 201. It is looking at an extension of employment insurance benefits for sickness. This is an important study, and I am very excited to see this motion put forward.

As a constituency consultant for 11 years, I dealt many times with constituents who, unfortunately, had exhausted their employment insurance sickness benefits. What I found many times was that there was a large gap between the time they applied for employment insurance and the Canada pension plan disability. The Canada pension plan, in many cases, would start at usually four months. However, many people did not understand that they might be off for that period of time.

Being able to have this study would be fantastic, because it would give us, as members of Parliament, time to look at some of these key issues. Today I will be discussing some of the things that are important, including why we need to study this as well as some of the costing. It needs to be looked at through two prongs.

I would like to thank the member for Sydney—Victoria for putting this forward. I know that this was debated in the House in 2011 and 2012, but since that period of time, we have seen a large increase in the number of people in Canada taking employment insurance sickness benefits. For 38.9% of people who have been on EI benefits for sickness, their benefits have been exhausted.

Over this time, I have also had the honour to serve as the Conservative shadow minister for families, children and social development. I have had the opportunity to meet with many different organizations, not-for-profits and health organizations that come to us to discuss the needs of their patients and the clients they are representing.

One that comes to mind is the MS Society. For a number of years, we have talked about some of the issues patients have had to consider. A lot of times, the symptoms are episodic. Although this employment insurance study may be looking at whether we should be extending the benefits, we also will have the opportunity to discuss more than that. This motion is looking at extending EI benefits to up to 50 weeks for sickness. Within this conversation, we would be able to discuss some of the things that are needed for people who have MS, who have cancer and who have hip replacements and knee replacements.

Because of that, last night I looked over some of the rehabilitation times. I was looking at what happens if someone has a hip

replacement or a knee replacement. What is the opportunity to return to work? The average time is four to six weeks before people can return to a desk job, and sometimes it is much longer. We also have to understand that some people are not able to return to work at a desk job. For instance, for truck drivers who have to get in and out and people working on a farm or in food processing or anything that is physically straining, the opportunity to take more time off is not just a necessity but is doctor's orders. A lot of times patients are told that they have to take up to six months off. Within the first 15 weeks, people would only be able to receive sickness benefits. Unfortunately, at that time, there would be nothing else.

Many people would wonder at that time if they could apply for Canada pension plan disability. For Canada pension plan disability, people need to be deemed unable to work, and that has to be over a one-year period. If someone tells his or her employer that he or she is sick, has been hurt or has a broken bone and will not be able to return to work for eight months, the Canada pension plan is not going to be an option. Sometimes sick benefits would be the only option for those people.

There are many things we also need to look at. It cannot just be government benefits. We also have to recognize that there are short-term and long-term disability plans that are available through private planners. Through the workplace, there are also many other pensions available. A lot of the time these benefits will work in conjunction with each other.

It is very important that we look at why this needs to be studied. The last time this was changed from 15 weeks was in 1971, and I believe that is probably when it was introduced as EI benefits for sick benefits, so it has been 15 weeks since 1971. Being 48 and born in 1971 myself, I think there have been a lot of changes in 48 years, so this is a great time for the human resources and skills development committee to study these things.

I recognize that a lot of studies have been done and that there have been requests. Recently there was a response to the HUMA committee from the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development. He indicated that the committee needs to explore impacts for employers and the cost implications relating to the increase in sickness benefits.

● (1720)

This discussion has already started at the HUMA committee, and we have heard from many different parties as to what we are looking at.

Let me go back to the MS Society. When people come to our office, many times they will tell us that they are able to work one day but not the next, so we need to have the opportunity to talk about what their needs are as well. They too need to have some sort of financial plan. Many of them are able to work, but it just may not be all the time.

Private Members' Business

When looking at issues like that, we need to make sure what the impacts will be on both the employer and the employee, as well as what the cost of the program will be. Luckily, earlier this spring we received a PBO report. Information was received by the PBO knowing that the study was going to be done. The report shows that the cost of this program would be \$1.1 billion in 2020 and would be expected to grow by \$1.3 billion by 2025.

I find those statistics really important. If we are going to extend this program, we have to look at what the cost will be to taxpayers and employers. We think it would probably be about \$1.62 per every \$100 earned through employment. We have to see at the end of the day if this is best for Canada's bottom line, and more importantly, if this is best for the bottom line of a family budget of somebody who is sick.

Let us compare benefits. There are many different benefits available through the employment insurance program.

The first one I can think of is the family caregiver benefit. The family caregiver benefit is available to parents or anyone who has a child under the age of 18. Parents are able to take some weeks off to care for their children if they are in critical or serious need.

There is also the caregiver for adults benefit. This benefit is for family members to assist other family members over the age of 18.

One benefit that I think is very important is the compassionate care benefit. I was really proud when our government expanded the number of weeks to receive this benefit. This benefit recognizes that 26 weeks is an appropriate amount of time when a loved one is going to pass away. This benefit allows that loved one to be provided with psychological and mental support from family members during a time of need.

Those 26 weeks were set by our former government, and I think it is fantastic to know that family can be there at the end of life and know that benefits are available. The family has to coordinate the benefits, however. The entire family cannot take 26 weeks each, but they can coordinate those 26 weeks so that each family member can care for a loved one.

I would like to see some changes made to this, but it needs to be a whole-of-government approach. We need to look at it. We need to know what all 338 members of Parliament think about it. We also need to hear from physicians. We need to know what they think when it comes to people going back to work. We have to look at stress loads. We need to look at what is best for a person who has just had a massive heart attack or open-heart surgery. We need to make sure that somebody looking to return to work is in good health and does not need to take time off because he or she returned to work too soon.

What are some of the things that we should be considering if somebody has had a knee replacement or a hip replacement? Is the person able to go back to full-time work? Is he or she able to go back to part-time work? Could he or she participate in a work-sharing project? There are lots of different opportunities to discuss.

It is important to have members come to the HUMA committee and discuss some of these issues. It is also great to have not-for-profit organizations and many health organizations come along as

well. It is important to hear from members of the Cancer Society, the MS Society, the Diabetes Association and a variety of these organizations to find out what works best for Canadians and what families need. I fully support having this conversation. Everybody needs to be at the table.

We recognize that coming back from surgery can be very difficult. I had surgery in January and I wanted to come back to work immediately. Unfortunately, my body, my mind and my family said absolutely not, and when I did come back to work a little too soon, I paid the piper, as my father would say. I did not feel well. We need to make sure that everybody has the opportunity to make sure that their health is taken care of first.

I am really excited about the opportunity to study this at human resources and skills development committee. This is a great opportunity for all Canadians to ask what we have done in the last 48 years and what can we do to improve the system.

I thank the member for Sydney—Victoria for putting this motion forward.

• (1725)

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am also honoured to rise to speak to this motion.

I am somewhat ambivalent. I am both happy and unhappy to talk about this motion. I am happy because it is important to talk about how the 15 weeks of sickness benefits offered by the EI program are not enough for people to recover. It does not make any sense. It does not make any sense for a person who is ill to have to return to work or be left penniless for weeks when that time is up.

I am also extremely disappointed to have to talk about this motion, which calls for an examination of the situation, when this government has been in office for four years and has still not done anything about this. It really bothers me because, behind this motion, there are people who are suffering. We are talking about people who have been diagnosed with cancer or a mental health problem or people who have to have knee or neck surgery, for example. They sometimes have to be off work for nearly a year. Employment insurance gives them 15 weeks of sickness benefits, but after that, they are left with nothing.

These are people who have sought help and done everything they can, but they are still left with nothing. They come to see us at our offices. Many people have come to ask me how this could be and where that bill came from. One woman by the name of Marie-Hélène Dubé has been working on this issue for a long time. She even worked with our late NDP leader, Jack Layton. She was in this situation herself, and she started a campaign called “15 Weeks to Heal is Not Enough!”. She has worked extremely hard. She has made people aware of this problem and collected 600,000 signatures in 10 years. This has been going on for a long time.

Private Members' Business

It bothers me that a motion was moved today to study this matter in committee. We do not need to move a motion to study the situation, we need to introduce a bill to resolve it. This problem dates back to 1971. This petition has been signed by 600,000 people.

I continued this fight with constituents. Some of them spoke to me about this problem. For example, Cynthia Lafontaine, a young mother from Drummond, had her life turned upside down when she was diagnosed with spinal cord cancer. She had to undergo surgery on her spinal cord and had to relearn just about everything. She had to learn how to talk and walk again. She had to work on regaining her fine motor skills. She had to do all this, and it took her much more than 15 weeks. After 15 weeks, she was no longer receiving EI sick benefits. She was getting nothing. In addition to being sick, she had no money and was financially stressed. When people are sick, they do not need financial stress on top of everything else.

This issue dates back to 1973, and she has been fighting for this for about a decade. It seems like this should have been resolved by now. It is not as though the Liberals are waking up today after four years and realizing that there is a problem. For years now, my colleagues from Churchill—Keewatinook Aski and Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot have been telling us loud and clear in the House and at committee that something has to be done to move this forward.

• (1730)

What we hear is that the committee is sweeping this under the rug and claiming that it will do it later. Four years later, with the election right around the corner, the government is saying that it is going to study this. That is really disappointing, especially when we think about people like Cynthia Lafontaine and Marie-Hélène Dubé.

I organized a talk on this subject a few months ago because I really wanted to remind people how important and inhumane this situation is. As I was saying earlier, we are not talking about EI sickness benefits, we are talking about human situations. We are talking about people who have experienced this, people who are living in completely unacceptable situations. We need to fix those situations. EI normally provides about 45 weeks of benefits. The same should be given in cases of serious illness.

On the ground, in Drummond, if anyone wants to speak with me or sign a petition, I invite them to come and see me. I really care about this matter, because this problem is affecting real people, and it needs to be fixed.

Speaking of Liberals waking up, I have to say that the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development has been aware of this for some time. In 2016, he told Radio-Canada that he was listening and was aware of the issue. He said the government would continue to ensure that the system serves those who need it most and that his department would be reviewing the cut-off.

That was in 2016. It is now 2019, but nothing has been done. The best the Liberals can do is move a motion to examine this in committee. Is that really the best they can do?

It is not like nothing has been done about this yet. A November 2017 report recommended that the Liberal government close the gaps in the social safety net for people coping with illness. That was a clear finding. The report recommended finding solutions quickly

for those who exhaust their 15 weeks of sickness benefits. That study was done in 2017.

Another government survey found that 48% of EI recipients who claim federal sickness benefits are unable to go back to work at the end of the 15 weeks. Half of those who receive EI sickness benefits are unable to return to work.

The Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology has already recommended increasing the maximum number of weeks of benefits to 50 weeks.

The 15-week EI program has been around since 1971. Over the past decade, Marie-Hélène Dubé has made the rounds of all the media outlets, from *Tout le monde en parle* to all the morning shows. She has toured Quebec. She has been to several ridings and met with many MPs. She even took photos with them. A study was done, and a report was tabled in 2017. That report noted that 15 weeks was not enough. Then there was another study in the Senate. After all that time, after four years of a Liberal government, all we are being offered is a committee study.

As I said, 15 weeks is not enough time to heal. People should be entitled to 50 weeks of benefits. Nearly half the people who use federal sickness benefits are unable to return to work when the benefits run out. Unfortunately, as we know, the incidence of cancer is on the rise. At some point in their lives, nearly one in two Canadians will be diagnosed with cancer, a disease that unfortunately requires treatment that takes around 52 weeks.

• (1735)

This motion is not enough, and I am calling on the Liberal government to introduce a bill so that this issue can be resolved before the election is called.

Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.): I am pleased to rise today to speak to Motion No. 201 and its fundamental importance to Canadians. This motion is sponsored by my colleague, the hon. member for Sydney—Victoria. I would like to congratulate him and thank him for his work.

While Canada has always striven to promote health care and its progression, there is still a lot of work to be done in terms of the employment insurance to which all Canadian employees are entitled.

According to Statistics Canada, three out of five Canadians over the age of 20 have a chronic disease, and four out of five Canadians are at risk of developing one. These chronic diseases include cancer and heart disease in particular. The most striking thing about these diseases is that although we currently consider them to be incurable, they are certainly treatable.

Private Members' Business

This alarming finding would therefore suggest that measures are in place to treat sick people and promote their return to society once their treatment has ended. However, as the member for Sydney—Victoria has pointed out, EI sick benefits are only paid for 15 weeks to eligible claimants, and the fact is that 15 weeks is not enough in most cases.

I think the member for Sydney—Victoria has a vision for an even better Canada, and the answers are there. This motion reaffirms that vision by urging the government to act. Since 2009, there have been seven different bills seeking to extend these 15 weeks of benefits. Some of those bills got as far as second reading, but none were ever passed. I share the member's vision and believe that we can make a difference by adopting this perspective.

Approving the motion on employment insurance will result in important and necessary changes that will allow Canadians to return to their workplaces and resume their activities after receiving treatment and having had enough time to recover, because most interventions to treat long-term illnesses can be invasive and require a longer recovery period.

I would like to add that before immigrating to Canada and completing my studies in translation, I worked as a registered nurse in Lebanon during the civil war. I witnessed horrific scenes. I treated many patients who, in addition to dealing with the common ills that afflict us in western countries, had to live in an environment where they were under constant threat of violence. I saw everything from the most debilitating infections to the unimaginable suffering of victims of physical and psychological violence.

These people had one thing in common: the time they needed to recover. Based on what I have seen and my personal experience, recovery is not about the time it takes for a wound to heal. Rather, it is about the time it takes for a person to regain enough physical and mental strength to return to the work they were doing before their diagnosis or treatment. Frankly, I do not think 15 weeks is enough time to recover from treatments such as radiation therapy or chemotherapy, where patients may need several months or even a year to regain enough strength to carry out their daily activities. I can speak to that because I spent five years working in an oncology ward at the hospital in Lebanon.

While EI sick benefits provide adequate coverage for most claimants, about 35% exhaust their benefits before returning to work. This means that these claimants needed more than 15 weeks to recover, but simply could not afford it.

• (1740)

That is the sad reality of the EI sick benefit program. First of all, I believe that when they are not given the time they need to recover, people may relapse. For example, depression and psychological stress can significantly affect a patient's ability to recover from cardiovascular disease.

According to the Mental Health Commission of Canada, about 25% to 50% of people with chronic conditions who do not receive specific support will also experience depression.

People who suffer from depression following a heart attack are at greater risk of having a second heart attack. Indeed, people with depression are more likely to develop poor lifestyle habits, such as

excessive alcohol consumption, poor nutrition and lack of physical activity, which can affect their recovery from the original illness. Indeed, depression can undermine the motivation and determination that patients need to complete their treatment.

In addition, it is important to point out that these are not people on the cusp of retirement. Most of them are young adults who still have a lot to offer Canadian society in terms of its progress.

According to the HealthPartners' Chronic Disease and Mental Health Report, 21.4% of Canada's working population has a chronic illness, with our youth being the hardest hit.

One study found that in any given year, 28% of people aged 20 to 29 will experience a mental illness. One in two workers has a mental illness by the age of 40. In addition, 500,000 Canadians are absent from work every day due to depression. This absenteeism is a major problem because it costs our national economy more than \$51 billion annually. Our government must invest in these young Canadians. They will give back to Canada by being active in the job market and thereby contributing to the country's economy.

It is well known that most people living with chronic disease receive care outside of hospitals, relying on family and community for their medical needs. A Statistics Canada survey shows that 20% of caregivers looking after someone with a chronic illness reported depression as a result of their responsibilities.

Not all claimants will necessarily be eligible for the extended benefit period for their recovery and treatment. Since decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, this will be a subjective procedure, and claimants will therefore only receive benefits for the number of weeks required for their recovery. As such, the government's duty will be to provide the necessary assistance to patients and their families by extending the benefit period to enable patients to fully recover from their illness and not develop additional ones.

In conclusion, I strongly support this motion because I recognize and understand the impact it can have on helping Canadians who may need a longer recovery period than the current 15 weeks and who will experience financial stress when they realize that there will be no more EI sick benefits if they take a longer period of leave.

Motion No. 201 calls on the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities to examine the possibility and practicality of extending the maximum number of weeks of employment insurance sick benefits for those with long-term illnesses. It therefore seems obvious that Motion No. 201 must be allowed to continue.

Private Members' Business

• (1745)

Imagine the relief of all those families who can only watch helplessly as their loved ones slowly fade away. This is not an unattainable goal, and it could be achieved more quickly than we think. After all, we have an obligation to help Canadians so that they, in turn, can contribute to productivity growth in Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a real pleasure to stand up and speak once again on behalf of my constituents.

I would like to thank the member for Sydney—Victoria for bringing this motion before the House. I know that his heart is in the right place when I read the motion, but I have to express my frustration and indeed that of the New Democratic Party at another half measure by this Liberal government. When it comes to the issue of employment insurance sickness benefits, this is not a new issue. This has been debated for several years over several parliaments, and we know that enacting such a measure in legislation would have a very real and tangible benefit for some of the most vulnerable Canadians. That is simply a fact.

For the benefit of my constituents back home, I am going to take some time to read the motion. Motion No. 201 reads as follows:

That, in the opinion of the House, the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities should examine the possibility and practicality of extending the maximum number of weeks of Employment Insurance sick benefits for those with long term illnesses; and that the Committee report its findings and recommendations to the House no later than six months from the adoption of this motion.

Once again, even though the member for Sydney—Victoria has the right idea with this motion, instead of a practical action from the Liberal government, we are again left with a motion for study, which is problematic in two elements. The Liberals have had a majority government and are now three and a half years into this 42nd Parliament. They have had the time to enact this measure. They have the numbers and the votes necessary to pass such a measure in legislation.

However, the fact is that Motion No. 201 is coming before us in its final hour of debate right now, in this 42nd Parliament, which is rapidly running out of runway. Therefore, there is no realistic chance for the standing committee to do the proper study and have an adequate amount of time to report its findings back to the House.

I want to highlight why this is so important. We know that employment insurance sickness benefits currently have a maximum payable of 15 weeks. We also know that about four out of 10 applicants are maxing out those benefits. This is problematic, because the next federal benefits that could conceivably come into play if one's illness is of quite a long duration is CPP disability. However, with CPP disability, one has to meet two requirements: One's physical or mental disability or illness has to be severe, and it has to be prolonged. One has to hit those two things.

From my days working as a caseworker and intervening on behalf of constituents, I saw that "prolonged" usually means a year or more. What I saw when I was working as a constituency assistant, and indeed what my office continues to see, is that we have constituents who have an illness that may last in the range of 30 weeks or so.

They max out on 15 weeks of sickness benefits, but they do not have the timeline necessary to go on to the next step.

This causes an incredible amount of stress and frustration on the part of those who are dealing with health issues, which we know is not good for their recovery. It is very problematic.

I got into politics because I was sick and tired of sitting across the table when I was doing casework, seeing people who were at their wits' end because either their benefits had run out or they could not find enough money to pay the rent or put good food on the table. I could link a lot of those issues straight back to this place and the policies and legislation enacted here in the House of Commons, or the lack thereof. If only Motion No. 201 had been a private member's bill, we could actually have done something.

• (1750)

We most certainly support extending EI benefits. If the member for Sydney—Victoria wants a template, he needs to look no further than my colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam, who in this 42nd Parliament has Bill C-288 at first reading. It would amend the Employment Insurance Act to provide for up to 50 weeks of benefits for persons suffering from health issues.

Yes, that will probably add some cost, but the thing about health issues is that no one knows when they are going to get sick. No one knows when these kinds of health problems can arise, but boy, do people appreciate the safety nets that are there when they need them.

Not everyone is going to need the 50 weeks, but they would have the peace of mind of knowing that they could potentially go up to 50 weeks if they needed to. Of course, along the way they would need to submit the proper medical documentation to show that they were still eligible.

This is not just in this Parliament. We have Bill C-288 here in the 42nd Parliament, but my colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam had a similar bill in the previous Parliament, the 41st.

Former member of parliament Dawn Black, of the NDP, had it in the 40th Parliament and in the 39th Parliament. There are numerous examples, and they are not only from New Democrats. I believe there were a number of Liberal and Bloc Québécois members of Parliament who all tackled this issue. There was a recent petition by Marie-Hélène Dubé that collected 600,000 signatures, so the will is there. The obvious sense of it is there, and we have numerous examples in previous Parliaments.

Again, all we have before us is a motion to direct this to a committee for further study, yet the government has all the tools at its disposal and a commanding presence in the legislature, and I would argue that amending this part of the EI Act is it is probably the lowest of the low-hanging fruit.

As I said in the beginning, think of the number of benefits we could extend to people and just do that one measure. Four out of 10 Canadians are already maxing it out.

Adjournment Proceedings

I will be voting in favour of Motion No. 201, but I want it clearly understood that a golden opportunity was missed yet again, especially with a majority government, and I want to convey my frustration and that of my party to constituents back home.

They know I have been raising issues on employment insurance for quite some time. I have, as all MPs do, an active case file. There are constituents in my riding who are seeing their EI sickness benefits cut off at 15 weeks. Some of them have tried to go back to work, which has made them even sicker. When I see the stress and the strain of attempting to do that, I do not know why we have not taken the time to tackle this issue yet.

I want that frustration clearly underlined, and I certainly hope that the member for Sydney—Victoria and his colleagues are listening. We could have had this done, but we certainly do not have a lot of time left in this 42nd Parliament.

Again, I appreciate this time to rise in this place and give my thoughts on the matter.

With that, I will conclude.

• (1755)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Sydney—Victoria has the right of reply.

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank all the MPs who have come into this chamber to speak to and support this very important motion, not only this evening but the previous times we have debated it in the House. As this may be my last time speaking to this motion, I would like to thank the different organizations that have helped us along the way to get where we are today. I speak of the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Canadian Cancer Society, the MS Society and many others that helped put this together and stuck with us all the way through. They showed us many examples of what they are facing with respect to the people they represent.

Also, I have to thank my staff. I have been elected for 19 years. I remember talking to one of my first staffers, Darlene Morrison. I asked her about the most disturbing thing she had seen in our office. She said it was people getting sick and not having enough EI to help them get through it. That is when our journey started, back when Darlene told me that. Along the way, over those 19 years, my staff and I have been keeping at this. We brought a private member's bill to the House on it before, and we are not giving up. I am glad our colleagues are moving this forward.

Since 2015, our government has done a lot with respect to EI changes, and we see it in our communities. We have made updates to the regular employment insurance benefits, and we now have parental benefits and the compassionate care benefits, all of which help the regular citizens in this country through tough times. The problem is that, thus far, sickness benefits have not been targeted for any major changes, making them the only benefits that have not received a makeover. Sickness benefits have remained at 15 weeks. That is all people are getting. As my colleague mentioned, this has not changed since 1971, when the EI system came into place.

In our region, the Atlantic region, people need 600 insurable hours to qualify for sickness benefits. However, people can work 420

hours and get employment insurance for 26 weeks. Therefore, that balance is not there.

There is another thing that is very important and has been recognized by my other colleagues. When people are diagnosed with an illness, such as prostate or breast cancer, the doctor will refer them for treatment. However, it could take 10 or 15 weeks before they even start their treatment. All of a sudden, they are 10 or 15 weeks in and just starting their treatment and, guess what, there is no money coming in. A lot of people are just a payment away from their cars and their homes, and their assets are in jeopardy. Not only that, but, as was mentioned by some of my colleagues, the stress on those people at that moment, when they are unable to make payments on their bills, really impedes their recovery, as doctors would tell us, on top of their bodies going through enough due to the treatments.

It seems that every person who is approved for EI sick benefits will get the full 15 weeks. This has to be looked at, because people get the same 15 weeks whether they have broken bones, stress or cancer. Therefore, there should be a real makeover of this, to look at how many weeks should apply to different illnesses. Perhaps the weeks approved could be tailored to a doctor's recommendation regarding the severity of the illness or injury. For example, a person with a broken leg may need only eight weeks, whereas a person with cancer may need 30 weeks. That all makes sense. However, many people are being forced to return to work when they are not well, which is causing increased stress and further contributing to their illness.

Many of my constituents, and those of my colleagues, have talked about this serious situation. Therefore, we have to make some changes. We have to look at this and study it. This was implemented in the 1970s, when most people who fell sick with cancer or had a stroke died. They are not dying now, because we have better medicines and a better medical system. Therefore, we can help them get through it so they can become productive citizens. Other countries are helping them do it. It is an economic benefit to get these people back into the workforce.

A healthy nation is a good working nation. I hope my colleagues in this House will support my motion this evening when it comes to the vote.

• (1800)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

Adjournment Proceedings

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rose months ago to ask a question about the Liberals' decision, when they signed the new NAFTA, to give up a percentage of our supply management, specifically dairy.

We know that we have given access to the United States that compromises our supply management and that, quite frankly, hurts farmers. That is something we have heard consistently. I have dairy farmers in my riding of Essex. It is something that, as New Democrats, we have stood against. We believe strongly that we should not be giving up supply management, certainly our dairy, in agreement after agreement. The question really is why the Liberals have betrayed farm families and our food security in Canada. That day I posed the question to the Prime Minister.

The NDP strongly believes that we should be defending our supply managed sectors, not sacrificing them in trade deal after trade deal.

I do not know how much more our dairy farm families in this country can bear. They are continually thrown under the bus in every trade agreement, and enough is enough. In CETA, CPTPP and now the new NAFTA, we have conceded 8.4% of our dairy production in Canada. To put that in perspective for Canadians who are watching at home, that is 800 million litres of milk that will be permanently removed from our farms. That will have a very serious impact on farm families across our country.

We know that this is an erosion of our supply managed dairy farm families' livelihoods and the communities they live in. The Liberals have the nerve to stand in this House, and the Prime Minister on that day, repeating the line that we have heard over and over, which is just a complete and utter falsehood, which is that they, of course, will protect supply management and defend supply management in some way. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Do Liberals not understand that dairy farmers are not falling for their claims that they are protected in any of these agreements? When the agreements come out at the end, dairy farmers can see in black and white that they were sacrificed. In fact, the previous minister of agriculture himself admitted that, saying that we had to give it up. We had to do something.

I am not sure how this goes along with the rhetoric that the Liberals will protect supply management and that they have in the USMCA, because nothing could be further from the truth. It is very disrespectful, I have to say, to our farm families. My farm families locally are tired of hearing it. It is Liberal spin. It does not make any sense. It is not the truth. I think the Liberals have to start being honest about that.

I want to talk about supply management and what protecting it means. There are three pillars of supply management: import control, pricing mechanisms and production. In production, we have a quota system in Canada. We make sure that we are only making as much as the market demands. What is being thrown away in every single trade agreement is the pillar of import control. When we start to have, in this case American milk, which is not up to the standard of Canadian milk, we can certainly talk about health standards, bovine

growth hormones, antibiotics and the fact that Canadians will not know if their milk is 100% Canadian, with the little blue cow. We know that the U.S. system is not working, and their farmers are looking for a place to dump their milk. Quite honestly, Canada should not be that place.

I live in a border city. I live in a border area, down in Essex County. Canadians are not going across and purchasing milk, because they are aware of the different standards and the different health impacts of the milk in the U.S. compared to Canada.

Why have Liberals betrayed farm families and our food security in Canada?

● (1805)

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Essex for raising this important issue.

The Government of Canada fully supports dairy, egg and poultry farmers, as well as our supply management system. Canada's dairy, egg and poultry producers and processors contribute to countless other industries, help support local economies, and create prosperous and dynamic rural communities. Promoting trade and upholding our supply management system are not mutually exclusive. We just concluded two of the most important agreements in Canadian history, namely the Canada-United States-Mexico agreement and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. We have also seen our agreement with the European Union come into force. All these efforts benefit the Canadian economy, the agri-food sector and farmers.

We did all this while protecting our supply management system. The United States tried to dismantle our system, but we managed to preserve it, protect it and defend it. The USMCA upholds the three pillars of supply management: production control, price control and import control. Transparency provisions are common in free trade agreements and do not compromise Canadian sovereignty in any way. They also do not interfere with our ability to change our milk classes as we see fit. The provisions do not apply only to Canada. The USMCA will require Canada and the United States to publish, notify and consult regarding various aspects of the milk pricing system.

The government fully supports the dairy, poultry and egg industries, and we are working together to assess the impact that the USMCA will have on those sectors. In order to mitigate the effects of more open access to the dairy, egg, and poultry markets, we have repeatedly said that will we fully and fairly compensate those affected by the agreement.

On that point, the government recently formed working groups with dairy, egg and poultry farmers to discuss the new agreements and collaborate on developing strategies to help them adapt, innovate and remain competitive.

Adjournment Proceedings

[English]

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Mr. Speaker, again I hear these ridiculous Liberal talking points about fully supporting supply management. Nothing could be further from the truth, and that is insulting to farm families, who are getting in touch with me every single week because that is not the truth. No matter how many times someone repeats something, it does not make it true and farm families are being hurt.

I want to talk about U.S. oversight, which was given up in the new NAFTA. The Dairy Farmers of Canada have asked the Prime Minister not to sign the USMCA until the U.S. oversight clause has been removed. What they say on their press release is that Canada's sovereignty is at stake.

Basically, the Liberals are giving power to the United States in this agreement. The United States will be able to determine and dictate how Canadian dairy is operated in our country. How on earth can the Liberal government say that this is protecting supply management? How on earth can it say that it is maintaining our sovereignty? The dairy farmers themselves are saying that this is not the case and that the government should not sign the agreement with this provision in place.

The government has given up the tariffs. That is bad enough, but this provision alone—

• (1810)

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant: Mr. Speaker, let me repeat that the USMCA upholds the three pillars of supply management. The government understands how important Canadian agriculture and agri-food trade is for our economy and our jobs.

Our negotiators worked hard to defend the interests of Canadian agriculture at the bargaining table. Defending supply management has not prevented Canada from signing free trade deals and negotiating new ones with major partners. Supply management is the system our farmers chose for themselves, and it has been working well for many years. It benefits the Canadian economy, and I can assure the House that we have protected and defended it and we always will.

The government is committed to working with the dairy, egg and poultry sectors to determine the best way forward in order to keep these sectors strong, dynamic and innovative at all levels of the supply chain and to ensure that farmers are fairly compensated.

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be able to rise on a question that I originally asked back in December about the Liberals' continued investment in the F-35 program.

The Prime Minister promised in the last campaign that he would not be buying the F-35, so I felt it was kind of strange at that point in time that the Liberals would be investing in a program that they do not believe in.

We get down to the truth now. Just yesterday, the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, a very well-respected independent think tank right here in Ottawa, came out with a new report called "The Catastrophe: Assessing the Damage from Canada's Fighter Replacement Fiasco". This report strongly condemns the way the government has handled this file in trying to find a replacement for our fighter jets.

I do not think I have to remind Canadians that the government's idea for replacing fighter jets is to replace our CF-18s with even older, more worn-out F-18s from the Australian air force. The Liberals are taking a position on these used F-18s now.

Let us be clear that the reason we have this fiasco is that the Prime Minister made an ill-informed campaign promise in 2015 that he would not buy the F-35. Every move the Liberals have made since then on replacing our aging CF-18 fighter fleet is about covering up for that promise, which they are going to have a heck of a time fulfilling, especially if they actually were to run an open, fair and transparent competition.

We know that this competition is not transparent because everybody has lifetime gag orders on them, and we know it is not fair because this report says it is fixed against some of the potential competitors.

It is clear that the Liberal government and the Prime Minister himself, with the assistance of the Minister of National Defence, have placed the partisan interests of the Liberal Party of Canada ahead of our national interest as a nation in protecting our sovereignty. It has eroded the respect that we used to have on the world stage, and in particular it has undermined our defence partnership with our strongest ally and neighbour, the United States.

Throughout our time as government, we stood up for the Canadian Armed Forces, but morale within the Canadian Armed Forces is at the lowest levels we have ever seen. Members of the armed forces are voting with their feet. Pilots and aircrew and aircraft technicians are leaving in droves, all because they have lost confidence in the Liberal government.

As the Conservative Party, we know that we will select the right fighter jet in an expedited amount of time when we form government this fall. We know that we will restore our relationships with our defence partners, especially the United States, through NORAD. We will not waste billions of taxpayer dollars on old fighter jets. We will not continue on with that Liberal tradition of buying used and old worn-out equipment, as the Liberals have done in the past and are doing right now. We will make sure that we are the true north, strong and free.

• (1815)

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I know that he likes to blame our government for all the world's problems, so I will just look back and bring up some unpleasant memories about the Harper government's F-35 program.

Adjournment Proceedings

Our government has always been clear that a fleet of modern fighter jets is essential to Canada's defence and sovereignty. That is why we launched an open and transparent process to replace Canada's fighter fleet with 88 advanced jets. This is something the Conservatives were unable to accomplish in their 10 years in power. Thanks to this competitive process, we will have good aircraft at the right price and also create jobs for Canadians and our businesses.

Let us go back a little in time. Under the Conservatives, military procurement processes were almost always sole sourced, without calls for tender, and the military's expectations were never met.

Here is the Conservative record on fighter aircraft. First, a Parliamentary Budget Officer's report set the cost of purchasing modern aircraft at double the government's estimate. What is even more shocking is the Auditor General's report indicating that the Conservatives kept two sets of books, one for the Canadian public and one for themselves. A decade later, our air force still does not have new fighter jets.

Instead of lecturing us, my colleague should look at what we are doing with respect to the bidding process. He said that members of the Canadian Armed Forces are disappointed, but everywhere I go on the ground, the military personnel I meet tell me they finally have a government that thinks of them and is taking care of them.

Our government will provide the Royal Canadian Air Force with the critical equipment it needs to be fully operational, now and in the future. That is why we are launching an open and transparent competition for the acquisition of 88 new fighter jets. The Conservatives were planning on purchasing only 66, and they were incapable of acquiring a single plane in 10 years.

In the meantime, Canada continues to participate in the joint strike fighter program, which will enable Canadian businesses to obtain contracts valued at over \$1.5 billion U.S. It also gives us the opportunity to buy jets under this program if the F-35 qualifies in the tendering process for the future fleet.

This fall, another report from the Auditor General confirmed what we have always known, and that is that the Harper Conservatives mismanaged the fighter jet file and misled Canadians for over a decade. The report also confirmed the existence of the capability gap, which started under the Harper Conservatives.

Unlike them, we will not compromise our ability to meet our NATO and NORAD commitments. That is exactly why we have been working with Australia on the procurement of fighter jets to strengthen our fleet until the permanent replacement for our CF-18s is operational. Some planes have arrived and others will be arriving soon.

We are required to take these measures because of the Conservatives' inaction and the fiasco they created. We are going to make sure that the Canadian Armed Forces and the Royal Canadian Air Force have the equipment and planes they need to continue to fulfill their mission.

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, I am not going to take any lessons from the Liberals.

The PBO report that came out this spring showed that the Australian fighter jet program is going to cost us 22% more. Why? It is because the Liberals are running two sets of books.

The report that just came out from the Macdonald-Laurier Institute includes a redacted copy of the original Auditor General's report from last fall, which recommended "National Defence should not purchase interim aircraft". It is right there, and the Liberals took it out.

The Liberals have also said that they are part of the joint strike fighter program, but there are two letters from the Pentagon and the U.S. Department of Defense indicating that jobs are at risk in Canada because Canada has not been following the rules under the memorandum of understanding between all nine partner nations.

Under the joint strike fighter program, 900 direct jobs have been created, \$1.35 billion in benefits have been provided and 9,000 indirect jobs have been created. The Liberals are going to squander all of this for partisan purposes, and this is not in Canada's national interest.

• (1820)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Mr. Speaker, I know it is hard for my colleague to hear the truth, but that is exactly what we did. We launched an open and transparent process to replace Canada's fighter fleet with 88 advanced fighter jets, not 66. That is something the Conservatives were unable to do during their 10 years in office. The Auditor General's two reports show that they gravely mismanaged the file and failed to acquire any new fighter jets. That is their record.

My colleague talked about transparency, but let me remind the House that the Conservatives had two sets of numbers, one for the public and the other for themselves. Anyone with a record as poor as the Conservatives' should not be talking about transparency.

Our bidding process will get us good fighter jets for the right price and will create job opportunities for Canadians. I think Canadian Armed Forces members are very happy with what we have done with this program.

[*English*]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, CCF): Mr. Speaker, back in December, I asked about restoring VIA passenger rail service between Winnipeg, Regina and Calgary. In response, the Minister of Transport tried to reassure me that Via Rail does pass through Saskatchewan. He must have been referring to the quite limited VIA Rail service to Saskatoon, but I want to make the distinction between Regina and Saskatoon clear to the parliamentary secretary, because that seemed to be a point of confusion for the minister. My question was about restoring passenger service on the southern Prairie line, from Winnipeg to Regina to Calgary.

Adjournment Proceedings

One of the original purposes of our Canadian Confederation was to build a railway across the Prairies to the Pacific coast, so it is somewhat ironic that today we do not have passenger rail service in the southern part of the Prairies. Of course, the motivation behind my question was not simply to achieve that historic goal. I think in the present day, we need to recognize the importance of providing accessible transportation options to people and also of providing transportation options that are environmentally friendly.

We had a whole debate in this House for most of today about an opposition motion regarding the price of gasoline, and a lot of the argument came down to whether a higher gasoline price would motivate consumers to drive less. A key part of that question was whether people had concrete alternatives to driving. On the southern Prairies, people do not.

The Saskatchewan Transportation Company and Greyhound have both withdrawn intercity bus service, and as I mentioned, there is no VIA Rail service in the southern part of the Prairies. Therefore, people really do not have much of an option other than to drive or fly. We have people without the means to travel for important purposes, and the people who do have the means to travel do not have much choice but to use these more polluting means of transport. That is part of the major rationale for wanting to restore VIA Rail service on the southern Prairies.

I am sure that one of the questions is how much this would cost. Is it feasible? Is this a realistic proposal? I took a look at VIA Rail's 2017 annual report, which is the most recent annual report available. What it shows is that the subsidy per passenger mile in western Canada, in other words for long-haul travel from Toronto to Vancouver, is about 32¢, which is quite similar to the subsidy of 28¢ per passenger mile across VIA Rail's entire system. As well, it is quite a bit less than the subsidies of three dollars and four dollars per passenger mile that we find on some of VIA's more remote routes. What I am proposing is actually quite consistent with Via's existing operations.

To put that in terms of total dollars, the subsidy for long-haul travel west of Toronto is \$41 million. Extending that to the southern part of the Prairies would presumably cost a comparable amount, which would be quite a bit less than the \$350 million currently provided to VIA Rail.

• (1825)

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Youth Economic Opportunity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government understands that VIA Rail has an important role to play in providing Canadians with a safe intercity travel option. It does so across a vast network that spans from Halifax to Vancouver. VIA's western transcontinental service, the Canadian, crosses the prairie provinces on its route from Toronto to Vancouver, serving many communities along the way. Our government recognizes the importance of this service to the people who use it and the role it plays in connecting our country.

We also recognize that for some communities—for example, Churchill, Manitoba—passenger rail is the only viable option for connecting to other communities. This is why when service to Churchill was cut off, we knew we needed to act to have it restored, and now passenger rail service has returned to the community.

While it serves an important role, passenger rail is just one of the many ways that Canadians travel between communities. In a country as vast and spread out as Canada, it is inevitable that the passenger rail network will not reach all communities.

For decades, many Canadians have relied on intercity bus services to get them where they need to go. The withdrawal of Greyhound from nearly all of western Canada and northern Ontario in October 2018 was, and continues to be, a big loss for Canadian travellers, especially Canadians living in rural and remote areas. Our government recognizes the seriousness of this issue, and while we are encouraged that several operators have stepped in to pick up former Greyhound routes, gaps in service still remain. This is why, on October 31, we announced our willingness to partner with the affected provinces to fill service gaps on a temporary and cost-shared basis. Federal money is on the table, and the member opposite's provincial Conservative government is refusing to use it to help the people of Saskatchewan.

In terms of indigenous transportation needs, we also committed to supporting indigenous peoples by providing vital transportation services to their communities.

Over the next year, we will continue collaborating with the provinces and territories to develop innovative, longer-term solutions to address the intercity surface transportation needs of Canadians. Together, we are aiming to ensure that our passenger transportation system is safe and efficient and provides excellent service.

Mr. Erin Weir: Mr. Speaker, I will begin by agreeing with the parliamentary secretary that it is quite disappointing that the Government of Saskatchewan did not take up the funding that the Government of Canada offered to try to restore some intercity bus service. However, the federal government does not simply need to wait for the province to agree to cost-share bus service; the federal government could, on its own, restore passenger rail service on the southern prairies.

I thought it was interesting that the parliamentary secretary began by mentioning that VIA Rail is needed to provide a transport option to Canadians. I want to reiterate that this option does not exist on the southern prairies. It is impossible to travel from Winnipeg to Regina to Calgary by train.

The parliamentary secretary mentioned all the money the government spent in restoring passenger rail service to Churchill, Manitoba. That is a good thing, but it would be far more economical to restore that same service on the southern prairies.

Adjournment Proceedings

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes how vital surface transportation options are to meeting the mobility needs of Canadians across the country, and we are taking this issue very seriously. We are committed to working with the provinces and territories on solutions to address the intercity transportation needs of Canadians. That is why, in the federal government's October 31 announcement, we committed to working with provinces and territories across the country in developing innovative, long-term solutions to meet the intercity surface mobility needs of Canadians.

In the meantime, we will continue to work with the provinces interested in cost-sharing to fill the gaps in service left behind by Greyhound on October 31, as well as indigenous communities.

● (1830)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:30 p.m.)

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