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Friday, June 3, 2022

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, June 3, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2022, NO. 1

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-19, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022 and other measures, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

• (1000)

[*English*]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): There are 63 motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-19.

Members will remember the Chair's ruling yesterday on the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Finance, and more specifically on the amendment of clause 135, which was declared null and void.

[*Translation*]

Under these exceptional circumstances, Motions Nos. 4 and 5 on the Notice Paper, which concern the same Standing Order and seek to rectify the procedural issue identified by the Chair, were reviewed and the Chair is of the opinion that they respect the instructions provided in the note accompanying Standing Order 76.1(5) regarding the selection of motions in amendment at report stage.

[*English*]

Accordingly, Motions Nos. 1 to 63 will be grouped for debate and voted upon according to the voting pattern available at the table.

[*Translation*]

I will now put Motions Nos. 1 to 63 to the House.

[*English*]

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 52.

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 53.

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 135.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP) moved:

That Bill C-19, in Clause 135, be amended by adding after line 2 on page 256 the following:

“(2.1) Despite subsection (2), the provisions of the Select Luxury Items Tax Act, as enacted by subsection (1), that set out the tax on subject aircraft come into force on a day or days to be fixed by order of the Governor in Council, which day or days may not be fixed before September 1, 2022.”

• (1010)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-19, in Clause 135, be amended by adding after line 2 on page 256 the following:

“(2.1) Despite subsection (2), the provisions of the Select Luxury Items Tax Act, as enacted by subsection (1), that set out the tax on subject aircraft come into force on a day or days, after September 1, 2022, to be fixed by order of the Governor in Council.”

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 136.

Motion No. 7

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 137.

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 138.

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 139.

Motion No. 10

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 140.

Motion No. 11

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 141.

Motion No. 12

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 142.

Motion No. 13

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 143.

Motion No. 14

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 144.

Motion No. 15

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 145.

Motion No. 16

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 146.

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Motion No. 17

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 147.

Motion No. 18

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 148.

Motion No. 19

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 149.

Motion No. 20

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 150.

Motion No. 21

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 151.

Motion No. 22

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 152.

Motion No. 23

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 153.

Motion No. 24

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 154.

Motion No. 25

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 155.

Motion No. 26

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 156.

Motion No. 27

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 157.

Motion No. 28

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 158.

Motion No. 29

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 159.

Motion No. 30

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 160.

Motion No. 31

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 161.

Motion No. 32

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 162.

Motion No. 33

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 163.

Motion No. 34

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 164.

Motion No. 35

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 165.

Motion No. 36

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 166.

Motion No. 37

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 167.

Motion No. 38

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 168.

Motion No. 39

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 169.

Motion No. 40

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 170.

Motion No. 41

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 171.

Motion No. 42

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 172.

Motion No. 43

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 173.

Motion No. 44

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 256.

Motion No. 45

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 257.

Motion No. 46

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 258.

Motion No. 47

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 259.

Motion No. 48

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 260.

Motion No. 49

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 261.

Motion No. 50

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 262.

Motion No. 51

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 263.

Motion No. 52

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 264.

Motion No. 53

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 265.

Motion No. 54

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 266.

Motion No. 55

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 267.

Motion No. 56

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 268.

Motion No. 57

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 269.

Motion No. 58

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 270.

Motion No. 59

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 271.

Motion No. 60

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 272.

Motion No. 61

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 273.

Motion No. 62

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 274.

Motion No. 63

That Bill C-19 be amended by deleting Clause 275.

He said: Madam Speaker, you made a heroic effort at going through all of those. I appreciate you putting them on the floor so we can have a good discussion about them today.

Before I get into the report stage amendments that we have proposed, and some of the experiences at the finance committee, I thought it would be important to have some high-level discussion to get into that, and then I would like to broaden the subject. I am going to be speaking quite a bit about the report stage amendments and the approach the Conservatives have, but I would also hope that hon. members will find most of the speech relevant to the issues we have.

In the movie *Glengarry Glen Ross*, Alec Baldwin plays a sales manager and tells his sales agents, “ABC: always be closing.” This is a classic movie for people in sales, but I can easily visualize the Prime Minister, at a very similar chalkboard with the finance minister, saying, “ABS: always be spending.” The approach of the current government has always been consistently on that side. There is nothing it cannot find money for, particularly for pet causes of the Prime Minister or his electoral coalition.

The Conservatives want to see proper spending and value for money. We know the value of every dollar the Canadian government receives. By the way, it is getting more revenue than ever. It does not have a revenue problem, as some other parties believe; it has a spending problem. Inflation has increased the revenues the government has. Obviously, we are in a commodities cycle right now where crude oil prices have gone up, so the government is collecting more money than it ever has, and it seems it cannot help itself but find more things to spend on.

Let us go to Bill C-19. I would like to discuss a little of what occurred at the finance committee and what I refer to as the good, the bad and unfortunately the ugly.

For the good, our shadow minister of national revenue put forward an amendment. While the government, through its parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance, tried to rule it inadmissible, we followed through with the recommendations of JDRF and Diabetes Canada and brought an amendment that was ultimately accepted by the committee unanimously and will clarify the disability tax credit measures for life-sustaining therapy. That is so incredibly important for parents who have opened a registered disability savings plan. They need to have access to the DTC, the disability tax credit, to have that, so it is a very meaningful measure. There are Canadians right across the country who have opened up these accounts for their children so that when they retire eventually they will have that extra money, because diabetes is a serious illness that requires so much time and dedication, and of course it is very costly to pay for insulin, insulin pumps, etc., so this amendment will clarify that.

I want to thank all hon. members because it is these kinds of amendments that Canadians have sent us here to make sure people have. Diabetes is tough enough, and this makes it a bit easier.

Again, between regimes and provinces we should always be mindful that the Canadian government has to at least make sure there is some fairness, so with this we see a clarifying amendment that will help improve the lives of people with diabetes regardless of where they live in this great country.

Now it is time for the bad. The government has put forward a so-called luxury tax. I would probably call it a well-intentioned, but horribly wrong and misplaced tax. In fact, it should be called a producer tax. I can understand how some members of the NDP and Liberals, or as I call them the “speNDP-Liberals”, would say they want to make sure people are paying their fair share so they can then spend it, but we need to have a balance and the government does not get that. It does not understand, or at least it has refused to understand, that this particular tax will take the sales out of the sail of the boating industry in Canada. If I was a manufacturer of boats right now and had to go to my board of directors and ask if I should

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be making an investment in Canada, when I see that I am going to be hit by a \$2.8-billion hole over the next five years, basically estimated by the Parliamentary Budget Officer as a drop of 15% in sales, I am not going to be making that investment. Why? It is because they are limited to their growth.

• (1015)

I have heard in my own riding that many of these manufacturers are receiving phone calls from the Americans to locate their facilities there. They are offering to give them land, build them buildings and give them tax incentives.

I see MP Ste-Marie here who has cited over and over the devastation this could cause. Pardon me. He is a great MP, and I will rescind that comment. The member of Parliament for Joliette has cited multiple times how important the aerospace industry is in Quebec, and this is something I have heard from my other Conservative colleagues in Quebec.

This is a bad tax, and we oppose it wholeheartedly. The government should be helping manufacturers to bring jobs and opportunity to this country, not sending it somewhere else.

The next thing I would say that is bad is the Competition Act changes. These Competition Act changes are not endorsed by any industry stakeholder. We had one witness who said we should not let perfection be the enemy of the good. Everyone, including the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, and I have never seen this before, but the Canadian Chamber of Commerce came to the committee and effectively said—

• (1020)

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. We are all having problems online.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will make sure the technical team takes a look at it. We will come back to the members in a few minutes to find out if it is resolved.

The hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, simply put, regarding the Competition Act changes, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce officials could not even articulate a position because they literally said there was so much occurring in these provisions that they could not say anything other than to please stop, wait and consult so the industry could fully understand what the government was intending to do with these changes. I have never seen that before.

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I am addressing the good, the bad and the ugly. The ugly part was I have never seen a finance minister present a bill to the House of Commons to have it referred to committee where it was chopped apart by committee. The HUMA committee recommended unanimously to cut the EI provisions. There was amendment after amendment. I have never seen a finance minister who has been so impacted who presented a bill and had blood on the proverbial floor from it.

I think this is indicative of the approach of the government. I think the finance minister is probably too busy with her other duties as deputy. I do not blame her for that: I blame the Prime Minister, so I would ask the Prime Minister to start considering his approach on finances and his approach to giving almost all the portfolios and almost all the responsibility to a minister who already has more than she probably can do. I would imagine other finance ministers would probably say that being given deputy and finance is too much for any one minister.

I would like to finish with a few points on finance ministers in general. The list of people, groups and organizations that have expressed serious concerns that the government has lost its way is growing by the day. We have unprecedented criticism coming from former Liberal finance minister Bill Morneau. I cannot recall a finance minister so fresh out of the job casting serious concerns over the actions of the Prime Minister and his successor.

As David Hurley commented on Twitter, it is something he has never seen before. As we know, Bill Morneau has publicly stated that the Liberal government is not focusing on economic growth, that it is letting politics get in the way of progress and that a lack of emphasis on long-term economic growth means the country will have some difficult times and face difficult choices in the year ahead.

Conservatives have been saying consistently that the government always focuses on cutting up the economic pie. It focuses more on redistribution than actually growing the pie so that more support can be given for our social safety net, for Canadians and for prosperity. However, the government is ideological, as I have said: always be spending. That is against the interests of our country.

We have many difficulties in this country from inflation. People are having difficulty putting food on the table. Groceries are at 10%. The last time we saw inflation this high was when we had another big tax-and-spend, divisive, inflationary prime minister in the 1980s. The government seems to be following the same agenda. Instead of growing the pie, as Conservatives have consistently said, let us see investment happen here. Let us see jobs and opportunity here. Let us make sure that we fund our programs and services like health care properly. Instead, the government again chooses to lard up and send the money out indiscriminately without having a value for dollar and without having a sense of putting money into the economy to make our economy grow, so that Canadians can be assured of their prosperity. They are now concerned about it.

The government has taken us back to the worst parts of the 1980s, and I fear for what comes next. Conservatives will be standing up for Canadians to help them to feed their families and to make sure programs in Ottawa are working better. I hope the government changes its tune.

• (1025)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, according to the member across the way, the government is spending too much. The election was not that long ago, and we recall that the Conservative Party platform actually committed to spending more money than we committed to spend.

I am wondering this. Is that one of the reasons why the Conservatives made the decision a couple of months ago to get rid of their leader, who led the charge on spending more in Canada?

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, that member is an enabler of that “always be spending” kind of philosophy. On this side of the House, we see the calls from the premiers. My premier, John Horgan, has said publicly, on behalf of the Council of the Federation and on behalf of all premiers, to not start new programs such as dental and other programs that are already being provided by the provinces. He said please give them the money to increase the health care transfer because more Canadians are convinced our system is not working. I have people calling me about doctors. They are not asking for more spending on programs that make the member and his Prime Minister feel good about themselves.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on his speech. My question is about the part of his speech concerning the “bad”, namely the luxury tax.

My colleague was right to say that the Minister of Finance is too busy doing the Prime Minister's job, given that she is Deputy Prime Minister. We get the impression that a lot of corners were cut in Bill C-19. The proof is that dozens and dozens of pages have been cut from this poorly drafted bill.

Does my colleague think the same thing should happen with the luxury tax, even though the principle may seem fair?

This 170 pages is all about taxing producers rather than consumers. It needs to be removed and reworked.

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[English]

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Joliette for his contributions in the House and at the finance committee. I will 100% say that the amendments that were put forward today by Conservatives encompass his suggestion that the government and the finance minister are too occupied with other issues and that they are putting forward terrible taxes, including a tax on producers that will see hits to jobs and the economy. Therefore, we have suggested to delete, delete, delete so we can take a pause and actually consult with industry. Whether it is its changes to the Competition Act or its so-called luxury tax, the government is headed in the wrong direction. We are presenting amendments to put it right.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am glad to see us continuing the amendment process here at report stage. We had a pretty good experience in committee and managed to bring a number of important changes to this budget bill, which looks quite different coming out of committee than it did going in. In particular, I think that one of the sets of changes that may not have been addressed in the member's speech, and I apologize if I missed it, is around the express entry program. I know the member was supportive of the amendments we brought to committee, so would he like to reflect on those changes?

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, we actually put an amendment in to force the government to have the installation date of January 1 for the coming into force of the ban on foreign speculation in our residential real estate market. That member supported it, so I want to thank him for that.

When it comes to express entry, the government was trying to give the Minister of Immigration unfettered powers. Through a good process that this member and his party critic engaged with in good faith, they presented an option that improves the bill. It would make sure that the Minister of Immigration cannot pick people willy-nilly through groupings of his own decision. We should all be concerned when we delegate our authority to a minister because that minister or another minister in the future may use it in a way that is contrary to the will of Parliament.

Therefore, I appreciate the member's bringing forward clarifying amendments to make for a proper public process of consultation of what the minister has to do before he or she can identify groupings for the purposes of the express entry program. That is good for Canada.

• (1030)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise at report stage to discuss the changes that were made to the bill at committee and a further change that I am proposing in the House at report stage.

I think often, when we reflect on budget bills and we talk about omnibus budget bills, we think of the experiences Parliament has had under majority governments with omnibus budget bills, where we have seen quite a lot of changes to many acts rammed through without a lot of discussion or debate because the government had the majority in order to be able to do that.

I think we actually saw quite a different process in this Parliament with the budget bill. This is reflected in the fact that the com-

mittee made significant changes to the disability tax credit, which would make it possible for people living with type 1 diabetes to not have to constantly reprove that they still have type 1 diabetes, that it is still expensive and that it is still time-consuming. We can take it for granted, based on what we know about the disease, that people living with type 1 diabetes are going to continue to need support, and they will continue to deserve the kind of support they get. When they are able to accomplish all of that administrative work, they should only have to do it once. The committee looked to make that the case, and I hope Parliament will soon too.

We saw the government introduce quite hastily some major changes to the employment insurance appeal board that did not reflect its commitments in 2018 and 2019 to stakeholders. After a long consultation process, the government was panned pretty widely within the stakeholder community. I think even the government was interested in pulling those provisions back. We have secured a commitment from the government to ensure it comes back in the fall with new legislation and that this is not the end of the story when it comes to the EI appeal board. It is in desperate need of appropriate reform. We were glad to see the government commit to bringing that legislation forward in the fall. We will certainly be here to remind it of that commitment and to press it to do that as promptly as possible in the fall.

We saw important reforms in the direction and control provisions for charitable organizations. These really needed to be undertaken to decolonize the charitable sector in Canada, facilitate its good work and ensure it can work with partners that may not have a charitable status but that are nevertheless doing good work. I think this shows not a blind trust but an earned trust on the part of the charitable sector in Canada for the very good work it has done, and done responsibly. I think we struck the right balance between ensuring that there is still the reasonable accountability that Canadians would expect of their charitable sector while ensuring that it has a freer hand to do work in a good way.

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We saw the government also try to rush in some changes that had not been advertised with the express entry system. The express entry system allows for people outside of Canada to come into Canada on an expedited basis. The minister was asking for an incredible amount of discretion with a very low amount of accountability and transparency concerning how decisions would be made to classify people in the express entry system and get them into the country. Through working together with other parties at committee, we were very glad to see, and I have to give credit to the member for Vancouver East, who really did the legwork on this, a proper accountability regime that would require the government, in the legislation, to have a robust public consultation process. This is actually spelled out in the legislation and will not be left just to the government to decide what public consultation will mean. Written submissions would be required, so it would not just be the government having backroom conversations with some of its friends to decide who gets into the country, who does not and on what basis. There is going to be a proper process in place. I think that is very important.

On the theme of fiscal accountability for government, which is something I have tried to champion here in my time, there was some spending the government had proposed in Bill C-17, which was incorporated into the budget, with transit and housing money being sent to provinces. However, there was really no detail beyond that. We fought for an amendment that would require the government, after it has negotiated the terms and conditions with provinces, to make those public because we think that is appropriate. Canadians have a right to know how their public money is being spent and under what conditions it is being passed on to other governments, so that was also very important.

● (1035)

As the Conservative finance critic mentioned earlier, there was also an amendment he proposed to set the date for when the foreign homebuyer ban would come into effect, which was something I was glad to support, to give a little more certainty with that. We were also able to finally make a distinction in Canadian law, as a result of an amendment put forward by the Bloc finance critic, between cider and honey wine on the one hand and grape wine on the other, which is a distinction that has become that much more important in light of the recent arrangement with Australia following its challenge at the World Trade Organization.

I say all of this by way of trying to highlight the extent to which there was a good process with the bill. I think that the committee was able to have much more meaningful input than parliamentarians who had been in majority governments where we have seen similarly large budget bills and, in fact, sometimes larger budget bills that covered more subject areas. I think we were able to have quite a good process here at committee.

I will wrap up by talking about the luxury tax, which was something we did amend at committee. We have heard some very significant concerns on the structure the Liberal government has chosen for the luxury tax and the potential effects it could have, particularly on the manufacturing industry in aerospace here in Canada. These are concerns that New Democrats take very seriously, and I know that members of other parties take those concerns very seriously as well. What we proposed as a solution was to give the government more flexibility on the coming-into-force date so it could

take the time it needs to talk to industry about these potential effects.

We still have a dearth of good economic information from government on what it expects the economic impact of the tax to be. It is something that a colleague of mine at the finance committee has proposed to look into more and ask for more information, and I fully support that request. I fully expect the government to be listening to that; taking that information seriously; generating that information, which is information I think it ought to have generated before designing the tax; and talking to industry. There is still time, and if we pass the amendment that I proposed here at report stage, there would be even more time, if the government needed it, to get the structure of the tax right.

There is no question from this side of the House that the wealthy in Canada have not been paying their fair share. A luxury tax is one way to ensure that people with the most resources in Canada are paying back into the programs we need in order to make sure that people have access to essential services on the basis of equity and not the ability to pay. It is important that we move ahead with the luxury tax, but we want to do that in the right way, and we want to create enough space for government to be able to do that in the right way. We beseech the government to listen, to think about the timetable and to develop a better proposal that would address some of the very legitimate concerns we have heard coming out of the industry. As I said, we are trying to pave the way to do that.

Now, there was some debate at committee about whether this or that was in order. The Chair of the committee, who had ruled the particular amendment out of order, had his ruling overturned unanimously. Nobody voted to sustain the ruling of the Chair. When it came to the House, I think there was a little bit of surprise that the issue resurfaced. However, I think that we have managed to change the wording of the amendment to respect the Speaker's ruling in that regard to be consistent with the ways and means motion that had been presented in advance of Bill C-19.

We now have a solve that would allow us to change those coming-into-force provisions to give the government the extra time it needs to work with industry to get the balance right on the luxury tax, which is why I am very happy to be rising today speaking to that amendment. It would have been, frankly, a travesty if a procedural hiccup, which was unforeseen and for which no warning was provided, would have such a serious consequence for an important strategic industry in Canada. I am glad that here on the floor of the House of Commons we are finding a way to avoid having our procedural eccentricities interfere with a major industry that provides a lot of good jobs for Canadians.

With that, I thank members for their attention throughout the speech, and I am happy to answer any questions they may have.

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• (1040)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as members well know, a great deal of consultation takes place in the presentation of any budget and in putting together budgetary implementation legislation. It is a process that, in essence, involves many stakeholders and thousands of Canadians. I do appreciate the member raising the issue, and people who follow the budget debate will hopefully understand and appreciate the degree to which governments, particularly the ministry of finance, reach into communities.

The member talked a great deal about the luxury tax. I understand that members of the NDP, in principle, support a luxury tax, but is there something specific that they would like to see modified, other than just an implementation delay?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I would encourage the member to listen to the industry, including the machinists who represent many workers in that industry. They have said the issue is not the principle of the tax, although I am sure there are some in the industry who dispute the principle, but that it is more the structure of the tax, and particularly the way it requires manufacturers to pay the amount of that tax up front. That is one of the issues that we have heard them talk about—

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. The hon. member for Joliette is rising on a point of order to point out a problem with interpretation.

[English]

Is interpretation working now? Yes, it is.

The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, on the other issue, consultation, I would say that the incredible amount of improvement that happened to the bill is also a testament to the lack of appropriate consultation that went into preparing the budget bill. I think that was not more evident than in the case of the employment insurance appeal board. In that case, I think the very people who the government sought to please with the reforms were the people who were most upset.

I think it is a testament to the fact that the government has to do a lot better job in consulting people when it is preparing the budget bill so that it does not have to be fixed in the way this particular bill needed to be fixed. I am glad that the composition of this Parliament and this committee allowed it to be fixed, instead of having a majority government ploughing ahead with some ill-conceived reforms.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I quite enjoyed the two years the member and I worked together on the operations committee. Although his replacements, the member from Hamilton Centre and then the member from Port Alberni, are doing wonderful jobs, he is welcome back at any time.

He spoke about the issue of the disability credit, the difficulties Canadians are having in applying for it and some of the silliness of the regulations. The Auditor General just released a somewhat

damning report on the government about the inability and difficulty that lower-income and marginalized Canadians are having in accessing benefits, such as the GIS and other Canadian benefits.

Does the member believe that the government should get on this and perhaps present legislation to help Canadians with these issues as well as the other disability tax credit he spoke about?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, the short answer is yes.

I think the member is aware of these issues, but for those who may not be, the inadequacies of the disability tax credit structure touch on so many more things. I will give a couple of quick examples.

In the pandemic, when the NDP fought for a one-time payment for people living with disabilities, the government initially wanted to use the disability tax credit list as its go-to list for people who would get it. However, it is actually quite difficult to qualify for the DTC, the disability tax credit. It involves a lot of costs and a lot of time and a lot of administrative knowledge in order to get all of the pieces in place to get on that list. It is only worth it to someone who already makes enough money to benefit from a tax credit, so the people who need financial support the most tend not to be on the DTC roll. However, that is a gate control for the government for many programs that support people living with disabilities.

It is a major problem, not just with the DTC but within the entire disability support infrastructure. An irony of that was that when we initially presented the amendment to exempt people with type 1 diabetes from the 14-hour requirement, the ruling by the chair was that because the DTC is a gate for other disability programs, there would be more spending if it was easier to get the DTC, so parliamentarians were not going to be able to change it.

• (1045)

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for that great speech and his excellent work in committee. I do have a question about amendments to the luxury tax. He made a reference to David Chartrand, the machinists' and aerospace workers' representative who came and asked us to support the amendments I proposed. My colleague voted against those amendments. I was very surprised that my NDP colleague voted against amendments that unions asked for. I did not know what to make of that.

Did my colleague have to vote against because the NDP has an agreement to support the Liberal government?

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Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I voted against because we did not think it was a good idea to try to rewrite complex tax code in the space of a few hours sitting around a table. We know doing it properly requires a lot more information. It also takes resources, and, given that the government has those resources, we want it to do the work to fix the tax.

That is why I voted against those amendments.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to talk about the budget of Canada. There is so much that one can talk about. How do we limit all the good news we have been able to put into the budget, not only in this budget but in previous budgets, starting in 2015 when we were first elected? There is so much substance and there are so many things we have been able to accomplish in a relatively short period of time.

Having said that, I thought I would reflect on some of the comments made by the shadow minister of finance, the new one. We can recall that the previous one was unceremoniously replaced for some odd reason, and I will let the Conservatives deal with that replacement.

The member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola said that the Liberal government has a spending problem, implying that Liberals tend to like spending money. I can honestly say that we do understand the importance of the government's role in making our communities healthier. We understand that.

However, I want to remind my Conservative friends across the way that it was not that long ago that we had a national election, and in that election campaign, there were a couple of economic matters that come to mind. One was that the Conservative Party of Canada, the same party across the way that just said we had a spending problem, committed to spend more money than the Liberal government. Conservatives are saying Liberals have a spending problem and that we are spending too much money, yet in the last federal election, they committed to spend more money. In fairness, they dumped their leader not that long ago. The leader of the Conservative Party at the time who made that commitment is no longer leader, so I have to be fair.

Then there is the debt. In that same election platform, the Conservative Party committed to a \$168-billion debt. Our debt is actually less than that. Again we have what the Conservative Party said during the election campaign and what it says when it is the official opposition. Given the nature of what we are witnessing, such as the member for Carleton attacking the Bank of Canada and trying to set economic policy to the hard right, along with other individuals, I suspect there is a good chance that the Conservative Party will continue to be in opposition for many years ahead. Conservatives need to understand that spending, as the former leader of the Conservative Party said, is not all that bad.

Let me give an example. Yes, we came up with a national program that will enable Canadians to enter the workforce. It will provide all sorts of opportunities. It is our national child care program. Yes, it did cost a lot of money, but from coast to coast to coast, for

the first time, we have a national child care program, a program that is supported by all of the provincial governments. Even the recently re-elected Doug Ford supported the child care program.

I suspect that if we were to canvass the House, we would find that only one political party does not recognize the value of having \$10-a-day day care. We are talking about the conservative right in the Conservative Party of Canada, and there are a lot of them opposite, individuals who maybe dream of the days of the Reform Party. Who knows? Maybe we will see a resurfacing of the Reform right. It is a party that does not support the national child care program.

● (1050)

What does a national child care program do by making things affordable for Canadians? Not only does it help them during a difficult time, such as inflation, but it also provides them with the opportunity to do more work in our communities. If we look at what happened, we see that the province of Quebec led the country in showing that enabling the public to have better access through affordable child care would cause the workforce to grow. We only need to look at the province of Quebec to see how successful it was.

We have a national government. Much like when we had health care in one province many years ago, and then a national Liberal government made a national health care program with a Canada Health Act that followed, we now have a national child care program that comes out of the province of Quebec. That is going to allow hundreds of thousands of people the independence to get into the workforce if they choose to do so. That will generate more revenue for the government. It will provide more productivity for the nation and add to our GDP.

I would argue contrary to what the critic for finance said, or the shadow minister, as they like to be referred to. It will add value in many different ways. I would suggest that the member try to convince his caucus colleagues to get behind the child care plan that the Liberals, New Democrats, and even the Bloc and the Green Party are supporting. I suspect there are a few Conservatives who will ultimately support that plan, particularly those from the province of Quebec who might be a bit more progressive.

The NDP talked about the importance of consultation, and the finance critic made reference to the Deputy Prime Minister. I took it as a compliment when the member said that she has so many responsibilities. I agree; she is an incredible woman. She is Canada's very first female Minister of Finance and she is also the Deputy Prime Minister. She also plays a critical role in what is happening in Europe today.

She was just with me and my colleagues from Winnipeg South, Saint Boniface—Saint Vital and Winnipeg South Centre in the city of Winnipeg, welcoming over 300 displaced people from Ukraine. She is an incredible woman who has done Canada proud in terms of where she has put us in moving us forward, especially in comparison to other countries around the world, particularly the United States.

When we compare our job numbers or our inflation rates to those of the United States or many of the European Union countries, we find that Canada rises to the top. It is because we believe in supporting, in a real and tangible way, Canada's middle class, those aspiring to be a part of it and Canadians in general who need a helping hand.

We can see that in the budgets we have presented, from day one up to the most recent budget. That is why I would encourage every member of this House to get behind the budget implementation bill and support it, instead of trying to come up with ways to block it. It is because this budget implementation bill will have a positive impact on everyone in Canada from coast to coast to coast. This is a budget bill that we can all be proud of, because it is a reflection of what Canadians want based on the consultations that were done by members of this government.

• (1055)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, wow, there is so much to unpack there. This member has supported the government through thick and thin. We all need our loyal soldiers, but by the same token, let us just take a look at a few things.

First of all, under the current Prime Minister, there has been more debt added to our national debt than under any prime minister alive. This member continues to follow the “always be spending” ways of the Prime Minister. In fact, when he talks about child care, this member continues to mistake leadership with cutting cheques. In British Columbia, one of the first provinces to adopt this new national program of theirs, we still do not have \$10-a-day day care, and the government cannot actually say when it is going to do it. It might take years. The member keeps conflating action with spending.

This is something the former finance minister said: “there’s no real sense of urgency in Ottawa, about our lack of competitiveness. It’s like we’re the proverbial frog in the pot and not realizing what’s happening to us as the heat gradually increases”.

When will the frog get out of the pot?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member needs to be a little more straightforward with what reality actually is.

The member made reference to the Prime Minister and the debt. There is a little thing called the worldwide pandemic. That event was something that cost a considerable amount of money. Many of the billions of dollars that were spent were actually supported in part by the Conservative Party. That is the reason why.

If we are going to support Canadians, if we are going to invest in and support nine million Canadians through the CERB program and keep tens of thousands of businesses from going bankrupt by supporting them through rent subsidies and wage subsidies, that costs money. We would argue that those sorts of expenditures are what has enabled Canada to continue.

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague mentioned earlier how much consultation the government has done, especially on Bill C-19.

Statements by Members

Yes, I would agree that consultation was fairly extensive. The problem, however, is that the general consensuses that came out of those consultations are not reflected in the bill, as if there had been no consultation. For instance, the section on employment insurance was removed. The same should have been done for the luxury tax and several other aspects, such as the Competition Act.

When will the government start actually paying attention to consultations and ensure that they are reflected in budget implementation bills?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, in all budget presentations and budget implementation bills, there is extensive consultation done. This particular Minister of Finance and the department have done exceptional work in terms of reaching out to Canadians and stakeholders to get their input. This is a budget that reflects the desires and the will of the Canadian people from coast to coast to coast.

• (1100)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member will have two minutes left for questions next time the bill comes forward for debate.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

MULTICULTURALISM

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in 1971 Canada adopted the multiculturalism policy, which acknowledged that Canadians come from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds. This is something we should all be very proud of.

The month of June is very special. June 27 is a day when we celebrate multiculturalism. When we think of the month of June, we recall members in the House standing up to talk about Indigenous History Month, Filipino Heritage Month, Portuguese Heritage Month and Italian Heritage Month. It is a month in which we celebrate and appreciate our diversity.

If one happens to be in Winnipeg in the month of August and wants to travel the world, one can do so by attending Folklorama, where one can experience the 50-plus pavilions. I encourage individuals to get out and appreciate Canada's diversity.

* * *

FILIPINO HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): [*Member spoke in Filipino*]

[English]

Madam Speaker, I say happy Filipino Heritage Month.

Statements by Members

June is Filipino Heritage Month, a time when Canadians celebrate with their Filipino friends and neighbours. Over the years, Filipino Canadians have contributed to our economy and cultural diversity in many ways, not least of which by establishing dozens of Jollibee restaurants across the country, including the one on Quance Street in Regina, just down the street from my constituency office.

This month, Filipino Canadians will be celebrating by raising their flag and singing their national anthem, known as *Lupang Hinirang*, which means “chosen land”.

To the nearly one million Canadians of Filipino heritage, we are glad they have chosen this land to call home.

* * *

CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Madam Speaker, each spring I have the honour of notifying many businesses and organizations in my riding of Whitby of receiving funds through the Canada summer jobs program. The creation of quality summer work experiences for young people enriches their development while contributing to a stronger local economy and a more inclusive community.

Today I would like to acknowledge an incredibly inspiring community organization in Whitby that I had the opportunity to visit recently, named Nova’s Ark. The people there are dedicated to helping people with special needs of all ages. By caring for animals, and they have many, from a Siberian lynx to camels, they create unique educational experiences to help their students develop the academic, behavioural, cognitive and social skills needed for success.

I was deeply touched by the work they do and was thrilled to see the Canada summer jobs program not only benefiting students and organizations but also improving the quality of life of individuals. This is a great example of how social enterprises make a real and positive impact on the lives of Canadians.

* * *

POLICE REFORM

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is now almost two years since a wonderful young Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation woman was shot and killed by a police officer in Edmundston, New Brunswick, during a wellness check.

Family, friends, community members and Canadians seeking justice for Chantel Moore are currently walking to Victoria and will arrive tomorrow. I am unable to be with them. Instead, I rise today to remind this House that Canada is still in desperate need of comprehensive police reform.

The government must act to address the disproportionate violence against indigenous people at the hands of police, and indigenous representation must be included in all investigations of police violence. Reforms are urgently required related to recruitment and training of police forces at all levels. Further delays only put more indigenous people at risk from a fate similar to that suffered by Chantel.

Today I am sending strength to her family, friends and community as they make this difficult journey.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SAINT-HUBERT VOLUNTEER CENTRE

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this evening I will have pleasure of attending a special dinner to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Centre d'action bénévole de Saint-Hubert.

The primary mission of this important social actor, which is located in my riding, is to promote volunteerism and respond to needs in our community. Through its volunteers, it offers essential services to the public and provides valuable assistance to the most vulnerable. This includes services like meals on wheels, medical transportation and caring calls for wellness checks. The Centre d'action bénévole de Saint-Hubert is a model of care and outreach that makes a real difference in the lives of my constituents.

I also want to point out that it never ceased operations, even at the height of the health crisis. I would like to offer my sincerest thanks and congratulations to the Centre d'action bénévole de Saint-Hubert on its 50 years of commitment to our community.

* * *

● (1105)

[*English*]

EXCISE DUTY ON CIDER

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize World Cider Day, a day to celebrate the over 370 cideries across Canada, including four in my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound: Windswept Orchard Cider, Duxbury Cider Company, Beaver Valley Orchard & Cidery, and Coffin Ridge. Canadian cider is among the best in the world, with origins tracing back to the Hudson’s Bay Company.

In fact, historically, cider was at one time on par with beer consumption here in Canada. In recent years, cider has grown in popularity both here and abroad, with Canadian cideries producing over 39 million litres of great Canadian cider annually. From the rich history to the excellent producers and, of course, the delicious end product, and considering our ideal climate for growing apples, the government should be supporting growing our cider exports and seeing the industry flourish. However, the Liberal government’s recently announced excise duty for wine and cider risks rotting this industry to the core.

Today, I urge the Minister of Finance to do the right thing and scrap the excise duty on cider or at least support an exemption. Four thousand Canadian jobs depend on it.

UKRAINE

Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, 100 days ago, Russia began its unjustified, genocidal war on Ukraine. Ukrainians are fighting for their freedom, but they are also fighting to defend our security, and we have to fight for them.

Some countries, like Canada, are fighting for them, but some western European countries have dragged their feet on providing weapons to Ukraine and have actually suggested that Ukraine appease Russia or avoid humiliating Putin or concede territory to Russia. These suggestions are preposterous. First, they are preposterous because appeasing Russia has never worked. It did not work in 2008. It did not work in 2014, after Russia invaded Crimea and Donbass. It has never worked. Second, giving up territory to Russia would be a victory for Russia. It would condone genocide, condone violations of the international rules-based order and encourage Russia and others to do the same thing again. The only acceptable outcome is a definitive victory for Ukraine that includes the Donbass and Crimea.

Ukrainians are fighting for us. We must fight for them, not for another day, not for 100 days, but for as long as it takes, until they win and until we all win.

Slava Ukraini.

* * *

[Translation]

MR. POLOZ AND MR. PROKHOROVYCH

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as the member for Orléans and a resident of the riding, I want to share the incredible stories and accomplishments of two members of our community.

[English]

First, I want to celebrate the accomplishment of Stephen Poloz, the former governor of the Bank of Canada and a finalist of the Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing. Mr. Poloz's book, *The Next Age of Uncertainty: How the World Can Adapt to a Riskier Future*, maps out the powerful forces that are shaping our future and offers an indispensable guide to navigating through a risky world.

[Translation]

I encourage all residents to read a copy of Mr. Poloz's book and his astute analysis of past crises, from the Victorian depression to the most recent recession of 2008.

[English]

I also want to highlight the emotional story of the Prokhorovych family. Because of the Canada-Ukraine authorization for emergency travel, Mr. Prokhorovych was able to bring his sister, who is undergoing chemotherapy treatment, and her son to Orléans.

[Translation]

I had the honour of meeting the family on Wednesday and I want to thank them for their warm Ukrainian hospitality and the incredible meal.

Statements by Members

[English]

ONTARIO PROVINCIAL ELECTION

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Madam Speaker, with 83 seats, 41%, 52 seats more than any other party in the Ontario legislature and a 16% margin of victory, it does not get much more decisive than that. The Ontario PCs ran a disciplined and smart campaign that focused on the issues that Ontarians are concerned about. They had a plan to address the affordability crisis and to rebuild the Ontario economy.

I congratulate my MPP, David Piccini, who was well rewarded for his tireless advocacy for the people of Northumberland—Peterborough South.

I congratulate Doug Ford and the Ontario PC Party for getting it done.

* * *

AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS

Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in 2015, the House first recognized June as ALS Awareness Month, a time to support Canadians who battle against this fatal neurological disease and honour their resilience and their strength. ALS affects about 3,000 Canadians and has no known causes. It strikes fast and has a life-altering impact on those affected and their families. Throughout June, the ALS Society of Canada is running educational and fundraising activities to help those living with ALS and support research as we work to find a cure.

I would like to wish two incredibly strong constituents of my riding of Cambridge, Graham Braun and Dennis McIntyre, best wishes as they, along with their families, battle ALS. I extend my support to all those suffering from this horrible disease.

We will find a cure.

* * *

● (1110)

[Translation]

TOURISM WEEK

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is Tourism Week in Canada.

I have the privilege of being the proud representative of a special region blessed with a river, monadnocks, countless lakes and streams, a variety of fauna and, especially, super nice people.

Statements by Members

There is so much to do back home that you could spend the entire summer there, either whale watching from Rivière-du-Loup or bird watching on L'Île-aux-Lièvres or L'Île Verte, tasting the famous cheese from L'Isle-aux-Grues in the company of the one hundred or so welcoming islanders, biking along the coastline of La Pocatière, canoeing, hiking Sugar Loaf mountain in Sainte-Lucie-de-Beauregard in Appalachian Park, visiting Parks Canada's Grosse-Île from the Berthier-sur-Mer marina, meeting the Wolastoqiyik Wahsipekuk first nation in Cacouna, or tasting delicacies from Kamouraska and Saint-Jean-Port-Joli. Come see us.

I would like to thank all the businesses in the tourism industry. We missed them and we love them. Let us go see them, appreciate them and share the good news.

* * *

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, today I want to raise awareness of the human cost of the Liberal-made immigration backlog. I get hundreds of correspondences from Canadians and newcomers alike who are desperate for help.

Over 2.1 million people are stranded in this massive backlog, and they cannot get hold of anyone in the department. They are left waiting for months or even years longer than IRCC's posted processing times. I know that my colleagues' offices are all dealing with the same issue. Newcomers' mental health is suffering, families are being separated and Canadian businesses and our economy are paying the price as labour shortages grow and newcomers choose to leave.

After newcomers have been forced to wait in this backlog and face the affordability crisis, who can blame them for wanting to get away from the government? Canada was a beacon of hope and new opportunities. Now Canada is known for backlogs and wait times.

I hope that our colleagues on the Liberal backbenches will do the right thing and join us in demanding that the immigration minister clear these Liberal-made backlogs.

* * *

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Milton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in Canada, diversity is our strength, and that is never more true than throughout the month of June. June is pride month, a time to celebrate love and authenticity, to promote diversity and to continue the fight for the full inclusion that gay, two-spirit, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and questioning, pansexual and asexual people have been fighting for since before the Toronto bathhouse riots in 1982 and Canada's first gay liberation protest, which took place here in Ottawa in August 1971.

[Translation]

June is also National Indigenous History Month, which an opportunity for us to reflect on the history, culture and contributions of first nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

[English]

It is also an opportunity to learn about and recognize the role that indigenous peoples continue to play in shaping Canada. It is always important to me personally to say “*nakurmiik*” to the Inuit for the invention of the kayak, a boat I have loved and enjoyed for decades.

[Translation]

In June we also celebrate our rich multiculturalism.

[English]

It is Italian, Portuguese and Filipino heritage months. *Auguri*, *parabens* and *mabuhay* to my Italian, Portuguese and Filipino friends and neighbours.

In Canada, diversity is a fact but inclusion is an act. This month, it is an act of love, kindness and generosity.

* * *

MPP FOR TIMMINS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I pay tribute today to a colleague, leader and personal friend, Mr. Gilles Bisson, and thank him for 32 years of incredible service to democracy and to the people of Ontario and the city of Timmins.

There are a million stories one could tell about how many people Gilles has helped over the years, of the countless fights he has taken on and won and of his fierce love for northern Ontario. Let us go back to when he was a young miner in the gold mines and he was meeting immigrant mining widows whose husbands had died of emphysema and lung cancer. They faced a solid wall of denial from the companies, the government and the medical institutions. Gilles took on their fight and helped change the compensation laws of Ontario forever. That is the passion he has carried through his whole career.

I congratulate George Pirie, our new MPP, and I will work with him on many of the issues that face our region, but there will never be a political legacy in the north that is as enduring or inspiring as that of Gilles Bisson.

I ask my friend to take some time. I look forward to drinking his homemade wine at the lake this summer.

* * *

● (1115)

[Translation]

SHORELINE PROTECTION

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, today I will be tabling a petition that I sponsored calling for shoreline protection, as well as a series of resolutions in support of the petition, which were passed by various municipal councils in my riding.

The petitioners are calling upon the federal government to implement a shoreline protection program for the St. Lawrence River and take the necessary steps to counter erosion and safeguard the environment, for example, by regulating the maximum speed of vessels based on vessel type and by creating and maintaining shoreline protection works.

The federal government abandoned municipalities along the river and their residents in 1997, divesting itself of the responsibility to maintain the shoreline protection works it built. That is scandalous.

Instead of interfering in Quebec's jurisdictions and withholding the money with conditions, the federal government should look after its own affairs. The erosion along the banks of the St. Lawrence is its responsibility. The government must act and support our municipalities and their citizens.

* * *

[English]

ONTARIO PROVINCIAL ELECTION

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Conservative Party of Canada, I rise to congratulate Premier Doug Ford and his team of candidates on winning a strong and stable Progressive Conservative majority government. I also want to thank Andrea Horwath and Steven Del Duca. Leading a party through an election is a tough task and I wish them both the best of luck in their future endeavours.

After a hard-fought election, the people of Ontario endorsed Premier Ford's plan to rebuild the provincial economy, control spending, keep the province open and build infrastructure like the Bradford Bypass. With the result last night, it is clear that working people have found a home in the Conservative movement, and while other parties engage in perpetual virtue signalling, the Conservatives stand with workers fighting for their jobs and the well-being of families.

I also want to congratulate Andrea Khanjin, Caroline Mulrone, Jill Dunlop, Brian Saunderson and MPP Doug Downey for winning their seats. They will continue to serve the people of central Ontario with excellence.

As a resident of Ontario, I look forward to watching the re-elected Ford government get it done.

* * *

GEORGE FLOYD

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, two years ago, the world witnessed a horrific crime. Committed in broad daylight in front of dozens of witnesses, police officers murdered George Floyd. In the United States, more than one Black man dies each day by police officers, and because of this, I am sad to say that I was not shocked when I first heard of Mr. Floyd's death.

However, this case was different. It was captured clearly on video and shared with the world. Our planet had a glimpse of life in Black America. Mr. Floyd's death was felt around the world and sparked an international movement and uprising. Two years later, his death continues to remind us that there is much work to do in

Oral Questions

Canada and around the world to combat anti-Black racism and police brutality.

As members of the House and as Canadians, we must never forget the significance of what took place two years ago, and we must remain diligent in our fight against hate in this country and throughout the world.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, I think many of my colleagues from the Liberal Party, the NDP and the Bloc Québécois are ignoring important facts about Bill C-5, the bill they are planning to support.

Under this bill, 11 serious criminal offences involving firearms will no longer be subject to mandatory minimums. We are talking about robbery with a firearm, discharging a firearm with intent and using a firearm when committing crime.

Why does the Prime Minister, with the support of the other opposition parties, think that it is more important to protect armed criminals than their victims?

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, those who commit serious offences will continue to receive serious sentences.

• (1120)

[English]

Our bill is about getting rid of the failed policies that filled our prisons with low-risk first-time offenders who needed help, not to be put in jail. These failed policies did not deter crime, they did not keep us safe and they targeted vulnerable and racialized Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, that is the problem. In trying to do something good, three parties in the House are going to make a serious mistake by passing Bill C-5.

Rather than sending a strong message to armed criminals, they are announcing that Canada will now be more tolerant toward criminals and will give them a second chance. Victims of gun violence, however, do not get a second chance.

The reality is that wealthy criminal gangs will now be able to pay the best lawyers, and the worst criminals will get the lightest sentences.

Why help criminals by abandoning victims?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government is committed to our criminal justice system reform. It is a promise we made to Canadians and we intend to keep it. This is about criminal justice policy that actually keeps our communities safe. A justice system that targets unfairly indigenous people and Black and marginalized communities is not effective, does not keep us safe and must be changed.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, two days ago, a 42-year-old man was gunned down in the middle of a crowded restaurant in Laval, Quebec. It happened in broad daylight in front of children. According to reports, police have linked this shooting to organized crime.

Bill C-5 would mean that the criminal and gang member who did this could face a reduced sentence and be back in their community sooner than they would be without the Liberals' new soft-on-crime bill. The reality is that street gangs and criminals will become more emboldened if there is little price to pay for shooting up our streets.

How can the Liberals justify this?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I agree with my hon. colleague that it is unacceptable that we continue to see innocent lives taken away as a result of gun violence, which is why I hope my colleague and the Conservatives support Bill C-21, because it takes on organized crime head-on. It would raise maximum penalties against illegal smugglers and gun traffickers. It would also give police more—

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, due to the Prime Minister's failed economic policies, Canadians are worse off now than they were when the Liberals formed government. Former finance minister Bill Morneau acknowledged that in a speech when he said, "I'm much more worried about our economic prospects today, in 2022, than I was seven years ago." I am sure the Liberals will accuse Morneau of spreading disinformation.

Young Canadians cannot afford a home, seniors cannot afford groceries and Canadians cannot afford to fill up their cars. The Liberals have completely mismanaged the Canadian economy. Why do they not just admit it, like Bill Morneau did?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, economic growth and prosperity are not only our priority; they are our reality. Experts are forecasting that Canada will have the highest growth among G7 countries both this year and next year. In the last quarter, we saw consistent growth. S&P and Moody's have reaffirmed our AAA credit scoring, and 2021 showed the highest trade surplus for Canada in over 13 years.

I could go on and on. More questions, please.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, while the lines of credit of Canadians go up, many people who work in the trades drive from job to job. They do not have a choice. Plumbers, electricians and other hard workers do not have the op-

tion of staying home and working virtually; they have to travel. Unfortunately, the government's policies have driven up the price of fuel to record levels. This is making life very difficult and expensive for tradespeople and businesses.

Does the government realize how its harmful gas price policy is hard on the hardest-working Canadians and how it is destroying the bottom line of many who work and have businesses in skilled trades?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we absolutely support hard-working tradespeople in Canada. There are a number of measures in the budget that are going to help all Canadians face the increased cost of living and the increased gas prices, but unfortunately last night, at the absolute 11th hour, the Conservatives filed 62 motions in order to block the budget implementation bill, in order to block \$2 billion being sent to the provinces to help with emergency surgeries, in order to block funding for vulnerable Canadians, in order to block our support for subsidized dental care. It is unfortunate that these political games are being played—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Saint-Jean.

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*[Translation]***PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT**

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, it has been three years since the government promised to include Chantier Davie in the shipbuilding contracts, but nothing has been done. Davie has been getting crumbs, while Irving, in Halifax, is drowning in contracts. Yesterday we got the proof that this is a political decision.

This winter, the Minister of Public Services and Procurement blamed the delays on Chantier Davie, claiming that it refused to pay to upgrade its shipyard. Yesterday, however, the minister confirmed that she was in negotiations to help fund upgrades, but for Irving, not Chantier Davie.

Irving gets the contracts, Irving gets the funding, and Chantier Davie gets nothing.

Why are the Liberals deliberately sidelining Quebec?

Oral Questions

● (1125)

[English]

Hon. Filomena Tassi (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are fully committed to delivering on the Canadian Coast Guard's fleet renewal plan, including selecting a third shipyard as a strategic partner in the national shipbuilding strategy. As the process of Davie's official qualification to become Canada's third shipyard is still ongoing, we are continuing to work with it every step of the way.

Davie is a strong, reliable partner and is doing significant work to help the government deliver for Canadians. In fact, Chantier Davie has been awarded \$2.1 billion in national shipbuilding strategy contracts, including the conversion of three medium icebreakers. We look forward to continuing to work with Chantier Davie.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, the minister proved two things when she confirmed that she wants to subsidize upgrades at the Irving shipyard and that Chantier Davie must pay for the same upgrades.

First, she has proved that Irving facilities are outdated, yet Ottawa still awarded it contracts that it should not have awarded. Second, she has proved that she is using the upgrade requirement as a reason to refuse to award Chantier Davie any contracts.

The Liberals are excluding Quebec from a contract worth over \$10 billion for fabricated reasons. Quebec's economy has been undermined enough.

When will the government stop crippling Quebec's shipbuilding industry?

[English]

Hon. Filomena Tassi (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is quite the contrary. We are fully supportive of our national shipbuilding strategy. I have seen first-hand this shipbuilding strategy at work by visiting shipyards and seeing men and women working very hard.

We know the contributions that the national shipbuilding strategy is making to the economy and the jobs it is creating. In fact, 17,000 jobs are being maintained or created, and the commitment is we are going to continue to work with Chantier Davie. It is a strong shipyard. We are happy that we have been working with it every step of the way and look forward to moving forward in the addition of it as a third shipyard.

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VETERANS AFFAIRS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, it has been seven years and still Veterans Affairs has not met its service standard for processing disability claims. This week, the Auditor General's report told us what veterans have been saying all along: that they are waiting far too long and it is causing suffering to the veterans and to the people who love them. Weak data collection means that Veterans Affairs cannot provide reliable, truthful information about their numbers, while internal human resources issues are leaving veterans behind.

How many reports are required before the government looks after veterans?

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to start by thanking the Office of the Auditor General for her report and by letting the House and all Canadians know that we have accepted all four of its recommendations.

We have invested \$340 million to hire new staff and speed up processes, and we have seen a decrease of over 50% in the past year and a half. We will continue to do what we need to do to ensure that veterans and their families receive the supports and benefits they need.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, three years ago, the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls released its report. For three long years, this crisis has continued while the Liberal government has failed to implement the calls for justice and save indigenous lives. In Winnipeg alone, five indigenous women have been murdered in just the past few weeks. My colleague for Winnipeg Centre has been urging the government to deliver funding for more low-barrier safe shelters.

How many more years will families have to wait for the government to finally implement the calls for justice?

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in Canada, indigenous women are 12 times more likely to go missing or be murdered. This is shameful. This is why our government put \$2.2 billion forward over the next five years for missing and murdered indigenous women.

We know we have to move faster. We know we have to do better. We know we can do better. We will do better.

* * *

● (1130)

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, the last time Prince Edward Island had inflation as high as 9%, it was in the 1980s when there was also a big-borrowing, tax-and-spend, inflationary Liberal prime minister in office. The regional breakdown is even worse in Charlottetown and Summerside, clocking in at a breakneck speed of 9.5%. The rising cost of fuel is only outpaced by this "always be spending" Prime Minister.

Oral Questions

Will he stop taking Islanders and their MPs for granted, and give them and all Canadians a break on GST at the pumps?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, allow me to congratulate the new finance critic for the Conservative Party. It is just unfortunate that he campaigned on a \$168-billion deficit. That was 50% more than our last budget.

It is also unfortunate that the previous finance critic for the Conservative Party was summarily fired for having criticized the fact that the member for Carleton was impugning the independence of the Bank of Canada. Of course, the previous finance critic was the member for Carleton himself, who is now doing a leadership campaign based on advising Canadians to use crypto—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canadians are at their breaking point due to financial stress. This entire nation is in trouble.

It is no longer paycheque to paycheque to make ends meet. Many are in a mode of survival. On top of maxing out credit cards, people are transferring balances from one credit card to another just to avoid insolvency. Out-of-control spending, a record-high cost of living and empty platitudes from the indifferent government are getting old.

Does the government actually have a plan to stop this cycle of destruction?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would invite the member opposite to read the budget and our plan.

She mentioned paycheques, and I could not agree more. Jobs, jobs, jobs: We have created over 3.5 million jobs over the past two years. Unemployment is at its lowest level in over 50 years. Well-paying jobs are putting good paycheques in the pockets of Canadians, and that is our focus.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, the cost of food has risen 15%, gas is over \$2 a litre, and what the government has done to our seniors is shameful. Public transit is non-existent. For many people, the hospital is over a two-hour drive away.

My constituent Dave Kendall wrote and said, “I am slowly going broke, and my savings are disappearing.” He had one question for the government, so I will ask it for him. “How do they expect seniors to live?”

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are doing everything possible in order to support Canadians through this difficult time. We understand that the cost of living is rising. It is due in large part to the war begun by Russia.

I would urge the Conservatives to please reconsider. Last night, they filed 62 different motions that are essentially going to delay or gut the budget implementation bill. It is a budget that includes sup-

port for seniors and includes support for vulnerable Canadians. I urge the Conservatives to help support Canadians.

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Madam Speaker, the cost of living in Canada is crippling small businesses.

In the words of my constituent David, who owns a small business, it is also pushing middle-class workers close to the poverty line. David has 30 individuals and 16 vehicles on the road on any given day. His fuel costs have doubled in the past month. This means that projects he bid on a month ago he will have to pay to complete.

His question echoes what many other Canadians want to know, and it is very simple. What is the government going to do about rising fuel costs and the out-of-control cost of living?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member opposite raises the importance of our small businesses. Small businesses are indeed the backbone of the Canadian economy.

In our budget, what we have done is expand the possibility for even more small businesses to be able to use the small business tax rate. It essentially lowers the tax rate for our small business owners. All of that is in jeopardy now that the Conservatives have filed 62 different motions to gut the budget implementation bill.

For the sake of our entrepreneurs and small businesses, can the Conservatives finally support the budget?

* * *

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, with the way it is going, there is not a chance.

It is a devastating time for farmers, ranchers and Canadians. This week, a rural municipality in my riding told me about a perfect storm that is brewing at home. Their ratepayers are already maxed out with paying for groceries and fuel, driven by the government's reckless monetary policy. Now, another severe drought looming means that crops will fail and ranchers are going to have to sell off their herds. That is on top of the higher input costs already faced by our producers.

Do the Liberals know what happens when taxpayers and people who produce our food go out of business?

Oral Questions

• (1135)

[Translation]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as you know, we are extremely concerned about the situation of rising input prices. That is why we are working closely with the various agricultural industries to help our farmers. For example, we made changes to the advance payments program so that farmers can access advances and loans with an interest-free portion. We continue to work with them in a variety of ways.

I would like to point out that last year the budget for the agricultural sector was over \$4 billion. This shows how committed we are to helping our farmers.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, according to the thinly veiled words of former finance minister Bill Morneau, the Liberal government's spending spree has contributed to inflation in Canada, taking money out of the pockets of thousands of Canadian families because everything costs more. This is further evidence of Liberal incompetence, as this government has totally lost control of spending.

What do the Liberals think about what Bill Morneau said? Is he right?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member who asked the question campaigned on a proposal to spend far more than the Liberal government. They proposed a deficit of \$168 billion. On this side of the House, we are focused on prosperity and economic growth. That is why experts predict that this year and the next, Canada will have the highest growth rate in the G7.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, the luxury tax in Bill C-19 misses the mark. Rather than targeting wealthy people who are buying private jets, it taxes Quebec's aerospace industry. My Liberal colleague knows this. Two weeks ago she promised "to ensure that this does not hurt our manufacturers", but since then, her government has voted against all of our amendments that would fix the problem.

Taxing the rich is fine, but taxing the flagship of the Quebec economy instead is out of the question.

When will the Liberal members from Quebec get to work and protect our aerospace sector?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I completely agree that the aerospace sector is absolutely crucial to our economy. It is indeed a flagship of our economy, especially in Quebec. As I said last week, we will ensure that our manufacturers will not be paying the price for this luxury tax.

A luxury tax is so important. Everyone needs to pay their fair share, especially now with the rising cost of living.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, Bill C-19 is about to be passed. It will hurt the aerospace industry. That is why the Bloc Québécois is reaching out to the government. We suggest passing Bill C-19 but not applying the luxury tax to aircraft right away. The government does not realize how much its ill-conceived measure will impact our businesses. It should, at the very least, take the time to study that.

Will the government agree to this reasonable compromise on behalf of our businesses and their workers?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I always enjoy being able to work with the Bloc Québécois on important issues like this one, but the Conservatives have moved 62 different motions that are completely blocking the way forward for Bill C-19. I hope the Bloc Québécois will help us so we can pass our bill and help Canadians with our budget.

* * *

*[English]***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, Gelete Burka is an elite Ethiopian runner who broke the Canadian all-comers' record at the 2018 Ottawa Marathon. This year, she and two dozen other elite athletes from Ethiopia and Kenya were looking forward to returning to Ottawa and competing in the Tartan Homes Ottawa International Marathon. They missed the marathon, because their visas were caught in the Liberal-made immigration backlog.

Can the minister clarify if this was due to the Liberals' mismanagement of the immigration system in Canada or the unaddressed systemic racism at IRCC?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me remind the House that last year we welcomed in our country over 405,000 new permanent residents; the greatest number of newcomers in a year in Canadian history. In 2022, we have already hit another record, processing over 246,000 PR applications and 216,000 work permit applications.

We are going to continue to invest in our immigration system, and I urge the member opposite to agree to pass our budget, because there is—

• (1140)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

Oral Questions

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, the caregiver program in IRCC continues to be one of the worst run programs. Canadians are desperate to get caregivers here to help their families, but almost no applications have been finalized. The government said the goal was to finalize 80% of these cases within 12 months. The reality is, since April 2020, an average of only 2.2% of cases submitted per month are actually finalized.

When will the government finally admit it failed caregivers and fix the caregiver backlog?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if last year has taught us anything it is the importance of those who provide care to members of our community to allow them to stay in their homes and receive the care they need in their communities.

Last year, we welcomed more than 4,000 new permanent residents through our caregiver stream, and this year we are expecting to see another 6,000 new permanent residents through the caregiver stream.

We will continue to work to bring caregivers to Canada to make sure they can provide support for families who live in our communities.

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, a year ago, a constituent Brian married Daniela, a Colombian national. They applied for a visa for her seven-year-old daughter, Sophie. Nine months later, they have had no communication and no updates, just “We are processing your application”. In frustration, they reached out to my office.

We were told that, on September 9, an IRCC system change delayed applications made before that date. Astoundingly, the advice given by the agent was to start over with a whole new application, along with additional fees, which would probably be processed before the original application.

Minister, is this level of service acceptable?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we understand that decisions on immigration cases can have a profound impact on individual's lives. Every case is assessed based on its merits in a fair manner and in accordance to Canadian law. Each case is unique, but all applicants can expect impartial, professional treatment and clear, accountable decision-making.

Due to privacy, I cannot comment on a specific case, but it would be a pleasure to reach out and talk more with the member.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Madam Speaker, farmers in my region and throughout Quebec are being squeezed. Not only is the price of diesel skyrocketing, but the price of fertilizer is soaring too.

As if that were not enough, farmers are facing unending immigration delays at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

Foreign workers cannot even enter Canada. Some farmers are afraid they are going to lose their crops, the thing that provides. Their livelihood is at stake, not to mention our food source.

Why is this government refusing to resolve the disgraceful delays and interminable holdups at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we know that immigration is essential to combating the labour shortage. IRCC is prioritizing work permit applications for in-demand occupations.

I know that I mentioned this week that we have processed 100,000 applications, but in fact, 216,000 work permit applications have been processed this year, compared to 88,000 applications over the same period last year.

We will continue to ensure that Canadian and Quebec employers have access to the workers they need to ensure Canada's economic recovery.

* * *

[*English*]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I asked the government to meet with the most impacted communities of Baffinland's Mary River project. The Minister of Environment promised that they would do consultations, but since February, my constituents have been ignored by the government.

The Minister of Northern Affairs has fewer than 70 days before a decision needs to be made on this urgent issue. The most impacted communities cannot be ignored. When will the government finally listen to indigenous voices before making decisions that impact their lives?

Hon. Dan Vandal (Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member has a very important question. On May 13, the independent Nunavut Impact Review Board submitted its report on the Baffinland iron mine project. We thank the board for its important work, and we thank all northern and indigenous partners for their participation in the NIRB process.

No decision has been made at this time. We will be taking the time to review the report along with federal officials. A decision will be made following appropriate due diligence and comprehensive analysis, including whether the duty to consult has been met.

Oral Questions

• (1145)

GOVERNMENT SERVICES**GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES**

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, when the pandemic began and Canadians were losing their jobs and then their pay cheques, the government said to apply for help, to not wait and apply now. It said that if people applied in good faith, they would not be punished. The government then took public servants from other departments and applied them to rolling CERB out the door.

We now have delays in other departments, such as immigration and access to EI. Where are those public servants? The government has asked them to put the squeeze on Canadians for \$2,000, \$4,000 or \$10,000 while they are struggling with inflation and struggling with higher interest rates. Why does the government not make it a priority to have government workers deliver the services that people need now, instead of chasing after Canadians for debts the government said they should not have to pay?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, allow me to take the opportunity to thank our hard-working public servants, who have been working overtime and then some over the course of the pandemic to provide programs, such as CERB and others, to vulnerable Canadians and to Canadians who needed help to make it through to the other side of the pandemic.

I understand the concern the member is raising, and we will certainly work with him to ensure all Canadians are treated fairly and with respect. That has always been our goal, and we have always have Canadians' backs. We will continue to do so.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, June 1 marked the beginning of pride month across Canada, a time for all Canadians to celebrate the 2SLGBTQ2+ community and recognize their contributions across this country.

Can the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth speak to the importance of pride season and some of the accomplishments of our government with the LGBTQ2 community?

Hon. Marci Ien (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for St. John's East for her incredible advocacy. While it is always a time for celebration, pride season is also a moment to reflect on activists, many of whom are in my riding of Toronto Centre, who risked everything by living their truth. Their sacrifices and advocacy for LGBTQ2 rights and protections have led to a safer and more inclusive Canada.

This past year, we banned conversion therapy, and this year's budget proposes \$100 million to develop and implement the first ever federal LGBTQ action plan. Every one of us plays a part in building an inclusive Canada. Canadians—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, a local senior from Kelowna—Lake Country, who does not have a computer, booked an appointment at the Service Canada passport office in Kelowna. He was turned away because he did not bring in forms he was told were available online only, and staff there could not print them. Our fabulous constituency team was pleased to serve him and printed off the forms he needed at my office.

How can Service Canada offices not have forms or the capability to print off forms at their office? This is a failure of the government. When is the minister going to put the “serve” back into Service Canada?

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her advocacy for her constituents. As we know, Service Canada has been ramping up service for Canadians across the country in all of its service centres, step by step and day by day. We know there are large volumes and that Canadians need the service delivered to them on a day-to-day basis.

However, we also know that, as we open up, we need to protect the safety of Canadians and ensure that, as they come to our passport centres, they have the documents they need so we can serve them better. We will continue to work with Canadians to ensure they get the services they deserve.

* * *

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, in April 2022, airports in greater Toronto held more than two thousand planes on the tarmac. In April 2019, they only held eight. The reason is travel restrictions. Travellers suffered through thousands of hours of delays, no thanks to the government's unnecessary travel policies.

When will the Liberals allow Canadians to travel freely again?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as we have committed to Canadians from the beginning of the pandemic, everything we do is based on our desire to protect the health and safety of Canadians. We have been guided by the advice we received from our experts. With respect to our travel measures, we have been lifting some of them and adjusting others, and we will continuously work with our experts.

Let me be clear. We are doing everything we can to address delays at airports. We are seeing similar delays around the world—

Oral Questions

• (1150)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for North Okanagan—Shuswap.

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GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, Vivian from Vernon has waited three years to attend an indigenous sun dance ceremony in the U.S. because of COVID mandates. She applied for her passport in early April, sent the application in by registered mail, and has a Canada Post signed receipt of delivery. Vivian paid for expedited passport service, which has been charged to her credit card.

My office made an inquiry, and Service Canada has no record of her application. Why has the minister failed so badly at her job?

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his advocacy for his constituent on this particular file.

Canadians are travelling again and we are seeing unprecedented volumes around the country. Yes, there are specific cases that do need attention. I would encourage the member to reach out to my office so we can find his constituent's file and make sure she can travel at her appointed time.

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GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, we have extreme labour shortages. We have ridiculous delays at the airport and at Service Canada. We have a deep divide in this country that has prevented family and friends from maybe ever speaking again. There is one thing that can stop all of this: The government can drop the mandates and lift the ridiculous travel restrictions.

Experts from across every sector agree, except for the Prime Minister. He tells us we are still in a pandemic, yet every province and every other country, except China and North Korea, have lifted these restrictions. Other than wanting extreme control, what is the reason for punishing Canadians and our tourism industry?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for her concern for her constituents and her consistent advocacy on this.

We have to recognize that in the month of May over 1,700 Canadians died. I am not trying to scare anybody, but we have to recognize that COVID is not over. Canadians are still dying from COVID-19. These public health restrictions have helped Canadians stay alive throughout this pandemic, and they will continue to do so. I hope members opposite would have some compassion for the families who are grieving for their dead family members who passed away in May.

[Translation]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, Quebec has already had \$342 million stolen from the infrastructure agreement, and it stands to lose up to \$4 billion more because Ottawa is unilaterally changing the terms of the agreement it signed with Quebec.

It is changing the deadline for submitting projects from 2025 to March 31, 2023. What happens if Quebec does not manage to submit in 10 months all the projects that it had three years to prepare? The minister stated that the funds would be taken back.

Why not abide by the agreement rather than stealing Quebecers' money?

[English]

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Quebec has not lost a single cent of the money allocated for its transit and infrastructure projects. However, the Bloc would have us believe that there are no infrastructure projects that are ready in Quebec or needed. We believe the contrary. We want to see infrastructure money roll into the Province of Quebec as quickly as possible to ensure these funds are building the things Quebecers need, such as reliable transit and infrastructure, as quickly as possible. That is what we are committed to doing as soon as the province provides us with its priority list.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, the minister said the exact opposite. On Monday, at committee, he admitted that he had taken \$342 million from Quebec and said that the government had not transferred money to Quebec.

What will happen to the \$4 billion that was promised to Quebec once we reach 2023? The minister stated that any money that is not used by March 31 will be taken back and not transferred.

The Liberals are violating the agreement. They stole \$342 million from Quebec and are threatening to steal more. Why are they not abiding by the agreement? What is an agreement signed by such a government worth?

• (1155)

[English]

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there has not been any money stolen from the Province of Quebec. On the contrary, all of the money that is allocated for Quebec will go to Quebec as soon as those priority projects are identified by the province.

We want to ensure that for all transit and infrastructure projects, all of the money allocated is rolled out to the provinces and territories, but we need our counterparts from Quebec to identify those priority projects. We look forward to rolling out those funds as soon as they do.

*Oral Questions***NATURAL RESOURCES**

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, G7 nations are calling on OPEC for energy solutions instead of turning to one of its own, Canada. I have a simple question: Why?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are working very hard with our European colleagues and with the Americans. I was in Berlin just last week having conversations with them about how Canada can continue to work to support Europe at a time of crisis with respect to energy security, while also ensuring that we are enabling them to continue to work on the important energy transition to reduce carbon emissions in line with what climate science tells us we must do.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I did not quite follow that, but G7 nations stated that the energy security crisis is a grave concern for households around the world. Canada, as a member of the G7, has the world's third-largest reserves, but our allies are not looking to us for energy solutions. Under the government, Canada has lost credibility with our peers.

Could the minister tell Canadians why his government has failed to be able to help our allies?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would simply say that my hon. colleague is wrong. I was at the meetings of the G7, and Canada participated actively with our colleagues. The member conveniently ignores that the communiqué coming out of the G7 focuses very much on addressing energy security issues within the context of addressing climate. As he also knows, we will accelerate production of oil and gas by 300,000 barrels a day by the end of the year to address some of those energy security issues. We are talking with Europe about LNG and hydrogen as we transition to a low-carbon future. We certainly are partnering very actively with our European friends.

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ETHICS

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, government departments are continuing to violate Treasury Board rules by allowing Liberal insiders and preferred vendors to split contracts in order to avoid a competitive bid process. An Order Paper question that came back shows several hundred examples of this. This was brought up to the previous Treasury Board president, who frankly could not care less.

Will the new President of the Treasury Board address this or will she too turn a Liberal blind eye to this corruption?

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government is committed to providing high-quality services to Canadians while ensuring the best value for taxpayers, which is why contracts are issued in a fair way in accordance with Treasury Board policy. The procurement of professional services is used to complement the work of Canada's professional public service by meeting unexpected fluctuations and workloads and to acquire special expertise, such as in response to the health care needs of remote northern communities. We know a strong federal public service is the best way to deliver for Canadians and we will continue to do so.

[Translation]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Madam Speaker, maintaining good jobs in the Quebec region is a key part of sound economic development.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue give us an update on the new tax centre in Shawinigan and the good it will do for the region?

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Alfred-Pellan for his important question. The Shawinigan project will create 150 new jobs and provide stability for those who are already working in the region.

This, along with the Canada Revenue Agency's pilot project for jobs in the regions of Quebec, demonstrates our deep commitment to the success of these important communities.

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[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Madam Speaker, Statistics Canada and the 2022 budget show that Canada is lacking almost a million workers. As baby boomers retire, the worker deficit will increase to two million. Currently, the number of people entering the workforce is not enough to fill this gap. This absence of workers only puts further stress and strain on those who are already working, because they lack the support they need.

How will the government help increase the number of workers entering the workforce and ensure that current workers do not burn out because employers are understaffed?

• (1200)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have the lowest unemployment rate in over 50 years, and the member opposite is absolutely right that here is a labour shortage in this country right now. That is why our government is so focused on ensuring that we welcome new immigrants to this country. I certainly hope the Conservative Party agrees that immigration is an excellent solution to the labour shortage in this country. It is certainly part of our core values to be open and inviting to the world, and I hope the Conservatives will join us.

*Routine Proceedings***TAXATION**

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, the government's lack of action to address escalating gas prices could now literally be a matter of life and death. One city in my riding has had to ask the Minister of Finance for a rebate on fuel costs specifically for ambulances and fire trucks because it can no longer afford to keep them fuelled up.

Will the government do the right thing and remove the GST on fuel, thereby delivering much-needed relief to municipalities just trying to fill up the tanks of their emergency service fleets?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are well aware that the global increase in energy prices is hitting us all very hard, which is why we have various measures in the budget to ensure that Canadians will see money go directly back into their pockets. It is also why we have an incentive program when it comes to the price on pollution we implemented, which ensures that eight out of 10 Canadians will receive more as part of the incentive program and as part of our federal subsidy than they pay for the price on pollution.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Madam Speaker, Regina city council has identified the construction of a new aquatic centre as a top priority in its recreational master plan. Fortunately, enough money has already been allocated to the city through the investing in Canada infrastructure program. Unfortunately, much of that money is going unspent because it is locked into mothballed public transit projects.

Will the government be reasonable and flexible and approve the request to reallocate these funds?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as a former city councillor, I understand the importance of investing in community infrastructure like recreation and community centres. We are committed to working with all levels of government and all orders of government to ensure that for the priorities they set forward, there are infrastructure dollars there. However, we must also be clear that the need for clean, reliable and efficient transit across this country is incredibly important.

I endeavour to work with the member and his local councillors to determine the best way to move forward on these projects, but we are committed to building—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Cloverdale—Langley City.

* * *

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our country's rail transportation system connects communities and keeps our supply chains running. However, accidents still happen that unfortunately result in injuries and even fatalities.

Can the Minister of Transport update the House on what our government is doing to protect Canadians and keep our rail system safe?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his advocacy.

Our government is working to ensure that Canada's rail transportation system remains one of the safest in the world. This morning, I announced that we are investing \$24 million for 147 projects across the country under our rail safety improvement program. This is in addition to the \$107 million we have invested since 2017.

I want to assure my hon. colleague and all Canadians that we will keep taking action to keep our rail system safe.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, last month hurricane-force winds destroyed large sections of the power grids in Ontario and Quebec, and floods inundated the West Point First Nation in the Northwest Territories and the Peguis First Nation in Manitoba. A report from The Globe and Mail showed that even more Canadian communities are at serious risk of flooding.

Extreme weather is costing Canada more than \$5 billion every year, and that will only increase. When will Ottawa fund significant proactive measures to protect our communities instead of just helping them clean up?

● (1205)

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I can tell the member opposite that the storm impacted my community right here in Ottawa. We need to invest in building resiliency in our infrastructure. That is why there is an over \$3-billion mitigation and adaptation fund available.

We will continue to work with our respective local communities so that planning can take place and we can invest in building more resilient infrastructure to deal with the drastic impacts of climate change.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to one petition. This return will be tabled in an electronic format.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): moved that the first report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, presented on Tuesday, February 8, 2022, be concurred in.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to move concurrence on the first report of the Standing Committee of Public Accounts presented to the House on Tuesday, February 8.

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts is probably known as one of the most powerful committees of the House of Commons. It has, I would say, far more influence than many others. It is one of the very few committees where deputy ministers are obliged to appear in order to respond to questions from members of Parliament, but also to explain why there are often shortcomings in reports from the Auditor General. The report I am interested in debating today is "Report 1, Procuring Complex Information Technology Solutions of the 2021 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada".

This particular report was last tabled in the 43rd Parliament's second session, in June 2021. I had the distinct privilege of briefly being elected chair of the public accounts committee, the standing committee of the House of Commons, late last year or the beginning of this year.

What I want to do, as I have done in past concurrence reports, is explain to constituents back home why we are debating this particular report. It comes down to the recommendations found therein and that is where I want to go. This report has eight recommendations in it, and I want to go over them so the constituents back home can understand why this is important.

I was trying to download the government's response to the report, but, as with much in the current government, it told me the link was broken and not working so I actually could not get it. It is typical. I tried twice on two different devices to get the contents of the response, so I am going to focus on the recommendations.

Often, I have constituents who come to my office and are worried about government spending. They are worried about excess spending and deficits and debt spending that is going on in our country. We saw, during question period, lots of questions about the state of the country's finances. We all remember that, back in 2015, it was the current Liberal government that promised itsy-bitsy, little tiny \$10-billion deficits, and no more, to be over by 2019. It is 2022 now and we have massive, structural, permanent deficits.

Where am I going with this? I tell constituents that waste in government starts with millions: not billions. It starts with the little things. It starts with things from contract splitting to sole-sourcing to individuals likely close to the government or close to particular public officials in the bureaucracies, and then they have a few hundred thousand dollars here and a few hundred thousand dollars there. That turns into millions of dollars. Then there are delays. There are dry-dock fees, perhaps with the national shipbuilding strategy, that amount to hundreds of millions of dollars and there is sometimes no construction going on. That is a major source of concern to constituents. They think, "Just take this large program of billions and billions of dollars and then cut that." I say that is not how government works.

Routine Proceedings

The government, in its sixth year, with this current budget 2022, will be a half a trillion-dollar operation. Never in my lifetime did I think this would happen. I want to give some credit to the Auditor General. I remember being a much younger man 20 years ago. The Speaker will remember this, because it was important to a particular province. We all remember the sponsorship scandal. The sponsorship scandal and the 1995 referendum happened in my formative years and were how I got interested in politics. I still have a copy of the Auditor General's report and her findings on my bookcase. It is not in mint condition. It is well flipped through and has lots of annotations in it. Those were millions of dollars of wasted, corruptly spent monies that the Auditor General found and then reported on.

I am not saying that this report has the same impact, but it talks about millions of dollars being wasted, the opportunities for corruption to exist within government, and how we deal with it as parliamentarians. This place is supposed to provide accountability and oversight in order to ensure that the public purse is spent wisely. It is to ensure that we spend money wisely. It is a challenge function, as a board of directors would have with the executive in a company, where the executive here is the cabinet that typically sits in the front bench to the right of the Speaker. That is the importance of this place. It is to make sure we catch those millions before they become billions.

● (1210)

Let me get to the recommendations of the report. Recommendation no. 1:

That the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Public Services and Procurement Canada, and Shared Services Canada provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with reports outlining what progress has been made with regard to developing more comprehensive guidance and training for employees to improve their understanding of agile procurement and how to apply collaborative methods.... Public Services and Procurement Canada should also provide a final report.

Routine Proceedings

That is a lot of technical language right there. Very essentially, to constituents back home, it is better training for the Public Service and also better training, as we saw again for matters coming out of Question Period, on what the rules of the Treasury Board Secretariat are on things like splitting contracts in two so they fall under \$25,000. It is as big an issue in my province, I suspect, as it is in the Speaker's province. These types of issues will come up where civil servants, at the closest level, are dealing with persons trying to seek grants or organizations trying to seek grants or trying to get a contract in very quickly, perhaps to procure a service or construction material or do quick renovations. The splitting of contracts is not supposed to happen. It is supposed to be an open bid so that the taxpayers can get the best absolute price and service: the two should always go together, hand in hand.

Recommendation no. 2:

That...the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, in consultation with Public Services and Procurement Canada and Shared Services Canada, provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a progress report regarding the assessment of the skills, competencies, and experience that procurement officers need to support agile approaches to complex information technology procurements.

In this space, I think we can all admit that we have a great amount of technology coming into our spaces, and we have a lot of individuals who are now using things like smart phone devices, but we have large tablets and we are doing a lot of work.

I want to make sure my dear colleague, the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola is in the chamber so that I can split my time with him, and he can then continue speaking to the recommendations of the report. I want to make sure that I got it in that I am actually in the chamber so that I could split my time with him.

Recommendation no. 3:

That the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with reports outlining the progress made with regard to ensuring that governance mechanisms are in place to engage senior representatives of concerned departments and agencies for the Next Generation Human Resources and Pay initiative.

Again, it is more training in place. I know the member for Edmonton West would appreciate this, because he is always hassling me in a friendly way about it. I used to work in human resources before being elected to Parliament. I was responsible for things like HR practices and labour policies. I was not directly involved with it, but I worked for the professional association that was responsible for setting things like the code of ethics or the practice guidelines, so I would often work with large committees of professionals who knew what the guidelines should be.

I learned a lot just by sitting at a table for three years with experts in the field: over 6,000 HR professionals in the province of Alberta at the time. It was about things like next generation human resources and pay. Pay is the most basic thing that has to be right in human resources. I see things like the Phoenix pay system, all the travails that have happened since then and all the difficulties in getting it right. If it had just been done right in the first place, all of those problems could have been avoided. I want to just spend a moment on Phoenix. I have a lot of constituents who have been affected by Phoenix, so I am always trying to help them. In fact, my case file manager was “Phoenixed” one month, while she was trying to

help constituents. Although hers was a very small amount, others were much larger.

I have been given a signal that I am running out of time, but I do have a Yiddish proverb. The one I want to use at this time is one I have used before. I think it is so relevant. It is, “When you sweep the house, you find everything.”

We have so many reports that are tabled in the House. Some receive recommendations and get a government response, and some do not. Some of these reports have very valuable content and information. This particular one speaks to avoiding millions of dollars of potential waste so it does not turn into billions. We are running a \$50 billion-plus deficit. That needs to stop: It needs to be wound down. We need to make sure we pay down the national debt, and it begins with ensuring that we spend money wisely.

● (1215)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the Conservatives, once again, want to use their political gamesmanship to prevent good legislation from being passed. Bill C-21 is what we are supposed to be talking about today, but they have reached into their not-so-tricky tricky book and they are saying they want to debate this particular issue.

Why does the member feel that the Conservative Party wants to continue to play games inside the House and prevent the important debate that Canadians want? Bill C-21 is about guns and so forth. Why are the Conservatives trying to avoid that debate?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, yesterday, during the Standing Orders debate, the member talked about making Friday a day when any members could rise in this chamber to speak about an issue they care about. I am simply practising what he is preaching.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his ongoing work to make sure that the government is both accountable and responsive.

The use of agile systems to run procurements is something that has long been discussed. Members should be prepared, because I am going to shock them: Sometimes industry cannot read the mind of the government. There are so many things the government can do.

The member did talk about the Phoenix pay issues. Could he maybe just give us an example of how those processes could have been improved through agile processes?

Routine Proceedings

• (1220)

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, in my experience, having worked for three years for a professional association responsible for this, not the Payroll Association but HR professionals, what people typically do is hire more compensation advisers.

I will admit that, at the time when Phoenix was being rolled out in its first phase, there were not enough compensation advisers, because one wants to work out all the kinks. It is like running an update to something, like an old Microsoft update for Windows 95. There are always errors that are going to happen, so before one makes it live and gives it to everyone, there is a small group of people to test it on. There are Treasury Board documents that show that this test did not happen with the Phoenix pay system. The minister at the time knew that a rollout of phase 2 would pose a disaster for those who would be caught up in the system.

It is an easy thing to do: do all the due diligence at the beginning, even if it means paying more for compensation advisers.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am really quite pleased with the member's endorsement of the fact that, during the Standing Orders debate, I made the suggestion that Friday be a debate day, so I am going to take that as an endorsement of that particular recommendation I was making.

I will go back to the point about the government's legislative agenda, because that is really what we are talking about today, when the opposition moves yet another concurrence motion. Does the Conservative Party have any sense in terms of a commitment to pass Bill C-21, or could we anticipate that there are going to be many speakers on that particular bill? Are the Conservatives prepared to see that bill ultimately pass?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, I cannot divine what my House leader is thinking, nor what the members on my side of the House may want to speak on, because I am sure that on Monday, when the government table-dropped this legislation, many of our constituents did not even know such a thing was coming and were not expecting its contents.

Over the summer months, I would hope that we will collect our emails, collect information that we get from constituents who are affected by this, and then reflect that back in the House, so that we can inform the government on what it is actually doing and the impacts it will have on the two million legal firearm owners.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Calgary Shepard for the amazing job he is doing. I know that he represents his folks well.

He mentioned the Phoenix pay system fiasco. I was just wondering if he can tell us a little more about how that has affected his constituents.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely correct. I have been to his riding. As in his riding, in my riding we have a lot of lawful firearm owners who want to abide by all the rules set out by the government. They understand that it is a privilege, and they have had a lot of difficulty over the last 20 or 30 years with ever-changing rules and expectations that keep being set higher and higher.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé on a point of order.

Mr. Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for the unanimous consent of the House to present the petition I planned to table today.

People from Berthier—Maskinongé made a special trip to Parliament Hill for this reason.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): All those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay.

I hear none. The House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

The motion is carried.

* * *

PETITIONS

ST. LAWRENCE RIVER SHORELINE PROTECTION

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking every single one of my colleagues for their kindness.

I rise today to present petition e-3748 regarding shoreline protection. I sponsored this petition, which is backed by a series of resolutions of support from various municipal councils and RCMs in my riding. I will share these resolutions of support with the minister in the coming days.

This petition, which was signed by 809 people, was started by Mr. Grégoire, of Saint-Ignace-de-Loyola, who travelled to Ottawa with several mayors from Berthier—Maskinongé to deliver it.

The petitioners are calling on the federal government to implement a shoreline protection program for the St. Lawrence River and take the necessary steps to counter erosion and safeguard the environment, for example, by regulating the maximum speed of vessels based on vessel type and by creating and maintaining shoreline protection works.

I remind the House that the federal government cancelled the shoreline protection program in 1997, divesting itself of the responsibility. Since then, municipalities along the river and their residents have been abandoned as erosion has become an ever-growing concern. Our small municipalities along the river should not have to take on the federal government's responsibilities. They are now forced to carry out costly emergency repairs without any support.

In signing this petition, the people of Berthier—Maskinongé are building on the work started by the people of Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, with the support of their member of Parliament.

I am very proud to continue this work. It is high time that the federal government took serious action to protect the St. Lawrence River shoreline. We are tired of the government's complacency and neglect.

Routine Proceedings

● (1225)

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2022, NO. 1

BILL C-19—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Filomena Tassi (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the report stage and third reading stage of Bill C-19, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022 and other measures.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the respective stages of the said bill.

* * *

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House to speak.

[English]

Today, I would like to talk about agile procurement processes.

Before I get into the substance of the debate, I would like to say, first of all, that the Auditor General's role is extremely important. Anyone who wants can show appreciation for that role, where time, energy, human ingenuity and, I am sure, robust discussions happen so that Canadians can know that there is a proper value-for-money auditing of government programs and services.

We know that, as a country, we have tremendous difficulty when it comes to procurement. Part of that is institutional and part of it, I would say, has to do with a lack of leadership. It is a difficult task, and the Auditor General comes to this place and tables a report to make the system better. The government accepts the recommendations, but it is not about just saying "We accept them." It is about whether or not the recommendations get the proper scrutiny or the political pressure to actually see those recommendations implemented.

For anyone in this place to rise and say that we should not be discussing things like agile procurement processes, given the failures of the government to effect the change that is necessary so that we can move past the process issues, I think, is not ideal. We should be talking about these things, because they cost billions of dollars, and when they fail, they fail Canadians.

The Phoenix payroll system, some people might say, was brought in by the previous government. Those processes were brought in, but the ultimate decision to initiate, overruling the advice given by IBM and others to this government that the system was not prepared and that there would be problems with the system, lies fully on the government's decision to start it.

Now, I am not going to relitigate that whole issue, but it does point out a very recent example where Canadians were hurt hard. We had public servants who, in effect, were unable to give the proper information to CRA and who were unable to feed their families or pay their mortgages. If any members in this place try to diminish today's debate on concurrence, that is on them. They are trying to avoid the accountability and the expertise brought forward by the Auditor General.

When the Auditor General says that she is "frustrated" about things like veterans wait-lists, when she and her office have made repetitive recommendations, accepted by government, but have not seen the subsequent improvements, I can understand how frustrating it is. We make recommendations to the government on a regular basis, and it does not accept any of them. The Liberals actually say things like, "We have nothing to learn", yet they ultimately have to do it, such as the decision on Huawei. It was this side of the House that said that the government needs to stand with our allies in saying "no way" to Huawei, yet the government did not listen.

Now, getting back to agile procurement, for those who are not necessarily familiar with the term, let me bring out what the Auditor General had to say: "We found that the way in which procurement teams collaborated with private sector suppliers on proposed IT solutions needed improvement." Suppliers reported that they "should regularly confirm that their procurement activities support the business need." I will sum it up by saying that agile, versus the status quo, is bringing industry in early and developing ongoing understanding and objectives.

● (1230)

This subject reminds of a story right out of a book called *The Death of Common Sense* by a lawyer from New York. He gave the example of a public servant in New York in the late seventies and early eighties. This person was told he needed to put in place a procurement process for a new bridge. The gentleman at the time said, "Let's bring in industry." He brought in industry, asked how they would do this and then was very quiet.

Some of the larger firms said they would do the traditional process and laid out what that would be, which was at great cost to the taxpayer and was a very lengthy process. One of the participants said they would not do any of that. They said they would build the bridge by using the natural characteristics of the route, which would save on time and money and get the bridge built much faster. The error the public servant made, after bringing the bridge developer back in a second time, was giving the contract directly to that person.

That bridge was built two years ahead of schedule at half the cost. Why? It is because rather than coming in with a prescriptive approach, wherein the government thought it had the perfect solution, and saying to industry to build a big bridge that would cost millions of dollars, go way over budget and take extra time, someone simply asked, “How would you do this?”

Now, the public servant was ultimately fired. Yes, he was fired, because he did not follow the procurement rules at the time. There is a great saying from the book *The Peter Principle*: The first to go in any organization are the hyper-competent and the hyper-incompetent. If someone is terrible at what they do, they are gone. If someone is incredible at what they do, they are gone.

That is the example I would like to put forward today because agile procurement takes a very similar approach. For example, instead of government saying what it thinks, we should go to industry, bring them in early and hear the proposals. That is not what the government is doing.

The government has been criticized as being too prescriptive and not necessarily taking advantage of the new technologies. This might shock some Liberal, NDP and Bloc members, but the government is not always a leader when it comes to new technology. We need to talk to the experts, and unfortunately the experts are in industry most of the time. They understand the technology and what it can and cannot do. Unfortunately, even when IBM said to the government not to press start on the Phoenix pay system, the government ignored the advice.

This report is incredibly complex. It is important for us to acknowledge that we need to move from the current procurement process to the agile process laid out in this report. I invite Canadians to go to the Auditor General's website. It is the first report of the latest batch. I would ask Canadians to take a look at it to see the contrasting approach. I really do hope the government will draw upon it.

I am a big believer in Canadian industry. I am a big believer in the notion that we can reinvent government, especially when it comes to procurement processes. However, we need a government that embraces change.

The government, with its so-called deliverology, has not delivered when it comes to procurement. I certainly hope it listens to our Auditor General. It may not listen to me, and that is okay and I understand it. Sometimes I do not want to listen to myself either. However, it is so fundamentally important that we start to address these processes, because procurement is one of the things that hold our government back.

While I am on my feet, I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

• (1235)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division or that the motion be adopted on division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

The House leader of the official opposition.

Routine Proceedings

[*English*]

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I would ask for a recorded division.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): Call in the members.

• (1320)

(The House divided on the motion, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 120*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultouf	Aitchison
Albas	Arnold
Baldinelli	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chabot
Chambers	Champoux
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	d'Entremont
Desbiens	Desilets
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeschen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Fortin	Gallant
Garon	Gaudreau
Généreux	Genuis
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Lake
Lantsman	Larouche
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lemire	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
MacKenzie	Martel
Mazier	McCaulley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Michaud
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Nater	Normandin
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Perkins
Perron	Plamondon
Poillievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Savard-Tremblay	Schmale
Shields	Shiple
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné

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McLeod
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Miller
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Naqvi
O'Connell
Petipas Taylor
Qualtrough
Rodriguez
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Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
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Van Bynen
Vandal
Virani
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

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McPherson
Miao
Morrice
Murray
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NAYS

Members

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Carr
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MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen

Alghabra
Anand
Angus
Arya
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Baker
Beech
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blaney
Boissonnault
Bradford
Cannings
Casey
Chahal
Chatel
Chiang
Coteau
Damoff
Dhaliwal
Diab
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
El-Khoury
Fergus
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser
Gaheer
Garrison
Gerritsen
Green
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Johns
Jones
Julian
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Lapointe
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)

PAIRED

Nil

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I declare the motion lost.

* * *

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am wondering if the member could provide his thoughts. After question period, we were supposed to actually be debating Bill C-21, and now we have a few minutes left of the government legislation. That legislation was important. It would make it illegal to transfer, sell or purchase handguns. That is something really important to Canadians. At a time when Canadians want this legislature to work in a co-operative fashion, why is the Conservative Party trying to filibuster legislation of such importance that the minister was here today to present it and to have that debate take place. Why wait until the last few minutes?

I would be interested in hearing why the Conservative Party does not feel this is an important issue.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I said during my speech that we should be taking the Auditor General very seriously. Although there were recommendations the government said it would agree to, it has not followed through on all of them. We need to do a better job with procurement in this country.

Routine Proceedings

The interesting thing is that this member just voted against my motion to end debate, so we are continuing to debate the thing that he is upset about because we are not supposed to be debating it anymore. This is the House of Commons, and the member knows the rules. He can put forward motions and have them accepted or rejected. I just did that. He voted against it. He wants to continue debate, apparently.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thought that was a really great speech given by my colleague from British Columbia.

Going through the Auditor General's report here, I find it quite fascinating that there is one line that reads:

Also, lack of engagement with key stakeholders in governance mechanisms can lead to problems that are costly and time consuming to solve after contracts are awarded.

I think that has been an emerging theme across multiple Auditor General reports that we are seeing in committee. I am wondering if the member has any comments toward that issue.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, I have said before that the procurement system in this country has not worked well. It is something that is a challenge to us. We must do better. I would point out that the PACP report states that the Office of the Auditor General found that ESDC:

had not established a clear governance structure for the Benefits Delivery Modernization program. In 2019, an independent review found unclear accountabilities and gaps in the program's formal processes for decision making. In response, the department developed a draft governance framework but by the end of [the] audit period, it was still not formalized—even though the department had selected and awarded a pilot contract to a supplier for the program's core technology in December 2019.

The government says that it accepts all recommendations by the Auditor General, yet does not take action. This report is an important road map for a better way to handle procurement, particularly by using agile procurement processes.

● (1325)

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, there is another point in the findings portion of this report. I think it is really interesting to note that the federal organizations rolled out agile procurement without sufficient training for staff or engagement with key stakeholders.

We heard the member talk about how the organization told the government to not hit the start button on the program, yet here we are. That engagement with stakeholders would have been extremely important. It would have prevented the whole disaster with the Phoenix pay system here. I am wondering if the member wants to elaborate further on that.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, I am very happy we can get into the guts of this particular report in debate.

Recommendation 3 is on “engaging senior officials for complex procurements”. This relates to the Treasury Board. It recommends:

That the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with reports outlining the progress made with regard to ensuring that governance mechanisms are in place to engage senior representatives of concerned departments and agencies for the Next Generation Human Resources and Pay initiative, as follows....

A number of dates follow and they are in the report.

We need to continue to scrutinize the government and hold it to account when it says it will do something. When it comes to things like the Phoenix pay system and procurement, the government talks a good game but does not walk one.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that the role and importance of the Auditor General cannot be underestimated. We have consistently, whether when in government or in opposition, encouraged the Auditor General to provide these much-needed reports. Whether we have a Conservative government or a Liberal government, these things all help society as a whole, and there is a response to the report.

Having said that, I think it is really important to note here that we see the behaviour of the Conservative Party once again surface. Canadians expect a sense of co-operation and a sense that the House of Commons will respond to the electoral mandate we were all given to focus attention on Canadians and on the important issues facing Canadians today.

We were supposed to be debating Bill C-21. The minister made a point of being here to listen to what opposition members had to say when he introduced this legislation at second reading. The legislation would make it illegal to transfer, sell or buy handguns, and the Conservative Party, true to form, is again playing a destructive force on the floor of the House of Commons.

Here, the Conservatives have an opportunity to deal with an issue that is important to Canadians. Maybe they should talk to some of the people in Quebec, Ontario and other jurisdictions to get a better understanding of what the real issues are, as opposed to continuing to play the types of games we see day in and day out from a party that has no rudder. Its members are all over the map on a wide variety of issues.

At the end of the day, Canadians deserve a more effective opposition. I sat in opposition for many years, and the types of issues that are before us today as a nation deserve more attention from the official opposition. The games—

● (1330)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I must interrupt the hon. member.

[*Translation*]

It being 1:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[Translation]

INCOME TAX ACT

The House resumed from March 23 consideration of the motion that Bill C-241, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (deduction of travel expenses for tradespersons), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a real pleasure to be here today to participate in the debate on Bill C-241.

[English]

I am a pretty *pratico-pratique* kind of person, and I am not going to beat around the bush. I am really happy that my colleague across the way brought forward this legislation. My father and my brothers have worked in the field of construction, and I am very interested in the piece of legislation my hon. colleague brought forward. I have not decided yet whether I am going to support it, but I will be speaking with the member across the way to get a bit more information from him, because I have a couple of concerns and questions.

To that point, I just want to say that when it comes to the tradespeople working in Canada, throughout the pandemic they really stepped up. I know the demand for tradespeople to work across Canada has boomed, whether it be in the construction industry, in plumbing or in electricity. I want to commend the member opposite for supporting the trades and supporting those who are making sure that our economy continues.

I am not going to speak for very long on this bill. I just wanted to let the member know that I am looking forward to speaking to him to determine whether I will be supporting it.

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for Essex on his Bill C-241. Before speaking to this bill, the Bloc Québécois did its homework and its research, and I can tell the member that we will vote in favour of this important bill.

As members know, Bill C-241 amends the Income Tax Act to allow tradespersons and indentured apprentices to deduct from their income amounts expended for travelling where they were employed in a construction activity at a job site that is located at least 120 kilometres away from their ordinary place of residence.

Subsection 8(1) of the Income Tax Act is amended by adding the following after paragraph (q):

Tradesperson's travel expenses

(q.1) where the taxpayer was employed as a duly qualified tradesperson or an indentured apprentice in a construction activity at a job site that was located at least 120 km away from their ordinary place of residence, amounts expended by the taxpayer in the year for travelling to and from the job site, if the taxpayer

- (i) was required under the contract of employment to pay those expenses,
- (ii) did not receive an allowance in respect of those expenses that is not included in computing the taxpayer's income for the year, and
- (iii) does not claim those expenses as an income deduction or a tax credit for the year under any other provision of this Act;

This bill acts on recommendations from Canada's Building Trades Unions, the national voice of over half a million Canadian construction workers, members of 14 international unions who work in more than 60 different trades and occupations and generate 6% of this country's GDP.

Salespeople, professionals and various other workers in different sectors can already claim a tax deduction for the cost of their travel, meals and accommodation. It stands to reason that these expenses could be claimed by skilled workers whose job sites are located in a different region or province from their primary residence. It is a question of fairness.

Growth rates and infrastructure investment often vary from one region to the next, which may in part explain why the labour shortage is particularly acute in certain regions. The labour shortage is one of the main impediments to the economic recovery. One way to address rising prices is to tackle this shortage. Improving labour mobility can help alleviate the shortage.

When expenses are not covered by the employer, workers must pay out of pocket. For workers with a family, additional expenses for travel can be very high and can impede the worker's mobility.

This tax deduction is a concrete and effective means of enhancing the mobility of construction workers. Additionally, it has been calculated that this measure could save the federal government a net amount of \$347 million.

Other countries, such as the United States, allow this type of tax deduction for skilled workers. Under the U.S. internal revenue code, these employees are entitled to deduct the cost of meals, travel and accommodation for a temporary job that is far from their residence. This already exists.

Such a measure would encourage employees to return to work while also addressing labour shortages and reducing dependence on government programs such as employment insurance.

Allow me to provide some clarification on what is already available. An employee can only deduct expenses that are specifically provided for in the act. Generally speaking, employees may claim expenses if their employment contract requires them to pay their own expenses, if the employee is regularly required to work away from their employer's place of business, and if they do not receive a non-taxable allowance for travel expenses. The employer must certify that the employee's working conditions enable the employee to deduct certain expenses.

Commission employees may deduct all their expenses, except capital expenditures, professional dues, and memberships in sports or leisure associations, up to the amount of the commissions received. This limit does not apply to depreciation and interest with respect to an automobile.

Tradespeople are entitled to a tax deduction of up to \$500 per year for the purchase of new tools acquired as a condition of their employment. However, the first \$1,257 of such expenses, or \$1,215 in Quebec, is not deductible.

• (1335)

As I have previously mentioned, the cost of travelling to a job site far from the worker's home can influence their decision to accept a contract. Inflation is high, so travel-related costs are also soaring. Just look at the price of gas.

This new deduction will make a real difference for workers who have to travel for work. According to a recent poll by Canada's Building Trades Unions, three-quarters of skilled trades workers say that a tax deduction will give them access to a greater number of job opportunities. With inflation the way it is, this is the right time to implement a tax deduction to help ease the pressure on some workers' wallets.

I will illustrate the absurdity of the current situation and how Bill C-241 can correct it. Currently, someone who sells rebar or conduits for the construction of a new building can deduct their work-related travel expenses, meals and accommodation from their income, yet that option is unfairly denied to the skilled trades workers who install the rebar or conduits. That is unfair. With Bill C-241, this option would also be offered to those workers.

The bill will therefore help reduce the labour shortages in some sectors, and the Bloc Québécois is proposing a suite of measures to alleviate labour shortages across Quebec. We need to increase the productivity of Quebec businesses, produce more with less, let Quebec manage the foreign worker program, and encourage seniors who want to remain in the workforce by eliminating any tax penalties they may face. I also have a number of other suggestions. For example, we are also proposing that the temporary foreign worker program be transferred to Quebec. We are very satisfied with Quebec's training model.

We are proposing all of these things, and we fully recognize that Bill C-241 will help address the labour shortage, ease the burden on workers who need to travel far from home, and make the tax system a little more fair. That is why we will be voting in favour of the bill.

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak today on this bill, Bill C-241. I want to thank the member for Essex for putting this forward. I would also like to thank him for reaching out to me about my private member's bill and his private member's bill. I have been here for a while, but at the same time, it was really nice to have the member take the initiative. He deserves a lot of credit for that because we all get busy here in our own little worlds, and it was nice to get the reminder with a conversation. His bill is really exciting, and I believe my bill is really exciting, and the fact that two members who are such close neighbours got pulled in the first top 10 of the PMBs is something I have not seen in my years here. We are actually going to have the votes on the same day as well.

His bill is very important for workers not only in Essex but also in Windsor, Windsor—Tecumseh, a number of different municipalities in our general region and across this country. What excites me about this is that our former member Chris Charlton from the NDP in the Hamilton area had introduced this bill originally, and there have been others. Most recently, the member for Hamilton Moun-

Private Members' Business

tain introduced this bill, which had a bit of a variation to it. He proposed 80 kilometres with respect to travel distance for skilled trades getting a tax deduction. This bill proposes 120 kilometres, so there is a minor difference between the two that can be worked out at committee.

I do not understand how members cannot support the bill going to committee. It blows my mind. I am in the same boat with my bill, Bill C-248, which proposes to create a national urban park for the constituents of Windsor and Essex county, and to protect 130 endangered species for all of Canada. To find reasons not to support this bill is kind of twisted and bizarre, quite frankly, because these things can be sent to committee to be identified and examined. In the past, the Liberals have supported some of this legislation, so I would be shocked if they did not do it here.

I think the member for Essex deserves credit for doing this in very much a complementary way with respect to what we want to see this Parliament work toward in the next number of years. If it stays together and goes together, this is a bill that can get passed.

What is important is that the skilled trades people who the member is trying to help are men, women and sometimes new Canadians who need to get the support that businesses already receive. Some of the largest corporations can write off all kinds of things, from sports, entertainment and booze, basically anything they want. What we are talking about here is helping people in the skilled trades, which we have a shortage of, with travel costs to get across our country. This also indirectly helps build the bonds of this country.

I know that when Windsor had high unemployment rates, many of the skilled tradespeople would fly out every single day to Alberta and Saskatchewan where they were needed, which built bonds among Canadians. The extra stress, the pain of the loss of contact with their families and the loss of income with the things they are doing should be identified. There are small but significant gestures for those workers.

I would suggest as well, when we look at this issue, that we are trying to get more women involved in skilled trades, so this small tax deduction would help them and their families, especially as they primarily raise the children. That would be another thing to look at with respect to this bill, so the people who we want to fill the void and the ever-increasing gap would actually get a bit of benefit here.

Private Members' Business

The member for Essex has a bill that has been lurking around the House for a bit here and there in different ways. He has presented it in a way that builds co-operation and support. He has done so in a way that also connects his local community and the rest of the country, and it is about more than just those individuals getting something. It is also about nation-building.

The timing for the member's bill could not be better, knowing that right now we have to fight to keep and retain employees in Canada. I can tell members that, for all the studies at the industry and international trade committees that I sit on, we have heard testimony after testimony about Canadians getting poached internationally. That is something that is taking place right now, so this is a very good step, because it shows those workers that their country needs and wants them.

It also shows new entrants who are getting into this business that they are going to get some extra financial support because they often have to purchase their own equipment, tools and training. These are all things that continue in these professions, and it is very important to have those skills in our community. That is why I think the bill is also about the community because it is better to have these skilled trades.

• (1340)

Who did not go around in their neighbourhood and try to get help from a skilled tradesperson to do their deck, to help them on the driveway, to get a home renovation evaluated as they go through building permits, and have family and friends pitching in for all kinds of different things and doing all the right work? That community capacity building is part of having skilled trades there. Bricklayers are needed everywhere. There are all kinds of metalworkers who are necessary. It goes on and on. Carpenters are needed. We have seen that all those organizations, whether independent or unionized, want to support this type of legislation.

When a member of Parliament puts forth a private member's bill, if they can do one that connects priorities in their community with the rest of the country, it is an important thing to do. I have seen other members present bills in here with no hope of actually pushing them forward, just kind of pushing buttons on things to try to get people excited. They know their bill is doomed to failure but present it because they want to make a point. However, this is a bill we should be fast-tracking because of its history and the way that it is being presented to us in the House of Commons. Also, we can move it toward the Senate.

I know that the government has been doing some work on skilled trades or some things that look like they are pretty good, but they are taking a while to wind themselves through the system. Here is something controllable that we have right here, and that is why I really like this bill. It is because it does not try to solve everything that we have to do all at once. It looks at a policy that has been advocated by professionals and those in the system, so it has been around and it has that type of support. It is just going to elevate that issue more quickly and it will be one of the boxes we can check off right away.

This bill should actually get unanimous consent to go to committee at the very least. It is one that has been around the table many times in different ways, and I was glad to see it presented here be-

cause my people in Windsor and Essex County, as I mentioned before, have had to travel to other places for work and may have to do so again. We are booming in many respects right now. We have some good developments that have taken place because we have worked really hard and laid the foundation. Part of that is because of the quality of labour and skill sets that we have. We are actually winning jobs and contracts because the quality of the people we have living in the Windsor, Essex and Tecumseh area is attracting not only domestic investment but foreign investment.

That is another thing that the member for Essex needs to be supported on here. If we can build up the skilled trades in this country, other communities are going to receive better investments, because the shortages of skilled trades are not just here in Windsor and Essex County and the rest of Canada but across the globe, so that is critically important.

As well, Windsor West is the fourth most diverse community among urban cities in Canada. A lot of our history is tied to skilled trades coming into this country. My grandfather, Fred Attwood, served in the *Ark Royal* in the Royal Navy and in the merchant marine. Then he worked for Hiram Walker. I am lucky to have in my garage his tools from Hiram Walker from when he retired there. They did a nice thing for him, as a gift, and presented it in a box and everything.

I look through the tools once in a while. I can see that he had to buy all those different things. I would go over to his house every Sunday and cut the lawn and hang out and listen to the stories of the Second World War and do gardening and a number of different projects with him, and I did not realize until later on that he had doubles and triples of different tools because he used them at work and at home, and that was a considerable expense.

We know, as members of Parliament, that when people are travelling, often they have to buy a second or third toothbrush because they did not remember to bring things with them and they are racing to get to the airport or a job or an event or whatever it might be. It is no different for some of these men and women who are in the skilled trades, because it is also very important for them to get to emergency situations as well. This is how this bill is very appropriate. It would help to take care of some of those things that otherwise would be a burden on the family. In reducing stress and giving more support, especially as the industry is transitioning for the future, this bill meets all of those check boxes, so I want to thank the member for Essex.

I was very happy to be able to be here in person to speak to this bill today. One of the reasons I stayed to do so is that the member for Essex showed courtesy and respect by reaching out to me to work on our legislation together, and he should be commended for that.

Private Members' Business

• (1345)

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to express my full support for Bill C-241, an act to amend the Income Tax Act. Before I begin, I would like to commend my colleague for Essex for introducing this great piece of legislation. The bill clearly shows his commitment to serving his community and working-class Canadians.

We must first recognize the essential role of Canada's hard-working tradespeople. The trades are the cornerstone of our economy and we must support the workers in this critically important sector. In my province of Manitoba, the trades and construction represent 21.3% of all Manitoba workers. The bill would have a positive impact on many tradespeople across my province and across our country.

Bill C-241 would allow for qualified tradespeople or indentured apprentices to claim travel-related expenses for their work. This legislation would allow tradespeople to claim travel for work at least 120 kilometres away from their residence. Currently, corporations and self-employed individuals enjoy the benefit of claiming eligible travel-related expenses.

If a corporation incurs transportation expenses for business operations, it subtracts these expenses from taxable profits. The bill would extend these benefits to the trades so that tradespeople have equal treatment.

I would like to tell members about a licensed electrician working in my constituency. She is forced to travel a long distance for work because there is no substantial amount of construction work in her area. She needs to travel to pay her bills. Money is already tight and she now has to foot the bill for travel, accommodations and food. She realizes that not every worker has the same struggle while travelling for work. Although business workers and construction workers both travel, not everyone will be reimbursed for their work expenses. It should not matter if a worker is in a suit or a hard hat: they should both be fairly reimbursed for their work.

Bill C-241 is important for all of Canada, but it is even more important for rural Canada. As an MP who proudly represents a rural region, I understand the challenges of travelling long distances to get from point A to point B. There are not many short trips and cheap gas bills for rural Canada.

I was in Dauphin last week and met a constituent named Jeff Hockridge. Jeff recently opened Hockridge Trade School. Over the past few months, he has been working hard to offer training services for heavy equipment operations in the Parkland region of Manitoba. Jeff and his team are working to support the next generation of trades and are teaching the skills that are among the most desired in our country. Jeff understands that operating a business in rural Canada carries additional burdens that make it difficult to work in the skilled trades.

Most notably, operating in rural regions requires a significant amount of travel among various communities. This means that tradespeople are often required to travel long distances for their work. This travel is unavoidable and tradespeople must bear these additional costs to simply do their jobs. When Canada's tradespeople

incur more costs, they take home less for themselves. They take home less money to support their families and they take home less money to reinvest in their communities.

Bill C-241 would also help address our nation's current economic challenges. Canada is in the middle of a cost of living crisis, and goods and services are becoming unaffordable for millions of Canadians. One of these essential goods is fuel. With gas prices reaching record levels, Canadians, especially rural Canadians, deserve a break. The bill would ensure that tradespeople enjoy the same taxable benefits as corporations and self-employed individuals for travel.

Bill C-241 would decrease the financial burden of transportation and by extension, allow tradespeople to sign up for jobs farther away from where they live. Canada is facing a labour shortage and I believe, as parliamentarians, we must work to fill these gaps. Canada's trades industry is one of the sectors most impacted by the national labour shortage.

In my province of Manitoba, the trades sector will account for the highest number of vacancies over the next three years. If we want to attract talent in Canada's trades, we need to support these Canadians in their field of choice. It is no secret that the trades offer excellent careers through highly skilled, highly paid positions. We must ensure that they are treated as such. Workers in the trades must be appropriately compensated for their skills and their work. We cannot wait any longer to train the next generation of skilled tradespeople.

• (1350)

Bill C-241 would help address the national labour shortage and help folks like Jeff increase student enrolment in Canada's trades. Bill C-241 is a pro-worker, pro-jobs, pro-paycheque bill. This bill would provide the support that tradespeople need. This bill would help grow the skilled trades sector.

It is no surprise that trade unions around the country have expressed their widespread support for this bill. They have been advocating for these measures for years. The working class people of this country have often fallen through the cracks, and it is time for the government to step up.

Private Members' Business

In conclusion, I would like to again thank my colleague from Essex for his great work in drafting this bill. Bill C-241 recognizes that working class Canadians are the backbone of this country. At a time when Canadians are experiencing significant financial hardship, when they deserve a break and when our nation is in desperate need of skilled trades, we must address these challenges. I urge members of the House to send this bill to committee so it could be further studied.

It is important to hear expert testimony on this legislation so we, as parliamentarians, could better understand the positive impact it would have on Canadian trades. I will be proudly voting in favour of this legislation, and I encourage all other members of the House to do the same.

● (1355)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, we are here to talk about Bill C-241, which was introduced by my hon. colleague from Essex. This bill amends the Income Tax Act to allow tradespeople and apprentices to deduct travel-related expenses from their income.

As my hon. colleague, the member for Joliette, pointed out, we support this bill. It can be described as a common sense bill, because it directly addresses the issue of fairness. The Bloc Québécois will be voting in favour of it.

Under this legislation, tradespeople can deduct travel expenses:

where the taxpayer was employed as a duly qualified tradesperson or an indentured apprentice in a construction activity at a job site that was located at least 120 km away from their ordinary place of residence, amounts expended by the taxpayer in the year for travelling to and from the job site, if the taxpayer:

- (i) was required under the contract of employment to pay those expenses,
- (ii) did not receive an allowance in respect of those expenses that is not included in computing the taxpayer's income for the year, and
- (iii) does not claim those expenses as an income deduction or a tax credit for the year under any other provision of this Act;

Let us talk a bit about the construction industry. It is a very important sector in Quebec, both for its contribution to the economy and for its value added. Houses and buildings can be built from scratch. Without this industry, we would not have our magnificent House of Commons, for example. In 2019, \$53 billion was invested in the construction industry and 264,000 direct jobs were created on average every month. In Quebec alone, one in 20 jobs are in this sector, and thousands of jobs in other sectors are linked to the construction industry.

This bill is being introduced in a particular economic context marked by a labour shortage and inflation. Inflation is now Quebecers' main concern. It affects the cost of housing, staple foods and, of course, gas.

The Bloc Québécois has proposed a number of measures to give some relief to workers struggling with the rising cost of gas. In this very specific context, Bill C-241 would help tradespeople do their jobs and be compensated for these expenses and the rising cost of gas, which is quite fair. If they travel for work and agree to take on a contract far from where they live, it just makes sense that they be reimbursed for the expenses they incur on the job.

Inflation has multiple causes, one of which was government spending during the pandemic. This spending was necessary and we supported it, but it may be partially responsible for today's inflation. In addition, the shortages of essential equipment created backlogs in a number of industries. Supply chain issues, the unfortunate war in Ukraine and the labour shortage also contributed to the significant inflation problems.

The labour shortage is boosting wages, but it is also creating a problem in the construction industry. It is a vicious circle. There is a shortage of workers for job sites. The construction industry cannot find people to take on jobs that are so important to our economy.

We think that this bill could help tradespeople do their jobs and accept contracts far from home, which is essential for many remote communities.

● (1400)

At the same time, tradespeople are forced to turn down contracts far from home because they would have to spend hundreds of dollars just to get to work. It is clear that, in many cases, they are forced to turn down these contracts. They are often forced to reluctantly apply for EI because they cannot find a contract near their home and cannot see themselves spending hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars on gas just to get to work, given the exorbitant price of gas today.

Ultimately, this bill will not only help address the labour shortage in this industry, but it will also enable people to accept new contracts, which could reduce the EI benefit envelope. These are significant numbers. For example, the government could save \$347 million in EI benefits thanks to this bill.

We believe that this bill will be able to constructively and concretely deal with economic issues such as gas price inflation and labour shortages.

The Bloc Québécois has proposed several solutions to the labour shortage. More specifically, with regard to immigration control, we have asked for a transfer of the temporary foreign worker program to Quebec. Who better than Quebec to know what it needs?

We also proposed greater integration of older, more experienced workers.

We also suggest supporting technologies designed to increase flexibility for the workforce. We know that is one solution. According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, technologies that make work more flexible are one of the most important solutions to the labour shortage. Another solution is to eliminate entry barriers for employees. One entry barrier is the cost of accessing these contracts.

That brings us back to this bill. If we make it possible for workers in the construction industry to accept these contracts without the entry barrier of the cost of travelling to the job site, then we are helping to solve the serious labour shortage problem.

We also proposed solutions to inflation. They do not necessarily target inflation directly, since the Bank of Canada, which is independent, is doing that already. Our solutions seek to protect the people who are struggling because of inflation. We proposed help for dealing with the housing shortage. The member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert is actively working on that. We proposed help for families and individuals who are having difficulty because of inflation.

What really matters, as I said, is finding a way to make the labour market more flexible by letting more workers in and giving workers who are already in the market access to jobs or contracts. As everyone knows, we want greater equity, but we also want to tackle labour shortages for an industry that really needs workers, the construction industry, which is especially important in Quebec.

• (1405)

[English]

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will start out this way: They often say the best way to sell something is to have everybody else sell it on one's behalf. To each and every one of the speakers today in the House, including my hon. colleague across the way for just telling the truth, I thank them very much. I really appreciate it. We look forward to everybody's support, but I certainly appreciate today's support from the NDP, the Bloc and, of course, my Conservative colleagues.

A gentleman by the name of Eric Nevin was a friend, conservationist, avid angler and hunter. He was a man of many jokes and a man of many skilled trades. He passed away yesterday, and I want to say my condolences to Suzie and his family.

I want to give congratulations to Anthony Leardi, who is the newly elected MPP for Essex, and to Andrew Dowie, the newly elected MPP for Windsor-Tecumseh. I bring them up specifically because I know how hard they campaigned on skilled trades. I heard it time and again. I saw it. They understand the importance of it for our region. Just as the hon. member for Windsor West spoke about, this is much larger than just Essex, Windsor West or Windsor-Tecumseh. Bill C-241 is truly Canada-wide.

Private Members' Business

I would also be remiss if I did not thank the member for Carleton. When the member for Carleton was the shadow minister for finance, I went up and spoke to him about this and asked him what his thoughts were. He said to make sure, whatever I did, to make it a tax deduction. I want to thank the member for Carleton and I also want to congratulate the member for Carleton, as it is his birthday today.

I have to thank Canada's Building Trades Unions. I have had extensive conversations with many of the CBTU union heads, and quite frankly people on the ground. They have been instrumental in helping me to gather information, and to understand what the real needs are and how to make this bill that much stronger. Specifically, and I have mentioned him before, I thank Tommy Holkenin for being, I will say, a thorn in my side, but he was probably one of the best thorns there could have been to make sure we brought this forward, as well as Carl Lovett. I thank both gentlemen so much.

We do not have to look very far when we go to the new Gordie Howe International Bridge. I visited there last week, and I had an opportunity to meet with who I call the "boots on the ground", and the amazing folks from a variety of skilled trades. To see the work they are doing is absolutely remarkable. Further to that, come 2025, they are going to need a place to go. We have lots of jobs across Canada, and we need to be doing work now to ensure that their travel expenses are taken care of when the new bridge is built.

Thanks to each and every member in the House. I am super excited. This is a great Friday.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The question is on the motion.

[Translation]

If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division or that the motion be adopted on division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

[English]

The hon member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 8, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[English]

It being 2:09 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:09 p.m.)

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