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Thursday, November 2, 2023

Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, November 2, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA

The Speaker: It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsection 21(2) of the Export Development Act, a report of the Auditor General of Canada on Export Development Canada's environmental and social review directive. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(g), this report is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

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[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 16 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

VETERANS' WEEK

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Veterans' Week begins this Sunday, and I wish to encourage all Canadians to participate in activities and ceremonies in honour of those who have served our country and those who continue to serve.

[*Translation*]

This week, I will be thinking of all of the veterans across the country. We will remember the 1.7 million Canadians and Newfoundlanders who fought in the major conflicts of the 20th century to defend peace, freedom, democracy and human rights.

[*English*]

We will remember the 12,000 first nations, Métis and Inuit veterans. We will remember the hundreds of Black men who took part in

the No. 2 Construction Battalion. They risked their lives to support Canada's war efforts, even as they faced systemic racism and discrimination at home and abroad. We must remember them and we must honour them.

[*Translation*]

We will remember the 125,000 members of the Canadian Armed Forces and the over 4,000 civilian police officers who participated in peacekeeping operations around the world. We are grateful to them for that.

We will remember women veterans and the thousands of other veterans and active members who belong to other under-represented groups who had to overcome so many challenges to wear Canada's military uniform.

[*English*]

We will also remember the 4,200 Canadian Armed Forces members and 450 RCMP members who participated in one of the largest domestic military operations in our country's history: the Swissair flight 111 tragedy in September 1998.

[*Translation*]

No matter where or how they served, every veteran's experience has been unique.

[*English*]

This Veterans' Week is a time to reflect on the many ways in which these brave individuals have made a difference both at home and abroad while wearing the uniform.

[*Translation*]

In times of war, military conflict and peace, our men and women in uniform have performed the difficult and demanding work required of them, often at great personal risk. At this year's Invictus Games in Germany, I once again saw just how much our veterans have had to overcome. It reminded me that a veteran's support network can change everything.

[*English*]

I was reminded of how, when veterans serve, their families also serve with them. This week, I hope that all are reminded of these veterans and their families too. I hope everyone is reminded of their service, their sacrifices and the battles they still fight today.

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[Translation]

In return, we are committed to providing them with the support and services they need, when and where they need them. It is the least we can do for those who have given their all for us.

[English]

This Veterans' Week, as we mark 75 years since the first UN peacekeeping mission began and 35 years since the UN peacekeeping forces received the Nobel Peace Prize, we reflect on all that our veterans have sacrificed to uphold peace, democracy and human rights.

[Translation]

We solemnly remember all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, and we pay tribute to veterans and active military personnel for their invaluable contribution to peace and security around the world.

[English]

On November 11, we will pause to reflect on the sacrifices they have made and the freedoms we enjoy today as a result.

Lest we forget.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, “All these were honoured in their generations and were the glory of their times.” For me, that verse from the Book of Ecclesiastes, which is inscribed on the walls of the Veterans Memorial Buildings here in Ottawa, captures the valour of the men and women who have served and continue to serve our country in uniform in our armed forces, who are the greatest of Canadians.

[Translation]

It is an honour today for me to speak on behalf of the leader of the official opposition and all Conservatives as we approach Remembrance Week. We honour veterans for the great sacrifices they have made in every mission and conflict in Canada's history.

[English]

We owe those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, those who have had their lives forever altered and their families who were left behind a debt that we can never fully repay. The instinct to honour our fallen is evident around our country, from Canada's first road of remembrance, established on Shelbourne Street in Victoria, B.C. in 1920, to the Crow's Nest Officers' Club, which was founded during the Second World War by Captain Rollo Mainguy of the Royal Canadian Navy in St. John's, Newfoundland.

Canadians strive to memorialize our fallen, honour those who fought and returned home and show our support for those who still serve our country in uniform today. Parliament Hill hosts one of the greatest memorials, the Room of Remembrance, which contains the records of Canada's fallen warriors. The names of every man and woman who has laid down their lives in service to Canada are logged in books of remembrance, and each day new pages are turned so Canadians can contemplate the sacrifice of those who gave their lives in service. Each page is a simple list that nonetheless tells a moving story of individuals from every part of our land who spared nothing to keep our country free and who sacrificed everything in defence of all that we cherish today.

• (1010)

[Translation]

The name of Sergeant Charles Albani Dominique Parent of Rimouski, Royal 22nd Regiment, appears on page 57 of the *Korean War Book of Remembrance*.

[English]

Charles Robert Loft of London, Ontario, a flying officer with 419 Squadron of the Royal Canadian Air Force, is on page 535 of the book that commemorates the Second World War.

Royal Navy Ordinary Seaman Sidney Macdonald Wheeler of Notre Dame Bay is found on page 204 of the *Newfoundland Book of Remembrance*.

Closer to home from me is Captain Nichola Goddard of Calgary, on page 219 of the *In the Service of Canada Book of Remembrance*. In Afghanistan, Nichola was the first Canadian female combat soldier since World War II to lay down her life in frontline combat.

[Translation]

Hailing from all regions of Canada and all branches of service, these and other courageous men and women represent only a fraction of the 120,000 Canadians who lost their lives protecting the freedoms they cherished and the country they loved.

[English]

They remind us of the importance of standing up for what is right and just and the need in a dangerous world to defend our values and freedoms. We must always strive to honour our fallen while showing our support and appreciation for our veterans and our men and women still serving in Canada's armed forces. All of them have served Canada with bravery, dedication and selflessness, and they paved the way for and now protect the peace we enjoy today.

Remembrance Day is also a time to reflect on the sacrifices of families who see their loved ones go into service. Many have lost husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters. It is the terrible cost of war. We must always be mindful of the pain of loss and the need for support endured by the families left behind.

I want to read from a letter from the front that was sent by a Canadian soldier, Fred Adams of Ontario, who wrote this letter in May 1915 to his aunt. It reads:

Dear Aunt:

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This is the first day they have allowed us to write letters since this battle began and I have no doubt you are anxious to hear from me. Well, we have lost an awful lot of our fellows, and to those of us who are left it seems just a miracle that any of us came through alive.... About two brigades of Canadians held about five times as many Germans. It would have done you good to see the boys. I did not see one show the white feather, but each had a set face and went right at it.... It was just a nightmare, a hell.... We could see the boys falling everywhere, and it was just awful to hear them cry out.... We have lost two of our guns and there are only eleven of us left out of the section. Well all the boys did the best they could and I for one am ready to do it again, only I hope the war will soon end, for the sake of the poor parents, wives and sweethearts of all the soldiers. Still I thank God that I am spared and always pray that He will soon end the war. With Love. FRED.

Sadly, Fred Adams was killed in action just days after this letter was sent to his family.

Letters such as Fred's are among the hundreds of thousands that came home from the front to worried loved ones at home. They are vivid reminders of the real people, with their humanity, their courage and their dedication, who are the reasons we enjoy the freedoms we do today.

It is a privilege of the generations that have received liberty as our legacy to honour the sacrifices of those who secured it for us at so steep a cost. It is our duty and their due that we pay tribute to their sacrifice by fixing their service and their sacrifices in our remembrance and by ensuring that we always cherish and uphold the very freedoms they fought for.

We will remember them.

● (1015)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is truly an honour for me to speak today in the House.

Wearing the poppy during Veterans' Week is a small but powerful symbolic gesture. It is an opportunity for all citizens to show their gratitude to those throughout history who fought for Quebec and for Canada, for freedom and democracy, and who paid the price in body and soul.

This ritual dates back to the armistice of 1918, when bugles sounded at 11 a.m. on November 11, ending 1,561 days of war that left nine million people dead or missing, but it has since expanded to encompass all veterans of all wars.

We now remember veterans of the Great War, World War Two, the Korean War, the operations in Cyprus, the conflict in Rwanda, the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the war in Afghanistan. We also remember those who fought at the Somme, Pas-de-Calais, Vimy, Dieppe, Hill 355, Sarajevo and Kabul. In all these battles, Quebec soldiers fought under the Canadian flag and gave us countless reasons to be proud of their acts of bravery and their sacrifice.

In recent years, thanks to the Internet, Sergeant Léo Major was elevated from obscurity to iconic status, and with good reason. The history of this soldier, a veteran of the Second World War, is so impressive that today we wonder why there is no movie recounting his remarkable life and incredible exploits, aside from a very well-made documentary produced by a Quebecker. Major was nicknamed "the one-eyed ghost" after losing an eye to a phosphorus grenade. He refused to return home and continued to fight. As a

sniper, he aimed with the one eye that still worked, because nothing was going to stop him.

After surviving the Normandy landing, he carried out numerous amazing feats, single-handedly liberating the city of Zwolle in the Netherlands after the tragic passing of his comrade-in-arms, Willy Arsenault. The man known as the "Québécois Rambo" was one of only three soldiers in the Commonwealth to receive the Distinguished Conduct Medal twice in separate wars.

We could also mention the military exploits of the Régiment de la Chaudière, the Royal 22nd Regiment and the 425 Bomber Squadron, nicknamed "Les Alouettes" after the famous song, just like Montreal's football team today. These French-Canadian units are, quite rightly, a source of pride for all Quebeckers.

For a Quebec sovereignist like myself, this commemoration, which unites 54 countries of the British Commonwealth, is an opportunity to remember that our goal of becoming a country builds on the values that these heroes fought for, and maintains unflinching solidarity with our historic allies.

However, along with this sense of pride comes the duty to remember all those who have fallen on the battlefield and whose names are lost to history. We also have a duty to show solidarity with all those who, despite having returned from the front, continued to have the horrors of war play out in their minds and paid the price of this dedication their entire lives.

Given the conflicts that we are seeing in the world today, we cannot help but look to these heroes of yesterday and yesteryear, as they confront us with the atrocities of war and the immense amount of courage it takes to face them. From the comfort of our country at peace, may we always maintain this humble deference to those who paid the ultimate price to preserve our freedom.

● (1020)

Let us wear the poppy next to our hearts. Let us donate to a veterans' organization. Let us talk to a veteran. Let us take a moment to reflect and remember the contributions and sacrifices of these men and women, our veterans, our heroes.

Lest we forget.

[*English*]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today on behalf of my New Democrat colleagues to honour those Canadians who have sacrificed so much for our country.

On November 11, we honour those who have given so much and who have dedicated their lives in the service of Canadians. We make our promise to never forget those who have lost their lives in the line of duty. We pay our respects to those who protect our freedoms and our rights by continuing to serve, in war and in peace.

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On November 8, we remember indigenous veterans, whose history is often forgotten or suppressed. Indigenous veterans sacrificed not only their lives but also their status and rights, if they returned home. Their stories, courage and experience must be remembered.

The poppies that we wear every year are a reminder of not only the sacrifices that generations before ours have made but also those of Canadians who have recently returned from war and those who are currently serving. We remember those veterans who served in the Great War and in World War II, who built the Canada we live in today. We also remember those Canadians who served in Afghanistan, in the Persian Gulf and in peacekeeping missions across the globe.

[*Translation*]

The wartime veterans who served during these and many other missions deserve our deepest respect and gratitude. We must keep supporting these veterans, who still need our help.

[*English*]

Once released from duty, many veterans continue to serve their communities. The skills and expertise learned from military service are brought into other aspects of life. Veterans continue to serve in the public sector, whether they be in uniformed services or other trades and services. Indeed, service to the public does not end when military service ends.

We also use this moment to think about those who are called to serve in today's Canadian Armed Forces. The Canadian Armed Forces command the respect of our international allies. Though small in number, members of the Canadian Armed Forces are among the best trained in the world. They continue to accomplish feats that many others cannot. Whether it be in modern conflicts, missions for peace or assisting with disaster response in Canada and around the world, our service members are heroes.

Among those highly trained and well-respected members of the Canadian Armed Forces are women, who continue to serve in a field that was designed by men, for men. The decision to enlist requires a courage many of us will never know. It is a courage that is too often overlooked. Women who serve are not invisible. As we rebuild the Canadian Armed Forces to reflect the modern world and its needs, we know that women veterans and those women who currently serve will be a major part of our future.

When the call to service is made, veterans and active service members are not the only ones who answer the call, as we have heard from many colleagues; the sacrifices of military service include those of the spouses, children, siblings and parents of the men and women who serve. When a service member serves, so too does their family.

Service members know the risks of leaving their families, and we know that these decisions are not easily made, or made alone. That is why we must remember those who were left behind and remind ourselves and all Canadians that families of service members are not alone, that we stand with them and support them.

The sacrifices that were made by veterans and continue to be made by members of the Canadian Armed Forces cannot be forgotten. The ultimate sacrifice was made by those who lost their lives

and the families that loved them. The memory of the person who will never come home breaks our hearts, and we commit to never forgetting the sacrifice they made.

The sacrifices of those who were injured and need the help of a government whose call they answered must not be neglected. We commit to ensuring the services they need will be there, when they need them. The sacrifices of families and friends who give up the most with their loved ones must not be taken for granted.

The lives we enjoy would not be possible if not for the moments they have given up. For that, we express our deepest gratitude.

● (1025)

This Remembrance Day, we ask all Canadians to take a moment from their lives to reflect on the sacrifices that have been made by their fellow citizens, who volunteered in service of something bigger than themselves. They answered a call so few of us have. We thank all members of the Canadian Armed Forces, past and present, and call on Canadians to learn and understand so that their work and service are never forgotten.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to join in the tributes to Veterans' Week and Remembrance Day, and I ask if I have unanimous consent to proceed.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I cannot thank my colleagues enough for allowing me to rise today with the other parties in the House to pay tribute to our veterans and to take a moment to mark Veterans' Week, from November 5 to 11.

[*English*]

All of us are, at this moment, thinking of how we will mark Remembrance Day in our own communities and how we will, in the week leading to Remembrance Day, mark and honour veterans' extraordinary contributions. The lives we lead today in this country, as many members have said, would not be possible without the sacrifices of others and other generations, for the most part, although, as the hon member for Burnaby South just reminded us, we have veterans now and members of our armed forces now who need our support.

I am of that generation of baby boomers who were close. My dad and my uncle fought in the Second World War. I even remember as a child meeting my dad's cousin. My dad was British and he lived through the Blitz, but his cousin Victor was in the trenches in the First World War. We did not have the term "post-traumatic stress disorder" then. Everybody just knew that cousin Victor was not quite right. He never got over the First World War. He once said to the family that, if someone were to tell him they were afraid of teacups, he would understand. There is a trauma that never leaves one from the horrors of war.

I particularly want to pay tribute to day to Mary Greyeyes Reid. She was born in Muskeg Lake Cree Nation in Saskatchewan. Her daughter, Cheryl Greyeyes, is a friend of mine, and that is the only reason I know that Mary Greyeyes Reid was the first indigenous Canadian woman to join the armed forces. On Indigenous Veterans Day, I particularly think of Mary Greyeyes Reid, who faced, at five years old, being seized from her family and taken to residential school. In 1942, she joined the Canadian military and served overseas where, even there in the Canadian military at a time of war, she faced discrimination: both sexism and racism. She served with such distinction and honour, and we do plan, all of us, to find ways in our own communities to mark Indigenous Veterans Day on September 8.

This is the first time in many a year that we have risen in this place to pay tribute to our veterans when we are close to theatres of war in two places: in Europe and in the Middle East. There was that end-of-history moment when we thought the brutality of direct armed conflict, one country against another, belonged in a different time.

To our Canadian men and women serving now in our military, I thank them. We will be with them. We support them, and we must never let our veterans down.

We will wear the poppy and buy as many as we can, knowing that the Canadian Legion does such good work in our communities, and I just want to take a moment to pray for the war dead in the most neglected of all Canadian war cemeteries. I only know about it because of the former member for Cumberland—Colchester, Bill Casey. When a group of us, 18 MPs, toured occupied territories in Palestinian territories and in Israel, Bill Casey spoke to the Canadian government to ask it to please let us go to the Gaza War Cemetery where several thousand Commonwealth war dead, some Canadian, lie buried. Nobody from Parliament had gone to honour them for many years. It was too dangerous then in 2018, and the government would not let us go.

In this moment there are some in that cemetery who are marked as never identified, but they are not marked as unknown. Their graves read, "A soldier of the Great War...known unto God". No one is unknown, but some are known only to God, and they are lying near another theatre of war, near Gaza, in the Gaza War Cemetery.

I will close with taking a moment, and hope all will join me, in a prayer for peace for the whole world, for Ukraine, for Gaza and for Israel. I pray that we will, before the next Veterans' Week, be able to go to the Gaza War Cemetery, that it will be quiet and tranquil,

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and that we will lay flowers on the graves of those known only to God.

• (1030)

The Deputy Speaker: I thank all for their interventions.

Lest we forget.

* * *

PETITIONS

FOOD SECURITY

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, too many children across Canada go to school without having a proper meal in their bellies.

I am presenting a petition that has been signed by many people across Canada to call upon the Government of Canada to invest, in budget 2024, in a fund negotiated with provinces, territories and indigenous leaders that would help children by developing the food and nutrition habits they need to lead healthy lives and succeed at school. A school food program would be so important as the next step forward to help for healthy families.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on this second day of Hindu Heritage Month, I rise to present a petition, important to many Hindu communities across Canada, to fight Hinduphobia. The petition received over 25,000 signatures of Canadians, thanks to the hard work and dedication of Hindu organizations, which have seen an increase in attacks and threats against Hindu people in their places of worship.

Everyone in this country deserves a safe place free of intimidation, violence, harassment and vandalism to worship, no matter what that looks like. Hindu Canadians are facing growing negative stereotypes and prejudice, as well as discrimination at work, in schools and in their communities, while traditions and cultures are misrepresented and misunderstood.

I am happy to table this petition, and we look forward to a response from the government about what it is going to do about this.

• (1035)

OPIOIDS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to bring forward this petition on behalf of constituents of mine from Cumberland, Courtenay, Parksville, Qualicum Beach and Port Alberni.

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The petitioners are calling on the government to take action on the toxic drug crisis. They cite that the war on drugs has failed miserably, and this is from family members and community members, people who are connected to people who have died from toxic drugs. They cite that criminalizing people causes more harm and that the government needs to take on evidence-based policies, which include expunging people's records who have been charged with personal possession of substances; stop criminalizing people who use substances; creating a regulated safer supply of drugs to replace the toxic street drugs; expanding treatment, recovery, prevention and education; and ensuring that people are getting the support in time and that we are meeting people where they are at.

The petitioners are calling for a plan with a timeline and resources to tackle this crisis, which is taking the lives of people in our communities.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the petition, signed by residents of Saanich—Gulf Islands, starts by recognizing that Canada is legally obligated, under the terms of the Paris Agreement, which was signed and ratified by Canada, to the goal of attempting to hold the global average temperature increase to no more than 1.5°C. We are now at 1.1°C, and we are already seeing dramatic and devastating impacts of the climate crisis.

The petitioners therefore call on the Government of Canada to take bold climate action. They particularly call on the government to do the following things: set ambitious targets for reduction of emissions; set a national price on carbon; arrest growth in oil sands and other fossil fuel production; end the export of thermal coal from Canada, which was a promise made in the 2021 election; and invest in the transition to a carbon-free, decarbonized economy, one with strong and sustainable jobs and a strong postcarbon economy.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I present a petition today on behalf of members of my community who indicate that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has warned us repeatedly that rising temperatures over the next few decades will bring widespread devastation and extreme weather. They also note that we are certainly feeling the impacts in Canada today, with increased flooding, wildfires and extreme temperatures and that addressing this climate crisis requires drastic reduction in greenhouse emissions to limit our global warming to 1.5°C. The petitioners also indicate that the oil and gas sector is the largest and fastest-growing source of emissions, and in 2021, the federal government committed to cap and cut emissions from the oil and gas sector to achieve net zero by 2050.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to move forward immediately with bold emissions caps for the oil and gas sector that are comprehensive in scope and realistic in achieving the necessary targets that Canada has set to reduce emissions by by 2030.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise again on behalf of my constituents to present a petition.

I rise for the 22nd time on behalf of the people of Swan River, Manitoba, to present a petition on the rising rate of crime. The peo-

ple of Swan River have been forgotten by the NDP-Liberal government, and crime is out of control. A recent report from the west district of the Manitoba RCMP showed that, within 18 months, just 15 individuals were responsible for 1,184 calls for service and 703 offences. This is why the petitioners are calling for action. They demand jail, not bail, for violent, repeat offenders.

The people of Swan River demand that the Liberal government repeal its soft-on-crime policies, which directly threaten their livelihoods and their community. I support the good people of Swan River.

● (1040)

OCEAN ECOSYSTEM

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of Canadians who care deeply about the health of the ocean and understand that we all depend on a thriving ocean ecosystem. The signatories point out that, in 2019, over one million cruise ship passengers travelled off British Columbia on their way to Alaska and these ships generate significant amounts of pollutants that are harmful to human health, aquatic organisms and coastal ecosystems.

Based on this information, the signatories are calling to set standards for cruise ships' sewage and grey water discharges equivalent to, or stronger than, those in Alaska; to designate no discharge zones to stop pollution in marine protected areas, and the entirety of the Salish and Great Bear seas, critical habitat for threatened and endangered species; and, finally, to require regular, independent, third-party monitoring while ships are under way to ensure discharge requirements are met.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from my constituents. They point out that the impacts of climate change are accelerating in Canada and around the world; Canada's current GHG reduction targets are not consistent with our fair share to meet the global goals agreed upon in Paris; subsidizing fossil fuel production is not compatible with the stated goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and the government's continued support of fossil fuels puts our future in danger.

They, therefore, ask the government and the House of Commons to fulfill Canada's obligations under the Paris Agreement through a just transition off of fossil fuels that leaves no one behind, eliminating federal fossil fuel subsidies and halting the expansion of fossil fuel production in Canada.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Questions Nos. 1697, 1700, 1701 and 1708.

[Text]

Question No. 1697—**Ms. Leah Gazan:**

With regard to the emergency COVID-19 funding to front-line organizations supporting those experiencing gender-based violence provided through Women and Gender Equality Canada: (a) how many women's shelters were funded through the program; (b) how many women's shelters will lose funding when the funding stream expires in September; (c) on average, how much did each shelter receive each year under the program; and (d) will the government extend the funding stream to ensure the continuation of critical and often life-saving services for those experiencing gender-based violence?

Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), in response to the unprecedented challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Canada acted quickly in providing \$300 million of emergency funding to over 1,400 organizations, such as women's shelters, sexual assault centres and other organizations that provide critical supports and services to those experiencing gender-based violence, GBV. Among these, 459 women's shelters received funding through this initiative.

With regard to part (b), this investment served as a short-term emergency response to the pandemic to enhance the capacity and responsiveness of organizations during the pandemic.

With regard to part (c), the amounts received by each women's shelter varied according to their identified needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. For additional information on funding received under this program, please visit the Women and Gender Equality Canada, WAGE, website at <https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/funding/supporting-women-children-experiencing-violence-during-covid-19.html>

With regard to part (d), along with other temporary COVID-19 emergency measures introduced by the federal government since 2020, the funding measure for GBV organizations is coming to an end. However, WAGE continues to support GBV organizations and their efforts to prevent and address GBV, including through the following investments since 2021-22: \$55 million over five years to bolster the capacity of indigenous women and 2SLGBTQI+ organizations to provide GBV programming aimed at addressing the root causes of violence against indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people; \$30 million over five years for crisis hotlines to offer more robust services, resources and supports for those experiencing GBV; \$105 million over five years to enhance the gender-based violence program, including promising practices to support at-risk populations and survivors; and \$11 million over five

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years for GBV research and knowledge mobilization, including support for community research models.

Building on these investments, budget 2022 provided an additional \$539.3 million over five years, starting in 2022-23, to support provinces and territories in their efforts to implement the national action plan to end gender-based violence. Launched on November 9, 2022, by federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for the status of women, the national action plan to end gender-based violence is a 10-year plan that sets a framework to have a Canada free of gender-based violence, a Canada that supports victims, survivors and their families from coast to coast to coast. The national action plan is informed by over 1,000 recommendations from indigenous partners, victims and survivors; front-line organizations; and experts.

Question No. 1700—**Mr. Blake Desjarlais:**

With regard to the government forgiving student loans owed since November 4, 2015: (a) how many student loans have been forgiven through (i) the Severe Permanent Disability Benefit, (ii) the Canada Student Loan Forgiveness for Family Doctors and Nurses, (iii) forgiveness in cases of death; and (b) what new criteria has the government established to qualify individuals for student loan forgiveness outside of those listed in (a)?

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a)(i), from November 4, 2015, to July 31, 2023, 3,987 Canada student loan borrowers had their loans forgiven through the severe permanent disability benefit, for a total amount of \$61.9 million.

With regard to part (a)(ii), from November 4, 2015, to July 31, 2023, 19,412 borrowers received the Canada student loan forgiveness for family doctors and nurses benefit, for a total amount of \$178.5 million.

With regard to part (a)(iii), from November 4, 2015, to July 31, 2023, a total amount of \$92.3 million in Canada student loans was forgiven due to cases of borrower death. The Canada student financial assistance program, or CSFA, does not track data on the individual number of deceased borrowers.

With regard to part (b), there are no new criteria outside of those listed in part (a).

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1701—Ms. Rachel Blaney:**

With regard to appointments and meetings attended by the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs, since January 1, 2021: (a) what is the total number of meetings held on the subject matter of (i) women veterans, (ii) Indigenous veterans, (iii) 2SLGBTQ+ veterans, (iv) the table of disabilities, (v) entitlement eligibility guidelines, (vi) research priorities, and (vii) award funding; and (b) what are the details of all meetings listed in (a), including the (i) date, (ii) names and titles of the government representatives in the meeting, (iii) names of the organizations or groups in attendance, (iv) location of the meeting, (v) length of the meeting?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Veterans Affairs Canada undertook an extensive preliminary search in order to determine the information that would fall within the scope of this question and concluded that a manual search and review would be required. The level of detail requested is not systematically tracked in a centralized database. Veterans Affairs Canada further concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

Question No. 1708—Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay:

With regard to the government's safer supply program: (a) what were the projections showing a reduction of overdoses that were used to justify implementing the program; (b) off of what methodology were the projections in (a) based; (c) what is the government's explanation for why the number of overdoses increased following the implementation of the program; and (d) when did the government first become aware that its projections showing that overdoses would decrease were flawed and inaccurate?

Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 2017, guided by the Canadian drugs and substances strategy, CDSS, the Government of Canada has taken a comprehensive approach to address substance use issues and the overdose crisis, supported by over \$1 billion in spending. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to prevent or reduce overdose deaths; a full range of services and supports are needed.

Safer supply sits within a continuum of services where medications are prescribed in the context of a therapeutic relationship between a health care provider and a patient. Safer supply services are informed by well-established domestic and international evidence from medication-assisted treatment, MAT, services, which are considered the gold standard of treatment for substance use disorder.

With regard to questions (a) and (b), surveillance conducted by the Public Health Agency of Canada, PHAC, on the overdose crisis shows a significant increase in apparent opioid-toxicity deaths in Canada beginning with the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, and rates remain elevated today. PHAC also conducts forward modelling to provide estimates of how many opioid-related deaths may occur over the coming months in Canada. Projections are based on assumptions regarding the toxicity of the illegal drug supply and the impact of health interventions. The model considers all health interventions together and does not report projections for specific interventions, such as safer supply. The model is updated twice a year, in June and December.

Health Canada recognizes that additional high-quality evidence is needed that addresses potential benefits and risks of safer supply. To help build this evidence, Health Canada is supporting assessment and evaluation projects related to pilot projects funded by the

substance use and addictions program, SUAP. This includes a preliminary assessment of 10 safer supply pilot projects in Ontario, British Columbia and New Brunswick.

The federal government, through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, CIHR, is also supporting a study being conducted by a research team from the Canadian research initiative in substance misuse. This four-year evaluation research project focuses on program implementation and the short-term health outcomes of 11 of the government-funded safer supply pilot projects. The final results of this study are expected in 2025. Additionally, CIHR has awarded \$2 million to the University of Victoria to support a four-year study evaluating the safer supply initiatives in British Columbia in partnership with indigenous leaders, elders and system partners.

With regard to questions (c) and (d), there is no one single intervention alone that will reduce overdose deaths and solve the overdose crisis. This crisis is being driven by a highly toxic illegal drug supply and a number of underlying socio-economic factors. This is why the federal government has taken a broad, comprehensive approach under the CDSS focusing on prevention, treatment, harm reduction and enforcement.

All SUAP-funded safer supply pilot projects are time-limited, innovative interventions designed to evaluate the effectiveness of providing pharmaceutical-grade medications as safer alternatives to the contaminated illegal drug supply in Canada. These pilot projects must have linkages to provincial and/or territorial health systems, involvement of people with lived and living experience of substance use in design and planning and prescriber or health care provider oversight, and must demonstrate commitments to research and evaluation.

Safer supply services exist in a limited number of locations in Canada, and currently serve a relatively small number of clients compared to the total number of people who use drugs and who are at risk of overdose due to the toxic illegal drug supply in Canada. At the federal level, there are 29 funded pilot projects, serving approximately 4,300 clients nationally. The focus of federally funded projects has been on building the evidence around this new practice.

Routine Proceedings

Under the CDSS, the Government of Canada will continue to undertake a comprehensive and evidence-based approach to substance use issues and the overdose crisis, including testing new ideas and approaches to help save lives and reduce harms. We will continue to work with all levels of governments and key stakeholders, who also have critical roles to play. We will continue to monitor and assess all available evidence regarding our approach, including studying the outcomes of safer supply pilot projects, to inform both current and future actions and make adjustments, including implementing risk mitigation measures as appropriate.

* * *

*[English]***QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS**

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 1694 to 1696, 1698, 1699, 1702 to 1707 and 1709 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled in electronic format immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1694—Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:

With regard to the Minister for Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard's decision to extend consultations on the open-net pen aquaculture transition: (a) what is the new timeline to introduce a plan for workers and coastal communities who will be affected by open-net pen finfish aquaculture closures; (b) what are the details of consultations leading up to the extension decision, and all consultations scheduled for the summer of 2023, including the (i) date of the consultation, (ii) organizations or the individuals being consulted; (c) what resources has the department allocated for the purposes of this consultation, including the (i) number of staff, (ii) budget, (iii) administrative resources; and (d) what is the number of full-time staff and budget allocated for the purposes of implementing a timely real-jobs plan for all those impacted?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1695—Mr. Richard Cannings:

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and the Small and Medium Business Enterprises Directorate, broken down by year, from November 2015 to date: (a) how many audits were completed; (b) what is the number of auditors; (c) how many new files were opened; (d) how many files were closed; (e) of the files in (d), what was the average time taken to process the file before it was closed; (f) of the files in (d), what was the risk level of non-compliance of each file; (g) how much was spent on contractors and subcontractors; (h) of the contractors and subcontractors in (g), what is the initial and final value of each contract; (i) among the contractors and subcontractors in (g), what is the description of each service contract; (j) how many reassessments were issued; (k) what is the total net revenue collected; (l) how many taxpayer files were referred to the CRA's Criminal Investigations Program; (m) of the investigations in (l), how many were referred to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada; and (n) of the investigations in (m), how many resulted in convictions?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1696—Mr. Richard Cannings:

With regard to the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA), broken down by province or territory: (a) what is the total number of businesses that received the CEBA loan; (b) what is the total loan amount provided to small businesses; (c) what is the total number of CEBA loans that have (i) been paid back in full, (ii) been paid back in part, (iii) not been paid back at all; (d) what is the total amount of CEBA loans that have been forgiven based on (i) repayment based on terms of the loan, (ii) reasons outside of the terms of the loan; and (e) what is the total number of small businesses that the government expects to miss the deadline for repayment?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1698—Mr. Scott Reid:

With regard to immigration, asylum, and refugee measures and programs established since September 2001: (a) what is the number of Afghan nationals that have been admitted to Canada, in total, and broken down by year, month, and program or measure; (b) what is the total number of Afghan nationals that have been granted permission to travel to or enter Canada by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC); (c) what is the total number of applications from Afghan nationals that have been accepted by IRCC; (d) what is the total number of Afghan nationals contained within the applications in (c); (e) with respect to the applications in (c), what is the number that received a negative decision from IRCC, broken down by year, month, and program or measure; (f) with respect to the applications in (e), what (i) is the number of Afghan nationals contained within the applications, broken down by year, month, and program or measure, (ii) were the reasons provided for the negative decisions, (iii) is the number of applications that received each reason, broken down by year, month, and program or measure; (g) what is the number of Afghan nationals that have been granted permission to travel to or enter Canada by IRCC, broken down by year, month, and program or measure; (h) what is the number of applications from Afghan nationals that have been accepted by IRCC, broken down by year, month, and program or measure; (i) what is the date of the establishment of each program or measure; (j) what is the date of each program or measure's closing to applications; and (k) what is the date of each program or measure's termination?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1699—Mr. Blake Desjarlais:

With regard to the investments in budget 2023 concerning the implementation of the Canadian Dental Care Plan: (a) what is the projected number of individuals who would qualify for this plan because they have an annual family income of less than (i) \$90,000, (ii) \$70,000; (b) what is the projected number of individuals listed in (a) who are (i) seniors over the age of 65, (ii) children under the age of 12, (iii) people living with a disability; (c) what is the estimated number of individuals, broken down by province or territory; and (d) what is the total number of individuals eligible for the Canadian Dental Care Plan, broken down by federal electoral district?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1702—Ms. Rachel Blaney:

With regard to the Veteran and Family Well-Being Fund, broken down by fiscal year and by province or territory: (a) what are the details of all organizations that have received funding, including (i) the name of organization, (ii) the amount received, (iii) the type of organization, (iv) the number of veterans and equity-seeking Veterans on the board of the organization, (v) the number of veterans and equity-seeking Veterans as staff in the organization, including CEO and owners, (vi) the number of veterans and equity-seeking veterans as volunteers in their programs, (vii) the number of veterans and equity-seeking veterans who used the programs and/or services, (viii) whether the organization reported on how the funding was applied and lessons learned; (b) for organizations listed in (a), which organizations qualified for funding because their application provided curated and specialized programs or services to equity-seeking groups, including (i) women, (ii) 2SLGBTQ+, (iii) homeless, (iv) Indigenous veterans, and (v) racialized veterans; (c) what metrics and analytical tools, including Gender-based Analysis Plus, does the government use to assess applications, and does the government apply considerations based on the (i) impact on single veterans, (ii) impact on veterans and their families, (iii) innovation to address unmet needs, as defined by research and veterans themselves, (iv) financial risk and ability to administer and deliver services, and (v) ability to provide a safe and welcoming space for marginalized veterans and equity seeking groups; (d) what staff level, working groups, panels, or review bodies assess applications for funding, and are veterans represented in these decision making bodies; (e) what is the total number of applications that were received; and (f) of the applications in (c), reflected as a number and a percentage, what is the total number of applications that were denied funding?

(Return tabled)

*Business of Supply***Question No. 1703—Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:**

With regard to the staffing of Canadian Armed Forces clinics: (a) broken down by each base and location, what is the number of (i) military psychiatrists, (ii) civilian psychiatrists employed directly by the Department of National Defence (DND), (iii) psychiatrists from Calian Group Ltd, (iv) military psychologists, (v) civilian psychologists employed directly by the DND, (vi) psychologists from Calian Group Ltd, (vii) military medical doctors, (viii) civilian medical doctors employed directly by the DND, (ix) medical doctors from Calian Group Ltd, (x) military medical social workers, (xi) civilian medical social workers employed directly by the DND, (xii) medical social workers from Calian Group Ltd, (xiii) military registered nurses specializing in mental health, (xiv) civilian registered nurses specializing in mental health employed directly by the DND, (xv) registered nurses specializing in mental health from Calian Group Ltd, (xvi) military addictions counsellors, (xvii) civilian addictions counsellors employed directly by the DND, (xviii) addiction counsellors from Calian Group Ltd; (b) for each position listed in (a), what is the (i) current average full-time equivalent salary, (ii) average number of patients treated per month; and (c) what are the details of all personnel provided by Calian Group Ltd, specifically the (i) number of personnel provided broken down by job title, (ii) statements of work by job title, (iii) responsibilities of position, (iv) position or supervisor title to whom they report, (v) average full-time equivalent salary broken down by job title?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1704—Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:

With regard to the government's purchase of 88 F-35A fighter jets from Lockheed Martin, announced on January 9, 2023: (a) what studies and reports were completed by the government to determine the lifecycle costs and economic impact of this purchase; (b) what were the details of each study or report in (a), including the (i) date of the report, (ii) author, (iii) cost of producing the report, (iv) conclusions concerning the lifecycle cost or economic impact; (c) what lifespan did the government use to determine its estimates of operation and support costs; and (d) does the cost modelling done by the government include upgrades and overhaul in its per-unit acquisition cost?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1705—Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:

With regard to the real property portfolio of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), broken down by facility or building: (a) what is the current number of work orders for maintenance; (b) for each work order in (a), what are the details, including the (i) type of request, (ii) estimated cost for repair or maintenance, (iii) date the work order was made, (iv) date the work order is expected to be closed; (c) what reports has the Department of National Defence commissioned regarding the costs of maintenance and repair at CAF facilities; and (d) what are the details of all reports listed in (c), including the (i) author of the report, (ii) cost to procure the report, (iii) conclusions of the report, including the estimated deferred maintenance costs?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1706—Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:

With regard to federal spending in the constituency of London—Fanshawe, in each fiscal year since 2020-21, inclusively: what are the details of all grants and contributions and all loans to any organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality in which the recipient is located, (iii) date the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1707—Mr. Dan Muys:

With regard to the Universal Broadband Fund announcement by the government on August 28, 2023, specifically relating funding recipient Rogers – UBF-05530 in the amount of \$79,052,000 to bring high speed internet access to 28,269 households: (a) how many of the 28,269 individual households are each located in (i) Ancaster, (ii) Binbrook, (iii) Branchton, (iv) Campbellville, (v) Carlisle, (vi) Copetown, (vii) Dundas, (viii) Freerton, (ix) Grassie, (x) Jerseyville, (xi) Kilbride, (xii) Lynden, (xiii) Millgrove, (xiv) Mount Hope, (xv) Pleasant View Survey, (xvi) Rockton, (xvii) Sheffield, (xviii) Stoney Creek, (xix) Strabane, (xx) Troy, (xxi) Waterdown; and (b) how much of the allotted \$79,052,000 for this project is allocated to be used in (i) Ancaster, (ii) Binbrook, (iii) Branchton, (iv) Campbellville, (v) Carlisle, (vi) Copetown, (vii) Dundas, (viii) Freerton, (ix) Grassie, (x) Jerseyville, (xi) Kilbride, (xii) Lynden, (xiii) Millgrove, (xiv) Mount Hope, (xv) Pleasant View

Survey, (xvi) Rockton, (xvii) Sheffield, (xviii) Stoney Creek, (xix) Strabane, (xx) Troy, (xxi) Waterdown?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1709—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to the President of the Treasury Board's directive to find specific cuts within departments by October 2, 2023, broken down by department: (a) were any third-party management firms contracted to assist with identifying spending cuts; and (b) what are the details of all contracts in (a), including the (i) name of the firm contracted, (ii) value of the contract, (iii) deadline to submit deliverables, (iv) titles of any reports or summary documents produced?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that, because of the ministerial statements, Government Orders will be extended by 28 minutes.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**OPPOSITION MOTION—CARBON TAX PAUSE ON HOME HEATING**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC) moved:

That, given that the government has announced a “temporary, three-year pause” to the federal carbon tax on home heating oil, the House call on the government to extend that pause to all forms of home heating.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Peterborough—Kawartha.

“A Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian.” Those were the words of the Prime Minister, and that is the principle of my motion today. It reads, “That, given that the government has announced a ‘temporary, three-year pause’ to the federal carbon tax on home heating oil, the House call on the government to extend that pause to all forms of home heating.”

Business of Supply

It is very simple. How does anyone argue with that? If the Prime Minister has now caved on the carbon tax for those heating with oil, then he ought to be intellectually consistent and do it for all forms of heating for all Canadians. We know that the Prime Minister has decided to create two classes of citizens. He, under pressure and under duress, decided to pause the carbon tax on home heat until after the election, at which point he intends to quadruple it. In the meantime, there will be a temporary carve-out. Asked why there was a double standard and why this carve-out applied only to about 3% of households, the Minister of Rural Economic Development said that other Canadians could have had the break too, but they did not elect enough Liberals. In addition to that being a bloody-minded, divide-and-conquer approach to politics, it is actually inaccurate, because many did elect Liberal MPs and are still forced to pay the tax on the heat. These are people in Liberal-held ridings who will be excluded and will be forced to pay the higher tax on the heat as the temperatures go down and the snow starts to fall.

Are these citizens less Canadian than those who are getting the pause? Is the malnourished senior in the Liberal riding of Sudbury who heats with gas any less Canadian than those who get the pause? Is the single mom in the Liberal ridings of Thunder Bay any less Canadian as she is forced by the Prime Minister's tax to skip meals so her kids do not have to? Is the welder in North Bay any less Canadian, as he cannot gas up his truck to go visit his dying relatives in other parts of the province, any less Canadian? Of course they are not, but the Prime Minister thinks they are.

Once again we see his divide-to-distract strategy. He thinks that if people are afraid of their fellow Canadians, they might forget that they cannot afford to gas their car or heat their home. We have seen this divide-and-conquer strategy of the Prime Minister over many years. We saw how he called small businesses “tax cheats”. We saw how he called anyone who disagreed with him a “small fringe minority”, even though he later had to apologize for those comments. Recently, we saw how he tried to besmirch Muslims, Sikh and Christian parents, calling them “hateful” simply because they wanted to protect their children. We see, again and again, how the Prime Minister tries to demonize hunters, calling them “American” and saying that people who live in Cape Breton and hunt or who live in northern Canada and hunt for sustenance are the reason we have record gang shootings in downtown Toronto. That has become his go-to approach, and here we have it again with a “two classes of citizens” approach to his carbon tax.

Let us not forget that his plan is to quadruple the carbon tax if he is re-elected. My plan is the opposite. I propose, with this motion, a compromise in the meantime. What I propose is that we take the tax off so Canadians could keep the heat on this winter, and then, when Canadians go to the polls, we could have a carbon tax election where people choose between his plan to quadruple the tax on gas, heat and groceries, and my common-sense plan to axe the tax and bring home lower prices.

• (1045)

The Prime Minister, in his desperation yesterday, would not even show up and defend this approach in the House. He was in Ottawa and he was in the building, and he would not—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Conservative Party has been told on many occasions that he cannot do indirectly what he cannot do directly. I would ask that the member recognize that members on all sides of the House, at times, cannot be in the House for a multitude of different reasons.

The Deputy Speaker: I will caution the hon. leader about that.

The hon. leader of the official opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's strategy is to hide and divide: to hide from debate and divide the population. That is how he thinks he will cling to power, but here is the problem: He can run away from debating me all he wants, but he cannot run away from his own party. His former environment minister Catherine McKenna said that he had broken her heart. A Liberal senator, Paula Simons, said that he betrayed her, because he had assured her that the carbon tax was going to make people better off but later admitted that people heating with oil were made far worse off by his carbon tax, thus needing a pause from that tax.

Liberal Senator Percy Downe wrote a spectacular piece just yesterday, in which he said:

The opportunity for [the Conservative leader to form] government was created by a lack of fiscal responsibility in the [Liberal] government, and the damage it caused our economy is now showing up in the opinion [polls]. Within the Liberal Party, many members who are in favour of fiscal responsibility...have given up on this current iteration of the Liberal Party.

He goes on:

Originally, these centralist liberals assumed that [the Prime Minister] and his crowd needed to be educated on the economic issues of the day.

That naiveté was replaced with the realization that they were not a serious government when it came to the economy, that they simply didn't care and would throw money at anything that crossed their mind. The resulting interest rate hikes, increasing cost of living, and huge debt didn't seem to concern them.

The Liberal senator goes on to say that the Prime Minister should be fired and replaced with a new Liberal leader. Meanwhile, the incoming Liberal leader, Mark Carney, is now firing shots at the Prime Minister, claiming that he would not have allowed two classes of Canadians on the carbon tax question.

Business of Supply

This is carbon tax chaos. Canadians are paying the price, and all of it proves that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. He is not worth the cost of heat. He is not worth the cost of food. He is not worth the cost of housing. However, apparently, he is worth the cost to the NDP. The NDP was elected by good, solid, decent working-class folks in places like Vancouver Island, Skeena—Bulkley Valley and Timmins. I have met these these people, folks who pack their lunch, get out of bed every morning, work hard and build our country. However, they have been betrayed by the NDP, which now works for the Prime Minister and has sold out the working-class rural people of this country who were the foundation of that party.

It now has a decision to make. The NDP leader says that he disagrees with the dual-class citizenship approach of the Prime Minister on the carbon tax. I am giving him a chance to prove it. We have a motion before the House that simply says to give everyone the same tax-free heat this winter. The NDP leader has already stated that he agrees with that point of view, but he has to check with his boss, the leader of the Liberal Party, the Prime Minister of Canada. Everyday people in Timmins, in Kapuskasing, in Smithers, British Columbia, and in countless other NDP communities will be watching on Monday to find out whether the NDP leader votes for them or for the Prime Minister. If he does not vote for the people he represents, why should they vote for him in the next election?

The good news is that the Conservatives do not work for the Prime Minister. We work for the common people and for the common sense of the common people, united for our common home: your home, my home, our home. Let us bring it home.

• (1050)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting hearing the leader of the Conservative Party. One can ultimately say he has done a flip-flop. It was not that long ago that the NDP brought forward a motion to remove the GST on home heating. One would think, based on everything he has been blabbing about for the last week or so, that the Conservatives would have voted in favour of getting rid of the GST on home heating. Canadians would be surprised to find out that their leader did not. He looks to his colleagues and wonders if he really did that. Yes, he really did vote against an amendment that would have removed the GST on home heating oil. Why has there been this change? I think it is a fair assessment. I agreed with him. I too voted against it, but I am curious why the leader of the Conservative Party flip-flopped on this issue.

• (1055)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, we would take all taxes off home heating. That is our view. The NDP did copycat our 2019 election platform commitment to take the GST off home heating; that is true, but then its members flip-flopped, and the NDP is now working for the Prime Minister. It has sold out the people in Kitimat and the people in Penticton, and it has sold out the hard-working miners and loggers in Timmins. Instead, the NDP members decided they would work for the Prime Minister of Canada, that they would speak for the Prime Minister in those communities, rather than speaking for those communities to the Prime Minister.

Conservatives are the exact opposite, and that is why we call for a consistent, “one Canada” approach. A Canadian is a Canadian is a

Canadian, and we would take the tax off and keep the heat on for all Canadians everywhere and always.

The Deputy Speaker: We have a point of order from the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to table the NDP motion and the results of that vote—

The Deputy Speaker: I am already hearing members say no.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with respect to a “one Canada” approach, this motion would apply to only four provinces and three territories. It would not help people in British Columbia. However, New Democrats, a year ago, brought forward a motion to remove the GST on home heating, which would have applied to all Canadians, in all 10 provinces and three territories.

While I am getting heckled by the Conservatives, I will try to push through.

Mr. Speaker, it was in the Conservatives' platform of 2019 to remove GST on home heating, but what did they do? They voted against it, so let us talk about who is fighting for all Canadians. The NDP did that by putting forward that motion.

Can the member for Carleton explain why his party members voted against the Conservative promise in the 2019 platform? Why did they vote against removing the GST on home heating for all Canadians?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, we can do both. Why do we not take all taxes off home heating? Why do we not do both? It is very easy to do. The NDP has copycatted our 2019 platform commitment to take GST off home heating.

The member is now hyperventilating because he is going to lose his seat in the next election because the people on Vancouver Island have seen him betray them again and again, and now he is going to force British Columbians to pay a quadruple carbon tax on their heat, gas and groceries. He is voting in favour of the federal government's forcing the NDP government in his province to quadruple the tax.

We are simply saying to give his constituents the same break that some Atlantic Canadians are getting temporarily. Give them a pause on the carbon tax because a Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian.

Business of Supply

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I sat and listened to the leader of the official opposition's speech, and not once did he actually mention the program we have in order to help with the transition. There are a million Canadian households in this country that are extremely vulnerable. They are sometimes paying in excess of double or four times the price of alternatives such as natural gas or electricity. We have built a program. He is talking about removing the carbon price, which we have done on a temporary basis, and we have offered a solution. Does he believe in what the government is doing to help the most vulnerable people across the country? The Conservatives have not quite picked up that it is across the country. Does he believe in the Government of Canada's helping people in rural Ontario, rural Alberta and rural Saskatchewan to actually make the transition, people who are extremely vulnerable on home heating oil? Does he support the program?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, first of all, it is not across the country. It is only available in a few provinces. So far, the uptake has been very low, because we do not have the capacity to switch large numbers of people under the program that he proposes; plus it is just riddled with bureaucracy and paperwork. We can picture elderly grandmothers who are in the freezing cold in Kings—Hants having to fill out all of these forms that he has put in front of them.

Finally, let us just point out that the member was in full panic mode last week, because I was holding a monster rally of 1,000 common-sense Nova Scotians. You were there, Mr. Speaker, and they were rallying to axe the tax, while the member was bawling his eyes out on the phone with the PMO, asking them to save his job, because he knew he was going to be fired by his constituents. That is the only reason he even sought a pause.

The member has to tell them the truth: If he is re-elected, people will see that tax go back on their home heat. The only way to axe the tax is by electing a common-sense Conservative MP for Kings—Hants and government for Canada.

• (1100)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is an extremely important day. Today, the members of this House, who were elected to serve Canadians, have the opportunity to prove where their priorities are. The Conservative Party of Canada and our leader have put forth an opposition motion on which members will vote on Monday. It reads:

That, given that the government has announced a “temporary, three-year pause” to the federal carbon tax on home heating oil, the House call on the government to extend that pause to all forms of home heating.

This is a reasonable, common-sense, fair-minded motion. I want to read it into the record again:

That, given that the government has announced a “temporary, three-year pause” to the federal carbon tax on home heating oil, the House call on the government to extend that pause to all forms of home heating.

After eight years, the question is why we would even have to ask for such a common-sense motion. How did we get here? How did we get to the point that the Liberal-NDP government put in a punitive tax, telling Canadians it was an environment plan? We now know, through expert testimony and the behaviour of this Liberal Prime Minister, that this punitive carbon tax, which is driving up

the cost of living, was never about environmental science. It was always about political science.

That is the pattern of behaviour we have seen over and over from the Prime Minister and the NDP, which continues to prop up the government and then practise hypocrisy in this House very single day in the chamber. The NDP prides itself on saying it stands up for the middle class and for the most vulnerable, and yet it props up the Prime Minister, who is making people's lives a living hell. This is not my opinion. These are facts.

Last week, Tiff Macklem, the Governor of the Bank of Canada, testified at the finance committee. I want to read into the record some of this testimony.

Mr. Tiff Macklem said, “First of all, it is the most vulnerable members of society that are suffering the most from high inflation. They are feeling the brunt of affordability more than everybody else. They can't just move down market. They're already at the bottom of the market. Much of their spending is already on necessities, you can't cut back on that. That's why it is so important that we get inflation down. Inflation is a tax that disproportionately affects the most vulnerable members of society.”

Some people may want to argue that the carbon tax is not responsible for inflation, or that it is not contributing to inflation. Let us correct that for the record as well. This Prime Minister has tried to tell Canadians that repeatedly, but again, we know it is not true. Let me read into the record more testimony from the Governor of the Bank of Canada during the finance committee last week.

The member for Northumberland—Peterborough South said, “Just to reiterate what you said there, it would be 60 basis points, or 0.6%. Currently the inflation rate is at 3.8%, so that equates to almost 15%, if I can do the math quickly.” Mr. Tiff Macklem said, “It would be 3.2.”

This testimony tells the story and the facts and it proves the impact of carbon tax on Canadians. If it were removed today or tomorrow, inflation would go from 3.8% to 3.2%. That is significant. For people at home who do not know, that is 16% overall. The cost of mortgages and interest rates, the cost of heating and the cost of groceries, which are all the things that people need, the necessities that people need to live that are squeezing them out every month, would go down. That is the impact of the carbon tax.

I want to read a couple of comments from constituents who write to me, because that is our job. Our job is to represent the constituents. It is to elevate their voices. When we talk about the most vulnerable, they are often our seniors.

Business of Supply

Barb wrote to me and said, “We are retired and we heat with propane now. We changed from oil to propane because of the costs for oil, but propane is just as expensive now with the carbon tax and because the propane has jumped and our groceries, I work part-time to help cover these increases.”

• (1105)

Seniors worked their entire lives to retire, but they cannot. They are being forced back into the workforce and not at high-paying jobs. They are trying to get into entry-level jobs. They cannot enjoy the fruits of their labour. Some of them are moving in with their children. That is the result of this carbon tax.

I want to mention more stories, because they are very important to hear and have on the record.

Danny wrote, “My mother is going through this now. She has to make a choice: either heat her place or buy groceries. She layers up in clothing in her apartment. She is 69 years old. I have never seen this country so bad.”

Mike Jessop wrote, “I heat my home with food.” What does that mean? It means he does not have any money left over to pay for his heating. He can only pick one or the other. How sad is that?

Elizabeth MacNeil-Young wrote, “I lived through two Trudeau governments.” I am not sure I can say that name. “Back in the eighties, I worried about losing my home. I made it work, though. Now my children are in the same boat.”

Carol said, “I changed from an oil-fired boiler to an electric boiler because I couldn’t afford the monthly oil bill any longer. I wish there was a rebate for us homeowners who couldn’t afford a heat pump and put in an electric boiler instead.”

This brings me to a point I want to bring up. I sit in this House every day and listen to the members opposite in the Liberal Party. Their new argument is that they are giving away free heat pumps. There are two problems with that. Number one is that heat pumps only work to -25°C. We live in Canada. I do not know where the Liberals are talking about, but many areas in Canada go far below -25°C.

The second problem is their statement that they are giving away free heat pumps. That is the essence of the problem we have in this country because of the Liberals. Nothing is free. It is taxpayer money. This is basic fiscal policy. Anyone who manages a household budget understands this. There is monetary policy that is controlled by the Governor of the Bank of Canada. It is his or her job to control inflation.

Fiscal policy is controlled by the government, which, in this case, are the Liberals and NDP. Fiscal policy is how much they spend. A basic student going to university right now knows that if people spend more than they make and have to use their credit cards, they will only be paying off interest and that debt will go up and up. That is how we got into this position.

When Liberals say they are giving away free heat pumps, that is disgusting, because it is taxpayer money. They should be honest and transparent. They are using taxpayer money. How much is that going to cost? Are they going to pay for the amp service? People

are going to need to up their amp service. That is the issue. Liberals do not have their own money. They have taxpayers’ money. Until they figure that out, we are going to keep doing the same thing over and over again.

The Liberals’ agenda is not about the climate. It is about holding onto power and keeping seats that are slipping from them because Canadians cannot handle this misery any longer. We heard from a Liberal minister on national television say that if people want a break from the carbon tax, they have to vote Liberal. That is shameful. It is awful. Every Canadian deserves the necessities to live. We are Canada.

The only party committed to affordability in this House is the Conservative Party. Today Conservatives challenge this House to prove their service to Canadians and to prove that they will do what they were elected to do, which is make life better, not worse. The most compassionate thing we can do is make life affordable for our children, for our seniors, for the middle class who go to work every day to pay their bills and cannot.

Today, Conservatives call on this House to treat all Canadians fairly and to vote in favour of the Conservatives’ motion to pause the carbon tax on all home heating for all Canadians.

• (1110)

Mr. Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was interested to hear the member say that heat pumps do not work when it is -25°C. I just came back from the western part of my riding, including Emo, which is in northwestern Ontario, where it quite commonly gets much below -25°C, and half the town uses heat pumps.

The member is from Peterborough. Even in Peterborough, it gets below -25°C. Does nobody north of Peterborough use heat pumps?

Is the member not in favour of heat pumps? It certainly seems like an affordable way to heat houses if people can afford them.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Mr. Speaker, again, we are hearing an inability to see the point of the motion. Heat pumps are fine. My parents are using a heat pump right now. That is not the issue at hand. The Liberals are not serving 97% of Canadians with what they are doing. They decided to give a break to some Canadians.

Business of Supply

The reality is that it is not a luxury to heat one's home. The efficiency of the heat pump drastically goes down. It is like using electricity. That is the science of it. It is just common sense. If the government does not pause the carbon tax for everyone, then it is discriminating against 97% of Canadians.

That is what we are asking today.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am confused. We have heard the opposition talk about the fact that the Alberta NDP has been pushing back against what the government has done, yet the Alberta NDP put forward an emergency motion in our legislature that said that the legislative assembly recognized that carbon dioxide emissions contributed to a changing climate. They talked about wildfires, evacuations and extreme weather events. Then they went on to talk about the fact that we needed to apply the same programs across the country for home heating. However, the Conservatives in Alberta voted against it because it had references to the need for a climate plan.

We have not heard this from the Conservatives yet. What is their climate plan? Could the member tell me what they plan to do to deal with the biggest crisis of our time right now, the climate crisis? As far as I could tell from her speech, she does not even admit it is real.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Mr. Speaker, there is so much to unpack in that member's question.

First, shame on that member for being a representative of a party that keeps the Prime Minister in power and continues to make Canadians suffer.

Second, I would challenge her to check out the recent CBC/Radio Canada article, in which whistle-blowers are saying that they provided secret recordings by Liberal bureaucrats, the outright incompetence of their green fund. That \$1-billion green slush fund is a sponsorship scandal-level kind of giveaway. That is not an environmental plan. That is another scandal, another misuse of taxpayer dollars, propped up by the NDP. Now those members are trying to distract. They are now stating a falsehood.

There was no motion from the NDP to take GST off of home heating. The members are distracting from their plan to have a carbon tax.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, there was in fact a motion that the Conservatives teamed up with the Liberals to defeat—

The Deputy Speaker: That is a point of clarification and debate.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Souris—Moose Mountain.

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague mentioned, the Prime Minister has said, "A Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian." In reality what he has done is to pit a Canadian against a Canadian against a Canadian.

The member talked about how it was not equal across the country and about the big challenges. I would like to hear more from her on those issues.

• (1115)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Mr. Speaker, we see it every day in the House. Canadians at home see it. They see who he really is. This is the reality of what we are dealing with.

This is an ideological government that believes it is going to save us. It is going to create the problem, make life unaffordable, drive up inflation, give punitive taxes and then come back and offer a little rebate from a scandal-level slush fund. Its moral integrity is gone, the agenda, everything. Divide, distract and power is the agenda of the Prime Minister, propped up by the NDP.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are here to debate an opposition day motion from the Conservative Party. As I read the text of the motion, and this is a common occurrence, I find the need to clarify and provide more context to what the Conservatives are calling for. This follows a very important government announcement last week. If we look at the text of the motion, it provides no clarity, no context and no actual solution for how the Conservative Party would deal with a very acute national issue, about which I look forward to talking to with all my colleagues today.

Before I start talking about what the government announced last week, it is important to talk about why there is a carbon price system at all. We are here because we are experiencing more and more dramatic and extreme weather as a result of climate change. Colleagues across the country will have experienced this as well.

My home province has had the worst forest fires in its history. Indeed, that was a reality across the country. We had hurricane Fiona. I have talked to constituents about this. Hurricanes used to happen maybe once a decade on the Atlantic coast and in Nova Scotia. They are happening every year now. In some cases, they are subject to having two storms.

The science is clear. Generally, most parliamentarians in this place believe in the importance of moving forward. Carbon pricing is an effective way to do that. Seventy-seven jurisdictions around the world have a form of carbon pricing. Last election, the Conservative Party ran on a carbon price. Canada is not alone in this regard. It is an important tool to being sure we can drive forward.

The way that the government introduced the system was to be very mindful of balancing affordability. I just listened to the member for Peterborough—Kawartha. She is not entitled to her own facts. The facts are that the Parliamentary Budget Office has consistently shown that eight out of 10 families receive more money back from the climate action incentive payments than what they pay in any form of carbon pricing.

That is not my fact. That is not the member for Peterborough—Kawartha's fact. That is from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, an independent member of this Parliament, who provides that reality.

Business of Supply

Carbon pricing in our environmental strategy is working. Notwithstanding that we never hear comments or concerns from the Conservative Party about environmental concerns or a plan, we are the only government in the history of our country that has actually reduced GHG emissions and grown the economy at the same time. Again, that is a fact. Is there more work to do? Absolutely, but I am proud of being part of a government caucus and a government that has been focused on that number one question. I cannot say the same for the official opposition.

That is the contrast. As I have said before, I am not seeing any plan, any vision or any desire to want to jointly address the questions, right now, of affordability and environment. As I have said publicly, those two things have to go hand in hand. The Conservatives do not seem to understand that we have to tackle these issues at the same time. They cannot be independent.

Last week, the government made a really important announcement. As a rural member of Parliament, I am proud to see the adjustments that were made. At the end of the day, not all Canadians have the same access to change behaviour and to benefit from the climate action incentive payment program. Not all Canadians have the same tools in the fight of climate change, particularly the further we go outside major urban areas.

You represent West Nova in Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker, and I represent Kings—Hants. I think it is fair to say that we both have the types of constituencies where there is some basic form of public transit, but it is not available to all our constituents. There are many instances where the people we represent have to drive longer distances and do not have the same tools as people living in major cities, like Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver.

The government did recognize that in what it originally introduced as a climate program under the national carbon pricing plan. There is a 10% supplement available to Canadians who live outside of a census metropolitan area. However, what the government announced last week was that this increase would go from 10% to 20%. I applaud the government for doing this. That makes a difference for rural Canadians in the federal backstop jurisdictions across the country.

● (1120)

It means that rural Ontarians have more money in their pockets. It means that individuals living in Saskatchewan and Alberta outside of major cities have more money to help support and recognize the lived differences between them and Canadians who live in major urban areas. It is equity in ensuring that this is in place, and the government was smart and mindful to make that change.

One million Canadians use home heating oil across the country: 286,000 in Atlantic Canada; 465,000 in Quebec; 266,000 in Ontario; approximately 30,000 in the Prairie provinces; and 88,000 in British Columbia. I do not have the statistics for northern Canada in front of me, but I know many northerners use heating oil as well.

This is an acute issue, because the reality is that heating oil is two to four times more expensive than other conventional means to heating homes. There is a clear economic incentive to change from a home heating oil furnace. If people at home right now have a furnace that uses oil to heat their home and if they have some money

in their bank account, I would humbly suggest they look at finding ways to get off heating oil, because it is vastly more expensive and it is also terrible in an environmental sense.

We do not hold Canadians responsible for the fact that they have certain living circumstances and use oil to heat their homes. There are vulnerable Canadians across the country, in the ridings of the official opposition, in the ridings of the government caucus. I would hazard a guess that every member in this place has some people in their riding who use heating oil. However, we have an interest, as a government, to help those people who may not have the means to change their behaviour themselves.

If people do not actually have the money to take on a project to reduce their reliance on heating oil, then they are stuck. That is exactly why the government launched a program in the fall of 2022 specific to those Canadians, to help them try to make a transition. There is a \$10,000 federal grant available to any Canadian who wants to make a transition. The \$10,000 grant is available to those of low and medium income. The government has a program that is more loans-based, with zero interest, for those of higher income. However, there are federal resources available across the country.

I will read some statistics, as they inform the debate and the conversation we are having about equity. The equity has been framed around one source of heating oil with no context about the price differential.

For members living in Ontario, I want them to know that if they have people using home heating oil, they are paying, on average, \$3,400 a year on that oil. For those on natural gas, it is \$900 a year. Therefore, oil is almost four times the amount. If people do not have the money, how do they get off of it? They are in a vicious cycle, using the most expensive fuel to heat their home, and they do not have the money to get off the source they are using. In Regina and Saskatchewan, it is the same thing, \$1,400 for natural gas on a yearly basis compared \$4,500 for heating oil. In Vancouver, it is \$600 for natural gas and \$1,800 for heating oil. Also, the prices have gone up 73% over the last two years.

I hear the member for Perth—Wellington saying, “I wonder why.” It is not because of carbon pricing. It is that the level of rhetoric from the other side that shows those members do not understand the fundamental market difficulties of Canadians who are in this situation.

That is why we have launched a national program, which was \$250 million. It was available and remains available to all Canadians.

However, what the Prime Minister announced last week was balancing affordability and environmental progress together. He announced that we would augment that plan and temporarily pause carbon pricing on home heating oil. Let us remember that there are a million Canadians who are vulnerable and are paying in excess of anywhere between two to four times the amount that other Canadians are paying on their heating bills.

Business of Supply

• (1125)

We launched a program in partnership with Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador to increase the support for Canadians who are in difficult situations. People who are below the provincial median income in my riding and your riding, Mr. Speaker, are going to benefit from a federal grant of up to \$15,000 with the Province of Nova Scotia supporting the remaining \$5,000. There is a \$250 incentive to join the program. We are going to help people actually make a transition off heating oil. It is good for the environment, it is good for affordability and it matters to the most vulnerable Canadians.

I want to give members an example from my riding. Mr. Speaker, you have been there. It was out in rural Hants County, on the Hants shore in Walton. I talked to a woman named Doris. It was about this time last year when we launched some of the programs. She said she was glad to see there was a \$10,000 grant she could access, but she was on a senior's pension and the guaranteed income supplement. She did not have a lot of extra money at the end of the month; things were tight. She said she would love to take on the program, but she was quoted \$17,000 to \$18,000 for the project. She cannot, even though the government is there trying to help, access the program.

Now, Doris in Walton is going to be able to benefit from a program of cost delivery between the Government of Nova Scotia and the Government of Canada. Not only is that good for the environment, but more importantly, in the affordability context, it is good for Doris. It is going to save her thousands of dollars a year. I do not hear any solutions from the official opposition of what it is going to do long term. Yes, it would remove approximately 20¢ from Doris's bill each year. We have done that. We have paused the carbon price because we recognize there is a group of Canadians who simply cannot make the transition.

Why would we have a carbon price when we are literally launching a national program to help them out? We have gotten rid of the carbon price. We have done what the Conservatives would do, but we have gone a step further. We have offered Doris a long-term solution to help her make that transition. I do not hear the Conservatives even talking about that program. Great, the Conservatives' plan on affordability is to offer Doris 20¢ off per litre, on average, from her home heating bill, which runs about \$1.88 per litre right now. It would be down to \$1.68; well done, Conservatives.

Guess what we are going to offer Doris? We are going to offer Doris \$2,500 a year in cost savings that she can then use to support herself in other ways. That is a good program. That is actually having a vision to focus on the transition and helping people out, and I do not hear that. Again, I have touched a bit on the exemption. This is a conversation. At the end of the day, we have seen some pundits here in Ottawa. Some say we are undermining the carbon system. No, we are not. We are tying a specific pause to a carbon price with a program for people who are too vulnerable to make the transition, and who have all the economic incentive to change because they are paying four times the energy bill. If they had the money, they would have already transitioned.

These people exist across the country. Is it acute in Atlantic Canada? Absolutely. I am proud of the fact that the government has

addressed this. I am proud to be able to go home and tell my constituents we have a solution for them. I am proud that, whether I go to northern Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba or Alberta, I will be able to tell people in the same situation that we have a solution for them too.

The way the Conservative Party has framed this is that somehow this is just for one region, but it is not. It is available for the whole country. The 30,000 households in the prairie provinces that use heating oil, that are vulnerable, that cannot make a transition and are paying four times the price of natural gas, do they not deserve a break too? Do they not deserve a government that is focused on meeting their needs? I have not heard one word from the Conservatives on that whatsoever.

At the end of the day, that is exactly what we have done. What we announced last week is good news for the entire country. It is particularly good news for rural and regional Canada. I am proud, as a member of Parliament representing a rural riding, to have offered thoughtful solutions and adjustments to a national policy, instead of a tear-it-down approach on the other side. Remember that the Conservatives are offering to remove approximately 20¢ off home heating bills. We are offering long-term solutions to actually help people make a transition. That is the difference and Canadians will take notice about what we are doing.

• (1130)

We are focused on vulnerable households. I listened to the leader of the official opposition, and there was not one word about the one million Canadians who are in a very difficult position in Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec, with 465,000 households in Quebec. It is very difficult situation that they are in.

Again, I want to highlight there is federal support across the board. We have launched a specific project to augment the national program.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, instead of just standing across the way and yelling and offering simplistic solutions, I would encourage the member from Prince George to reach out to Premier Eby, because I can promise some people in Prince George right now use heating oil and are in a difficult situation.

He should direct them to the \$10,000 grant that exists right now for his constituents. I hope he has. Maybe we should get some household material about whether he has actually talked about the programs the government is announcing. He should call Premier Eby and ask the premier to work together with him. He should ask him to reach out to the Government of Canada and work for the 88,000 households in British Columbia that use home heating oil.

Business of Supply

What about the people in Saskatchewan and Manitoba? Yes, they are smaller communities, but these people still matter, these people who are in rural, northern communities and need help.

I want to tell the story of why we are focused and why this matters, because it has been vandalized by the Conservatives to suggest that this is only from one part of the country. It is not. It is a national question of a million households across the country.

Instead of offering simplistic solutions to save people at home very minimal amounts of money, because the actual market cost to heat their home is frankly extortionate, it is so expensive, we are not only temporarily pausing in direct correlation to a program to help people make a transition but are giving them the money to help make the transition so they are not stuck in a cycle. That is climate action.

There are some people in this country, and I have seen it, who see it as a climate step-down. No, not at all. In fact, I would point to an agency back home in my province, the Ecology Action Centre. It is saying that this is an example of action on climate and affordability at the same time. It is the pre-eminent environmental organization in Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada, because it understands the unique regional challenges that exist not only in the Atlantic but indeed in rural Ontario, northern Ontario.

The member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, instead of actually talking about what the Conservatives do to help people in northern Ontario, is calling a press conference. I can only imagine what elements he would be talking about. He will probably not be talking about the fact there are 266,000 households in Ontario who would benefit from this. No, he is going to stage a press conference in front of the office of the member of Parliament for Sudbury. It is disgusting; it is sick.

Why do the Conservatives not step up with a plan? Again, they ran on carbon pricing in the last election. If they do not want to run on it this election, fine, but show Canadians an iota of evidence that they actually have a plan not only on the environment but on affordability.

I have already talked to many constituents at home, and they appreciate what the government did this week. They appreciate the fact that this matters. I have talked to some of our members on this side and indeed other members in the House. I talked to the member for York—Simcoe last night. He said, “You know, there are a lot of people in my riding who use heating oil.” He said that what was announced was going to make a difference. That is a Conservative-held riding.

There is a national program. I am proud of what the government has done. We have made sure rural Canadians are better protected and better supported under the national pricing strategy, particularly those who do not have the same ability to change behaviour. We have taken a specific look at a million Canadian households that are in a very vulnerable situation, that are paying some of the highest costs in the country to heat their homes and do not have an ability to transition. We have built and augmented a national plan.

I hope to get some questions, particularly from my NDP colleagues. Again, this was framed very quickly as an Atlantic Canada exercise. It is a national question. I know some of my NDP col-

leagues represent rural areas, and hopefully they will be able to opine on the importance of this project and what else we might be able to do to help those people. We are going to be focused on solutions, not rhetoric.

• (1135)

I am proud to stand with this government, and I look forward to answering further questions.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I must say that the member made our case for technology and not taxes. The carbon tax only makes everybody poorer and then does not allow them to have the funds to buy new technology that often is more efficient and better for the environment and all of these things. We have been making this case for a very long time. I do not know if the hon. member has heard our “technology, not taxes” line we have been saying for a very long time around these things.

The other thing I would point out is that this is an Atlantic-heavy policy, in the fact that the heat pump program he is talking about is not available in Alberta. The fact is that most Albertans would like to buy more efficient products and things like that but are unable to because the carbon tax is being placed on them for no value at all to the average person who is paying the carbon tax in Alberta and the average business that is paying carbon tax in Alberta.

A sawmill in my area pays \$140,000 of carbon tax every year. How does that allow them to invest in better technology?

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, first of all, perhaps the member was not in the chamber when I made my remarks specific to the fact that this program is available across the country. There is a \$10,000 federal grant to vulnerable Albertan households that are still using heating oil. He should help his constituents find that program. Maybe he has not; maybe he did not know about it. I am happy to share the information after the remarks here today. This is a national program; when he stands up and says that there is not something for Alberta, it is just simply not the case.

Specific to home heating oil, it is unique, because it is highly carbon intensive. In fact, it is the worst for the environment, but it is also the highest cost for what it actually takes. That is unique. Usually there are higher intensities of carbon in more affordable fuels, and we are trying to put a carbon price to make a change in behaviour. That is not the case here. There is no sense in putting a carbon price on someone who is already vulnerable and paying the highest costs, but under the climate action incentive payments, the rebates that go, every other source of heating actually gets more money back than people pay in, but heating oil was the exception, and that is why we have moved on an exception on the carbon price specific to that.

Business of Supply

Yes, it is an Atlantic-acute issue that I am proud to have helped champion, but it matters in his riding too. I am proud to have made a difference for his constituents.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was just reading a news article that quotes the member for Kings—Hants. He is quoted as saying, “I will tell my folks at home in Nova Scotia that are using natural gas... that at the end of the day there is other federal programs should they choose to want to help make a transition or reduce their reliance on natural gas”, yet every single organization I talked to that works in the energy space says that the federal government's greener homes program and the heat pump rebate that it provides are deeply flawed and do not work for low-income homeowners.

Will the member for Kings—Hants admit to this House that the program is broken and that it does not work for low-income Canadians, and will he commit to fixing it so that low-income homeowners get cash up front and get as much cash back as he is willing to provide for people who heat with home-heating oil?

● (1140)

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, in Nova Scotia people using natural gas would be using a heating source that is probably one of the lowest cost in the province, and my remarks reflect the fact that there is a series of programs. With the Canada greener homes grant there is a \$5,000 grant available to people.

I take notice that the member is talking about how we can make sure we front-load more money for people who are vulnerable and not specifically on heating oil. I think that is a valid conversation, but I would direct him to the fact that there is a plethora of federal programs that are available to help people regardless of the heating source they use. Heating oil in particular is a very specific chronic challenge for a vulnerable group of Canadians. That is why the government has tackled it.

We started with coal-fired electricity. We are moving to heating oil, in terms of that being a challenge, but on natural gas, if people want to look at energy efficiency programs, they do exist across the country, and they are available. Can improve them? I am happy to take some of his suggestions.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, as we get into this debate again, I am seeing the same omission we always see, and I will note it is particularly from our Conservative colleagues. Yes, the price on pollution, the carbon tax, went up 2¢ a litre in the last year, but it is corporate profits of the oil and gas industry that went up 18¢ a litre. There is never a word about those. In fact, when we talk about inflation, 47¢ of every dollar of inflation is directly attributed to massive increases in corporate profits. If we are going to have an honest conversation in this place about addressing affordability for Canadians, we need to talk about where inflation is directly coming from.

We have had a number of conversations over the past week on this topic. I would be curious to hear more from the member for Kings—Hants on his view on addressing this by putting in place a windfall profit tax on these excess profits of the oil and gas industry that are gouging Canadians at the pumps in the midst of a climate crisis.

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises a really important point that, particularly on heating oil, it is the market that is driving the price. It has nothing to do with the carbon price, but it has to do with the cost of the heating oil itself, which is anywhere from two to four times the price of alternatives. That is exactly why the government has been laser-focused on that question with affordability programs to support it.

To answer the hon. member's question on the windfall profits, I recognize that other jurisdictions in the world have considered it and have moved forward. I said to him this week that, because the oil and gas industry is primarily located in western Canada, we have to be careful about the concept of introducing something like that, not only because there could be a capital flight of really important jobs and industries that may not necessarily invest in the country as a result, but also because the money collected under such a program should stay within the regional context. That is the suggestion I gave him. Whether or not the government moves forward on it, I do not know. It is a careful balance because there are a lot of considerations there.

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Kings—Hants stays up to date on the news. He reads it every day, so he knows that this week Nova Scotia Power, our provincial power utility provider, announced that the budget it had set aside for responding to dramatic weather events was around \$3.5 million, and what it ended up spending in the past year was, in fact, well over \$100 million on those responses. That is about a 3,000% overage on what it budgeted.

All members in the House have seen their insurance premiums go up, as have the people they represent. Members and their constituents have seen their municipal taxes go up. Both of those increases have to do with insurance companies and municipalities covering the costs of damages to infrastructure and other things from extreme storm events.

We are offering between \$10,000 and \$20,000 to Canadians to switch from home heating oil, which is four times as expensive as natural gas and two times as polluting, yet the Conservatives are focused on using sophistry and social media shenanigans to sow discord among Canadians over a few pennies a litre.

Would the member care to offer a reason that the Conservatives are showing such disdain not only for the environment but also for Canadians?

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Halifax packed a lot in that because he is an intellectual guy and wanted to get all of that in within a minute.

There are a couple of things I would say. Let us remember why we have introduced our national programs on climate. It is that we see it every day outside our door. We saw it this summer in our neighbourhoods. He gave statistics for Nova Scotia Power with respect to the cost associated with cleaning up after storms. It is significant.

Business of Supply

He mentioned of course the importance of being focused on concrete solutions to help people. I totally agree. Conservatives are offering that people in Nova Scotia could save somewhere between, as I understand it, 20¢ to 30¢ a litre on home heating oil, which is at \$1.88 right now. We are offering that people could save thousands of dollars not only by temporarily pausing the carbon tax for the next three years but also by offering concrete solutions to reduce their reliance on a really expensive source of fuel that is not necessarily that great for the environment.

As it relates to the Conservatives' policy regarding the environment, the member will know that I feel they have very little, if any. I think that will be a question they are going to have to address as we contrast our different styles in the coming years.

• (1145)

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is incredible that the member for Halifax and the member for Kings—Hants think that 20¢ to 30¢ a litre on home heating oil is pennies. That is \$200 to \$300 a tank, times four tanks a year, which is \$1,000 for people in carbon tax, and they are dismissing it. The great promise the member for Kings—Hants is so proud of is that the government will delay that to a 61¢ increase after the election.

Can he tell me why he thinks that is better than axing the carbon tax altogether for all home heating oil to give everyone an equal chance at saving money in this expensive, inflationary period the government has caused?

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, we are not only offering people \$300 in savings, on average, because we are removing the carbon price on heating oil, but also offering people the ability to transition and to save thousands of dollars a year.

The Conservatives are offering short-term solutions. However, \$300 is extremely important. People in my riding have come to me to thank me for pushing for those changes and to say that it matters. At the end of the day, we want to make sure there is a long-term solution so that they are not paying extortionate bills over the years to come.

I do not hear any of that same vision from the Conservative Party as to whether or not it even supports the idea of helping people make a transition. That is what I would say to the hon. member.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the Chair that I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Jonquière.

Today is a bit like Groundhog Day. For a while now, it feels like the same day keeps coming back. Once again, we must highlight a very simple fact about the Conservative motion: it does not apply in Quebec. This was already true for the dozens of other motions the Conservatives have presented about the carbon tax. They do not apply in Quebec.

We understand that the Conservative Party is a federalist party, a Canada-wide party. Sometimes, the Conservatives want to look after Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta, the Atlantic provinces. In a way, that is their job, since they are a Canada-wide party. Nonethe-

less, since I was elected in 2021, this has bothered me. It bothers me because I have not yet had the opportunity I so desire, which is to rise to speak on a Conservative opposition day and believe that they are looking out for or thinking about Quebec, that their proposal applies to Quebec, that it is something of interest to Quebecers.

The first time, we thought they were looking out for their voting base in oil country. The second time, we thought they were looking out for their voters elsewhere. Today, we see the consistent truth: Quebec is of no interest to them. What interests them is the oil sector. Just this week, the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent said as much, in somewhat fancier terms, on a CPAC panel. The Conservative plan to fight climate change consists of three things their leader stated at their convention: subsidize the oil sector, subsidize the oil sector and subsidize the oil sector with Quebecers' money.

I am concerned that the Quebec Conservative caucus does not seem to have any influence. They do not seem to be heard, or to stand up for Quebecers. If they stood up for Quebec, if it were worthwhile for Quebecers to vote Conservative, we would be talking here about Quebec once in a while. What is interesting about these Conservative caucus members is that they are among those who joined forces to ensure carbon taxes did not apply in Quebec. They were players. They were Jean Charest's gang. With one exception, they were his cronies.

The member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis supported Quebec's emissions trading system and Quebec's environmental sovereignty in cabinet in Quebec City. She's a friend of Jean Charest, a good friend. She was part of that. When the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent was in Quebec City, he said he was in favour of Quebec's autonomy in the realm of environmental policy. That is what the Bloc Québécois is fighting for. Once he landed in Ottawa, his values evaporated. The member for Mégantic—L'Érable was one of Jean Charest's underlings in Quebec City. He was part of that gang. As one of Jean Charest's minions, he worked to defend our environmental sovereignty, but now it is radio silence. The member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord campaigned in support of Jean Charest's leadership bid. They were so joined at the hip, it was a wonder Mr. Charest did not have to get bigger pants so the member could fit in there with him. Now, there is nothing. Nobody is standing up for Quebec.

Business of Supply

There is no more defending Quebec because with the Conservatives, under the current Conservative leader, it is a purity test for a Quebecker to deny the interests of Quebec, to lie to Quebec and defend the Conservative lines which are deeply flawed. Some days I tell myself I am happy there is a gym in Parliament. Members of Quebec's Conservative caucus do not get in their squats and their exercise by standing up for Quebeckers in the House. If they want to firm their thighs here, they do not do so by standing up for Quebec, because they never stand up for Quebec. They are going to get bedsores remaining seated for Quebec. They do not even ask for health transfers for them, which is what the provinces and Quebec are asking.

This worries me because there are Quebeckers who, at one time, trusted these people. They were wrong. On Bloc opposition days, which are focused on the needs of Quebec, these same Conservatives have the nerve to tell us what we should have done. They tell us we should have chosen topics that matter to Quebeckers. Yesterday, Parliament voted unanimously in favour of a motion from the Bloc Québécois asking the federal government to consult Quebec before announcing its new immigration targets.

• (1150)

During the vote, all Quebec members, Conservatives and Liberals alike, voted in favour of consulting Quebec. That same day, the federal government adopted and announced targets unilaterally. It did so without consulting Quebec, as was confirmed to us by the Quebec minister. Today is an opposition day and it would have been a good topic to address. The Conservatives had the opportunity to think of Quebec for the first time in years. They did not do it because a Quebecker in the Conservative Party is useless. It would have had direct consequences on the lives of Quebeckers, on the capacity to integrate, on French language training, on togetherness. Actions count.

I will speak of the Canada emergency business account, or CEBA. The Conservatives, who form the current opposition, have the opportunity to ask tons of questions during oral question period. Right now, tens of thousands of businesses are headed for bankruptcy and we are asking for a CEBA loan repayment extension. That is what chambers of commerce are asking for. We can agree that they are not part of the radical left. However, never has a Quebec Conservative stood in the House to defend our businesses, our entrepreneurial base or the investments people have made. These people have never stood up for Quebec.

Quebec has its own housing model. The Conservatives say that they favour decentralization and acknowledge that the provinces have jurisdictions. When Quebec tries to exercise its power in its areas of jurisdiction, it gets no money from Ottawa. How many times have we seen a Conservative from Quebec rise in the House to ask the government to give Quebec the \$900 million it was due from income tax paid by Quebeckers? There are over 10,000 homeless people in Quebec, and the cost of housing continues to rise. It is a national crisis. My colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert is working full time on this, but no Conservative has ever spoken on the topic.

The Conservatives have never asked for an increase in health transfers. They bowed to their leader.

The Quebec Conservatives claim to be progressive conservatives. They say this until they look at their values, then their pay, then their values again, then the money they make in Ottawa with their nice Conservative seats. That is where it stops. Suddenly, they are progressive only on statutory holidays and weekends.

When the Conservatives helped to ensure the carbon tax did not apply in Quebec, they were players. They are now on the sidelines and are trying all kinds of tricks to say that it applies in Quebec. They wanted to play wedge politics and say that the tax applies across Canada, but they did a poor job of it, as is so often the case. They were caught misleading the House.

In response, they fooled around with motions and conjured all kinds of convoluted nonsense to say that there was a second carbon tax. This second carbon tax is a regulation that will not apply until 2030. They did not know this because they did not do their homework, because the Conservatives do not listen to Quebeckers. They realized that the Quebec regulation is more restrictive and that this had no effect. They are now bending over backwards to try to explain that it is coming in through the back door or whatever.

The truth is that Alberta made \$24 billion this year on oil royalties. Alberta taxes compulsively and is dependent on oil. Per person, for every dollar Quebec makes on hydroelectricity, Alberta makes 13 on oil. Furthermore, this government has no modern sales tax or personal income tax. This is the system Quebec Conservatives defend in their caucus. They are kowtowing to keep their seat.

The member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier promised to resign if the current Conservative leader was elected. Today, we are not hearing the member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier defend the decentralization of Quebec's environmental policy or Quebec's jurisdictions.

My political commitment is to Quebec and it is profound. We are standing up for Quebec and we are standing up for the truth. I appeal to the statesmanship of the Conservative members from Quebec. I hope that at some point they will reflect deeply on what their commitment means to them, and that one day we will be able to discuss a motion that applies to Quebec. However, that is not the case today.

• (1155)

[English]

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was fascinated that we had the member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River asking questions earlier. I wanted to respond to his question.

I was interested to see that, when the Prime Minister made the announcement on the pause on the home heating fuel carbon tax in Atlantic Canada, only Atlantic MPs were standing behind him.

Business of Supply

Could the member speculate on why the member for Thunder Bay or the member for Sault Ste. Marie was not in that picture?

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, my colleague knows that we in the Bloc Québécois defend Quebec's jurisdictions and Quebec's independence when it comes to environmental policy.

He asked me why this or that member from this or that province, members who are not in my party, supported this or that measure. What I find unfortunate is that, here in the House, not every single member from Quebec is standing up for Quebec's autonomy when it comes to environmental policy. On top of that, those folks are being paid by the federal government to misinform Quebecers.

I hope the member will ask our Conservative colleagues from Quebec that question at some point.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, what was really shocking about the Liberal announcement was that it seemed to be so much about keeping their MPs in Atlantic Canada alive.

Conservatives are now saying that the Liberals are dividing the country, but the Conservative motion is actually dividing the country. Quebec and British Columbia do not pay carbon tax. Residents in British Columbia and Quebec would not get any benefit from this.

It would have been more reasonable, as New Democrats have pushed for, if we took off the GST and the HST. This would ensure that, if we are going to have a pause, it would be fair across the country. However, what we are seeing now is that the Liberals have actually just undermined the whole principle of carbon pricing that they have been promoting.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, my colleague understands what kind of situation we are in. When I was elected to federal Parliament, I knew that Ottawa does not really care about Quebec very much. I knew that, but I never thought it was this bad. I never imagined that they would never talk about Quebec, about Quebec's interests, about respecting Quebec's environmental policy. My NDP colleague is talking to me about the GST and the QST.

Let Quebec take care of its own environmental policy. I repeat: Let Quebec take care of its own environmental policy. It is not only Quebec's jurisdiction, but Quebec is also much better at this than the federal government.

• (1200)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, in the debate on home heating, sometimes people express a belief that natural gas is more environmentally friendly than heating oil. That is not true. For the most part, natural gas is shale gas. The method for producing shale gas leaves a bigger carbon footprint than heating oil. It is not a good choice for our climate.

Can my colleague comment on the issue of the carbon footprint of shale gas?

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands.

I am able to talk about the ecological footprint of hydroelectricity because that is what we chose. When we decided to branch out into this sector, it was not an easy choice. Everyone said that Quebec was crazy. Some places were turning to nuclear energy, while others were opting for fossil fuels.

Quebec chose hydroelectricity because we believed in the transition. More than that, we believed that it would pay off to invest in technologies that make Quebec unique, technologies that we can export and that make a name for us around the world, as we have done and continue to do today. In Quebec, we are proud to heat our homes with green, renewable electricity. If anyone would like to talk about the carbon footprint of our hydroelectricity, I would be happy to talk about it for hours.

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, members will notice that my speech is similar to that of my colleague from Mirabel. The thing I have learned in politics is that we need to repeat ourselves often so that our messages are heard. It feels like Groundhog Day, as my colleague from Mirabel said, or like Nietzsche's eternal recurrence. The Conservative Party has plenty to say about the carbon tax.

There is something essential that I need to clarify: Today's motion will have no impact on Quebec. It does not concern Quebec. The only good thing about this motion is that it clearly demonstrates that everything the Conservative Party said when it was talking about the two carbon taxes does not apply to Quebec. That is crystal clear. If the government reduces the carbon tax on home heating in Canada, Quebec will never see the effects of that because it does not apply to Quebec. The carbon tax does not apply to Quebec. What we get from this motion is that the Conservative Party is completely out of touch with Quebec's reality.

As my colleague said, the Conservative members from Quebec do not carry enough weight in their caucus to push the issues facing the only francophone nation in North America. The representatives of the only francophone nation in North America are unable to carry Quebec's messages to the House. The Conservative members are failing to be a voice for Quebec, but it gets worse. This week, the leader of the Conservative Party made it clear that the carbon tax would become the main electoral or ballot-box issue. The leader of the Conservative Party believes that the ballot-box issue of the next general election is one that does not involve Quebec. At no point has it ever involved Quebec. This is unprecedented. It is a fundamental rejection of the Quebec nation.

Business of Supply

I would like to clarify something. The Conservatives constantly refer to two carbon taxes. The first tax applies to Canada, whereas Quebec has a carbon exchange. Some Conservatives have actually started to adjust their language. They know very well that lying will not help them win. Whenever they talk about the other carbon tax, calling it the regulations, they are referring to the clean fuel regulations. These regulations were the logical continuation of regulations put in place by one Stephen Harper. I am not sure if my colleagues are aware of this, but he was a Conservative. These regulations will not take full effect until 2030. Now we are being asked to look into the future. They want to fight inflation now, but the effects will not be felt until 2030.

Furthermore, there are already parallel regulations in Quebec that are in force today, in 2023. Quebec's clean fuel regulation are already in effect. Will the Conservatives trample on Quebec's regulatory independence by saying that it should repeal its clean fuel regulations? Worse yet, we are collectively subsidizing oil companies so they can introduce low-carbon fuel. We are all paying for this. The Conservatives are also asking why we could not stick consumers with the bill. Where I come from, that is called double-dipping, like when someone takes a potato chip and sticks it into the dip twice. That is not allowed. When it comes to oil, the Conservatives no longer see clearly. This is quite obvious to me.

As my colleague said earlier, we are wasting a ridiculous amount of time talking about the carbon tax. Meanwhile, not one Conservative member from Quebec is talking about the issues that affect us all. I have not heard one Conservative member talk about the CE-BA loans, even though the National Assembly unanimously passed a motion calling for the December 31 deadline to be significantly extended. I have not heard a single Conservative talk about that. Regarding immigration, they voted in favour of our motion, but I never hear a Conservative member argue that Quebec is losing all of its weight within the Canadian federation.

• (1205)

The Quebec minister said it again this morning: One of the effects of uncontrolled immigration is reduced political weight for Quebec. I do not hear any Conservatives talking about that. If we are serious about fighting inflation, then the first thing that we should probably be doing is taking care of the most vulnerable. Among the most vulnerable are seniors struggling to afford housing, clothing and food because their pensions are so meagre. If the Conservatives were serious, they would support increasing old age security and the guaranteed income supplement.

That is not all. Since 2015, the Liberals have been talking about reviewing the Employment Insurance Act. Who is more vulnerable than an unemployed worker unable to access benefits? I have never heard a Conservative say that because of inflation, perhaps we should review the Employment Insurance Act. All they talk about is the carbon tax.

An important test is coming up in the next few months or next year, especially for Quebec. It is about Bill 21 and Bill 96, which will be challenged in court. I am eager to see how the Quebec Conservatives will react. Today I want reach out to them, because I know we will need them as well. Perhaps one way to do this is by

showing them reality. That is why I want to return to the Conservative Party leadership race.

However, before that, I want to return to some rather hare-brained remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Carleton. For instance, there was the time he offered his unconditional support to the trucker convoy, including its illegal behaviour. The Leader of the Opposition also had the oh-so-brilliant idea of firing the Governor of the Bank of Canada because he did not agree with him. He took quite a beating for that one. He even touted cryptocurrency, saying it could help Canadians opt out of inflation. I cannot speak for my colleagues, but the majority of the people I know are aware that cryptocurrency is not the way to ensure the well-being of the middle class. Cryptocurrency does not reduce inflation. It does not help with the price of gas or turkey, which was another of the Leader of the Opposition's obsessions. Lastly, it certainly does not help people find housing and put clothes on their backs.

There are also all the misleading advertisements. I do not know if my colleagues saw the ad that used an image of a Quebec family and said they were struggling to pay their mortgage. The people in this family then came forward, saying that it was a stock image, but that the ad was associating them with a reality that did not in the least reflect their own and that it was making them look stupid. The Conservative Party is unscrupulous. It uses images like that one and claims that these people are struggling to pay their mortgage, when that is completely false. Worst of all was hearing the member for Carleton, the leader of the official opposition, say on numerous occasions in the House that there were people who could not afford food and were asking for medical assistance in dying. How can we trust someone who makes such asinine statements?

I am saying these things because it just goes on and on, and the Conservative Party leader's vision is catching. When people from Suncor came to committee, some members tried to prevent me from asking the Suncor CEO questions. They did not want me to make him uncomfortable, like he was royalty. What is more, I heard a Conservative apologize to the Suncor reps on behalf of all Canadians. I could not even make this stuff up.

I will wrap up quickly with one final thought. Members may recall that, during the last leadership race, only two Quebec MPs did not take sides, but seven MPs were against the current opposition leader. Let me point out that one of them was the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent. He supported Jean Charest, the very same Jean Charest whom he had clumsily accused of being the godfather of the Liberal family 10 years before. The member for Louis-Saint-Laurent chose to support Mr. Charest despite his questionable ethics in Quebec, rather than the man who is now opposition leader.

I would encourage my Conservative colleagues from Quebec to get back in touch with reality. There are going to be some interesting debates happening in Quebec. If they do get back in touch with reality, we will be happy to try to help them out.

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• (1210)

[English]

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, wow, that was a lot of something. It is interesting that the hon. colleague from Quebec focused all of his attention on the Conservatives. Why is that? It is because he is feeling the heat in his own riding.

It is interesting that this member of Parliament voted twice to impose an Ottawa-knows-best carbon tax on Quebecers. I would like to ask why the member, who stood up and railed against the Conservatives, who have been fighting for over a year to axe the tax, voted twice in favour of this Ottawa-knows-best carbon tax.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, my colleague obviously was not listening to what the member for Mirabel and I said. The carbon tax does not apply in Quebec. Anyone can prove that.

The other thing I want to point out is that we do not vote on regulations. During the debate on the Conservatives' last fallacious motion on the carbon tax, I asked one of his colleagues how he voted on the clean fuel regulations. He told me that he voted against them.

I challenge my Conservative colleague to show me where in the blues it says he voted against the regulations. I challenge any Conservative to show me where it says they voted against the clean fuel regulations. I would advise them to look up who put the regulations in place. It was a fellow named Stephen Harper.

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am wondering where my colleague from the Bloc stands on our proposal to cut the GST on all forms of home heating so that affordability measures like the ones that have been proposed can truly benefit people right across this country, regardless of how they heat their homes. Could he speak a bit to that?

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, the best solution is to come up with incentives to transition to a less carbon-intensive heating system, and that is electrification. Right now, instead of taking money and investing it in electrification, the government is funnelling it to the oil companies. They are paying the oil companies \$83 billion until 2035 for the pipe dream of low-carbon oil. This is completely unheard of.

The best solution is to come up with what all other countries have, which is the polluter-pays principle, not a polluter-paid principle. Canada is doing the reverse. It is rewarding oil companies with \$83 billion and investing nothing in clean energy.

• (1215)

[English]

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to hear my colleague speak in this House. It was a really good intervention and good speech related to all the fantastic work that Quebec is doing to address the very real situation of climate change that we are all facing.

Unfortunately, as we have heard, the motion brought forward by the Conservatives today is very divisive. Speaking of division, we have seen at our natural resources committee a huge example of the obstruction the Conservatives are willing to do to prevent us from moving forward with climate change legislation.

I would welcome my colleague's thoughts on how we can move beyond division and do some great work to address climate change. We have had nine hours of filibuster, which has prevented us from dealing with this very real issue. I would appreciate the member's thoughts on that. Perhaps he can also reflect on how this legislation is not helping the discussion and is actually a hindrance to addressing climate change in Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right. The Standing Committee on Natural Resources has become a circus where the Conservatives insist on wasting our time. Not only that, yesterday some Conservatives fancied themselves YouTubers. After succeeding in wasting our time, they started filming live videos. I am sorry, but I am not an influencer. I am a legislator. If someone lacks the gravitas to debate issues we disagree on in committee, I do not think they deserve to form a government.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I resume debate, I just want to remind members that if they are going to be asking questions or making speeches, they should make sure their phones are away from the microphones. During the last question, I could hear some vibrations, which affect the interpreters.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, "Humanity has opened the gates of hell." Those are the words of António Guterres, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, from last month. Of course, he was talking about the spiralling climate emergency that around the world is wreaking such havoc, with the hurricanes, flooding, heat waves and wildfires that are costing lives, costing billions of dollars and getting worse every single year.

Our country is warming at twice the global average, with Canada's Arctic at four times the global average. Last summer, we saw the devastating impacts of the climate crisis. We saw an unprecedented wildfire season. The 16.5 million hectares that burned across our country were double the historic record from 1989.

In northwest B.C., we saw communities evacuated. Across Canada, we saw hundreds of thousands of people evacuated. Of course, we also saw severe drought, class 5 drought, which, in the region where I live, led to farmers not getting their hay crops. They could not feed their animals, and many farmers had to sell off their herds.

Business of Supply

Every year, we are seeing these impacts grow worse, yet in the face of this dire climate crisis, the Conservative Party of Canada and my Conservative colleagues are nowhere. I listen every day in the House for some semblance of recognition of the severity of this crisis that threatens our children's futures, yet it is crickets. I have thought a lot about this and how cynical it is to be debating a motion to tear apart climate policy, notwithstanding the lack of merits of that policy, without proposing any semblance of a plan themselves.

I will add that I am very pleased to share my time today with my hon. colleague from Timmins—James Bay.

There is no plan from the Conservative Party on climate, and this is a feature, not a bug. We might wonder why that is. Why would a party deny the most severe crisis of our time, an existential threat to humanity? I think we can go back to a couple of things. First is the fact that the Conservatives are in the pocket of the oil and gas industry. However, also, a group of people they care a whole awful lot about, members of the Conservative Party, have voted as such. It is official policy that climate change is not an issue. I find that deeply cynical.

An hon. member: It's baloney. You know it's baloney.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Madam Speaker, I hear the member for Cariboo—Prince George heckling me. I think that might have gotten to him.

It is deeply concerning—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1220)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind members that there will be five minutes of questions and comments. I would ask members to hold their thoughts until then.

The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Madam Speaker, it is deeply concerning because, of course, protecting the environment and our children's futures is really a Conservative idea. This is about conserving what we have enjoyed and benefited from for so many years.

The climate crisis is a pressing concern for many people, and certainly for many people I represent. However, there is another great challenge plaguing our country, and people refer to it as the affordability crisis. I do not think that language really gets to the heart of what is happening, because what is happening is much more systemic and structural.

Not everyone in our country is struggling. Some people are getting fantastically rich and accumulating tremendous wealth while the vast majority of Canadians struggle to pay bills. We have people sleeping on our streets and record food bank visitation, and all the while, the big corporations of this country are making out like bandits.

On the issue of economic inequality, the Liberal Party is missing in action. Despite ample opportunity to stand up to these big corporations and drive affordability for Canadians who are struggling, the Liberals have completely abdicated that responsibility. They

have not stood up to the big banks. They have not stood up to the big telcos. They have not stood up to the Rich Krugers of the world, who are amassing massive profits and polluting all the while. They have not stood up to the grocery giants. They have not stood up to the big airlines, such as Air Canada, which is once again seeing its profits soar. However, people are struggling in this country. People are having a hard time putting food on the table. People are having a hard time affording transportation and home heat.

This brings me to the topic of the motion, and I think most Canadians see it quite clearly for what it is: a cynical attempt by a flailing government to save its political hide in the only part of rural Canada where it has any. Among the values we share as Canadians, one of the greatest ones is a sense of fairness. Certainly, when I talk to people, they want the policy we create in this place to be fair. However, they see a great and profound unfairness when the government, for political reasons, because it is struggling in a certain part of the country, makes changes to help some people in Canada but not others. That is not fair, and I think it is eminently reasonable for people in other provinces and other parts of this country who have been overlooked by the government when it comes to the affordability of home heating to want the same. That is what we are debating today.

We have heard from the government, of course, that Canadians in all parts of the country can access its programs, so I will take a bit time to talk about how deeply flawed the government's program for home energy efficiency and heat pumps is in the rest of the country. The government has made changes for people who heat with home heating oil, but for people who heat with natural gas, the process is impossible.

I will tell a story about Perry, my neighbour in Smithers. His gas furnace went, and he wanted to do the right thing and get a low-emissions heating system. He learned about this great program the federal government had and went through all the steps. He had to get a home energy audit, of course, and then he had to find a contractor, who had to work through the program. However, the contractor installed a heat pump that worked in the northern community, only to discover after it was installed that, while the indoor unit was on the government's approved list for equipment, the outdoor unit, which was also on the list, was not listed in conjunction with the indoor unit. This was maddening. Of course, Perry is someone who wants to shift his home off of fossil fuel heat and onto a clean alternative, so the contractor, who was incredibly frustrated and at that point did not want to have anything to do with the government's greener homes program, ripped out the heat pump and put in a different one that was on the list. However, a year and a half later, my neighbour is still waiting for the greener homes rebate of \$5,000.

Business of Supply

• (1225)

I would bet that he and the contractor have spent more than 5,000 dollars' worth of time just dealing with the brutal bureaucracy of a program that does not work for any Canadians but, most of all, does not work for low-income Canadians. They are the ones who deserve the help the most. The fact is that these heat pumps work, and they can reduce people's bills dramatically. People deserve the help that they provide.

What we want to see is the same kind of help provided to people in Atlantic Canada to be extended to people across the country, especially low-income people, people who heat with gas and people who heat with electricity. That is why we have brought forward a proposal to remove the GST on all forms of home heating. Not only that, but we want the government to improve its heat pump program so that every single Canadian has access to the financial resources they need at the front end, with no massive bureaucracy, no waiting a year and a half, no need for assessments and all that stuff. If it is good enough for people in Atlantic Canada, it is good enough for people in northwest British Columbia: people in Smithers, in Terrace, in Kitimat, in Prince Rupert, in Burns Lake and all the other communities that I am so proud to represent.

How are we going to pay to put heat pumps in the homes of every low-income homeowner in this country? We are going to do it by putting an excess profits tax on the oil and gas companies, which continue to make off like bandits while fuelling the climate crisis that threatens our children's future. That is a plan, and that is something we are going to get behind.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, from my perspective, the way I look at it is that the government has focused on getting and encouraging people to change from oil to heat pumps. Given that oil costs are so much higher compared with other sources, it is a good way to encourage that transition. In the longer run, people will save more money, and the environment will be better for it.

The member highlights the issue of bureaucracy. The program that is there is a coast-to-coast program. Manitoba has thousands of people who heat their homes with oil. Would he not agree that it will be very helpful to move forward and get provincial jurisdictions, in particular, involved in this?

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Madam Speaker, that may very well be how the parliamentary secretary sees the issue. I will tell the House how Canadians see it. Canadians see the issue as being one of a government that is flailing in the polls, that is particularly struggling in the Maritimes, in Atlantic Canada; without doing any detailed planning, it has just pulled this idea out of a hat overnight. It has given a sweetheart deal to people who live in one part of the country, while ignoring the affordability needs of people who live elsewhere.

Everyone in this country deserves help to get their homes off fossil fuel heat. They deserve help with the affordability of home heating and, yet, low-income Canadians have largely been ignored in this country's programming.

Mr. Scot Davidson: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Earlier today there was a speech. The member for Kings—Hants

disclosed and misrepresented a personal conversation I had with him. I want to correct the record.

The conversation I had was that the Liberal carbon tax plan was not working for the people of York—Simcoe. York—Simcoe is now considered urban, of all things, and included with the city of Toronto. As I explained, the residents will not be getting the rural top-up. This plan is not working for the residents of York—Simcoe—

• (1230)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Based on the information that the hon. member provided, it seems to be more of a point of debate. I will just double-check the record on that and come back to the House, if need be.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am glad the hon. member for York—Simcoe rose on that, because I was in the House when the member for Kings—Hants said that. I know the hon. member for York—Simcoe, and I know how he feels about this carbon tax and that he wants to see it scrapped across the country.

I sat in the House, as I said, for the debate this morning. I listened to the NDP and the Liberals. For lack of a better term, there is a falsehood that is being spread in the House. The NDP is saying that they had a motion to remove the GST off home heating, when in fact it was a Conservative motion to scrap the carbon tax. The NDP actually tried to amend the motion. That is really where this misrepresentation is being spread.

My question to the hon. member is this: Is that not factually what happened in the House a year ago?

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Madam Speaker, it seems that my hon. colleague wants to split hairs. If there was an amendment, it was an amendment that his party rejected, which means that Conservatives do not support it.

The idea of taking the GST off all forms of home heat has been around since Jack Layton's time. New Democrats have consistently called for the GST to be taken off home heating as an affordability measure for all Canadians, and we are going to continue to do so until we get the support of the House.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, let us talk about the facts. One fact is that the motion the Conservatives have put forward today would help four provinces and three territories; it would not help people who live in British Columbia. Another fact is that removing the GST on all home heating would help all Canadians in all 10 provinces and three territories.

Could my colleague talk about the fact that the Conservatives have not supported removing the GST on home heating, something that was in their 2019 platform?

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Madam Speaker, that is a fact. My hon. colleague made the point very clearly.

Business of Supply

What is really concerning with the inherent mendacity of the motion before us is that the Conservatives are claiming to help all Canadians when, indeed, this motion would only help Canadians in provinces covered by the federal price on carbon. The plan that New Democrats have put forward would help people in all parts of the country with all forms of home heating.

We need to do that; at the same time, we need to fix the broken programs that the Liberal government has put forward, particularly to help low-income homeowners transition from fossil fuel heat to renewable alternatives. We could then finally tackle the climate crisis with the seriousness it deserves.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I listened intently to the hon. colleague's intervention from the lobby. In his intervention, he named me, said I was heckling him and then went on to say that I was feeling the pressure.

I would ask for the member to stand and apologize for that. I was not in the House, nor did I heckle him or would I have done so.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Madam Speaker, to my friend from Cariboo—Prince George, I apologize. I am a lifelong resident of northern British Columbia, and I know the difference between Cariboo—Prince George and Cariboo—Peace River. I hope he will accept my humble and sincere apology.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I think the hon. member mixed up a couple of the riding names. I appreciate the apology; I am sure the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George appreciates it as well.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is always a great honour to rise here in the House on behalf of the people of Timmins—James Bay at a time when public confidence in public institutions and democracy is at an all-time low. We certainly know that trust in democracy is under very frightening pressures all over the world.

In Canada, recent polls show that over 75% of the Canadian people believe that Parliament and the behaviour of parliamentarians have become “dishonest” and “useless.” At a time of growing difficulty in our country and growing difficulty and very dark times around the world, it is incumbent upon us to be able to show that democracy can work and that parliamentarians can work together.

That is why I am very concerned about today's debate, which seems to be one between an absolute failure of vision on the one hand and an absolute failure of leadership on the other. What we are debating really reflects a political race to the bottom that is leading and feeding this growing public alienation and rage farming. As elected representatives, we all have a sacred duty to adjudicate the very difficult economic, environmental, political and international issues that confront us as a nation.

This means that we must occasionally climb out of our partisan trenches and put forward a bigger vision for the nation. Doing this means that sometimes we are going to need to stand up on unpopular issues. If we are going to build a long-term future for our children, sometimes it is incumbent upon the leadership of this generation to say that tough choices have to be made.

However, that is not what we are debating here. We are debating the realm of gotcha politics and rage-farm politics in response to a very desperate and cynical gerrymandering of public policy that was clearly seen, in the public's eyes, as a desperate attempt to shore up Liberal MPs in certain parts of the country. The result was to pit region against region and to raise fundamental questions about a signature piece of the government's climate action plan, which is carbon pricing. It has now been thrown into doubt.

We need to find a way, as Canadians, to address this. It would have been very fair in the fall economic statement, for example, for the Prime Minister to step forward and say that we are dealing with two very major crises in our country right now. We have an unprecedented climate catastrophe unfolding, which is something the Conservatives pretend does not exist. This climate catastrophe dislocated over 200,000 people this summer alone. It is a climate catastrophe that has now impacted over 60% of Canadian small businesses. People are frightened about what the future holds, and they want to know that a burning planet can be addressed through policies that force down the use of fossil fuel emissions. They expect that from us.

Instead, from the Conservatives, they get a party platform of climate denial. They are told not to worry that the planet is burning; Conservatives are going to make fossil fuel burning free for everybody. As the city of Kelowna was burning, we had the MP for that region not standing up for the people but standing up for this myth that burning carbon fuels was somehow going to be good for everybody. That is a failure of leadership and of our responsibility to tell people the truth of what we are facing right now in an unprecedented climate catastrophe. It is also a failure to the planet.

It could have been perfectly fair, in the fall economic statement, for the Prime Minister to say that we are dealing with an unprecedented climate catastrophe, and we need to make sure the policies we have in place work. One of the policies Liberals sold the country is carbon pricing.

It would have been equally fair for the Prime Minister to say that we are dealing with an unprecedented crisis. Liberals call it “affordability”, but as my colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley pointed out, it is a much deeper and more troubling crisis, a crisis of people unable to heat their homes and feed their families.

• (1235)

The Prime Minister could have said that we are going to find a way across this country to take some pressure off. To do that, it would have been a reasonable suggestion to say that we are going to take the GST-HST off home heating. Why? It is not a luxury to heat one's home in Canada, particularly in regions like mine that go to -45°C and sometimes -50°C. It is not a luxury. This is not wasteful spending on behalf of citizens. This is about keeping families alive.

Business of Supply

To take the GST off would have affected people across the country and it would have been fair, but the Liberal government did not do that. It opted to focus on home heating oil, which certainly is a very problematic fuel that we need to address. It also is a fuel that tends to be used by people in more rural and poor regions who cannot afford to switch.

The way it was laid out was so cynical. It was about defending beleaguered Liberal MPs in Atlantic Canada. It sent a very clear message that the Prime Minister's focus was on keeping his MPs above the water line and not responding to the needs of Canadians, so it was not a credible plan. It has pitted region against region. It has raised serious questions about whether the Prime Minister has an environmental plan to deal with the climate crisis. It also raises questions about the whole pitch of carbon pricing.

Canadians were told that this was going to be a fundamental feature. New Democrats have argued with the government on carbon pricing over the years. We have said that we need to make the big polluters pay, the people who are actually damaging the planet and destroying our kids' future. They are the ones who should be paying. Senior citizens who have to heat their homes in rural northern Ontario are not responsible for the climate crisis.

There needs to be a balance. The across-the-board imposition raised real questions about fairness. What we ended up having in this situation is that one group of people is being exempted. We are hearing all kinds of positive reasons for it, but the fundamental issue it is coming down to is they were being exempted because they are in regions represented by Liberals who are afraid about their future. That is not good enough.

We have said all along that it should have been the GST from the get-go. We know the Conservatives voted against our attempt to take off the GST from heating because that would have covered people across the country.

What the Conservatives have brought to us today is another way of dividing region against region, because they know that if we just take the carbon tax off, it is not going to mean anything for people in British Columbia who are still paying heating bills. They are not covered by the carbon tax because they are under cap and trade, and neither are people in Quebec because Quebec is under cap and trade. One part of the country will have taxes taken off their heating and another part of the country will not.

If we are going to talk about the climate crisis and affordability, we have to put in place measures that are not ad hoc or gotcha moments, but measures that address the difficulties we are facing across the board.

To that, New Democrats have said time and time again that the people who are making the pollution have to be the ones paying. Rich Kruger, the CEO of Suncor, said there is a sense of urgency right now, as our planet is burning, for the big oil industry to make as much money as possible, as they are firing workers, as they are moving to automation and as they are doing stock buybacks. They could be paying the greater share for carbon pricing. We can take efforts to make sure that this is across the board and fair.

If we are going to stop pitting region against region, I would like to move the following amendment: "That, the motion be amended

by adding after the words 'all forms of home heating', the following: 'and to eliminate the GST on home heating in provinces where no federal carbon tax is in place.'"

That would be fair across the board.

• (1240)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty to inform hon. members that an amendment to an opposition motion may be moved only with the consent of the sponsor of the motion, or in the case that he or she is not present, consent may be given or denied by the House leader, the deputy House leader, the whip or the deputy whip of the sponsor's party.

Since the sponsor is not present in the chamber, I ask the acting opposition whip if he consents to this amendment being moved.

• (1245)

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, no.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is no consent. Therefore, pursuant to Standing Order 85, the amendment cannot be moved at this time.

[*English*]

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Halifax.

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my friend from Timmins—James Bay and I agree on many things, but not on everything. We do not agree, for example, that this was a reactive change in Atlantic Canada.

I want to come to the point of my question. We agree on the fact, I believe, that home heating oil is four times the cost to homeowners as natural gas. It is twice as polluting as natural gas. It is disproportionately used by the lowest-income Canadian households. Therefore, one of the biggest wins we can pursue is to have those households convert to electric heat pumps. Of the many things we can do in our arsenal of climate actions, this is a very important thing. It accelerates our journey to our targets and does so in a way that makes life more affordable.

Natural gas users in the rest of Canada, who Conservatives claim are so aggrieved, heat their homes at a quarter of the cost, with half the amount of pollution and still get the climate action incentive rebate so that eight out of 10 households are better off.

I wonder if the member would care to provide an opinion on why it is Conservatives are so concerned about helping the people who least need the help right now?

Business of Supply

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, the issue of home heating fuel is something I know a great deal about, as I represent rural northern Ontario. People are not able to afford it. I can also say that for the people who are living on a northern reserve and paying over \$2,000 a month for electric heat because they are isolated and then are having to pay a tax on top of that, it is punitive. We have senior citizens across the board who simply cannot pay for heat, so we need to be fair, which is what the Liberals have failed to do,

When the Liberals had their MPs from Atlantic Canada backing them, it gave the impression they were defending people who were in a region who had more home oil. However, everywhere in the country should have the same opportunities, and we just saw Conservatives vote down an opportunity to bring fairness to British Columbia. They did not want that to happen.

Again, we are seeing region being pitted against region by both Conservatives and Liberals.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is tragically ironic, quite frankly, that the member, the members of the NDP and all other political parties are bent on punishing Canadians who are facing out-of-control increases to their home heating. They are pitting region against region. Even in the amendment the member just tried to move, it would have been so simple to simply say that the GST should be eliminated on all home heating. Is that what the member did? No. He wanted to once again pit region against region. He wants people to be divided in this country, just like his coalition partners in the Liberals.

My question for the member is simple. What does he say to those in his constituency who heat with propane or natural gas who are desperate for a break? What would he say to those in other parts of the country, who likewise are reaching out to their members of Parliament from coast to coast to coast, where both the federal backstop applies and others, who are desperate for a break?

Why would the member, instead of choosing to work toward common-sense policies, choose politics and division over practical change to bring home lower prices for Canadians?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, here is the guy who just turned down an amendment that would have included the parts of the country that Conservatives deliberately excluded. The Conservatives are playing games here.

The member stood up and voted against taking the GST off home heating last year on October 22. Then he comes in and asks why the NDP did not offer to take GST off home heating. We did, and the Conservatives voted against it. Now they are going to get up, whine and bring points of order about being mean to them. These—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will allow the hon. member to finish in a second.

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I would ask for unanimous consent to table the Hansard from exactly what happened on the day that supposedly the member, in his imaginary world, thinks somehow Conservatives voted against it, when it was the NDP who refused to vote to eliminate the carbon tax.

I would ask for unanimous consent to table the Hansard showing what actually happened on that day of debate in the House of Commons to put the facts on the record when it comes to what the member is insinuating, which is truly a fantasy—

• (1250)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): On the same point of order, the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Well, it is in the Hansard, Madam Speaker. I can show him where it is. We would agree if they would agree to table, for unanimous consent—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is becoming a point of debate.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, we would agree if the Conservatives would also table their election platform that said they would take HST off, and now they are refusing.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is more a point of debate.

All those opposed to the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot's moving the motion will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is no unanimous consent.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay has 44 seconds to finish up his response.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, again, it really hurts the Conservatives when they go out and tell the public they are going to deal with a carbon plan and then they pretend climate change does not exist. They say they are going to get rid of the GST on home heating, and then they say it is a fantasy and it never happened. The Conservatives are continuing to divide Canadians, and when we offer them an amendment to include other parts of the country that are excluded by their region-against-region attack on the Liberals, they refuse to support it. This is the kind of politics we are dealing with here.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington. I would like to begin today by reading our motion so that folks at home and here in the House know exactly what we are debating today. It reads:

That, given that the government has announced a “temporary, three-year pause” to the federal carbon tax on home heating oil, the House call on the government to extend that pause to all forms of home heating.

Business of Supply

It is not that complicated. It is a reasonable, common-sense, fair-minded motion. That is what we are asking for today, and at the vote on Monday. We will see what members of the House do. I am sure those at home will be watching very carefully how each member of Parliament votes on this.

The Prime Minister gave it to some, and now he needs to give it to everyone. I have been in politics a long time, behind the scenes and now on these benches. I have seen rising stars and good public servants. I have seen careers come to an end in good ways and in ways that were truly ugly.

However, I have never witnessed a climbdown as utterly humiliating and so blatantly transparent as the one we saw from the Prime Minister. A government that has spent eight years forcing its carbon tax, its signature policy, on Canadians, insisting that it was good for the environment, that it would not make life more unaffordable and that it was the right thing to do, and anyone who said otherwise must be a climate change denier or dangerous to the future, now admits that the carbon tax causes misery for Canadians. This is all while it is failing to meet its own emissions target, and just months after the Liberals, along with their NDP abettors, voted down the motion to remove the carbon tax from home heating. We cannot make this stuff up.

For eight years, the Liberals ignored the science. They ignored the feedback from businesses, which decided to close up shop or move south, and they ignored the cries from everyday Canadians who could not put food on the table or gas in the car, or heat their homes. The Liberals caused pain and suffering for the economy, for small businesses, and for people who made sacrifices, such as took an extra job or went bankrupt, because of the high inflation caused by runaway deficits and, yes, the carbon tax.

What has changed? The science has not change. The affordability crisis has certainly not changed, although it gets worse every day the Liberals continue to make policy from that side of the House.

Conservatives are now threatening to sweep Atlantic Canada and the future aspirations of the Liberal MPs sitting across the aisle. This announcement is a slap in the face to all Canadians who endured eight years of the hardship of everyone else and who was told that questioning it was somehow un-Canadian and, in some way, was somehow denying climate change.

The Liberal-NDP government now admits that it can take the carbon tax off whenever it pleases. It could have done it a year ago, and it could have done it any day in between.

It gets even worse than that because only certain regions get a break. It is only on certain types of fuel and only for some Canadians. What adds insult to injury is that many provinces still have to pay the carbon tax. These are the people who have to heat their homes with natural gas or electricity, the people who have to drive in a car to work and buy groceries at a store. This move would help 3% of Canadians, while everyone else remains in the literal cold. It will fundamentally threaten our national unity and our constituents' faith in the federal government, if there is any left at all.

We already have provinces refusing to collect the federal carbon tax. We even have provincial NDP governments or opposition parties across the country speaking out against their federal counter-

parts. If we ask any Liberal why this happened, they ramble on about some national program, some agenda, some public policy. They will fearmonger about questions being dangerous to democracy. It is such utter nonsense.

Even though home heating oil is more polluting and more costly than regular heating, they are now incentivizing it. It makes no sense. The Liberals gave the impression that this was all planned, and I find it hard to believe their Prime Minister, who used to so vigorously defend his carbon tax, planned out the humiliating climbdown that we saw last Thursday afternoon in the lobby of this place.

● (1255)

It was forced, plain and simple, and it was forced by a group of Atlantic MPs, who are running scared, and a government that is scared of the most effective official opposition on this point, and on many others. The Minister for Rural Economic Development, the minister from Long Range Mountains in Newfoundland, was more candid in her remarks. She actually told the truth. She said that if people just voted Liberal more, they too might have a chance at getting the exemption.

Now we know that anything else those members opposite say is simply partisan spin. It is simply for vote-buying. They are trying to win votes and they are even doing that poorly. My neighbours in the GTA have some questions for the minister. She has gone radio silent since Sunday.

This is the largest concentration of Liberals anywhere in the country. I am surrounded. I will not be for long, but I am surrounded for now, yet their voters, Canadians, still pay a carbon tax at the pump, at the grocery store and when they heat their homes. That is everyone around me.

Why are they not as effective as the Liberal Atlantic caucus? Maybe they do not feel that threatened. I assure members that the poll numbers are certainly following there.

The government just must not have strong enough MPs from the region, who do not listen to their own constituents, the people from there, about the affordability crisis or the need to at least alleviate some of that pain. They are MPs in places such as Thunder Bay and Sudbury, places where it is cold, and they are not good enough advocates for their own constituents to get the exact same break that they have offered to those in Atlantic Canada.

Those Canadians have been let down by their representatives and they have been let down by the costly coalition. They are continuing to be let down. I can assure members opposite that there will be much fewer Liberals on the other side of the House after the next election.

Business of Supply

If the costly coalition can remove the carbon tax for some Canadians, then they can remove it for all Canadians. The Prime Minister once said that a Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian. It is time for him to start acting like it too. That is why we are here today, to make this costly coalition put its money where its mouth is. If they truly cared about affordability, about the cost-of-living, then they would take the carbon tax off for everyone, everywhere.

We know they can do that because they admitted it. The Prime Minister admitted it just outside of the doors in this place, and it is his signature policy.

We know that we have more to do, long-term, because lying just behind this announcement, waiting in the wings, is a quadrupling of the carbon tax for all Canadians, bringing more misery and that high carbon hypocrisy that we see so often from the Liberals and from their NDP betters.

A “pause” is not good enough. That should be said in the House. A regional model is not good enough. The carbon tax must be killed for everyone and forever.

There is a clear choice here. The only option is to axe the carbon tax entirely. Conservatives are the only party that would bring that to Canadians, no more pitting regions against one another, no more temporary pause, no more quadrupling of the tax, only a massive tax cut, plain and simple. We would get rid of the carbon tax, and we would do it when we are elected.

We are even willing to fight that election over it. In fact, we dare the Prime Minister to go to the polls so that Canadians can have their say. They can choose to quadruple the carbon tax after this pause for 3% of Canadians, or they can choose to axe the tax. We know what they will pick.

This week is not just humiliating because the Prime Minister flip-flopped on his signature policy. It was humiliating because even Liberals are beginning to see that he is just not worth the cost. These are Liberal leaders such as future leader Mark Carney, who split with the government on this policy, and Liberals such as Senator Percy Downe, the insider’s insider, who used to be chief of staff to former prime minister Jean Chrétien. He says that it is time for the Prime Minister to go. That is a ringing endorsement.

After eight years, he has divided this country between urban versus rural, rich versus those who are struggling, and vaccinated against the unvaccinated. He has left us poorer and weaker at home and less respected abroad. This flip-flop is just their latest attempt at failure. It is their latest attempt to make one plus one equal three. I have a feeling that it will not be their last.

It is fitting that the first snowfall of the year happened this week in Ottawa. Perhaps the Prime Minister should go take a walk in it.

• (1300)

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague's speech, and I remember.

Let us go back in our time machine a couple of years, when the hon. member was running in an election with a stalwart leader under the Erin O'Toole plan. They ran on a carbon tax, one without a

rebate, back to Canadians. As she was talking about changing positions, I was wondering if she could point to back in 2021 when she stood up against her own party's carbon tax.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Madam Speaker, I do feel for that member, who has to go back to his constituents to tell them why he has not advocated for them in the same way that the Atlantic caucus advocated for their constituents and why he continues to vote to increase the carbon tax. He has to explain that to his constituents. It is a difficult situation, and I feel for him.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to ask the hon. member across the way a question. Canada's five biggest oil and gas companies had \$38 billion in profits alone last year, but when the NDP called for big oil to pay what it owed to get more help to the families she is talking about trying to defend, Conservatives voted no.

Why do the Conservatives always prioritize protecting those giant corporate profits over actually protecting the people they say they are trying to defend?

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Madam Speaker, Conservatives have consistently in the House advocated to axe the carbon tax because everyday Canadians are struggling. Everyday Canadians are struggling in my region. They are struggling in Atlantic Canada. They are struggling out west, and they are struggling in that member's very own riding.

To pretend she does not vote to up the carbon tax at every given opportunity and put more struggle on her constituents is disingenuous. Frankly, she used to in opposition, and I think she should be ashamed of herself.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to ask our hon. colleague from Thornhill why she thinks the NDP continues to prop up the Liberal government. Its members propped it up through the SNC-Lavalin scandal, the WE scandal and now the arrive scam scandal. They continue to vote in favour of the carbon tax.

What are members, such as the member for Timmins—James Bay, going to say to their constituents who are being left out in the cold through the Prime Minister's current lockdown on the carbon tax?

• (1305)

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Madam Speaker, I have no idea what the member for Timmins—James Bay is going to say to his constituents, but he does have the opportunity to vote against the Prime Minister and vote with his constituents on Monday.

Business of Supply

We have consistently advocated to make sure people can buy groceries, buy gas and heat their homes by axing the carbon tax once and for all. We have put this reasonable motion forward, which would put the same pause right across the country that the Prime Minister has done for Atlantic Canadians on home heating oil, and we expect that members in the House, no matter how much they prop up the government, will vote with their constituents and not with the Prime Minister.

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I wanted to ask the member if she has also advised that constituent of hers that the rebate would not be coming. If we take off the carbon price, the \$720 a year a family makes in many jurisdictions would also go away. Are constituents being reminded that 90% or 80% of families are actually getting more than what they pay, but if we remove a carbon price on something, they would also not be getting those other funds? Where would the Conservatives compensate and help that constituent with that shortcoming in their pocketbook?

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Madam Speaker, Canadians know already that, when we collect a tax, more does not come back. In fact, the Parliamentary Budget Officer said so. This is the Parliamentary Budget Officer the Liberals appointed. I do not know how many times the member opposite needs to hear it. I can provide him with the report. I can table it, but 80% of Canadians get less back than they give.

We cannot get more back on a tax we pay the government, which, by the way, has not reached a single environmental target. He is going to have to explain that to his constituents. That is not going to be my job.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Madam Speaker, “given that the government has announced a ‘temporary, three-year pause’ to the federal carbon tax on home heating oil, the House call on the government to extend that pause to all forms of home heating.” This is a reasonable, common-sense and fair-minded motion.

Again, “given that the government has announced a ‘temporary, three-year pause’ to the federal carbon tax on home heating oil, the House call on the government to extend that pause to all forms of home heating.” That is what Conservatives are asking for today and with the vote on Monday. The Prime Minister gave to some; now he needs to give to all.

Poll after poll has shown that the affordability crisis, aided by the government’s poor fiscal mismanagement, is top of mind for all Canadians. Conversations I am having with the people of Hastings—Lennox and Addington are consistent, that the high price of food, fuel, rent and interest on mortgages is staggering. We realize that the relief from the cost of living is what Canadians not only want but need, and the quickest and most effective way to do that is to roll back the Liberals’ burdensome carbon tax plan that is closer to a revenue-raising measure than an actual carbon reduction plan.

When I say that scrapping the Liberal carbon tax will have immediate positive results for struggling Canadians, I do not say that without backing. Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem told parliamentarians that removing the carbon tax would result in an im-

mediate drop in inflation, helping to ease the financial burden weighing down Canadian families.

The Conservative opposition has tried numerous times, through opposition day motions in this place, to stem the increasing tide of the affordability, and every time the Liberal-NDP government voted against them. On September 28, we moved a motion to introduce legislation to repeal the carbon tax, and the government voted against it. On June 1, we moved a motion to cancel the second carbon tax, and the government voted against it. On December 8, 2022, we moved a motion to eliminate the carbon tax on food, and the government voted against it.

It is extremely clear to anyone who has been paying attention that the government has historically had a deep loathing to alter its carbon scheme in any way.

Suffice to say, when the Prime Minister announced a temporary three-year pause to the federal carbon tax on home heating oil, many of us wondered why now. Why has the government taken this small step in the right direction after years of dogged ideological refusal to support common-sense motions proposed by the official opposition?

The answer can be found splashed across the newspapers of the nation, but allow me to cite everyone’s favourite pollster, Mr. Fournier, who said that if there was an election held today, according to 338, the Liberal Party under the Prime Minister would win a staggering 80 seats. One out of every two sitting members of the government would not be coming back.

The only reason that the government is starting to break away from its near cult-like devotion to the Prime Minister’s carbon tax is because it is now politically expedient to do so. It is doing it now because it knows, and always knew, it was what Canadians wanted and what Canadians needed, but Canadians had a problem because it was not what the Prime Minister wanted, until now.

With what I am sure was much gnashing of teeth at the cabinet table, the Liberals’ free fall in the polls has forced them to make a political calculus, a bend in their deeply unpopular urban-centred climate change policy in exchange for at least some public support come election time, particularly in Liberal seat-rich Atlantic Canada where the majority of heating oil is used. I would like to applaud the Atlantic Liberal caucus for what I am sure was a spirited effort to secure even this small concession from the leadership. I find it curious why those same concessions were not given to other areas heated by different methods.

Business of Supply

For instance, why did the Prime Minister fail to include electric heating from these measures, which is the most popular source of heating in British Columbia, where Mr. Fournier predicts only four of 11 members of his caucus would return, or natural gas for Ontarians, where only 30 members are slated to see the 45th Parliament? However, I have good news for my Liberal colleagues across the way. The member for Carleton just tabled a motion that would directly help the other 97% of Canadians who are struggling to pay their heating bills, like those using propane, natural gas, electric or wood stoves, which are especially frequent in rural communities.

• (1310)

This is not to say that a federal government does not have a role to play in combatting climate change and that industry and Canadians should do their very best to lower their carbon emissions. The federal government absolutely has a role to play as measured environmental stewards, but having the government take the wallets of Canadians hostage to do this is a terrible way to go about it.

Once again, Tiff Macklem reiterated that the carbon tax disproportionately hurt the lower class, the poor, the infirm and those on social assistance. They cannot undertake the extreme lifestyle changes necessary to have any measurable effect. Not everyone is an investment banker or a lobbyist. The vast majority of Canadians are struggling, and the Liberal-NDP government needs to open its eyes and realize this.

I would like to take an opportunity to quickly highlight another time tested and true Liberal Party method of raising money, which the government has borrowed from its Chrétien era ancestors, and that is raiding and pillaging from the budget and pockets of the Canadian Armed Forces.

At a time when CAF members are using food banks and begging for donations to pay rent, resulting in morale, recruitment and retention dipping to an all-time low, what does the government do? It slashes their benefits and cuts a billion dollars from the defence budget, something it specifically said it would not do in the 2023 budget. This does not even touch on the billions of lapsed spending this Parliament approved, which was never used on the CAF, but rather was skimmed off into some other project. It is shameful and it is the exact opposite of what needs to be done to address the numerous severe crises facing our armed forces.

My riding is immense, stretching from Amherst Island, where Lake Ontario meets the St. Lawrence River, along the shores of the Bay of Quinte to Belleville and northward to the Hastings Highlands at the edge of Algonquin Park. Whenever I get a chance, I love to travel through the riding to meet the awesome and amazing people we have there.

During my conversations with my constituents, what I find, as I am sure many others in this place find, is that despite inflation, despite high taxes and despite rising interest rates, our people are resilient and determined to carry forward and make better lives for themselves and their families. However, its getting harder.

Whether it is at local fall fairs or celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Lennox & Addington County General Hospital volunteer auxiliary, it is our people who make us strong. We cannot lose sight

of the fact that it is these people who sent us here to do our jobs. It is our role to advocate for them.

My constituents are overwhelmingly hard-working farmers, forestry workers, tradesmen, seniors, small business owners and young families juggling the chaos of life. They pay their federal taxes, their provincial taxes and their municipal and education taxes. However, after eight years, they need a break from a government and a finance minister who believe big bureaucracy can spend us into prosperity using their hard tax dollars.

After eight years, they need a break from a Prime Minister who thinks he deserves over \$600,000 for three vacations on the backs of taxpayers. After eight years, they need a break from the free spending finance minister and her jet-setting boss, who travels around the world preaching virtues and values that he and his government fail to uphold.

Will the members opposite find it in their hearts to rein in the runaway spending of their leadership and give my constituents, their constituents and all Canadians a break? If not, will they please step aside and let a common-sense Conservative government show them how to balance a budget and tackle climate change and still deliver services effectively and efficiently to Canadians who so desperately need it to.

• (1315)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, earlier today, when the leader of the Conservative Party addressed the House, I pointed out the hypocrisy of the Conservative Party, when its members voted no for an NDP motion that would have removed the GST on home heating. I thought that was somewhat contradictory to what he was saying. There was no answer. Now the NDP have moved another proposal that would see the GST once again dropped.

What is more ironic is the fact that, in a reckless fashion, when I posed the question for the member, ultimately he said that they would get rid of that too. It is like policy on the fly, that he would get rid of the GST. However, when Conservatives were now provided the opportunity to do it again, what did the member for Battle River—Crowfoot do? He said no, that they did not want the amendment to the resolution.

Why is the Conservative Party recklessly flip-flopping all over the bloody place on this issue? It does not seem to have a direction regarding the environment.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Speaker, the New Democrats and the Liberals are deliberately spreading outright falsehoods. There was no such motion from the NDP to take the GST off home heating. In my opinion, the Liberals and their NDP dance partners need to wake up ahead of Monday's vote and, hopefully, understand that when something does not work, it is time to try a different approach.

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This is not about environmental science; this is about political science. The Liberal-NDP agenda is only about holding onto power.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have heard a lot that is fascinating, but I am really shocked to hear the Conservatives mention science, from their leader who is running on an anti-vax platform to members of a party who are climate change deniers. The Conservatives have no plan. They are making it up. They claim that we will have technology, but yet while we have EV investments in Canada, \$7 billion in Volkswagen, the member for Sarnia—Lambton said that all those cars would catch fire if we invested in them.

With respect to heat pumps, people in my region would die to get a heat pump, but they cannot get them through the useless Liberal program. We have the Conservatives who say that heat pumps do not work.

That is a party that while Kelowna was burning, its MP was out there saying they loved burning carbon for free. Her community was burning. The Conservatives have no climate plan. They are climate deniers. At least they should be truthful and stop pretending they know anything about science.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Speaker, the Conservatives do have a plan and when we face the electorate, people will see that. The carbon tax is an abject failure of the government. This is not a revenue-neutral plan. This is a Liberal plan that is incoherent, inconsistent and completely ridiculous across the entire country. Our policy will be clear: We will take the carbon tax off, no matter where people live, and we will work to make green energy more affordable, not traditional energy more expensive.

• (1320)

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, I come from Winnipeg. In the winter, it is one of the coldest cities on the planet. Imagine how much energy it takes to heat a home when it is -30°C or -40°C at night. In the midst of an affordability crisis, how dare the government give a break to one part of the country and not to Manitobans? I wonder if my colleague could comment on the inherent unfairness of that.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Speaker, we have to recognize that, after almost a decade of Liberal rule, the Prime Minister has undermined the economy, our national unity, security, sovereignty, safety from crime, trust in public institutions and any sense of patriotism, pride or optimism, everything a Prime Minister has a responsibility to protect. Affordability is a huge issue facing all Canadians.

I encourage and implore all members to listen to their constituents with an open ear to what their concerns are and come to this place and advocate on their behalf, which we are attempting to do through this motion.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as always, it is a wonderful opportunity for me to speak on behalf of the residents of my riding of Davenport in the debate we have before us today. The debate is on an opposition motion, which I will read out so people who watch this will know what I am talking about. It reads: “given that the government has announced a ‘temporary,

three-year pause’ to the federal carbon tax on home heating oil, the House call on the government to extend that pause to all forms of home heating.”

I do not think members will be surprised when I say that the government will not be supporting the motion, and I am very happy to explain why.

I will be sharing my time with the very hon. member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River.

Today's motion from the hon. Leader of the Opposition does not provide context on what is happening in Canada today around home heating, inflation and the federal government's aggressive plan to decarbonize and to meet both our 2030 and 2050 targets. Indeed, the way the motion is phrased, it is easy for any Canadian who is reading it to misunderstand what the federal government's actions are. In today's case, the motion is based on the misconception that all forms of home heating have the same cost to the consumer, which is not the case.

Late last week, the government took action to temporarily pause the application of the federal fuel charge to heating oil, not because it is a source of home heating but because it is the most expensive form of home heating. It is important to note that the vast majority of those who use heating oil are among the lowest-income Canadians today. We know that lower-income Canadians face particular hardship, particularly with the high cost of inflation today, and we know that there is little to no money for anything extra beyond the basic living costs. Low-income and rural residents have been trapped in a vicious cycle where they are stuck having to pay for the most expensive form of home heating, the cost of which is preventing them from investing in cleaner, more affordable forms of home heating.

I am pleased to let members know that, last week, the Prime Minister made an announcement on our new energy affordability package. I will go through some of the basics, because I think it is very relevant to the debate we are having today. The government is moving ahead with doubling the pollution price rebate, or what we call the “climate action incentive payment”, to our rural community, increasing it from 10% to 20% of the baseline amount, starting in April 2024. We know that people who live in rural communities face unique realities, and this measure will help put even more money back in the pockets of families dealing with higher energy costs because they live outside large urban cities.

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The federal government is also moving ahead with a temporary, three-year pause to the federal price on pollution on deliveries of heating oil in all jurisdictions where the federal fuel charge is in effect. It is important for me to stress that this would be applied right across Canada. This pause would begin in less than two weeks. While the fuel charge is already returned to consumers through the pollution price rebate, this temporary pause would save a household that uses heating oil \$250 at the current rate, on average, while the federal government works with provinces to roll out heat pumps and phase out oil for heating over the longer term.

A final part of the announcement is that the federal government has said it will work with provinces and territories to help Canadians save money over the long term by making it easier to switch to an electric heat pump to heat their home. We announced a number of measures that will be piloted first in Atlantic Canada, and we truly hope that other provinces and territories will sign on moving forward. The targeted action we are taking with our new energy affordability package will break that vicious cycle and save rural Canadians thousands of dollars a year over the long term while allowing us to continue to move as aggressively as possible towards our climate action targets and decarbonizing our economy.

The pause on the fuel charge on heating oil, in concert with our strengthened oil-to-heat-pump affordability program, will create a window of opportunity for people to make the switch to cheaper, cleaner heat. With our strengthened oil-to-heat-pump affordability program, we are partnering with provinces and territories to increase the amount of federal funding that eligible homeowners can receive for installing a heat pump, from \$10,000 to \$15,000, adding up to an additional \$5,000 in grant funding to match provincial and territorial contributions via codelivery arrangements. This would make the average heat pump and installation free for low- to medium-income households as we continue to minimize upfront costs and make federal programs even easier to access for all households.

• (1325)

On average, homeowners who switch from oil to cold-climate heat pumps in order to heat and cool their homes save up to \$2,500 per year on home energy bills. I think that is a very important point to keep stressing, because heating oil is one of the most polluting forms of home heat. Making this switch will not only help protect Canadians from the costs associated with climate change over the long term but also help to reduce emissions, which is what we are trying to do as we move toward our climate targets.

Make no mistake: these costs are real. As confirmed by science and research, the costs of anthropogenic climate change, which is primarily driven by carbon pollution, will be devastating. The Canadian Climate Institute concluded that climate change is already costing Canadian households billions of dollars, and that these costs are just the tip of the iceberg. In its 2020 report on climate risks and their implications for the insurance industry in Canada, the Insurance Bureau of Canada concluded that the average annual severe weather claims paid by insurers in Canada could more than double over the next 10 years, increasing from \$2.1 billion a year to \$5 billion a year, and must be accompanied by an increase in premiums.

These are billions of dollars in costs that will need to be borne by Canadians. That is why the government has put a price on carbon

pollution since 2019 to ensure that polluting is no longer free. Putting a price on carbon pollution reduces emissions and encourages innovation. It encourages reductions across the economy while giving households and businesses the flexibility to decide when and how to make changes. It creates incentives for Canadian businesses to develop and adopt new low-carbon products, processes and services.

To ensure that the system is both effective and affordable, the bulk of proceeds from the price on carbon pollution go straight back into the pockets of Canadians in provinces where the fuel charge applies, with eight out of 10 Canadians in these provinces continuing to get more money back through the climate action incentive payments than they pay as a result of the carbon price. In provinces where the federal system applies, a family of four can now receive up to \$1,500 a year under our plan. This means that our climate plan is both effective and affordable. Our new energy affordability package will make it even more so by supporting the transition to cleaner and cheaper forms of home heating.

I believe it is important to say that making it free to pollute will not save Canadians money. It will cost them money in the long run, while endangering Canadians and jeopardizing the natural environment we all depend on. There are better ways to make life more affordable for Canadians, without destroying the environment and incurring more devastating costs farther down the road. We can do so by delivering support where it is most effective and to those who need it most. This has guided our actions from day one. This includes supporting about 3.5 million families annually through the tax-free Canada child benefit, with families this year receiving up to \$7,437 per child under the age of six and up to \$6,275 per child aged six to 17. It includes increasing old age security benefits for seniors age 75 and older by 10% as of July 2022, which is providing more than \$800 in additional support to full pensioners. It also includes reducing fees for regulated child care by 50% on average, delivering regulated child care that will cost an average of just \$10-a-day by 2026.

These are the right ways to make life more affordable. Extending the fuel charge pause to sources that are far cheaper and less polluting than fuel oil, as proposed by today's motion, is not the right way to make life affordable. I therefore call on the House to reject today's motion, as the government continues working with its partners in all provinces and territories to explore further options to lower the cost of energy bills for all Canadians while also lowering emissions and fighting climate change.

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• (1330)

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to join in the debate today. In Saskatchewan, in 2021, total GHG emissions were 67.1 million tonnes. Saskatchewan's GHG emission intensity dropped 18% from 2005 to 2021 because of innovations like carbon capture and sequestration. We have stored over five million tonnes of carbon in carbon capture over the last five years.

My question for the hon. member is this. Seeing that Premier Moe has come out and said that Saskatchewan residents are not being treated fairly, obviously the expression “a Canadian is a Canadian” is not true for the Liberals anymore. What is her response to Premier Moe's statement that he will not collect carbon tax anymore, and to the fact that Saskatchewan has lowered emissions per capita more than any other province over the last five years?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, I will say a couple of things. The new affordability package we announced late last week really talks about ensuring that we provide more supports to rural Canadians, because we know that transitioning is costing them more money to reduce their costs. It is also an affordability plan that makes sure we are providing supports for those who have the highest-polluting type of energy, who tend to be our most vulnerable Canadians in society, as we are transitioning and decarbonizing our economy.

What I would say about new technologies is that they would encourage more investments by companies and provinces in new technologies so that we can continue to move as aggressively as possible to decarbonize and meet our 2030 and 2050 targets.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, Nunavut relies completely on diesel for energy for home heating and for everything, basically. All of its oil and gas is from the south; we do not have any that we extract on our own. Therefore, when we get that oil and gas, it is from companies in Canada. Canada's five biggest oil and gas companies made \$38.3 billion in combined profits last year alone.

Does the member agree that there needs to be a windfall profits tax on oil and gas so those funds can then be diverted to renewable energy that needs to be supported, such as Hydro-Québec's fibre-optic link project?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, it has been very disturbing to see that our oil and gas companies over the last few years, particularly during the years of the pandemic, have accumulated record profits, much of which went back to the U.S., and then have come back to Canada to ask for subsidies to decarbonize their production.

What I would say to the member is that I agree this is something we should look at. I am very disappointed with our oil and gas companies for not stepping up and doing their share.

Mr. Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am from a different part of Ontario, northern Ontario, where I think the carbon tax is very different.

Can the member tell us what the carbon tax exemptions coming out of the Atlantic mean to people in Toronto, and how they see this?

• (1335)

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, this is what I would say to the hon. member. I live in downtown west Toronto. That is where my riding of Davenport is. My constituents want the federal government to keep moving as aggressively and urgently as possible to reduce our emissions to meet our targets. I think they understand that the transition costs money. I think that they are very pleased with our plan for a price on pollution and that anything else we can do to continue to provide support to Canadians as we transition to meet our 2030 and 2050 targets would be supported.

Mr. Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the CPC motion is to drop the carbon tax not only on oil temporarily but also on all heating fuels temporarily.

Believe it or not, I actually have friends in the Conservative Party, who I think like me through my sometimes philandering political ways. My friends in the Conservative Party may be surprised to hear I actually approve of the carbon tax, and I am in favour of the announced Maritime exemptions.

The Leader of the Opposition took the rather unusual step of appearing on Thunder Bay TV a few days ago in order to tell the people of Thunder Bay that the members of Parliament for Thunder Bay are basically useless because we did not get the same kind of exemption for natural gas and propane as the people in the Maritimes got for oil. Now, people all across Canada get the exemption for oil.

In response to what the Leader of the Opposition had to say to this motion, let me start off by saying, and I think this is really important, most people know that 80% of people actually get back as much as, or more than, they pay in carbon tax. In addition, people in rural areas get 10% on top of that. Now, because of this announcement, that will be going up to 20%, including in northern Ontario. That is certainly justified because people in rural areas are often dependent on fossil fuels. They have further to commute, and they cannot resort to using mass transit. I am in favour of all those things.

Why is the present plan withholding carbon tax on only oil and not on other fuels? There are good reasons for that, and I am going to talk about four reasons.

First, the cost of heating one's house with oil is more expensive than with other fuels, particularly in the Maritimes. I want to mention some figures from a recent CBC report on the subject. Home heating oil in P.E.I., with the carbon tax, costs \$47.87 per gigajoule of heat energy. Propane in Ontario costs \$39.33 with the carbon tax. Natural gas in Saskatchewan is \$12.09.

To reiterate, that is a total of \$48 for oil and down to \$43 if we do not include the carbon tax, which we are removing. Propane is around \$39, and natural gas is around \$12. The bottom line is that people who heat with oil have to pay a lot more to heat their homes than people who heat with other fuels.

Second, there are other differences with oil. One is the fact that oil produces more greenhouse gases than other fuels. The best is natural gas, and the second best is propane. In terms of low-hanging fruit, the best bang for one's buck is to get people off oil and into a green transition.

Third, because the carbon tax is based on tonnes of CO₂ produced, and oil produces the most CO₂, the amount of carbon tax paid on oil is higher than on the other fuels.

Lastly, and this is an important one, when a lot of older homes were built, they had oil furnaces in them. As I grew up in Kaminitiquia, outside of Thunder Bay, we had an oil furnace.

In the years since the 1960s and 1970s, a lot of people have transitioned to cheaper forms of fuel. The people who have not are often the people who could not afford to transition, and that leaves us in the ironic situation that the people who are least able to afford the fuel will have to pay the most. Both my party and I are not unsympathetic to such people, and that is why we are dropping the carbon tax for a limited period of time for those people.

In terms of a long-term solution for people on oil, certainly heat pumps are part of the solution. As oil is dirtier, getting those people to transition to green sources of heating is certainly something that is desirable from an environmental perspective. We already have a program that offers \$10,000 for low- and middle-income families in order to buy heat pumps.

In addition to that, and this is the one difference in what people in the Maritimes are getting that we are not getting in Ontario, they are also getting an additional \$10,000, which is \$5,000 from the province and \$5,000 from the federal government, if they want to put in a heat pump. That is because those provinces agreed to do it. If Ontario wanted to do it, I am told we, too, in Ontario could.

I think this is important: The Conservative Party is not just suggesting a temporary pause on the carbon tax on heating fuels. It wants to get rid of the carbon tax altogether. It wants to axe the tax. Frankly, I do not agree with that, and I find it a little difficult to believe. Why does it want to get rid of the carbon tax when, in fact, a lot of Conservative economists actually think the carbon tax is one of the most efficient ways, if not the most efficient way, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

• (1340)

Furthermore, a lot of Conservative economists like it because it is a market-based intervention rather than a regulatory intervention. Some of the many, perhaps they are not Conservative, but they are not really left-leaning, institutions that approve of carbon tax and carbon pricing include the American Enterprise Institute, a centre-right American think tank.

In 2009, in response to the question, “[What is] the better approach to climate change?” Its answer was, “A direct tax placed on emissions of greenhouse gases. The tax would create a market price

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for carbon emissions and lead to emissions reductions or new technologies that cut greenhouse gases.”

Of note, in 2023, like some other Conservatives, it seems to have changed its position.

Some other groups, again, not exactly left-leaning institutions, that support carbon tax are the World Bank in 2023, the Business Council of Canada in 2019 and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce in 2021. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, in a 2018 endorsement, said, “Carbon pricing is probably the most effective mechanism of emissions reduction.”

Subsequent to this, it emphasized that the carbon tax should be flexible and competitive. Certainly with this, we are seeing some flexibility.

Even the Conservative Party, in the last election, ran on a platform that included a carbon tax. I know that members of the Conservative Party deeply believe in their convictions, but it appears that when the political winds blow another way, their convictions seem to blow away, too, and they have to come up with new convictions. Now, they actually oppose it.

I am somewhat shocked by the Conservative opposition to the carbon tax, particularly given what would seem to be the almost daily climate-related calamities we hear about, both in Canada and around the world. For example, a heat dome in B.C. recently killed over 600 people, mostly elderly people. Wildfires burned down the town of Lytton, B.C. and forced the evacuation of people in Alberta, Northwest Territories and—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There are continuous comments and responses coming from someone who has not been recognized to speak at this time, because it is not time. I would ask that member to please hold his thoughts and comments. He could write them down, and then once it is appropriate for questions and comments, he can attempt to stand up and to be recognized.

The hon. member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River has two and a half minutes left.

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Mr. Marcus Powlowski: We all remember, in the spring, when the smoke was so thick in Ottawa that we could not see more than a couple of blocks away. In other areas, flooding is a problem. Flooding has been a problem in B.C. West of my riding, we had record flooding at the Lake of the Woods and Rainy Lake areas last year. The list goes on. The polar ice caps are melting. Permafrost is melting. Island states in the South Pacific risk disappearing forever because of rising sea levels.

What is the Conservative Party's reply to all this? It wants to get rid of one of the government's best and most effective tools for dealing with climate change. I do not know about the opposition, but I feel a sense of duty to future generations, to my kids.

I have tons of kids. One of them is Miko. Miko is only three years old. Miko has done absolutely nothing to contribute to climate change, yet he and his generation are the ones who are going to be asked to pay the price of climate change, rather than our generation or the generation before, if we do things like axing the carbon tax.

What do the Conservatives want to do? They seem to want to do basically whatever it is going to take in order to get them elected the next time around. The Conservatives, in their 2021 convention, did not even want to agree to a statement saying they believed climate change existed.

I do not like the tax. Nobody likes taxes. However, the reality is most people get the tax back in terms of the rebate, and it does motivate people to change over to green sources of energy. Most Canadians do believe in climate change and want to do what is best for their kids and for future generations.

I, like most Canadians, perhaps begrudgingly, believe the carbon tax is absolutely the right thing to do. Therefore, I disagree with this motion.

• (1345)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, there was a lot of stuff in my hon. colleague's intervention. There were a lot of falsehoods.

I sit on the health committee with him, and I have a lot of respect for him as he is a family physician and offers a lot of great insight in our health committee. It is one thing for this colleague to stand up and read the talking points of the Liberal Party very well, but he is an educated man, and I expect him to do better, not just to read the talking points like a clapping seal.

He knows that the carbon tax is wrong and that it punishes Canadians. It raises the cost of growing food. It raises the cost of shipping food and, ultimately, it is Canadians who pay the price.

There is no greater evidence to that than when the Prime Minister walked back his carbon tax on Atlantic Canadians.

Why are they punishing the rest of Canada for the Atlantic Canadian MPs' failures?

Mr. Marcus Powlowski: Madam Speaker, I agree with my friend in the opposition on a lot of things, but I do disagree on this point.

In terms of talking points, I refuse to use the party's talking points. I write all my speeches myself.

I do believe in the carbon tax. I believe that by not continuing this carbon tax, which has been shown to be one of the most effective ways of dealing with climate change, the Canadian people and the people of the world would be punished. The opposition would be punishing them. They would continue to suffer because of climate change and because they are being denied one of the most useful and efficient tools to deal with climate change.

Yes, there is some short-term pain but for the long-term gain.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, we also believe that there should be a price on carbon and that we need to take climate action seriously, to take real action and to move rapidly.

The Liberals decided to do a carve-out that is only going to take pressure off Canadians in terms of home heating.

We hear the Conservatives say they are bringing forward a motion to help all Canadians. In B.C., that motion the Conservatives are bringing forward will not help British Columbians. It will not take any taxes off their home heating.

We put forward a motion to remove the GST on home heating for all Canadians. It was in the Conservative 2019 platform. They rejected our amendment to apply the GST removal to provinces that were not going to be impacted by their motion today.

Does my colleague believe it was either a) because it was not their idea that they rejected it, or was it b) because they actually do not believe in taking action on climate change, and that is why they brought forward this motion today that does not really help all Canadians?

Mr. Marcus Powlowski: Madam Speaker, I am assuming that he is asking me to interpret the motivation of the Conservative Party in bringing forward this motion. I cannot really comment on their motivation. As to removing the carbon tax on the GST, I do not really have much comment on that.

As for who is going to benefit from this, and why we removed the carbon tax on oil, we clearly did it because the people who pay the highest price for oil and who are the least able to afford it are people with oil furnaces.

The NDP should appreciate that we are targeting people who are the most adversely affected while maintaining our position that the carbon tax is, again, one of the most effective ways of dealing with climate change and of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Business of Supply

• (1350)

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we continue to see one party in the House spread misinformation. I heard a “falsehood” earlier, and that term is used in response to my colleague.

Whether it is the member for Sarnia—Lambton talking about battery fires with EVs, the member for Niagara West talking about ivermectin being used to combat COVID-19 or the suggestion by the member for Saskatoon—University, who discouraged Canadians from using heat pumps because they would not get home insurance, this misinformation, I think, does a lot of damage to discussions in the House. I wonder if my colleague can speak to the whole issue of relying on science to adopt a climate policy.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There are still individuals who are trying to contribute to the discussion, and they are not the ones who have the floor, so I would ask those members to please hold off.

The hon. member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River.

Mr. Marcus Powlowski: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for pointing out the very disturbing fact that so many people in society seem to be willing to question the scientific empirical method that basically has led, in many ways, to the advancement of society. I am not going to point the finger at anyone here, but the fact that so many people are willing to subscribe to conspiracy theories rather than follow science, which has, in so many ways, tremendously bettered the lives of many people in Canada, is certainly disturbing.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I recognize the member, I will advise him that I will have to interrupt him for question period.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Fundy Royal.

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to speak today. I will be splitting my time with the member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

The motion we are debating today is, “That, given that the government has announced a ‘temporary, three-year pause’ to the federal carbon tax on home heating oil, the House call on the government to extend that pause to all forms of home heating.” What could be more fair? This is a reasonable, common-sense and fair-minded motion that addresses the concerns that we are all hearing from our constituents as the cost of living continues to rise under the government.

I will repeat the motion, which says, “That, given that the government has announced a ‘temporary, three-year pause’ to the federal carbon tax on home heating oil, the House call on the government to extend that pause to all forms of home heating.” The motion is simply asking for fairness for all Canadians, regardless of the region or the way they choose to heat their homes.

All of us in this House and all Canadians, especially Atlantic Canadians, are acutely aware of what happened with the Prime Minister. He brought in a carbon tax that hurts working people, single mothers and families that are trying to make ends meet. It hurts people who get up early in the morning and drive to work in their vehicles. It hurts parents who take their kids to a hockey game. It

hurts families that are trying to put food on the table. It hurts senior citizens on fixed incomes who are trying to heat their homes.

All members have heard from their constituents about the damage that is being done by the carbon tax. The Conservative leader was about to hold an axe-the-tax rally in Atlantic Canada, in the province of Nova Scotia. I have been to rallies before where many people are very concerned about the carbon tax and are very enthusiastic about the Conservative Party’s plan to axe the carbon tax, to make life more affordable, to give Canadians back a little more of the money that they work so hard to earn.

The Prime Minister and his Atlantic members of Parliament have been steadfast in voting in favour of the carbon tax every single time. It is funny that when it was the constituents of Atlantic Liberal members who were suffering losses, those members did not stand up to the Prime Minister. Their constituents called them, and we know these calls are coming in. Their constituents said that they do not know how they will pay their heating bills or put gas in their cars, that they have to choose whether to buy groceries for their kids or heat their homes. We know that is happening. It is happening in Atlantic Canada. It is happening throughout Canada.

The Liberal members of Parliament in Atlantic Canada and the Prime Minister, when the tables were turned, and the numbers were not looking so good, realized that their jobs were on the line. Forget their constituents, when those members saw this could cost them something, it got their attention. The very day the Conservative leader was in Nova Scotia for an axe-the-tax rally, the Liberals crassly announced this completely transparent proposal to freeze the carbon tax on home heating oil only.

In my province of New Brunswick, 90% of homes are not heated with home heating oil. This does not apply to those people. We are hearing other Liberal members throughout the country asking about their constituents and what is going to happen to them in the next election. Every Atlantic Canadian knows that the Prime Minister and Liberal members have voted to make their lives tougher. Every one of us knows mortgage payments have gone up, that the cost of groceries has gone up, that the cost of fuel has gone up, that people are being taxed every step of the way. Conservatives can see right through this panicked reaction. If it were not so sad, it would be laughable.

Statements by Members

● (1355)

There is this increase the government has given to rural areas. Let us talk about rural New Brunswick. If someone is a tenured professor or a provincial bureaucrat living downtown in the city of Fredericton, the capital city of New Brunswick, they get the rural top-up. If someone lives in my riding in the village of St. Martins, with a population under 300, they could have a 100-kilometre round trip commute to work in Saint John. It is truly a rural community. Elgin, New Brunswick, has a population under 200. It is an over 100-kilometre commute to the city of Moncton for work. It is truly a rural community. They do not get the rural top-up. That is how twisted the Liberal proposal is and how little the Liberals understand the needs of New Brunswickers and the needs of rural Canadians.

As he watches his support drop to new lows, the Prime Minister is now trying to rebrand himself, very transparently, as a hero for Atlantic Canadians living in rural communities. This is a frantic attempt to slow down the support for our axing the tax movement. The Prime Minister announced a slight increase to the rural rebate but is applying it to urban centres. People living with the high cost of fuel, the high cost of groceries and the high cost of heating their homes are getting no relief whatsoever.

That is why it is heartening to see from coast to coast to coast different provinces standing up and saying that now is the time to axe the carbon tax, that now is the time to help people. Everyone recognizes this. Everyone recognizes it, except for the Prime Minister and his Liberal caucus.

I know this drives Liberals crazy, but how often have we all seen the Prime Minister get into his motorcade and jet off to some other country to preach about his virtue—

● (1400)

The Speaker: I hate to interrupt the hon. member for Fundy Royal in the middle of his speech, but it is now time for us to move to Statements by Members. The hon. member will have two minutes and 40 seconds left in his speech to continue at the next opportunity.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

BUDDY WASISNAME AND THE OTHER FELLERS

Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, is you 'appy?

We all know laughter is the best medicine and there is a group in my home province of Newfoundland and Labrador who have been making people laugh for decades.

Buddy Wasisname and the Other Fellers have entertained people across this country for 40 years. Through skits, songs and an amazing storytelling ability, audiences have left their sold-out shows with the best belly laughs imaginable. Professionals before even performing in this group, Kevin Blackmore, Wayne Chaulk and Ray Johnson are gifted musicians, songwriters, authors, vocalists

and true ambassadors for Newfoundland and Labrador's culture and heritage.

With 20 albums, three television specials and, most recently, Music Newfoundland's Lifetime Achievement Award and also being named to the Order of Canada, we are all lucky and honoured to call them ours.

Please join me in offering sincere congratulations to the members of this group on all their accomplishments.

* * *

APPLE SCHOOLS

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today in the House of Commons to recognize a tremendous accomplishment by an organization that is dear to my heart. Alberta-based APPLE Schools has once again been recognized as one of the top 100 global education innovations by HundrED, a Helsinki-based organization dedicated to identifying transformative and scalable education innovations worldwide.

APPLE Schools was selected from over 3,000 innovations and subjected to a comprehensive evaluation. This achievement not only highlights the profound effect the organization is having on the lives of children in Alberta and across Canada, but it is also internationally recognized for its significant impact and scalability in the education landscape.

This underscores the unwavering commitment of APPLE Schools to its vision of fostering healthy children in healthy schools. I congratulate the entire APPLE Schools team.

* * *

2023 PAN AMERICAN GAMES

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Milton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Team Canada continues to crush it at the 2023 Pan American Games in Santiago, Chile. The official slogan of this year's games is "Dream, Play, Win". That is exactly what Canadian athletes are doing. Team Canada has secured an impressive medal count, including 35 gold, 34 silver and 47 bronze medals as of today.

Milton's Collyn Gagne won a silver medal in the swimming pool in the 400 IM. From the Canadian track-cycling team, Milton's own Michael Foley led the team pursuit, with Sean Richardson, Chris Ernst, Carson Mattern and Campbell Parrish to gold and a new Pan Am record. The women's team with Devaney Collier, Kiara Lylyk, Fiona Mejendie and Ruby West established their dominance with gold in the women's team pursuit. Nick Wammes also won a gold in the team sprint with James Hedgcock and Tyler Rorke, while Sarah Orban, Jackie Boyle and Emy Savard also crushed it with a bronze.

Track cycling is really popular in Milton, because when we hosted the 2015 Pan Am games, Milton hosted the cycling, and our velodrome is a legacy of those games.

*Statements by Members***CARBON TAX**

The 2023 Pan Am Games closing ceremony is this weekend, on November 5, but the Para Pan Am Games will run from November 17 to 26.

I congratulate all the athletes. Go, Canada, go!

* * *

[*Translation*]

**20TH ANNIVERSARY OF ACTION-CHÔMAGE
CÔTE-NORD**

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with great appreciation that I rise today to mark the 20th anniversary of Action-Chômage Côte-Nord. I want to thank Line Sirois, the board of directors and all those who supported this organization over the past two decades. Their work is essential, not only because they help people in need on the north shore, but also because, through their actions and representations, they keep bursting the Ottawa bubble and reminding us why we were elected, and that is to speak on behalf of our constituents.

Tourism, fisheries and forestry workers support families, businesses and communities and help to occupy more of this vast land where we want to live. These workers are entitled to respect and dignity. Action-Chômage Côte-Nord gives them that. They have the right to be able to put food on the table all year round. They have the right to comprehensive EI reform. Together, we will give them that, and not 20 years from now. I wish Action-Chômage Côte-Nord a happy anniversary.

* * *

• (1405)

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has always been a country that has needed immigrants to grow our economy. They enrich our country from coast to coast to coast. Our diversity has become our strength, with Canada continuing to be ranked as one of the top countries in the world to live.

I am proud to let this House know that as of this week we have formally welcomed 40,000 Afghans to Canada, a promise we made and have now fulfilled. This is a huge achievement, as the rights and freedoms of the Afghan people, especially women and girls, have sadly gone backwards.

We have also made changes to our international student program to ensure that talented students who choose to study in Canada have a positive experience and that we close loopholes that have led to international students being exploited by bad actors.

I am pleased that yesterday we announced our immigration levels that reaffirmed that Canada continues to be open to newcomers, who enrich our country with their hard work and talent.

Diversity is indeed Canada's strength, and we are a better and stronger country because of the extraordinary people who choose Canada as their home.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a desperate, flailing Prime Minister admitted that his carbon tax was punishing Canadians and making life unaffordable when he decided to remove the carbon tax from some but not all Canadians. This weekend, the minister from Long Range Mountains, Newfoundland and Labrador, admitted that this exemption was not granted to all Canadians across the country because they do not all vote Liberal, pitting Canadians from one region against those from another.

What about the Liberal minister from Edmonton Centre? What about the member for Calgary Skyview? Are these two Liberal MPs from Alberta so incompetent and so ineffective that they could not get an exemption for Alberta? Do they agree with the minister that Alberta should pay a higher carbon tax than Atlantic Canadians?

After eight years, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. Even Rachel Notley thinks Alberta deserves this exemption.

However, there is still a chance. On Monday, the NDP-Liberal government can vote for our plan to pause the tax on heating until Canadians have a chance to vote for a common-sense Conservative government that will axe the tax for good for all Canadians.

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HUMAN EXPLORATION ROVER CHALLENGE

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in Surrey—Newton, a team of 10 science-loving students from Princess Margaret Secondary have rocketed into the NASA-backed Human Exploration Rover Challenge, a competition taking place in April at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center located in Alabama.

Students Omar Arain, Mehul Bhanot, Jasmeet Dhaliwal, Parneet Dhesi, Haardik Garg, Alex Gupta, Victor Gupta, Manroop Padda, Jeevan Sandhu and Harmeet Sond are members of the only Canadian team selected for the contest. I am very proud of these exceptional young leaders, and I urge all members of the House to join me in wishing them the very best in the upcoming competition.

* * *

RECOGNITION OF PARAMEDIC SERVICES

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this fall, five paramedics from Sudbury and Manitoulin were recognized by the Governor General for their outstanding service. I want to sincerely thank and highlight Annik Thibault-Simard, Gaetan Lagrandeur, Lyndsay Fearnley-Ungar, Shawn-Eric Poulin and Monic Rochon-Shaw. It is an honour to recognize these individuals for their extraordinary service.

Statements by Members

Paramedics play a crucial role in Canada's health care system, providing vital emergency care and saving countless lives every day. These highly trained professionals are the first responders on the scene, delivering immediate medical attention to individuals in critical situations. Paramedics bring critical care right to the doorsteps of those in need, often being the difference between life and death.

Let us recognize and appreciate the significant contributions paramedics make to the health care and well-being of Canadians every day.

* * *

[Translation]

CARBON TAX

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this government, Friday's announcement added insult to injury. Quebeckers are feeling scorned. The Prime Minister needs to announce that he is completely eliminating the second carbon tax, which adds as much as 20¢ to the price of a litre of gas.

This tax has the Bloc's support. It is costly to vote for the Bloc Québécois. The impact of Bloc-Liberal inflationary spending is catastrophic for the country as a whole. The cost of heating, food production and transportation is skyrocketing.

At home in Beauce, parents call me every weekend, criticizing this government's incompetence. Everything costs more. Of the organizations supported by Moisson Beauce, 71% said they had run out of food from their supply sources.

This Bloc-Liberal coalition is completely out of touch with reality. These carbon taxes have a direct impact on Canadians. The Prime Minister wants to further divide Canadians by creating two classes of citizens.

It is time to bring back a government that will use common sense: a Conservative government.

* * *

• (1410)

[English]

POPPIES

Mr. Paul Chiang (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I stand today to emphasize the profound significance of the poppy in our great nation. The red poppy, a symbol of remembrance, has served as a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made by our brave servicemen and servicewomen throughout history.

The tradition of wearing the poppy was inspired by the famous poem *In Flanders Fields*, which was written by Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae during World War I. It is a small yet powerful token that connects us to our veterans and their enduring legacy.

As we wear our poppies this year, let us not forget the sacrifices of our veterans and the ongoing commitment to ensuring their well-being. The poppy is not merely a symbol. It is a call to action, urging us to support and remember those who have served and continue to serve.

May we always hold the poppy in our hearts as a symbol of remembrance, gratitude and unwavering support for our veterans. Let us not forget.

* * *

CARBON TAX

Mr. Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Prime Minister, Canadians know he is just not worth the cost.

I recently did a survey at all the fall fairs in the Hamilton area asking people how they were coping with the skyrocketing cost of living under the NDP-Liberal government. The results were overwhelming. Home heating was one of the top concerns.

Fast-forward to last week, when a desperate Prime Minister temporarily paused the carbon tax on heating but only for some Atlantic Canadians. What happened to “a Canadian is a Canadian”? Well, the minister from Long Range Mountains clued us in. The exemption was not granted to all Canadians because they do not vote Liberal. Why, then, were the Liberal MPs from Hamilton not effective in getting a carve-out for those struggling with the cost of home heating in our community, most of whom heat with natural gas?

Canadians see through these Liberal gimmicks. The common-sense Conservative plan is simple: no gimmicks, no temporary measures, take the tax off and keep the heat on.

* * *

CARBON TAX

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the NDP-Liberal government is getting desperate. Last week, the Prime Minister announced his plan to push the pause button on his unaffordable carbon tax, but for only 3% of Canadians. Over the weekend, a Liberal minister went on TV and said that Canadians who do not vote Liberal will be punished with higher taxes.

What about the Liberal MP from North Bay and the minister from Thunder Bay—Superior North? Why are they so incompetent and ineffective in getting an exemption for folks hurting from North Bay to Thunder Bay? The Prime Minister will pay any price to divide Canadians. He is not worth the cost.

The common-sense Conservative promise is simple: no gimmicks and no temporary measures. We will axe the unaffordable tax for good. We will take off the tax and keep on the heat.

It is time for these NDP-Liberals to decide if they will stand behind the Prime Minister or stand with their constituents. It is time to bring home lower heating prices.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

JOSEPH MAINGOT

Hon. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour the passing of a great Canadian from Ottawa—Vanier, Joseph Maingot.

Mr. Maingot was a true servant of democracy, as a law clerk and parliamentary adviser to the House of Commons from 1971 to 1982, and as a member of the Law Reform Commission of Canada.

He frequently visited the Library of Parliament, by bicycle, until age 91. His writings on parliamentary privilege, immunity and inviolability remain essential for our work in the House and continue to be widely cited.

He travelled to Yemen, Kyrgyzstan and East Timor to support the emerging parliamentary democracies and he served as an electoral observer in Ukraine during the Orange Revolution.

Joseph Maingot leaves a legacy of intellectual rigour, social commitment and service to democracy.

We offer our deepest condolences to his family and loved ones.

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[English]

BIOSPHERE RESERVES

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the world will observe the second International Day for Biosphere Reserves, designated by UNESCO in collaboration with the world network of biosphere reserves.

On Tuesday, we had an early start, as the all-party climate caucus, in partnership with the Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association, gathered for the third annual biosphere regions day on the Hill. We celebrated the immense contribution of Canada's 19 biosphere reserves to environmental conservation and sustainability.

My riding of Courtenay—Alberni is blessed with two biosphere reserves, the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust and the Mount Arrowsmith biosphere region. I know that all members who are fortunate to have a biosphere reserve in their ridings will join me in paying tribute to the important work of the biosphere region movement in our country. Biosphere reserves are of critical importance, conducting participatory research and supporting environmental, social, cultural and economic sustainability.

* * *

● (1415)

[Translation]

WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP DAY

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, every year, on November 19, we celebrate Women's Entrepreneurship Day, which seeks to give women and girls the means to be active economic participants in our society. It is also an opportunity to celebrate those who have paved the way and who continue to inspire an entire generation of women.

There is one woman in particular who inspires me with her resilience and dedication and I would like to pay tribute to her. My

mother started a business 30 years ago when I was just a few months old. Over the years she has overcome obstacles, doubts, stress and financial pressure to build a business that reflects who she is and helps women feel good about themselves, to thrive and reach their full potential. She managed to do all of that while being an extraordinary mother and an exceptional mentor. Nothing stops her, not even retirement.

Mom, thank you for pushing the glass ceiling and inspiring other women to take a leap into the world of entrepreneurship. Mom, I love you and I am proud of you.

* * *

[English]

CARBON TAX

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, winter is here, and with rising costs, there is not one family that is not being left out in the cold. After eight years of the Liberal government, Canadians are struggling to heat their homes as the carbon tax is about to quadruple, costing Canadians more money they do not have. The Prime Minister knows this because he just paused the carbon tax for Atlantic Canadians, proving that he is just not worth the cost.

What about the rest of Canada? What about Prince Edward County, Quinte West and Belleville? What about my wife's old riding of Thunder Bay? What about the NDP leader's Vancouver riding of Burnaby South? Do they not deserve to be treated as equal citizens? Is a Canadian not a Canadian?

Our leader has introduced a motion to take off the carbon tax on all home heating in Canada this winter so Canadians can keep the heat on. On Monday, there might be the most important vote the NDP leader has ever had. Will he vote with common-sense Conservatives to keep the tax off so that Canadians can keep the heat on, or will he continue to sing along with the tone-deaf Prime Minister?

* * *

CANADA-UKRAINE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the House was scheduled to debate Bill C-57, the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. Instead, the Conservative Party played procedural games by moving a concurrence motion that prevented debate on this important piece of legislation.

In recent months, the leader of the Conservative Party has become silent on Ukraine. He has never advocated for military, humanitarian or economic support for Ukraine, has never called out Russia for its acts of genocide against the Ukrainian people and has never raised the issue in Parliament, except for false narratives about the war, including the statement that it does not contribute to inflation in Canada.

Oral Questions

I call on the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada to put aside the games, let us debate Bill C-57 and pass this important piece of legislation.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, even the Liberals agree that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. After his flip-flop on the carbon tax, his former environment minister Catherine McKenna said that the Prime Minister broke her heart. She is calling on him to flip-flop on his flip-flop.

Future leader Mark Carney says that he is against the flip-flop and has the support of Gerald Butts. Now Liberal Senator Percy Downe is saying that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost and should resign.

Does the Prime Minister still have the confidence of the Liberal Party?

• (1420)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working hard every day to deliver results for Canadians by fighting climate change, by creating supports for Canadians, by lowering the cost of living, by being there to build more housing, by being there to stand up for minorities, and by ensuring that the economy works for everyone.

We will continue to be there. We will continue to do it as a team. The Liberal Party is fundamentally about helping Canadians build a better future. Instead of saying that everything is broken, we are here to work hand in hand with Canadians. We look forward to doing that every day.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he did not say whether his party supports him or not. That is interesting.

Senator Percy Downe said that this government is not serious about the economy, that it simply does not care, and that it would throw money at anything that crossed its mind. The resulting interest rate hikes, increasing cost of living and huge debt do not seem to concern it. Even the Liberals agree that this Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

Is Mark Carney the only one who can save the Liberal government?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, everyone is fully aware that we made a choice that the Conservatives disagree with. We made the choice to invest in Canadians because confident countries invest in their people.

While they have been preaching austerity and cuts, we have been there to provide \$10-a-day child care across the country. We have

been there to provide the Canada child benefit. We have been there to invest in public transit and housing. We have been there to help our seniors and students. These are all programs that the Conservative Party voted against. They continue to vote against dental care for children. They continue to vote against helping Canadians in need.

We will continue to be there for Canadians every day.

* * *

[*English*]

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when asked why the Prime Minister paused the pain of the carbon tax for only some people, the Liberal rural affairs minister said that other people should have elected Liberal MPs if they wanted to be able to afford heating their home or feeding their kids. The Prime Minister has not denounced that viewpoint. In fact, he is doubling down on punishing people elsewhere.

Liberal MPs in Sudbury, Thunder Bay, North Bay and Sault Ste. Marie have starving constituents who are worried about the heat going out as well. Will they have a free vote on my motion to keep the heat on and take the tax off for everyone this Monday?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a government, we are phasing out the use of coal because it is dirty and bad for the environment. We are now moving on phasing out home heating oil because it is dirtier, more expensive and is disproportionately relied upon by lower-income Canadians who do not have other choices.

Over half a million Ontarians heat their homes with home heating oil. This program and this approach will not just give them a break, in working with the Government of Ontario, but will deliver heat pumps for Canadians right across the country. I invite Saskatchewan to work with us as well.

We need to get Canadians off home heating oil and that is what we are going to do.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with an answer like that he is clearly not worth the cost.

The Prime Minister did not answer the question as to whether or not his MPs would have a free vote, which begs the question whether his NDP MPs will get a free vote.

The Saskatchewan NDP has just voted to endorse my motion to give equal tax-free heat to all Canadians. That is the position of the NDP in B.C., Manitoba and Alberta as well. The question is whether the NDP will vote against its cash-strapped constituents in favour of the Prime Minister.

Could the Prime Minister tell us if this vote is part of the coalition agreement or does the NDP have the freedom to vote for its constituents?

Oral Questions

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition wants to talk about places across the country. Let us talk about them: 20,000 Saskatchewanians heat their homes with home heating oil, 50,000 Albertans do and about 100,000 British Columbians do. That is dirty, it is more polluting and it is more expensive, particularly for the predominantly lower-income families that rely on this.

That is why we are moving forward to replace them with heat pumps. We are working with the provinces to deliver free heat pumps for lower-income families so they can save money and fight pollution at the same time.

This is about helping Canadians as we fight climate change, for which the Leader of the Opposition has no plan.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is helping the Prime Minister save his political bacon, and we know that because he has now admitted that his carbon tax is not worth the cost of oil for some people in some regions. My motion simply says that all Canadians should get the same break. After all, a Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister indicated that he wants to have a carbon tax election on his plan to quadruple the tax to 61¢ a litre on heat, gas and groceries. Therefore, will he confirm whether he considers my motion to keep the heat on and take the tax off a confidence vote?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, home heating oil is dirtier, more expensive and more relied on by lower-income Canadians across the country. Across the country, 1.3 million households rely on home heating oil. That is why we are working with the provinces that want it to replace them for free with heat pumps. That is what this is about.

The Leader of the Opposition is making a serious mistake if he thinks Canadians are not concerned about the environment or that Canadians do not know that protecting the environment does go hand in hand with creating good jobs and prosperity for them across the country. That is a conversation I look forward to continuing to have over the next two years with Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Government of Quebec announced its immigration targets, in other words, how many people Quebec believes it will be able to integrate and teach French, and the federal government did the same. The two governments are not at all on the same page.

In the meantime, however, I asked all members, including the Minister of Immigration and the Prime Minister, whether they would consult Quebec before setting the 2024 targets. The Prime Minister said yes and the Minister of Immigration said yes.

Am I to understand that the targets announced yesterday are temporary and that they will speak to Quebec?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague knows full well, for years we have been engaging with the provinces, including Quebec, to talk about immigration, their wishes, their capacity and the future of immigration across the country. Quebec, of course, sets its own immigration targets.

Our immigration plan will continue to strengthen the system and extend the benefits of immigration to communities in Quebec and across the country. We also provide hundreds of millions of dollars every year to help integrate newcomers, including French integration.

We will always work hand in hand with Quebec and the other provinces when it comes to immigration.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that is the way it has always been, in health care too. The government claims that it has talked to the provinces, but it never really listens to them or makes any changes based on what they say.

However, yesterday, the government voted and said yes. It said that it would consult Quebec before setting the immigration targets that the minister was in the process of announcing. For consistency's sake, the government ought to talk to someone in Quebec City because, if it does not, it needs to realize that Quebec will no longer be able to ensure that immigrants who settle there are taught French. In other words, the government will be reducing Quebec's weight within the Canadian federation.

We will draw our own conclusions.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I just said, every year, we provide Quebec with hundreds of millions of dollars to help teach its immigrants French. Quebec sets its immigration targets, and we will always continue to work with Quebec. We have been working with Quebec on immigration for months and years, and we will continue to do so.

Yes, we supported the motion that said that we will continue to talk to Quebec and all the other provinces when establishing targets. We will continue to do that in a responsible, reasonable and ambitious manner for the future of our country.

* * *

• (1430)

TAXATION

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the weather is getting colder. Heating costs are putting pressure on families' already tight budgets, but this government says that it is only willing to help people if they voted Liberal. That is shameful. The NDP's plan to eliminate the GST on home heating would put more money back into everyone's pockets across the country, while also protecting the environment. A few minutes ago, the Conservatives once again said no to this NDP proposal.

Will the Liberals eliminate the GST on home heating to help families who are already struggling?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that my hon. colleague truly cares about the environment and climate change and that he wants to help Canadians deal with the cost of living at the same time. That is why he understands that, for the more than 100,000 households in British Columbia that rely on heating oil, this is a big challenge. It is a big challenge for their wallets, as well as for the environment. We have an approach that will replace these oil furnaces in British Columbia with heat pumps, which will help families with affordability and help the planet. I look forward to continuing to work with the member.

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal member for Kings—Hants said we should do our homework when it comes to heat pumps.

Who did do his homework? Perry from Smithers, B.C. He is a teacher, after all. For a year and a half now he has been trying to jump through all these government hoops to get a \$5,000 heat pump rebate.

I talked to the folks at Efficiency Canada, and they told me, unequivocally, that the government's heat pump program does not work for people on low incomes.

Will the Prime Minister commit to offering the same deal he just offered Atlantic Canadians for heat pumps to all Canadians who heat with fossil fuels?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yes, that is exactly what we are doing. We are offering the same program for heat pumps that we have with Nova Scotia, P.E.I. and Newfoundland and Labrador to all provinces across the country. All they have to do is join us in making sure we can deliver heat pumps, for free, to low-income Canadians. There are 1.3 million households across the country, half a million in Quebec, a quarter of a million in Ontario and tens of thousands across the provinces, that need those heat pumps to clean the air and to save their wallet some money.

That is exactly what we are doing. I look forward to working with B.C. and all other provinces on this program.

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CARBON PRICING

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said Tuesday that there would absolutely not be more carbon tax exemptions under his watch, but Canadians struggling with the high cost of gas, groceries and heating their home want to have a word about that.

After eight years of the Liberal-NDP government, the Prime Minister is only giving relief to a lucky 3% of the country, specifically where his poll numbers are in the gutter. He has already admitted that the carbon tax makes life harder.

Will the Prime Minister let his MPs have a free vote on our motion on Monday to keep the heat on and take the tax off for all Canadians?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I noted the phrase, “a lucky 3%”.

These are people who pay two to four times the cost of natural gas. These are folks whose costs went up by 75% during 2022. These are not the lucky 3%.

We have focused on people who actually have a strong affordability challenge because of the inordinate cost of heating oil. We have put in place a measure that would ensure affordability, but will do so in a manner that fights climate change. Truly, “a lucky 3%”, really?

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is exactly what the Prime Minister does when he is desperate and flailing, not confident about his leadership.

Canadians in other parts of the country now have one more reason to regret voting for Liberals, like in northern Ontario where a minister at the cabinet table has sold out her own neighbours and left them out in the cold.

Will she vote with those who sent her to this place and scrap the tax on all home heating or will she vote with the Prime Minister and remind Thunder Bay that she is just not worth the cost?

• (1435)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, do we know what she will do? She will stand with the folks who are having an affordability challenge related to heating oil. It will apply in every province and territory in this country where provinces step up to co-deliver with the federal government. It is a plan that will address the short-term issues for those folks who are most pressed, but it will do so in a manner that will save significant dollars in the long term. It will address it in a manner consistent with fighting the existential threat of climate change.

I say this again in the House: It is a shameful thing that, in this country, we still have a political party that does not believe in the reality of climate change and has no plan to address it.

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is actually shameful is how the Liberals continue to divide Canadians every chance they get. Now it is about heat. Sigi from Dufferin just paid \$100 in carbon tax to heat his home for one month. In the Maritimes, Sigi would pay zero. That is dividing Canadians. Sigi is on a fixed income. He cannot afford it. They are basically saying he should freeze in the dark.

Why do the Liberals not stop dividing Canadians? Will they take the tax off so Sigi can keep the heat on?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only folks in this chamber who are dividing Canadians are from the Conservative Party of Canada. We are focused on addressing a significant affordability challenge. Heating oil costs two to four times what natural gas does, and it appreciated by 75% in 2022. It is time that the Conservatives stop playing partisan games and focus on good public policy that addresses the critical issues that Canadians are facing, but in a manner that protects affordability and addresses climate change. Once again, I say it is shameful that they have no policy to address climate change.

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a minister making \$300,000 a year, who gets driven around in a limo, says it is a political stunt when I talk about a retired senior who cannot pay the carbon tax. This behaviour by the Liberals is disgusting.

Not all Liberals have to behave that way; on Monday, there will be a common-sense Conservative motion to axe the tax. They do not have to behave like a limousine Liberal minister. They can stand up for their constituents. They can vote to take the tax off, so people like Sigi can keep the heat on.

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am in the awkward position of contradicting my colleague in the House. In fact, on the other side of the House, they do have a plan. Some of them owe their seats to that plan. It was a carbon tax plan. It was the Erin O'Toole Christmas wish book of green things that the Conservative Party will pick out just in time for the holiday season. Once again, with the price on pollution, we put cold hard cash back into the pockets of Canadians, not the O'Toole Christmas wish book.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Order. Colleagues, I am sure all members would like to hear the question.

The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to lay out some facts. The carbon tax affects the price of food in Quebec. The second carbon tax will apply in Quebec. The Bloc Québécois wants to radically increase the Liberal taxes on fuel and food. Quebeckers are turning to food banks in record numbers every month. The Prime Minister announced a break on the carbon tax, but only for the Atlantic provinces. It is unfair, it is illogical, and it is enough.

Will the Liberals vote with us in favour of our common-sense motion to get rid of the carbon tax on all forms of heating for all Canadians?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, the price on pollution puts more money in the pockets of people in the middle class. Second, the price on pollution reduces pollution. Third, climate change is real. We know the Conservative leader does not believe in what I just said. Would my esteemed colleague be willing to invite him to Baie-Saint-Paul to see the effects of climate change and meet with my former colleagues from Université Laval for a crash course on why a price on pollution is important?

• (1440)

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can tell my colleague from Quebec that his Atlantic colleagues had a different take on what he calls the price on pollution. What we saw in the Atlantic provinces is that people were being financially squeezed. They were forced to ask the Prime Minister to flip-flop, change his policy and cancel the carbon tax.

What we are asking him to do now is just to be fair to all Canadians, including Quebeckers. Let us not forget that the federal carbon price is driving up the carbon market, which has doubled in the past two years. I mention this in passing to my hon. friends in the Bloc Québécois. Can the Prime Minister confirm that, on Monday, he will be voting with the Liberal members, and perhaps the NDP gang, to scrap the carbon tax across Canada for heating?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I count not just one, two or three members of the Leader of the Opposition's caucus who supported a price on pollution in Quebec, but four. How many others are hiding and have changed their minds since he took over as leader of the Conservative Party?

My message to them is to not be afraid of their leader and to respect their own opinion.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, at 11:30 a.m., the Quebec minister of immigration, francization and integration said she had not had any discussions on immigration targets with her federal counterpart. At 3:30 p.m., the federal minister in question voted in favour of a motion calling on him to review the targets, after consultation with Quebec and the provinces, based on their integration capacity. At 4 p.m., he released the new targets for 2024. If the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship processed applications as fast as the minister reneges on his votes, the two-million-case backlog would be a thing of the past.

Will he abide by his vote, consult Quebec and review his targets?

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Chiang (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member opposite has brought this up. I am proud to stand in the House today and re-echo that, yesterday, we tabled our new immigration levels plan for 2024-26. Our plan will ensure that immigration continues to grow our economy and to provide stabilized growth, while balancing pressure on housing, infrastructure and essential services.

Immigration is important to Canada, and we will continue to embrace newcomers and ensure that they have the support they need in their new communities.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec confirmed that no consultation took place. More to the point, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship admitted it yesterday at his press conference. He explained to journalists that he had spoken to Christine Fréchette about foreign workers and refugees, but never about the 500,000 immigrants per year.

The minister promised to consult Quebec before setting his targets, but he confirmed that he had not done so. When is he going to get back to work and finish the job?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague knows full well that Quebec sets its own immigration thresholds in consultation with various stakeholders and organizations. It does so according to its own needs. Obviously, when we set our targets, we discuss them with Quebec.

What I find odd is that the Bloc Québécois is never satisfied. Its members are always trying to pick a fight. They are upset when we vote against their motion. Now they are upset because we are voting in favour of their motion. They come off as a bunch of Grouchy Smurfs.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I am sure everyone would like to hear the question from the hon. member for Saint-Jean.

The hon. member for Saint-Jean.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in a response to a question from the Bloc Québécois yesterday, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship said that questioning Quebec's capacity to integrate immigrants showed bad faith and was essentially a refusal to listen to what is going on.

Let me tell members what shows bad faith: setting record immigration thresholds without even trying to determine our integration capacity. Let me tell members a refusal to listen really is: refusing to consult Quebec. "Bad faith and a refusal to listen" could have been the title of the plan the minister unveiled yesterday.

Will the minister scrap his plan and consult Quebec in order to present thresholds that are based on reality?

• (1445)

Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and to the Minister of Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the Bloc Québécois wants to pick a fight with the federal government. Our government is making investments in French, even in Quebec. We have invested tens of millions of dollars in additional funding as part of our action plan for French integration.

We have also given the province of Quebec \$500 million to invest in immigration each year. Does the leader of the Bloc Québécois disagree with giving Quebec that money? We have a plan to support Quebec and operate with investments in French integration across the country and in Quebec as well.

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, we will be voting on a common-sense Conservative motion to axe the carbon tax on home heating for every single Canadian. It is snowing in southern Alberta; it is cold. It should not be a luxury to heat our homes, yet when the Prime Minister quadruples his carbon tax, Mountainview Farms in my riding will be paying \$480,000 a year in carbon taxes. The Prime Minister says that there is no carbon tax relief for Alberta.

However, on Monday, the Liberal members for Calgary Skyview and Edmonton Centre have a chance to defend Alberta and vote with us to end the tax and keep the heat on. Will they do it?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend across the aisle is forgetting some facts. One is that the price on pollution works in such a way that there is a rebate, where 80% of Canadians get more money back. In fact, an Alberta family of four gets \$386 per quarter. It is more than what people pay in terms of the price on pollution.

The pause for three years for home heating oil is based on the specific issue around the cost associated with home heating. It is done in a manner that is consistent with continuing to fight climate change, which is what a price on pollution is all about.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the NDP will have the opportunity to show who they work for: the Prime Minister or Canadians who want the tax off and the heat on. It is cold in Edmonton, yet Edmontonians are being penalized as a result of this NDP-Liberal government's punitive carbon tax on home heating.

Is the Liberal minister from Edmonton going to order the NDP MP for Edmonton Griesbach to once again vote against his constituents, or will he be permitted to vote with Conservatives to axe the tax and keep the heat on?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we work each and every day for all Canadians, Canadians who live in every province and territory in this country. We do so in a manner that ensures that we are addressing critical issues in a thoughtful way and making good public policy decisions. We are not playing the partisan games that are played by the members opposite.

At the end of the day, we are focused on ensuring that we address legitimate affordability concerns in a manner that is consistent with addressing climate change. Once again, I say it is shameful to have a bunch of climate deniers on that side of the House.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last year, the NDP voted against our common-sense Conservative motion to scrap the carbon tax on home heating. The Liberals have admitted that these taxes are not worth the cost after they exempted Atlantic Canada, but, once again, they left Albertans out in the cold.

Is the Liberal minister from Edmonton going to order the NDP MP for Edmonton Strathcona to vote against the wishes and interests of her constituents, or will she be permitted to axe the tax to keep the heat on?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there were \$340 million in damages from storms in Ontario, over \$720 million from wildfires in B.C., over \$300 million from storms in Alberta and the Prairies and over \$170 million from flooding in Nova Scotia. This is what climate change has cost Canadians just this summer, and these are insured costs. The total costs are three times that.

The climate-denying Conservative Party of Canada wants us to believe that climate change is not costing Canadians anything. It is costing Canadians hundreds of millions of dollars every year.

* * *

• (1450)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, more than 400 Canadians are trapped in Gaza, including Ahmed Alheluo of Edmonton, who is recovering from surgery and unable to transport himself. First, he was told by Canadian authorities to stay where he is, then to evacuate to Rafah, then to stay put again as Canadians may not be allowed to cross into Egypt. While the government ignores calls for a ceasefire, Ahmed is struggling to survive, and today we have learned that not a single Canadian is on the evacuation list.

Why is Canada not advocating for the lives of Canadians in Gaza, and when will the Liberals call for a ceasefire?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the humanitarian situation in Gaza is dire. Many Canadians are worried about their family and friends.

Yesterday, we saw the first wave of foreign nationals leave. I want to reassure Canadians that we are in regular close contact with Egypt and Israel, to push for Canadians to leave as soon as possible. We continually try to reach all Canadians, permanent residents and their family members to give them the latest information. This is why we continue to call for humanitarian pauses to get Canadians out and to get humanitarian aid in, and for all hostages to be released.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with the cost of living crisis, Canadians cannot afford the therapy they need. If they try for public care, wait-lists are months to years long. There is no postpandemic recovery plan to help people with

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their mental health. So many people are suffering in silence. This is not acceptable, especially when the Liberals have yet to deliver on the \$4.5-billion mental health transfer. For a government that claims to champion mental health, it sure does delay and disappoint. Breaking this promise will cost lives.

Will the Liberals change course and deliver the mental health transfer to get people the help they so urgently need?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague's commitment to mental health is something I share deeply and profoundly. In his home province of British Columbia, the agreement we made to see, over the next three years, a historic amount of money flow to help in all aspects of health care, including mental health, was exceptionally important. We are committed to seeing it not only in British Columbia but also across the country.

We have much more work to do in all aspects of mental health. This is going to require a whole-of-government approach, and it really requires all of us to think about how we can do everything we can to treat each other better and put mental health at the front of our workplaces and our lives.

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HOUSING

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, people in my riding of West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country and right across the country are grappling with the housing crisis. Now, more than ever, they need more affordable housing options like co-ops.

In my home province of British Columbia, 275 co-ops provide safe and affordable housing to well over 15,000 people. We need governments to build on this by promoting and expanding co-op housing across the country, but earlier this week, when asked about social and co-op housing, the Conservative leader said, “We do not need a Soviet-style takeover of housing”.

How does the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities respond to that?

Oral Questions

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to affordable housing, the Conservative Party could not be more out of touch. Referring to co-ops as “Soviet-style” housing is a slap in the face to the quarter-million Canadians who live in homes like that. This is not the first time I have heard the Conservative leader criticize middle-class Canadians' living arrangements. Just this past summer, on a live video, he labelled a woman's home in Niagara a “shack”.

Canadians need bold federal leadership to solve the housing crisis, and that is what we are going to deliver. The Conservative leader, who insults middle-class homes while he goes home to his own government-paid-for housing arrangement, simply does not get it. It is reckless behaviour. We will not stand for it.

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CARBON PRICING

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, The B.C. NDP premier has demanded carbon tax fairness and equal treatment for British Columbians. The NDP member for North Island—Powell River votes with her Ottawa boss, the Prime Minister, punishing people in Campbell River struggling with high home heating costs. On Monday, we will vote for our common-sense plan to take the tax off all home heating for all Canadians for good.

How does the carbon tax coalition work? Will the PM require the NDP member for North Island—Powell River to vote against the Conservative plan, or will she vote with us to keep the heat on and axe the tax?

• (1455)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the hon. member raised the Government of British Columbia. I had the opportunity to speak to my counterpart from British Columbia this morning. We will be engaging British Columbia in a codelivery arrangement to ensure that 10,000 British Columbia households that are on heating oil will get a free heat pump to get them off heating oil and reduce their costs on an ongoing basis.

I would also say that affordability is also about the economy and jobs. I would say that what is happening at the natural resources committee with the obfuscation by the opposition is a shame. It is destroying jobs and economic opportunity for Newfoundland and Labrador, and for Nova Scotia. Opposition members should be ashamed of their behaviour there.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am never ashamed to help keep home heating costs down for all Canadians.

After eight years, Canadians know that the flailing Prime Minister is not worth the cost. Seniors in Smithers should not be punished for heating their homes, and the B.C. NDP premier agrees. Common-sense Conservatives would axe the tax on home heating for every single Canadian.

Does the NDP member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley have a choice on Monday's vote, or must he vote with his political master? Will the Prime Minister require that NDP member to vote his way,

or is the member going to support our Conservative plan to keep the heat on and axe the tax?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague should know that the 10,000 homes in British Columbia that actually utilize heating oil will, yes, have access to free heat pumps, because the Government of British Columbia is stepping up to work with the Government of Canada to ensure that this will be the case. This is addressing affordability concerns not just for the short term but also for the long term, and is doing so in a manner that is consistent with the government's commitment to fight climate change, a commitment shared by governments around the world and by every party in the House except the Conservative Party of Canada.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not a luxury for seniors, families and single-parent families to heat their homes, regardless of what type of fuel they use or what region of the country they are from. After eight years of the Prime Minister and a year and a half of the NDP-Liberal coalition, Canadians realize they are not worth the cost.

On Monday, NDP members will have a choice to make: support their constituents who are suffering from energy poverty or support a panicking Prime Minister.

Will the Prime Minister force the NDP members to support their coalition agreement, or, with what little dignity they have left, will they support the people they represent, to keep the tax off and the heat on?

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite mentioned families. Everything we do, at the heart of our actions on this side of the House, is focused on ensuring we are there for families. I look to building a national early learning and child care system as just one way we are looking to support families. Introducing affordable, high-quality and accessible child care across this country saves families hundreds of dollars each and every month. That is just one of the ways we are working to make life more affordable for Canadian families.

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been eight long years, but on Monday, the NDP members have a chance to show whom they work for. Is it for the Prime Minister, who is just not worth the cost, or for Canadians, who want the tax off and the heat on? It is cold in Manitoba. It gets down to -40°C. It should not be a luxury for folks to keep the heat on. The member from Churchill and her NDP colleagues will have a chance on Monday to show whom they work for.

On Monday, will the NDP members vote with the Liberals, or will they vote for Canadians, to axe the tax for all forms of home heating?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the hon. member referred to his home province of Manitoba. The new government in Manitoba has reached out to the federal government to engage in a conversation about codelivery for the thousands of homes in Manitoba that actually use heating oil, to ensure they will be addressed in a thoughtful and affordable way. I congratulate the Government of Manitoba for being proactive on this important issue and for its continuing commitment to fighting climate change.

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● (1500)

[Translation]

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has been warning us since June that hundreds of thousands of business could go bankrupt. The CFIB's updated numbers are no better. Right now, 220,000 businesses are in danger of going bankrupt if the federal government does not let them defer repayment of Canada emergency business account loans without losing the subsidy. Those 220,000 businesses say they have neither the cash nor the ability to borrow more to repay the loan.

When will the government understand that these businesses may well go bankrupt if they are not given enough time to pay back their loans?

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Small Business, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we did not abandon small businesses during the pandemic, nor did we abandon them after the pandemic.

What did we do then? We created the Canada emergency business account loan to help small businesses keep their doors open. What are we doing now? We are offering more flexibility for them to repay their CEBA loans. What will we continue to do? We will continue to listen to and support small businesses across the country.

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, 18 days is not what I would call real flexibility. In my riding alone, 72 small and medium-sized businesses are in danger of bankruptcy if the federal government fails to act. These are family businesses that I know, business that these people have invested in for their entire lives. These businesses also employ hundreds of people. If the federal government does not stop taking a hard line with family businesses, hundreds of jobs could be lost in the riding of Terrebonne alone.

Which Liberal minister, the Minister of Small Business or the Minister of Finance, is going to come with me to tell Natacha, Sylvain and Éric that because of so-called fiscal restraint, the government is going to leave them high and dry?

Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. I would remind her that over

900,000 businesses have been saved by our government. If we had not stepped in, these companies would have been shuttered.

Today, we are offering a second loan repayment extension. We are offering more flexibility to refinance and have the loan forgiven. We will continue to be there for businesses.

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CARBON PRICING

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, all members of the House will be asked to vote on our motion to eliminate the carbon tax on all forms of home heating in a bid to bring financial relief to all Canadians. After eight years, the Liberals are going in the opposite direction and are refusing to press pause on the suffering of Canadians as a whole. Worse yet, the Bloc Québécois wants to step on the gas and drastically increase carbon taxes. Voting for the Bloc Québécois is costly.

During their phone call, did the Prime Minister ask the Bloc Québécois leader to come to his rescue and vote against our motion on Monday?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct something that was said in the House earlier this week. The Governor of the Bank of Canada said that, each year, carbon pricing contributes 0.15% to inflation, an effect he describes as “quite small” from one year to the next. This idea that carbon pricing raises the price of everything is a myth, and the Governor of the Bank of Canada says as much.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he should take a closer look at his briefing book because it is 16% of the inflation rate that is affected by the carbon tax.

I have another question. The NDP has only one member in Quebec, but it will be interesting to see whether he votes for our motion to make the pause on the carbon tax on home heating fair across the country. Will he stand with Canadians, or with the Liberals?

Also, will the Bloc Québécois stand with the 972,000 Quebecers who rely on food banks every month, or with the Liberals?

After eight years of divisive and inflationary policies, will the Prime Minister allow the NDP and the Bloc Québécois to have a free vote on our motion on Monday?

● (1505)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is surprising to see the Conservatives quoting the Governor of the Bank of Canada when they are campaigning to fire him.

However, this week, the governor confirmed that carbon pricing contributes only 0.15% to inflation and that reducing carbon pricing will have no long-term effect on inflation beyond this initial reduction. That is what the Governor of the Bank of Canada said.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is cold in northern Ontario. It is not a luxury for residents of northern Ontario to heat their homes.

The Prime Minister has created two categories of Canadians: those who got a temporary pause on the carbon tax on home heating and those who did not. The Prime Minister has been clear that he opposes providing relief from his unaffordable carbon tax for all northern residents.

My question is this: Will northern Ontario MPs be free to vote with us on our common-sense Conservative motion to take the tax off and keep the heat on for all Canadians?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said a number of times, the issue around heating oil is that it is two to four times as expensive as natural gas as a heating source. It accelerated by 75% in 2022 alone. It is creating a significant challenge for folks. We have developed a program that will ensure that we are able to address that in a long-term, sustainable way through the implementation of free heat pumps. That program will apply in any province and territory that is willing to step up. It is certainly open to the Government of Ontario, and I look forward to discussions with my counterpart in that regard.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have worked very hard to ensure that Canada's unwavering support for Ukraine is shared by all parties in the House. Unfortunately, that support for Ukraine is not unanimous in the House. Conservatives are delaying Bill C-57, the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. Their MPs are calling the legislation "woke".

Most concerning is the Leader of the Conservative Party's silence on support for Ukraine. He has not called for military, humanitarian or financial support for Ukraine. He has refused to criticize Russia's war crimes. His silence speaks volumes.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs reassure Canadians that, despite the Conservative leader's lack of support, the government will stand with the Ukrainian people until they win?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our support for Ukraine as it defends its freedoms, independence and democracy is unwavering. Since Russia began its unprovoked aggression, we have supported Ukraine with almost \$10 billion in assistance.

My colleague is a steadfast advocate for Ukraine, and what he raises is troubling. This is not the time for unnecessary delays of this important legislation. This is not the time for doublespeak from Conservatives and their leader. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to stop with the political games and stand with us to show Ukraine and Ukrainian Canadians that we are all united.

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the out-of-touch NDP-Liberal government does not even know what a rural community is.

In a totally transparent effort to save seats in Atlantic Canada, Liberals will be giving a rural rebate to downtown residents of the city of Fredericton, but not to someone who commutes 100 kilometres a day for work from the actual rural community of St. Martins, which has a population of under 300.

The Prime Minister is not worth the cost. Will the Liberals quadruple the tax on Atlantic Canadians, or will they vote with us to axe the tax on all forms of home heating?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is hard to imagine a political party more opposed to the interests of my region of Atlantic Canada than the federal Conservative Party. It is painting a measure that has a national application as only benefiting one region just weeks after it signalled that it will not support the development of offshore renewable energy in my region.

We are moving forward with a policy that is going to reduce the cost of home heating for many people across the country. We are going to put more money into the pockets of rural residents across this country as well. It is the right path forward. We are going to protect the environment and save households money at the same time.

● (1510)

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is hard to imagine is that, after eight years, the plummeting Prime Minister panicked last week with his carbon tax announcement. However, Nova Scotians who made the decision to convert to cleaner propane have been exempted from that announcement and will have to pay 61¢ a litre more on their home heating.

The flip-flopping Prime Minister has finally admitted that he is not worth the cost. Will the Liberals admit that they are going to quadruple the carbon tax on Atlantic Canadians after the next election, or will they join the Conservatives on Monday and vote to axe the carbon tax on all home heating?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I find fascinating is that I am unable to discern from the Conservative Party's rhetoric on this issue whether or not it supports our decision to invest in measures that are going to reduce pollution across Canada and put more money into the pockets of households by getting heat pumps to them.

For awareness, this is the kind of measure that would save my neighbours thousands of dollars every year in reduced energy costs by creating a more efficient solution. It is going to have the same impact for people who use home heating oil right across the country.

Therefore, I respond with this question for my hon. colleague: Does he support the measure that would save money for our residents?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, eight years of this utterly out-of-touch government conspiring with the NDP and the Bloc Québécois has made voting for the Bloc costly. Last week's announcement is a slap in Quebec's face. All Canadians need help, not just those in Atlantic Canada where the Liberals' polling numbers are taking a nosedive. Once again, dividing Canadians is what the Prime Minister does best.

Will the Prime Minister ignore the Bloc members next Monday and vote in favour of our common-sense Conservative motion that will help all Canadians?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what exactly does common sense mean when several members of the opposition party are former members of the governments of Quebec, British Columbia and New Brunswick? Back then, those members spoke in favour of carbon pricing. Back then, they believed in climate change. They believed climate change was an important issue.

About 200,000 families in Quebec use oil to heat their homes. Oil prices have gone up three times faster than natural gas prices. Oil is two to four times more expensive. We will work with every Canadian province to help them eliminate oil heating in the coming years.

* * *

[*English*]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we continue on the path of reconciliation, there is more and more evidence showing that indigenous-led solutions lead to better, more sustainable outcomes and stronger, healthier communities. It is easy to see when it comes to mental wellness. For generations, indigenous peoples have known that wellness and health depended on holistic connections, as well as their relationships with each other and with culture. By contrast, our narrow, one-size-fits-all, western approach has left far too many indigenous people by the way-side.

What is the government doing to make sure indigenous-led models of wellness are reaching the people who need them?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am so grateful to indigenous leaders who are working so hard on blending traditional and western ways of healing. At the second annual National Summit on Indigenous Mental Wellness, people gathered to share successful stories about programs that are designed by indigenous peo-

Oral Questions

ple for indigenous people. From the Ahousaht key-note speech to the Pimishka project in northern Quebec, healing is happening, and we can all learn from the wisdom of indigenous partners. I thank every participant for sharing their knowledge.

* * *

TAXATION

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a new study found that big Canadian companies stashed away \$120 billion in Luxembourg to avoid paying their taxes. This was while working-class Canadians and those on fixed incomes play by the rules and are falling further and further behind.

This is the result of Liberal and Conservative governments creating a tax code that supports the wealthy not paying their taxes, and it is costing Canadians billions of dollars that could go to health care, housing or indigenous communities. When will the government finally crack down on wealthy tax cheats and make sure they pay their fair share?

• (1515)

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, everyone must contribute their fair share to financing public services. Contrary to the Conservative leader, who demonizes the income tax and wants the rich to pay less, we are trying to redouble our efforts so that they pay and do not use loopholes to avoid this responsibility. The CRA has hired experts and continues to use sophisticated tools to better detect and deal with the most serious cases of noncompliance. This government really does care.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, as we have gathered here for the last hour or so of question period, I have wanted to engage in the debate and talk about the climate crisis, but all I can think about is that, while we are sitting here in such safety and security, the children of Gaza are terrorized and terrified. Children in Israel remain terrorized and terrified. We need a ceasefire, and we need it now.

I want the Government of Canada, which has always stood for peace and for solutions to conflicts that do not involve the bombing of civilians, which is a war crime in itself, to please, the government or any minister, stand up to say right now that Canada will call for a ceasefire on both sides.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her compassion. We have seen the horrific scenes of unspeakable violence of Hamas's abhorrent terrorism, and we unequivocally condemn the attack. The price of justice cannot be the continued suffering of Palestinian civilians. What is unfolding in Gaza is a human tragedy. The Minister of Foreign Affairs continues to engage in efforts to help Canadians.

Business of the House

We need humanitarian pauses, and Canadians must be allowed to leave Gaza. More humanitarian aid needs to get in, and all hostages must be released.

ROYAL ASSENT

[*English*]

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Rideau Hall
Ottawa

November 1, 2023

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable Mary May Simon, Governor General of Canada, signified royal assent by written declaration to the bill listed in the Schedule to this letter on the 1st day of November, 2023, at 4:12 p.m.

Yours sincerely,

Maia Welbourne
Acting Secretary to the Governor General

The schedule indicates the bill assented to was Bill C-42, An Act to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During question period, the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles heckled us by saying that the carbon tax affected the price on pollution in Quebec.

I have a document that shows the contrary. I seek unanimous consent to table it.

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member's request will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In light of some clear misunderstandings in question period, I would request the unanimous consent of the House to table the special permit given by the Liberal government to Siemens to get around sanctions, that the government gave the permit to facilitate Russia selling energy to Germany instead of supporting Canadian oil and gas. That was in support of Ukraine. I would like to table the document.

• (1520)

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to table the document?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, on a separate point of order, there was some discussion in the House as to the impact of the carbon tax.

The Governor of the Bank of Canada clearly said at finance committee that it was 16%. I would like the unanimous consent of the House to table documents showing that.

The Speaker: Regrettably, before the member finished making his request for unanimous consent, I heard noes from the floor.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We have witnessed this again today. Am I correct in my assumption that if a member is rising and asking for unanimous consent after question period, that the member seek consultation. Could you just provide some clarity on that?

The Speaker: I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for raising this point. As all members are now experienced members, they would know that the Chair has asked many times, that when they do rise to seek unanimous consent, that they make every effort to please consult with colleagues in other parties, certainly the whips or the House leaders, so we can ensure we do not waste the time of the House and of all hon. members.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I want to respond to what my colleague from Winnipeg North said.

It is the custom and tradition of the House that, after question period, members raise points of order on topics mentioned during question period. That is the proper time for that. My colleague did exactly that. He mentioned an aspect of question period. He wanted to seek the unanimous consent of the House to support what was said during question period. That is the tradition. That is what we have been doing since I have been here and, I assume, for many years before that.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

He is right. However, I encourage members not to waste members' time. I am very patient. I can stay here a long time, but I do not want to waste members' time. I encourage members to always seek unanimous consent before rising in the House.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise for this very exciting time of the week, when I get to ask the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons the Thursday question.

I have a burning question that I cannot wait to ask. In addition to knowing the government's schedule for tomorrow and next week, I would like to know whether oral question period on Wednesday will be held as it has been for the past few years, at least since the Prime Minister was elected, with the Prime Minister answering all the questions.

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the Thursday question.

[*English*]

Tomorrow, we will continue with second reading of Bill C-57, the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement implementation act.

Next week, our priority will be given to Bill C-34 concerning the Canada Investment Act; Bill S-9, the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act; and Bill C-52 to enact the air transportation accountability act.

Finally, next Tuesday shall be an allotted day.

* * *

● (1525)

[Translation]

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

[English]

On October 18, you took the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to make quite a detailed statement on the matter of order and decorum in the House. In that statement you indicated that “order and decorum are signs of respect for each other and for the institution”. You further stated that the lack of order and decorum were most prominent during daily question period.

On that day, Mr. Speaker, you raised a number of concerns, from incendiary language to reference to the absence of members to heckling and personal attacks. One matter that was not discussed was the need to maintain question period for what it is: a tool for opposition parties and for individual members to hold the government to account.

As House of Commons Procedure and Practice states:

...time is set aside almost exclusively for the opposition parties to confront the government and hold it accountable for its actions, and to highlight the perceived inadequacies of the government.

Speaker Bosley, in 1986, outlined a number of principles, including stating that:

While there may be other purposes and ambitions involved in Question Period, its primary purpose must be the seeking of information from the government and calling the government to account for its actions.

The book continues in stating that when recognized in question period, a member should, “ask a question, be brief, seek information and ask a question that is within the administrative responsibility of the government or of the individual Minister addressed.” This is a key point, Mr. Speaker, as I am sure you will understand.

Clearly, the primary purpose of question period is to hold the government to account.

However, we have seen question period used in recent days and weeks, not to hold the government to account but to ask questions of individual members, in some cases government backbenchers and in other cases members from other opposition parties. As was previously the case, I would submit that such tactics should be considered out of order and not allowed.

I will quote extensively from some of the decisions that have been rendered by a previous Speaker who is now the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

Points of Order

[Translation]

In that regard, here is what the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, when he was the Speaker, had to say in his January 28, 2014, ruling, and I quote:

It is for similar reasons that questions that concern...the actions...of other members, risk being ruled out of order...[A]s Speaker Milliken stated in a ruling on June 14, 2010, found in *Debates* at page 3778, “...the use of [...] preambles to questions to attack other members does not provide those targeted with an opportunity to respond or deal directly with such attacks.” Thus, unless a link to the administrative responsibilities of the government can be established early in the question to justify them, such questions can be and indeed have been ruled out of order by successive Speakers.

[English]

In the same ruling, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, who knows the House well, also said:

...we have witnessed a growing trend: we hear preambles to questions that go on at some length to criticize the position, statements, or actions of other parties, Members from other parties, and in some cases even private citizens before concluding with a brief question about the Government's policies.

What we have, therefore, is an example of a hybrid question, one in which the preamble is on a subject that has nothing to do with the administrative responsibility of the Government but which concludes in the final five or ten seconds with a query that in a technical sense manages to relate to the Government's administrative responsibilities.

[Translation]

...since members have very little time to pose their questions and the Chair has even less time to make decisions about their admissibility, it would be helpful if the link to the administrative responsibility of the government were made as quickly as possible.

● (1530)

[English]

Accordingly, these kinds of questions will continue to risk being ruled out of order and members should take care to establish the link to government responsibility as quickly as possible.

That was said by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle when he was Speaker of the House.

The MP for Regina—Qu'Appelle, as Speaker, concluded with this:

In conclusion, I will continue to rule questions out of order that do not establish a direct link to the administrative responsibilities of the government. In the same sense, so-called hybrid questions will also continue to risk being ruled out of order when this link is not quickly demonstrated. Members should take care when formulating their questions and establish this link as soon as possible in posing their questions to ensure that the Chair does not rule what may be a legitimate question out of order.

On March 24, 2014, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle cut off two questions by the official opposition. I was in the House at the time. In response to a point of order raised by myself as House leader of the official opposition, he ruled:

...I raised the concern about questions that had no obvious link to government business, and informed members that they would run the risk of having their questions cut off unless that link was established early on in the question.

At the time I stood up to stop the members, I had not heard that link. If they feel they have a link to government business, I look forward with eagerness to their attempt to establish that, but as I heard it, there was no such link to the direct administrative responsibility of government. As relevant as it might be to public interest or to members, there has to be that established link to the administrative role of government.

Business of Supply

Mr. Speaker, I do want to take this opportunity to commend you for your efforts to address matters of order and decorum. New Democrats are pledged to work together with you on this matter. We would, however, like to implore you, as part of this work, to ensure that question period remains a tool for keeping the government accountable. Parliamentarians, and Parliament as a whole, are not well served if that mandate expands, as we have seen this week, to matters that are definitely not within the administrative purview of the government.

I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, to consider this point of order and to use the tools the House has equipped you with to ensure that the kinds of questions we have heard this week, which are clearly out of order, are ruled as such before the question is finished.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your attention.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby for raising this point of order. The member brought up a nuanced argument, one that I will consider and come back to the House on.

I would like to note that the member did note that although the question would start off as a hybrid question that would not refer to the administrative matters of the House, near the end of the question it would come back to it. There were, of course, members of the government who were willing to stand to answer those questions.

I do appreciate the carefulness of the member in bringing up this issue and I will come back to the House with a ruling on that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to help you in your deliberations, I would like to remind you that all the questions asked by an opposition member were addressed to a government member or a member of the government coalition, given that we know that the Liberals and the NDP have signed an agreement of mutual understanding and support.

It is entirely reasonable for us to refer to this agreement and to potential joint decisions when we ask the government questions, given that we know that the NDP will ultimately have to support the government under this agreement. It is only right that, when we ask our questions, we refer to the party that has formed a coalition with the government.

I would like to advise you that we will surely have more to add on this point over the next few days.

• (1535)

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out that notwithstanding the last comment by my Conservative colleague, there is not a single Westminster parliamentary system that follows what he outlined.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think this is an important pedagogical opportunity, because the Conservatives do not seem to understand what a coalition is in a Westminster parliamentary system. It has come to the point where it is causing a considerable amount of disorder, including interfering with the proper terms of question period.

A coalition government is where more than one party is represented in cabinet. That would mean that a member of the New Democratic Party would be eligible in question period to answer for the actions of the NDP. There is no universe in which any Liberal gives answers on behalf of New Democrats. It is why we are up asking questions in question period every day of the government and not mincing words. The idea that we are in a governing coalition and somehow Liberals get to answer for our actions is completely unacceptable.

It has come to the point that it is making a mockery of question period, which Conservatives get up and say is a sanctity in this place. While I am inclined to agree that question period is one of the more important moments in the parliamentary day, the fact of the matter is that if they are going to talk about the sanctity of Parliament, they should bother to learn the rules.

The Speaker: I am hoping that we can close this matter. I have heard from all members of the House, and I think I have a pretty full understanding of the issues raised. I would like to thank all members who participated.

I thank the member for New Westminster—Burnaby, and I will get back to the House. Unless there is a pressing and novel point, I suggest that we close this subject.

The member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, in light of the comments that were just made by my NDP colleague, I note there is a distinct difference between a supply and confidence agreement and a coalition. We just have to look at some of the parliamentary systems that take place in Europe, for example, where genuine coalitions are formed. To the member's point, they end up with a government that is representative of various parties. That is not the case here, and I want to support my NDP colleague's comments with that.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CARBON TAX PAUSE ON HOME HEATING

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is obviously an honour to speak here today.

After eight years of this costly NDP-Liberal coalition, Canadians are facing the worst affordability crisis in decades. This crisis is driven by out-of-control government spending, which has caused the highest inflation in 40 years. That is why the Leader of the Conservative Party has proposed the common-sense motion we are debating here today. Here is the motion: “That, given that the government has announced a ‘temporary, three-year pause’ to the federal carbon tax on home heating oil, the House call on the government to extend that pause to all forms of home heating.”

Business of Supply

This is a reasonable, common-sense and fair-minded motion. It is what we will be voting on in this House on Monday. The Prime Minister gave to some and now he needs to give to all.

Let us be clear about this. The Conservatives are proposing a national common-sense solution that, if adopted today, will provide a real cost reduction for all Canadians. This is actually a very easy fix. A simple majority of MPs is all that is needed, and the home heating carbon tax would be removed. Unfortunately for all Canadians, we know that the NDP and the Liberals in this chamber have it in their minds to make life as unaffordable for Canadians as possible.

I think it is fair to say that everybody understands that the carbon tax is making life more expensive. It is especially making food more expensive. The NDP-Liberal government is taxing the farmer who grows the food, the trucker who brings the food to us and the processor and any other business that touches that food. The end result is that food costs more, 6% more in just September.

Members should not just trust my math. Last week, the Governor of the Bank of Canada, Tiff Macklem, confirmed this. He said that if the carbon tax were eliminated, it would lower inflation by 0.6%. Let us think about that. The latest inflation rate was 3.8%. If the carbon tax were eliminated, it would get us one-third of the way to the target rate of 2%, and interest rates could start coming down. Instead, this cold-hearted NDP-Liberal government wants to keep prices high for all Canadians.

Before I get into how the NDP-Liberals pit one region of Canada against another, perhaps I should spell out for everyone just how harmful the carbon tax actually is. In Saskatchewan, two-fifths of our electricity comes from natural gas, two-fifths from coal and the balance from other sources, so 80% of our electricity is generated from fossil fuels extracted from the ground. Our home heating comes from that same natural gas extracted from the ground. Very few people use oil to heat homes in Saskatchewan. Those are the facts.

Now here is the rub, or should I say the great political shell game that the NDP-Liberals are pulling on Canadians, specifically the good folks of Saskatchewan. It is called the carbon tax, and it is not just one carbon tax; no, that would be too easy. It is not just the second carbon tax, which came into effect on April Fool's Day of this year. There is also a third carbon tax called the clean energy regulations, specifically aimed at Alberta and Saskatchewan. The Minister of Environment unveiled it this past summer to force the shutdown of our natural gas and coal electrical power plants. As I said, 80% of our energy is generated by those two forms of energy, and the NDP-Liberal Minister of Environment has ordered that our power plants be shut down. All of this, of course, is supported by the NDP.

Let me make this clear. Here is the NDP plan for the people of Saskatoon West. The original carbon tax was strike one. The second carbon tax was strike two. The shutdown of 80% of electrical generation in Saskatchewan is strike three.

Today's debate is not about electricity. It is about heating our homes and how we do that. How will the carbon tax affect that? First off, last week, the Prime Minister made an announcement that

his NDP-Liberal coalition will be removing the carbon tax from home heating oil. He did this for the explicit purpose of winning votes in Atlantic Canada.

How do we know that? First, at his announcement, he was surrounded by every single Atlantic Liberal member of Parliament. Second, one of his cabinet ministers from Newfoundland said as much to CTV on the weekend, when she chastised Alberta and Saskatchewan for not electing Liberal MPs. Her claim was that if a riding did not vote Liberal, the Prime Minister does not care about them. Therefore, no carbon tax break for natural gas home heating in Saskatchewan. It is mostly Atlantic Canadians who use oil to heat their homes. Back on the Prairies, we use much greener natural gas to heat our homes.

This is how the Liberals are using the carbon tax to pit one region of the country against another for political advantage. In Saskatchewan, we do not take this lying down. Saskatchewan has repeatedly been treated as a poor cousin when it comes to environmental policy, which is ludicrous because we care more than anyone about our environment.

• (1540)

Our farmers depend on a healthy environment to make a living. They have been adopting green practices for decades, long before the government even cared, and do not need government handouts to accomplish this. They did this on their own because it makes sense, and they continue to make the best decisions for their farms and, by extension, for the environment. Let us not forget about the vast amounts of carbon stored in Saskatchewan, on our farms, in our forests or in our carbon capture and storage projects.

This mistreatment and unfairness is very frustrating and only adds costs to the industries and people of Saskatchewan. My Saskatchewan colleagues and I have been working hard to fight against this inequity from Ottawa, and so has the premier. This NDP-Liberal carbon tax plan that rewards Atlantic Canada and penalizes Saskatchewan definitely needed a response.

Let me tell the House what the premier has said in response to all of this. He has promised to have our natural gas supplier, SaskEnergy, stop collecting the carbon tax on home heating in my province. This will level the playing field with Atlantic Canada. Here is what he said about this:

As premier, it's my job to ensure Saskatchewan residents are treated fairly and equally with our fellow Canadians in other parts of the country... [I]'s the federal government that has created two classes of taxpayers by providing an exemption for heating oil, an exemption that really only applies in one part of the country and effectively excludes Saskatchewan.

Lest anyone thinks this is just a bluff, I can report that only a few hours ago in the Saskatchewan legislature, the following motion passed. Let me read it:

Business of Supply

That this Assembly calls on all Members of Parliament to support the Opposition Motion being debated November 2nd, 2023 in the House of Commons that reads as follows:

“That, given that the government has announced a ‘temporary, three-year pause’ to the federal carbon tax on home heating oil, the House call on the government to extend that pause to all forms of home heating.”

Not only did this motion pass, but it passed unanimously. Let me break that down. That means Saskatchewan Party MLAs voted in favour of this. It also means that NDP MLAs voted unanimously in favour.

Will the NDP in this House rise to the challenge and choose common sense over political games? I am not optimistic. Here in Ottawa, the spineless and directionless NDP supports the Liberals every single time. The Liberals say to jump and the NDP asks how high. I encourage them to take a cue from their provincial brothers and sisters and support our motion to pause the carbon tax on all forms of home heating.

After eight years of the Liberal government, we know that one of its favourite tools is division, and this carbon tax policy change is a great example. When the going gets tough, the Prime Minister divides. Why does he do this? It is to distract and to pit one person against the other. He divides by race, by sexuality, by vaccine status and now by region because he knows that when Canadians are arguing with each other, they do not notice what the government is doing. He does not care if it tears the country apart because this gives the NDP-Liberal coalition the ability to get away with so many things: corruption, giving money to their friends and bad legislation. This list goes on and on of all the scandals that have happened.

This “gift” to Atlantic Canada is a clear attempt to buy votes, but Atlantic Canadians are not fooled by these tricks. They know that, heaven forbid, if the Liberal government were to be re-elected, it would quickly end the temporary pause and continue on its path to quadruple the carbon tax. The Prime Minister may have fooled Canadians once or twice, but we will not be fooled anymore.

I know what I have said today is hard for MPs of the NDP-Liberal coalition government to hear. The truth is that after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, it has, first, spiralled government spending out of control; second, borrowed ridiculous amounts of money that has doubled our national debt in only three years; third, endlessly printed money, which causes inflation, as clearly confirmed by the Bank of Canada; fourth, drastically raised interest rates, causing mortgage payments and rent to soar uncontrollably; and fifth, to top that off, told us to eat cake as it raises taxes in the form of multiple carbon taxes.

We cannot afford this costly coalition. We need a government that will scrap the carbon tax and balance the budget to ease inflation and lower interest rates. It is time for Canadians to elect a common-sense Conservative government. Let us bring it home.

• (1545)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am curious. The member is from Saskatchewan, so when his constituents call him to ask about home heating oil and why Atlantic Canada will have the price on pollution removed from it, and solely Atlantic Canada because that is the way Conservatives are

portraying it, I am wondering if he corrects them and says, no, it is for all people in Canada who use oil to heat their homes. As a matter of fact, he said the majority were in Atlantic Canada. That is not true. There are twice as many people in the province of Ontario heating with oil who will benefit from this than there are in Atlantic Canada.

The question is very simple: Does he try to correct the policy and tell people the reality of it, or does he perpetuate the falsehoods that Conservatives are trying to distribute among the population?

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Madam Speaker, rather than perpetuating falsehoods, in reality, I just want to do a bit of math for the hon. member.

The government has said that it is going to give \$10,000 to provide heat pumps. I am not sure if it has actually done this math. By my calculations, there are probably 400,000 homes in Atlantic Canada that will need heat pumps, and 400,000 times 10,000 is \$4 billion.

That is just in Atlantic Canada. There are needs across the country as well.

One thing that has not been talked about in this whole proposal by the government is the actual cost of this heat pump subsidy. It is potentially billions of dollars, and nobody has talked about that. I am not sure if they even know that.

I just wanted to get that on the record and maybe invite them to do a little bit of homework on that side of the page.

• (1550)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister was wrong to introduce regional divisiveness into Canada's carbon pricing system, but he was not the first person to do that. Actually, the Conservatives have been talking about taking off the carbon tax as though it would save every Canadian money, when it surely would not.

All sorts of provinces have their own carbon pricing scheme, and the federal backstop does not apply there.

He talks about an NDP plan, but he did not mention anything to do with our plan, which was to take GST off home heating. Why would we do that? We have an established tradition of not charging GST on essentials. GST applies everywhere in the country, which means every Canadian would get a break. Moreover, it would apply to all forms of home heating, including when people heat their homes with electricity.

Business of Supply

When we presented an amendment last year to one of their carbon tax motions, they said no. When we presented a motion today to take the GST off in parts of the country where the federal carbon tax does not apply, they said no.

Who is practising regional divisions, and why did he fail to mention the actual NDP plan, which has nothing to do with what the Liberals have proposed?

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Madam Speaker, his NDP brothers and sisters in Saskatchewan voted unanimously to support this measure in the House when we vote on it on Monday.

I am curious to know if the NDP in Ottawa will actually listen and take the advice of their very good brothers and sisters in Saskatchewan. They are very close, yet I am not convinced that they are going to listen to them.

This is something that NDP members in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba are all saying needs to change. I just want to put a bug in his ear and that of the whole NDP here.

Will they support this motion, as their brothers and sisters have in Saskatchewan?

An hon. member: B.C. has its own carbon tax. You know that. Say it out loud.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): If an hon. member has questions, they can wait for questions and comments.

The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, the member mentioned B.C. He knows full well that B.C. has its own carbon tax. It was introduced by the Liberal-cum-Conservative government in B.C., just as there have been carbon taxes imposed by Conservative governments elsewhere in the world. What a bunch of BS that is, just as talking about an NDP-Liberal coalition is BS.

We just had a point of order before he got up to give his speech. He sat through the whole bloody thing.

If he wants to talk about the truth, he could start by telling some.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have a great deal of respect for my colleague from Elmwood—Transcona, but using the acronym “BS” is definitely not parliamentary.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is the hon. member rising to apologize for saying “BS”?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I do apologize for using that term. I forgot how difficult it can be to call a spade a spade in this place.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind members to be careful about the words that they use in the House. We need to be respectful.

The hon. member for Saskatoon West.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Madam Speaker, well, let us call a spade a spade. Every single time the Liberal masters ask the NDP members in the House to do something, they do it. They vote with the government every time. We have a strong NDP-Liberal coalition.

An hon. member: Motion No. 79. Talk about that one.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member has had an opportunity to provide input. If he has more input, he should wait until the proper moment.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, despite the fact that it may have been heckling, the member's contribution was so good that I think we should have made an exception on this one occasion.

I find it interesting that the member for Saskatoon West said, “Let us call a spade a spade”, right after he did not answer a single question he was asked. He just pivoted and went to a completely different place. I asked him about something in his speech, and rather than address the question, he totally went off and started talking about heat pumps, which I did not even hear him talk about in his speech.

This just goes to the point that I will be making in my comments, which is the fact that this is all about Conservative hypocrisy. Before I go any further, I will indicate that I will be sharing my time with the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

I find it very fascinating. At the heart of this is the issue of the price on pollution, and the reason I find it so difficult is that I feel as though, once again, it is Groundhog Day. I have given a similar speech many times before. I am talking about the same hypocrisy that comes from Conservatives in the House. What we repeatedly see is Conservative after Conservative standing up against a policy that they all ran on; some of them did so not once, but twice. Some members in here, 19 members, who ran and were elected in the 2008 election and are still here today, ran cap and trade.

Cap and trade is just another form of pricing pollution; it is just done slightly differently. However, the Conservatives ran on it. Again, of course, just in the most recent election, they ran under Erin O'Toole as their leader with their signature platform titled “The Man with the Plan”. They talked about how they were going to put a price on pollution, but rather than just giving the money back to Canadians, which is what we are doing, they would put the money into a special carbon savings account. Then, depending on how much a person grew that account, they could go out and qualify for different rewards. I imagine there would be some form of catalogue, and people would look through it, just as one would with Air Miles. Depending on how much they had built up in that carbon fund, they could get some really good prizes. Maybe they could get a really nice bicycle or something. However, if they had not spent a lot and had not built up a lot in that carbon account, they might get a smaller prize as a result.

Business of Supply

Despite the fact that it would have been pricing pollution, the problem with that plan is that it actually incentivized people to use carbon and have a larger carbon footprint. The larger the carbon footprint a person had, the more credits they would build into this carbon account, so they could get even better prizes at the end. Their plan was immensely flawed, and our party, and all parties in this House, would never support something like that.

That is what they ran on most recently, in 2021. In 2008, 18 of them also ran on “The True North Strong and Free: Stephen Harper’s plan for Canadians”. In that, as I previously mentioned, Stephen Harper outlined how his newly formed government, if elected, would bring in cap and trade. It was revolutionary at the time, at least for North America, because it was just a handful of states in the United States; Ontario, which came along a bit after that; and Quebec, which had also signed on, that were part of this North American version of cap and trade among a number of jurisdictions.

Did Stephen Harper actually implement that and put in that price on pollution? No, he did not. He completely abandoned it once he had the opportunity. However, the point is that 19 Conservatives who currently sit on that side of the House ran on that in 2008.

● (1555)

The hypocrisy is even better than that, because a number of the Conservative members sitting in the House right now actually sat previously in legislatures that had adopted pricing pollution. To take it a step further, they have comments in the official records of those legislatures, where they actually commit to pricing pollution.

There are many options, but I will start with the member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, now a Conservative member of Parliament in this federal House. He said, while sitting in the provincial legislature in B.C.:

In 2008, our government made the decision to implement a tax on carbon. It was designed to help British Columbia reduce greenhouse gas emissions while at the same time be fair to hard-working families.

A Conservative member said that, which is literally what we are saying.

We did not even come up with that material; the member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge did. He ran on it. He said that in the provincial legislature. He also went on to say:

I know that the member for Vancouver-Kensington made a comment about it and tried to blame it on the federal government, as far as revenue neutrality. Well, the fact of the matter is that we have the option of how we wanted to bring this about, as far as a carbon tax. Our policy—it’s law—is to put it back into the pockets of taxpayers.

This is not a Liberal saying this; it is a current sitting member of the House in the Conservative Party who said this. Now, suddenly, he can just blindly abandon his values and principles, in terms of how he at least felt while in the provincial legislature, to follow the lead of the alt-right leader of the Conservative Party of Canada. That is the reality of what is going on.

I am always really amazed when Conservatives try to suggest that Liberals are gagged in terms of their ability to speak, when example after example comes from that side of the House.

It does not end there. There were two other members who were in the Quebec legislature and voted in favour of pricing pollution: the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent and the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis. Both of them sat in the provincial legislature and voted in favour and helped adopt pricing pollution in Quebec.

Now they suddenly show up here at the federal level and act as though pricing pollution is the absolute worst thing one could do. How is it possible that they can be so hypocritical? A lot of people can say things about me, but I am very consistent as it relates to my position on pricing pollution; I have been from the beginning.

I want to raise something else, and this is my final point about Conservative hypocrisy. It actually involves you, Madam Speaker, and I would like to tell members what happened in this House back on October 20, 2022. You were presiding, Madam Speaker, and there was an opposition day motion from the Conservatives.

Our NDP colleagues tried to put forward a motion to build on to the motion the Conservatives had on the floor; it would basically have eliminated the GST from home heating sources. It did not even require a vote or anything. All the mover of the motion needed to do was accept it, and then it would have carried.

Madam Speaker, you said:

It is my duty to inform hon. members that an amendment to an opposition motion may be moved only with the consent of the sponsor of the motion, or in the case that he or she is not present, consent may be given or denied by the House leader, the deputy House leader, the whip or the deputy whip of the sponsor’s party.

The hon. member does not have the support of the opposition; therefore, the amendment cannot be accepted.

Conservatives are just playing games with this. They did not want that to be adopted, because if it did get adopted, they would not get the political ammunition they are looking for to hold over the NDP and everybody else.

This hypocrisy was pointed out by both the parliamentary secretary to the House leader and the NDP, who have been rising on it all day long. To make matters even worse, today, the member for Timmins—James Bay again tried to amend this motion to add “and to eliminate the GST on home heating in provinces where no federal carbon tax is in place.”

The member for Battle River—Crowfoot said no; basically, it was rejected once again. One is left wondering why. Why are Conservatives acting this way? Are they really interested in the best interests of Canadians, or is this all just for political gain?

● (1600)

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, why is it that only a chosen few of the Liberal-NDP coalition are up speaking today? It is a very chosen few, much like this movement it has to only choose a few who will benefit from this carbon tax relief. We do not see the member for Calgary Skyview or members from Atlantic Canada and northern Saskatchewan speaking today. Why is it that only a chosen few are getting up to speak?

Business of Supply

• (1605)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader will be speaking shortly. He is from the Prairies.

The member makes this suggestion that only a chosen few are speaking on this measure, and then he says—

Mr. Dan Mazier: The chosen one.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I just want to remind members that if they have something to contribute to wait until it is time to make that contribution. There will be time for questions and comments again, but the hon. deputy government House leader has the floor right now.

The hon. deputy government House leader.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I hit a nerve.

The member for Kings—Hants spoke earlier to this issue. He is from Atlantic Canada.

I can guarantee one thing. We will fill all of our spots, unlike when we had a debate earlier about India potentially being involved in the assassination of a Canadian. Do members remember that? Not a single Conservative stood up to speak. Every single Liberal spot today will be filled with a Liberal speaking.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Kingston and the Islands for showing some of the hypocritical stances that people who used to sit in legislatures and now sit in the House of Commons have.

One thing I have noticed over the last number of years during this 44th Parliament is that Conservatives love to talk about carbon pricing and its supposed role with respect to inflation, but they will say almost next to nothing about the oversized corporate profits in the oil and gas sector. Last year alone, it was \$38 billion. This year it is another record.

Through you, Madam Speaker, given the Conservatives' love for oil and gas corporations, does the member think that it is time for them to register as official lobbyists for that industry?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, if only I had more time. I could go on about this for a while.

What I will say is this. When we look at the rising costs at the pumps right now, 2¢ a litre over the last year is attributed to a price on pollution and 18¢ a litre is attributed to the wholesale margins, in other words, the profits for the wholesalers. Conservatives should be nine times as outraged by the profits being made by oil companies right now as opposed to the price on pollution, but where are they? They are absolutely silent, never once getting up to talk about the extreme price gouging that is going on. I think it is shameful because they are making an intentional, deliberate attempt to look for political ammunition.

The member said something very good at the beginning of his question, which was that Conservatives like to talk. I would say, yes, they do like to talk, and that is where it ends.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, there was a lot of talk about hypocrisy in this debate, but maybe the member opposite could help me understand something.

For eight long years, we have been listening to the Liberals try to justify a carbon tax based on driving people to lower their carbon footprint, but then they take the tax off heavy oil and continue to punish people who are using lower-carbon fuels like propane, natural gas or electricity. Could the member help me understand this ridiculous policy the Liberals have come forward with?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I am not sure if I can help the member understand, because she thinks that EV batteries will spontaneously explode and does not think that electric cars work in the winter. If that is where I am starting from when trying to help somebody understand something about environmental impact, I do not think I am in a good place, and I probably will not be successful.

What I will say is this. When we talk about why we are doing this specifically, despite the fact she probably will not understand, it is because we know that oil is the dirtiest form of energy and we need to get off of it. What we are trying to do is give relief to Canadians so they have the ability to move toward a heat pump, which is astronomically cleaner than oil. That is the objective here.

Conservatives always like to talk about half of the equation. They like to completely leave out the other half, and the other half is helping people transition to heat pumps.

• (1610)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure and a privilege to rise in this most honourable House and to be with many of my esteemed and honourable colleagues to debate important legislation. Today, we are obviously debating an opposition day motion.

As I was one of those MPs who were elected in 2015, I came here to do the good work that my constituents in Vaughan—Woodbridge elected me to do. They sent me here and put their trust and faith in me to bring forth legislation to improve the lives of not just the residents in my riding but residents across the country, to put in place legislation that makes sense but has lasting and tangible benefits for generations, for my children at home and for many of us who are parents here to ensure that we have a bright future for all our children.

Business of Supply

I will get to my formal notes in a second, but when I think of some of those measures, we have made life more affordable. We have been able to create a strong economy, an inclusive economy, to lift all boats, as we economists say, to lift all individuals. We have been able to provide confidence for investors, for the private sector, to continue to invest in Canada and Canadians, and confidence in governments, I would say, to invest in their citizens and in their country, exactly as our government has been doing since we came into power in 2015.

I think about things like the Canada child benefit. Some 653,000 children have been lifted out of poverty. Over two million Canadians have been lifted out of poverty since we came into power. I think about the Canada workers benefit, how it is lifting low-income Canadians, hard-working Canadians out of poverty, who need extra dollars at the end of each quarter. We changed it. That is something the Conservatives started, but we strengthened it.

I think of the trade deals we have negotiated and put into place that help our businesses grow. I think of the supports we provided businesses and individuals during COVID. They were so important to keep our economy functioning, to keep Canadians in their homes and allow them to be with their families. I think of the benefits we have provided for seniors, with a 10% boost to old age security. Over three million seniors are receiving another \$800 annually. There are so many things. Dental care has helped hundreds of thousands of children already and will help hundreds of thousands of seniors in the coming year.

I also think of the two major middle-class income tax cuts we brought in. We raised the basic personal amount to \$15,000, again taking people off the tax rolls, helping seniors, helping students and helping those folks entering the workforce, and asking the wealthiest to pay a little bit more. There are a lot of good things.

We brought in pricing pollution. We know we have made commitments to be at net zero by 2050. As an economist, I know there are many ways to get there, and this is one of the ways that is really the most effective for individuals and businesses to adopt technology, yes, to change their behaviour, yes, but also to put in place measures, at the end of the day, that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We know that in prior platforms from the party opposite and from members opposite who have also sat in provincial legislatures, they have supported this kind of measure.

Those are just a few of my thoughts. Now I will comment on the motion at hand.

[*Translation*]

Our government clearly understands that it has become difficult for many Canadian families to make ends meet. That is why we will continue to put forward measures to help them. The reality is that since 2015, our government has spared no effort to make life more affordable for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

For example, we lightened the financial load on Canadians through the Canada child benefit, the middle-class tax cut, the grocery rebate, the new dental care plan, and affordable early childhood education and child care services across the country, with our goal being \$10-a-day child care.

We have also helped millions of low- and modest-income Canadians by introducing and enhancing the Canada workers benefit. Our government has also supported the financial security of seniors by enhancing old age security and the guaranteed income supplement.

• (1615)

However, the reality is that, at present, there are still people across the country who are having a hard time paying their bills and who are under tremendous financial pressure. It is important to us that we help them. That is why we decided to temporarily pause the fuel charge on heating oil for three years.

As we saw this summer across the country, the effects of climate change on Canada are very real and very serious. Our country was hit with floods, forest fires and unprecedented storms. Just as we know that climate change is real, the path to follow is clear. To protect our planet and build a stronger economy, we must make a concerted effort to do even more on climate action. That is what we are doing with the historic investments announced in budget 2023 to build the green economy of tomorrow. Our pollution pricing system is an essential measure in our fight against climate change.

Economists like me and experts around the world have known for a long time that putting a price on carbon emissions is the best way to reduce the emissions at the root of climate change. It is the least costly, most effective and most impactful approach, and it works. The scales are beginning to tip. We are leading the way among the G7 nations with our system that encourages people to choose ways to be pollute less at home and at work, while putting money back in the pockets of eight out of 10 households where the federal system applies.

In fact, thanks to the climate action incentive payment, a family of four in Ontario will get \$244 on a quarterly basis this year. The amount is \$264 in Manitoba, \$340 in Saskatchewan, \$386 in Alberta, \$328 in Newfoundland and Labrador, \$240 in Prince Edward Island, \$248 in Nova Scotia and \$184 in New Brunswick.

Moreover, residents of rural areas and small communities currently get an extra 10%. Last week, the Prime Minister announced that we are going to double the rural top-up for pollution pricing rebates from 10% to 20% of the baseline amount starting in April 2024. Our government is well aware that people who live in rural communities face unique realities, and this measure will help put even more money back in the pockets of families dealing with higher energy costs because they live outside a large city.

Business of Supply

We want to do even more to fight climate change by helping Canadians install more energy-efficient heating systems. An upfront \$250 payment will be available to low- and median-income households that heat their homes with oil and sign up for a federal-provincial program to install a heat pump. Our goal is really to help Canadians make the transition.

What is more, we are working with the provinces and territories to strengthen the oil to heat pump affordability program. The amount of federal funding that eligible homeowners can receive for installing a heat pump will increase from \$10,000 to \$15,000, adding up to an additional \$5,000 in grant funding to match provincial and territorial contributions via co-delivery arrangements. This would make the average heat pump free for low- and modest-income households as we continue to minimize upfront costs and make federal programs even easier to access for all households.

• (1620)

[English]

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. member said that the current NDP-Liberal government has spared no effort to make life more affordable for Canadians. Guess what: It is not working. Rent and mortgages have doubled, and there is 40-year-high inflation and 20-year-high interest rates. That is the record of the NDP-Liberal government. Meanwhile, the hon. member's constituents are being penalized by the punitive carbon tax on home heating. They will not benefit from the suspension with respect to home heating oil, which was a desperate effort by a desperate government to save Atlantic MPs.

Will the member finally, for once, stand up to his boss, the Prime Minister, and vote in support of our Conservative motion so his constituents can keep the heat on? Will he vote to axe the punitive carbon tax?

[Translation]

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I represent the people of my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge, and I always listen to them.

[English]

I always will stand up for the citizens of my riding, and I have done so ever since I was elected in 2015. They know me quite well. The government has put in place policies that always put the citizens of Canada first, and we have done this again with this measure that we have brought in. The income tax cuts we brought in for 2015; the basic personal expenditure amount; the Canada child benefit; the Canada workers benefit; the dental benefit for kids under 12 and now, going forward, for seniors; and the national early learning and child care program, which, in my riding, is saving residents literally thousands of dollars a year, are measures I am very proud of.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, obviously there is a lot of concern about the real hardship that Canadians are facing right now. We know that the Conservatives are playing political games, saying that they have the backs of working people. We know that time and time again when it came to taking action to show it, when they were in government, they did the opposite.

What are the Liberals doing to reinvest in the programs that Canadians need today? I asked about the \$120 billion that Canadian corporations are funnelling offshore to avoid paying taxes here in Canada. The Liberal who responded said that the Liberals care about this, but what are the Liberals doing to crack down on wealthy tax cheats and to reinvest that money into Canadians who are hurting right now?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, ever since we were first elected in 2015, we have brought into place income tax measures on high-income earners here in Canada. We have also put in place the dividend recovery on banks and financial institutions earning over a certain amount. We have increased resources to the Canada Revenue Agency to make sure we go after Canadian institutions and organizations pursuing measures that try to minimize their taxes in illegal ways and so forth. We know that to have a strong economy, we need a strong social fabric, and we can do that only by ensuring that all Canadians pay their fair share.

I know that the hard-working citizens in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge, the residents who go to work every day, play by the rules, save for their kids, go to their soccer tournaments on the weekends and bus their kids around, are working hard. They need to know that all 338 of us are working hard to represent not only the residents of my riding but also all the residents across Canada.

• (1625)

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

It is always an honour to rise as the representative for the amazing people and spectacular region of North Okanagan—Shuswap. It is also an honour to rise to speak to the Conservative opposition day motion that is in front of us today, which is, “That, given that the government has announced a ‘temporary, three-year pause’ to the federal carbon tax on home heating oil, the House call on the government to extend that pause to all forms of home heating.”

Business of Supply

Winter has started in our nation, and Canadians are having to pay more than ever to heat their homes. Heating our home is not a luxury; it is essential for survival, and that is an important point that the Liberal regime and its NDP enablers wilfully and recklessly ignore. In the past week, we saw an admission from the Liberal-NDP government that the federal carbon tax is hurting Canadians and their homes. However, the Liberals' token partial deferral of federal carbon tax in predominantly Liberal regions is unacceptable. I cannot recall an instance when the federal government acted in such a divisive, cynical and self-interested way by relieving pain inflicted by the government for some, but not for all.

Too many members of the House continue to ignore or deny the hurt being inflicted by the Liberal-NDP coalition, so let me share with everyone how the hurt has recently been described to me by a constituent, who said that the more that Canadian families are forced to pay for necessities of basic survival, like home heating, the less they have to pay for other basic or essential expenses, such as groceries and clothes for their kids. These are the realities, and if the Liberals are serious about reducing the pain experienced by Canadians, then they must start by recognizing the problem.

The Conservative motion before the House today proposes a solution for the pain inflicted on Canadians by the Liberal government. The motion's proposal is inclusive of all Canadians, not exclusive to the chosen few, the 3%. Not only is this common-sense motion reasonable, universal and fair, but it is also essential, because it would directly support the ability of all Canadians to meet the essential need of heating their homes. Canadians struggling to keep the heat on are watching and will be watching when members vote on the motion next week. I will read the motion again so it is very clear what we are debating here today and what we will vote on next week: "That, given that the government has announced a 'temporary, three-year pause' to the federal carbon tax on home heating oil, the House call on the government to extend that pause to all forms of home heating."

As the NDP-Liberal coalition and Bloc collaborators continue to deny carbon tax pain, the Governor of the Bank of Canada has clearly stated that the carbon tax is adding to the devastating inflation affecting the lives of Canadians, especially low-income Canadians, who are being hit the hardest. The member for Northumberland—Peterborough South recently asked Mr. Macklem what the effect on inflation would be if the federal carbon tax were removed. Mr. Macklem confirmed that removing the carbon tax would, in fact, achieve a much-needed reduction of inflation. He went on to state the following: "[I]t is the most vulnerable members of [our] society who are suffering...from high inflation. They are feeling the brunt of affordability more than everybody else. They can't just move [down the market]. They're already at the bottom of the market. Much of their spending is already on necessities. You can't cut back on that. That's why it is so important that we get inflation down. Inflation is a tax that disproportionately affects the most vulnerable members of [our] society."

We know that the carbon tax is adding to inflation, which is adding to the cost of living, which is in turn adding to the number of young families, single parents, seniors and many others having to make the choice between heating and eating.

• (1630)

I hear from Canadians in the North Okanagan—Shuswap about how food banks are struggling to keep up with demand and how businesses are trying to balance their books to avoid going under. Small business owners are forced to dip into their savings in an effort to avoid laying off workers. I would like to share a couple of recent emails from good people at home who are struggling under the inflationary load forced on them by the NDP-Liberal government.

This one came in just today from an entrepreneurial couple in Salmon Arm: "Mel, well, let's talk about sticker shock. We purchased fuel for the generation of power electricity today. Kind of hard to run solar or electricity on a gravel screening plant. Carbon tax of \$294.59 and \$149.04 for GST. Pretty darn sure that is part of the problem why many of our fellow small business people are facing bankruptcy. Sincerely, taxed to death constituents, Peter & Anne." That is over \$400 just on one tank of fuel so they can run their plant. That fuel would have been used to clean gravel to build roads, homes and farms, and the carbon tax will compound each transaction and add to the cost of all those operations that are needed so badly for people to move, have a home and have food to eat.

This message is from Ed: "Look at house insurance, property tax, heating fuel and electrical with carbon tax, auto fuel cost, home repair costs. Look at furnace replacement, in 2018 the cost was 5,000 and the same furnace in my kid's home was quoted by the same contractor at 10,000. What senior could save an additional 5,000 in 4 years when they can't make ends meet. Heat pumps, 4,500 to 11,000 in 4 years. Again, no senior could afford this should they have a breakdown."

These are messages I am getting and I am sure many MPs are getting because of the NDP-Liberal government's policies. The Prime Minister is choosing once again to divide Canadians. Instead of every Canadian feeling proud of being part of one country and pulling in the same direction, we have a Prime Minister who is pitting one group of Canadians against all others. His plan to temporarily pause the carbon tax on home heating will apply only to 3% of Canadians, while 97% are left out in the cold to figure out whether they can afford heating or eating.

Even the NDP Premier of British Columbia has said that while people in Atlantic Canada are struggling to make ends meet, so are residents in B.C. He went one to say, "At a minimum, fairness demands equal treatment of British Columbians. People struggling with affordability around home heating face the same struggle in B.C. It's not a distinct or different struggle."

Business of Supply

In the neighbouring province with abundant, clean-burning natural gas, which, by the way, will receive no carbon tax exemption anywhere in Canada, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages has a suggestion for Albertans angry with his Liberal government's special treatment of Atlantic Canada over the carbon tax. He said that Canadians could always switch their natural gas furnaces for heat pumps instead. However, now what is being exposed is that insurance companies do not want homeowners to install heat pumps in locations where winter temperatures fall below -20°C . That is about 85% of Canada's land mass.

The Liberal cabinet minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency really took Atlantic opportunities to heart last weekend when she said, “[The Liberal Atlantic] caucus was vocal with what they've heard from their constituents, and perhaps they need to elect more Liberals in the Prairies so that we can have that conversation as well.”

Conservatives have a better opportunity for Canadians. Instead of dividing Canadians like the Liberals do, a Conservative government would axe the carbon tax for good to make life affordable for all Canadians, not just for the ones who vote Liberal.

• (1635)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member, right at his conclusion, said that the Conservative Party would axe the carbon tax for Canadians. Conservatives have made that very clear. No doubt it will be part of their campaign platform.

The issue I have with the simplicity of the message the member just gave is that he does not talk about the rebates being given to the people of Canada. For example, in Winnipeg North, over 80% of the residents I represent will get more money back through the rebate than they will pay in carbon tax. That comes from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, so it is not just me saying that.

The member is telling Canadians that you are going to axe the tax, but would you still be providing the rebates? If you do not still provide the rebates, you are taking money out of the pockets of more than 80% of the residents I represent.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the hon. member, who has been here for quite some time, that he should know he is to address all questions and comments through the Chair.

The hon. member for North Okanagan—Shuswap.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, that question is very pertinent, and I am really glad the member asked the question.

What we are going to do is not take the money out of Canadians' pockets in the first place. If it is not taken in the first place, it does not have to be provided back as an incentive or enticement to vote Liberal in the future.

Why would Liberals take money out of the pockets of Canadians only to give it back? It only creates more bureaucracy within a government that is just so corrupt and so wasteful that we have to put an end to it.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague that we do need to have regional fairness in Canada. That is one of the tenets of federalism that we have to realize.

However, my colleague from British Columbia should know very well that anything to do with carbon pricing in the province of British Columbia is run out of the legislature in Victoria and not out of Ottawa. That is because the Province of B.C. does not like taking an “Ottawa knows best” approach, unlike Conservative premiers elsewhere in Canada.

The member would also know that his Conservative colleague, the current member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, was a member of the B.C. Liberal government that proudly brought it in in 2008, and he used to sing its praises when they were bringing it in. They have now changed their tune.

Would my hon. colleague from B.C. at least correct the record and acknowledge that the policy in B.C. is set in Victoria, not in Ottawa?

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, that question gives me an opportunity to set the record straight here.

When the carbon tax was originally brought in in B.C., it was a revenue-neutral tax. There were no extra funds going into the government coffers. When an NDP government was elected in B.C., that carbon tax became a revenue generator. It is no longer revenue-neutral. The government makes money off it.

Will the member back up what his NDP provincial premier has stated, which is that this should be fair and equitable in all regions of the country, as we are proposing in our motion?

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for enlightening the government that, if it does not take the tax money from Canadians' pockets, it will not have to give the money back to them.

One of the things the government has never thought about because they do things on the spur of the moment, without thinking about things, is the cost of these free home heating units that will be going out. With basically close to 400,000 homes, just in the Maritimes alone, at \$10,000 each, that is \$4 billion.

Could my colleague quickly comment on where he thinks that money would come from? Who is the government going to tax if it follows through with this?

• (1640)

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, I could only speculate on what the government may do.

Business of Supply

We know that it is going to quadruple the carbon tax. That is right; it will quadruple it. Perhaps the Liberal government needs to quadruple it to pay for some of these “free” heat pumps they are going to be giving out. It seems scandalous. It is like every other scandal within the Liberal government. There seems to be a free heat pump or a free scandal for every Liberal member over there.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House to speak to this opposition motion, which reads, and I quote:

That, given that the government has announced a “temporary, three-year pause” to the federal carbon tax on home heating oil, the House call on the government to extend that pause to all forms of home heating.

Note that we are talking about a “temporary, three-year pause”. That means that it will be coming back.

This is a fair, reasonable and common-sense motion. It could not be simpler. I think that everyone in the country can understand this. That is what we are asking for today and during the vote on this motion next Monday.

The Prime Minister gave to some. Now he must give to everyone. This motion calls on the Prime Minister to be fair to all Canadians, whatever region they live in or whatever form of home heating they use.

Last week, the Liberals announced three changes to the carbon tax aimed at Atlantic Canadians: a three-year pause on the carbon tax for home heating; a 10% increase in the rural top-up; and the creation of a program that will reward Canadians who register to switch from oil to heat pumps.

A heat pump costs between \$5,000 and \$10,000 and as much as \$12,000. I hear it will be free depending on the province. I cannot wait to see that. I do not know of anything in life that is free.

This is all quite the coincidence. Our leader was actually in the Atlantic provinces for a rally against the carbon tax when the Prime Minister made his announcement. It appears the Prime Minister panicked, or perhaps it is because he realized his popularity was plummeting. In short, this is a disaster.

The problem is that this announcement only impacts 3% of the population; the other 97% will continue to pay the carbon tax on heating. Quebec will also continue to pay. The western provinces will also continue to pay. The Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency even had the nerve to say that people in the Prairies should just vote Liberal. Talk about condescending. It is impossible to make this up.

I want to be very clear. The carbon tax is making everything more expensive, contrary to what the Bloc Québécois has been saying for weeks. Contrary to what the Bloc Québécois has been saying, the carbon tax does have an impact on Quebec. Whether it is direct or indirect, the tax does have an impact on Quebec. Every product or food that comes from another province is affected by the carbon tax. Other provinces import services and consumer goods, particularly groceries, and this drives up prices in Quebec as well.

The carbon tax therefore does apply to Quebec. As soon as those products hit the shelves and are consumed in Quebec, they are subject to the carbon tax.

Quebec is not self-sufficient. Even if Quebec were independent, as the Bloc Québécois wants, it would not be completely isolated from the world. It is absurd to think that Quebec could produce everything that needs to be produced in its own hypothetical country, which is what the Bloc Québécois wants to see someday. The reality is that Quebec imports goods. These goods are affected by the carbon tax, which the Bloc Québécois wants to radically increase. Let us imagine the end result. What will happen in five or 10 years? The government wants to quadruple the carbon tax and the Bloc wants to increase it as much as possible. This will inevitably have an impact on Quebec.

The Liberals granted their wish. The Prime Minister imposed a second carbon tax. The clean fuel regulations will raise the price of gas by up to 20¢ a litre by 2030. The Bloc Québécois's willingness to make Quebecers poorer is astounding, but that is precisely what is going on. The Parliamentary Budget Officer estimated about 17¢, but after the GST and QST are added, the total adds up to about 20¢. The Bloc has been the government's ally on this issue from the start. Worse yet, I repeat, they want to drastically hike the carbon tax. That will inevitably impact Quebec and the entire country, against their wishes.

A few weeks ago, we moved a motion to abolish both carbon taxes, and the Bloc Québécois voted against it.

• (1645)

Bloc Québécois MPs say that they represent Quebecers. Unfortunately, I do not think that Quebecers want more taxes. People who live in ridings represented by Bloc MPs who are in the House or at their offices in Ottawa are all affected by these things. They are all having a hard time making ends meet. Currently, nine out of 10 Canadians, including Quebecers, are using food banks. It is no longer just people on social assistance or people in a temporary bind, but workers and entire families who are forced to go to food banks.

A Canadian family will pay \$1,000 more for groceries over the next year. The Bloc Québécois is okay with that. A report on food prices predicts that prices will go up by 34% over the next two years. Here are a few of the general numbers on increases in food prices since 2015, when the Liberals came to power: lettuce has gone up 94%; onions, 70%; cabbage, 70%; carrots, 74%; potatoes, 77%. Oranges have also gone up in price. Everything has gone up. When we go to the grocery store, we leave with one bag of groceries that cost \$250. That is crazy. Things absolutely need to change.

A common-sense Conservative government will work to reduce the debt, pay it down. The Bloc Québécois could not care less. The Conservatives want to return to a balanced budget to bring down inflation and interest costs, which have caused mortgages to double. The amount required for a down payment has doubled, rent has doubled, everything has doubled. It is appalling. People are living paycheque to paycheque, month to month. It is hard for them to get by. The Bloc Québécois does not give a damn.

Worse yet, two of our Bloc Québécois colleagues told the House this morning that the Conservatives should be ashamed of getting their paycheques in Ottawa and that they should represent Quebecers. It takes a lot of gall to say such things knowing that they want to divide or, indeed, outright undo the country we live in. Besides, where do they get their pay and pensions from? It is appalling to hear them say such things.

Monthly mortgage payments for an average house have now reached \$3,560. That is a 150% increase since this Prime Minister took office. The average price of a one-bedroom apartment climbed from \$973 in 2015 to \$1,175 in 2023. The increase on a two-bedroom apartment is even worse, from \$1,100 to \$2,300. It used to take 25 years to pay off a mortgage. Now, it takes 25 years just to save up the down payment.

The situation has worsened to the point that some families are being forced to take out mortgages that will take them 50, 60, 70 or 80 years to pay off. That makes no sense. Most young people have actually given up on the dream of owning their own home. What we are currently experiencing across Canada is no picnic, and all because of this government's inflationary policies.

The government is making things worse with the carbon tax, and the Bloc Québécois wants to increase it drastically. I cannot say this often enough. Bloc members said it before in the House, more than once. They could not care less that the people of Quebec are struggling to make ends meet. They have no problem adding to that burden. Voting for the Bloc Québécois will be costly.

Bloc members are denying the obvious. The carbon tax increases the price of everything. I have no choice but to repeat that they refuse to believe it. It is incredible. We live in a country with 10 provinces and three territories, including Quebec, but these people seem to live on a different planet. They do not, and Quebec does not either. They live in Canada. Goods are bought and sold within Canada, and Quebec inevitably pays tax on them. I do not know why they insist on saying that this does not apply to Quebec. Yes, Quebec has a carbon exchange with California, which, by the way, has doubled. Where is that money going? I think that Quebecers should check or at least seek more information on their current situation. It really is no picnic.

After eight years of this government, the time has come for a common-sense government. I therefore ask my parliamentary colleagues to support our motion and expand the pause announced by the Prime Minister to include all forms of home heating.

• (1650)

[English]

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

Business of Supply

Speaker, when we think of oil heating and compare that to the impact on the environment of natural gas, or home heat pumps, I think we would probably agree that the oil heating system does hurt the environment a whole lot more, and it is a lot more costly.

Does the Conservative Party have any policy, direction or thoughts regarding that, or do they feel they should leave it out there and let it evolve in society in a way Conservatives would be happy to see with regards to climate change in general.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, the answer is quite simple: reduce taxes on heating. It is not hard.

By the way, he says that heat pumps are better for the environment. I agree with him. The Liberals have been in power for eight years. Instead of collecting a tax on carbon and giving part of it back to people, why did they not decide eight years ago to provide all Canadians who are less fortunate with heat pumps or to help them acquire them?

I do not know why they did not do that eight years ago if it is such a good solution for the environment. They collect taxes and give some of it back. They tell people to go buy a heat pump that will cost them anywhere from \$5,000 to \$12,000 and that it will all be paid off in a few years. Nothing is free in Canada.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, thanks to the Quebec Conservatives, we are still talking about the carbon tax that does not apply in Quebec.

If the people of Saskatchewan are fed up with a carbon tax, all they have to do is tell the Premier of Saskatchewan to come up with a plan and they will no longer have a carbon tax.

I have a question for my colleague who represents Quebec Conservatives. He and all his colleagues spend 100% of their time in Ottawa talking about issues that do not affect Quebecers, like the carbon tax. Again today, they have decided to waste their entire opposition day on a subject that does not concern Quebec. Meanwhile, we are not hearing them criticize the new immigration thresholds, which do not respect Quebec's capacity to integrate newcomers. We are not hearing them stand up for SMEs in their own ridings that are facing bankruptcy because of the emergency account. They prefer to stand up for wealthy western oil companies. They talk about the cost of living, but the cost of living for the people of Calgary and Moose Jaw.

Do they not want to work on behalf of Quebec from time to time?

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, I feel I must compliment my colleague. She is probably the least condescending of all the Bloc Québécois members here in Ottawa. She is careful about what she says. She is very nice.

Business of Supply

I think she is once again making the mistake of saying that this is of no concern to Quebecers. Clearly we see things differently. We also have a very different vision of government. The Liberals, with the help of the Bloc Québécois, want to keep increasing the carbon tax. They actually want to increase it radically, but we want to eliminate it entirely. She is also mistaken when she says the Canadian carbon tax does not apply to Quebec. Of course it applies to Quebec, both directly and indirectly.

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I do want to follow up on the question that was just asked by the Bloc.

As the member is a member of the Conservative Party representing Quebec, I am curious how he feels about the fact that his party continues to support big oil and gas companies. We know that five of the biggest oil and gas companies made \$38 billion in combined profits last year, but when we asked whether they should be asked to pay simply what they owe, the Conservatives voted against that.

I agree with my colleague from the Bloc that it feels to me like this is a Quebec member of Parliament who is standing up and touting the party line from the Conservatives that big oil can do whatever it wants as long as Albertans keep voting for Conservatives.

How is that vote helping his constituents in Quebec?

• (1655)

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, I was under the impression the NDP would be supporting our motion. I thank my colleague.

I cannot believe what she keeps saying about the western Canadian oil and gas sector. She is from Edmonton, Alberta, which sends \$13 billion to the province of Quebec. Basically, what she is telling me is that they are all rotten.

I cannot understand why she is not prouder of her own province's industry.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, Climate Change; the hon. member for Brantford—Brant, Public Services and Procurement; the hon. member for Calgary Centre, Oil and Gas Industry.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country.

It is a pleasure to rise and speak to this opposition day motion. I want to break it into two parts. One is the issue of affordability and the other is the issue of oil-generated heat.

When I think of the issue of affordability, it is important to recognize that the Government of Canada, over the last number of years, in the many different programs that we have brought for-

ward, has very much demonstrated its support for Canadians, whether they are in the middle class, those aspiring to be part of it or those who are disadvantaged.

We can take a look at some of those programs. We can talk about the grocery rebate program. We can talk about the dental program for seniors and children, people with disabilities, or we can talk about the rental support program. Now, I would like to suggest we can also talk about the home heating pump program and, in fact, the pause that is being put on for heating homes with oil. These are all programs that have been very supportive in making sure that Canadians can get through a time when they are experiencing inflation, among other issues.

When I think of the affordability issue, we have been a government that has been very much focused on supporting Canadians. All those programs I just listed, the Conservative Party actually voted against every one of them.

It is somewhat disheartening and disappointing. Conservatives seem to want to focus on one issue, and we see that time and time again, when it comes to the carbon tax.

They are just taking a piece of their policy and saying that they want to add on to the pause that we have put on with regard to home heating oil.

When they talk about the price on pollution, I think that Canadians need to be reminded of two things. When Erin O'Toole was the leader of the Conservative Party and campaigned in the last election, along with 337 other Conservative candidates, they all campaigned in favour of a price on pollution.

Whether we like it or not, or try to figure out why it is, the Conservatives changed their minds. They no longer support a price on pollution. They say they are going to get rid of that price, and they classify it as the carbon tax. They say they are going to "axe the tax". It is a great bumper sticker, I must say, even though, I would suggest that it is very deceiving.

It is deceiving, because I put forward a question earlier to a member about why it is the Conservatives are being very one-sided in their messaging. Conservatives are trying to give an impression, for the more than 95,000 people who I represent in Winnipeg North, that if they form government, they are going to get rid of the carbon tax.

A vast majority of the constituents that I represent, over 80%, actually get a net benefit from the price on pollution, or the carbon tax, as the Conservatives refer to it.

What the Conservatives have been quiet on is the question of what they are going to do with the rebate portion. That rebate portion is put into place as a result of the carbon tax being collected. If they get rid of the carbon tax, they are getting rid of the rebate also.

The member opposite, when I posed the question to him, said that if one does not collect the tax, then one does not have to worry about giving money back.

Business of Supply

● (1700)

The Conservatives do not understand that the price on pollution, which was something that was adopted in the Paris conference back in 2015, was to provide incentive for people to think of the environment in terms of the choices they make. It is based on a rebate. Most Canadians will actually receive more money back than they paid for the carbon tax. When the Conservatives put on their bumper stickers that they are going to get rid of the carbon tax, what they are really saying is that for more than 80% of the constituents, some of whom I represent, they want to take more money out of their pockets. That is the reality, but they do not talk about that. That idea has been amplified.

Earlier today, the leader of the Conservative Party, who raised the issue we are debating today, said the Conservatives are going to get rid of the carbon tax for all Canadians on all home fuels. That is what he said. I asked him why the Conservatives opposed a motion that the NDP proposed which would get rid of all the GST on home heating.

We have heard a leader recklessly make a policy statement on the floor of the chamber. He proclaimed that the Conservatives are going to get rid of all taxes on home heating. He actually said that, even though a couple of hours later, his party denied the opportunity to actually say yes to what it was he had just finished saying.

Talk about reckless. Canadians need to know and understand just how risky it is to consider the Conservative Party of Canada, because it does flip-flop all over the place. Conservatives are more focused on bumper-sticker politics, the far right and populist attitudes than they are on the general welfare and well-being of Canadians. We see that in the debate.

Let us think about it. Coal used to warm up homes during wartime. They would put coal in little steel boxes in many wartime houses. That coal would be used to heat homes. It was not very good for the environment. A lot of that coal was converted into natural gas. Some of it was converted into heating oil. It is good to transition out of coal.

What we are talking about today, and what the government is talking about, is a policy for all Canadians, even though the Conservatives will try to say that it is divisive. It is not divisive. In their own minds, possibly it is, but I have news for them. Canadians from coast to coast to coast use oil to heat their homes. Canadians in all regions will benefit. What we will see with this policy is a greater emphasis for people to convert, with incentives, to home heat pumps. By doing that they will save thousands of dollars every year. We do not hear people saying that is not the case.

A simple search on Google or Yahoo will show there are significant cost savings in converting from oil to a heat pump. It is a good policy idea, but the Conservatives are not concerned about that. They are concerned about bumper stickers. For them, it is about the simplicity of the message, even if it means they have to flip-flop and turn into pretzels here, based on voting patterns and what they have told people at the polls.

The Conservatives will continue to do the twisting and turning. We will continue to be there to ensure affordability for Canadians and to be there for the environment.

● (1705)

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, if the hon. member was one of the 50 species of fish that swim in the Red River, he would certainly be swimming upstream on this issue.

In late September, there was a Postmedia-Leger poll that found a clear majority of 55% of Canadians want the carbon tax reduced or eliminated entirely and that everyone thinks the federal plan to get to net zero is unrealistic. Of the respondents, 18% wanted the carbon tax reduced, 37% wanted it abolished, and 27% were fine to keep it as is.

One thing I have never been able to understand and explain to the residents of Barrie—Innisfil is this: The government talks about them getting more money than what they pay into it, which the PBO has said is not the case. If I take a dollar from somebody and give that person their dollar back, how are they ahead? I would love to hear an explanation on that one.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member made reference to fish in the Red River. I could have used the analogy of the Conservative Party being like a fish on the dock at The Forks flipping and flopping all over the place. That is what I mean by risky and reckless policy.

We do not hear an environmental policy coming from the Conservative Party. We just do not see it. It is more interested in trying to fool Canadians on issues by simply saying it is going to axe the tax because that sure does sound good.

The member wants to go by polls. If we were to canvass a poll asking if we should decrease the pay of members of Parliament by 30%, I guarantee that 95% of Canadians, or a very high majority, would say yes. Does that mean we are going to see the Conservative Party say it would slash MPs' salaries by 50%? After all, that might make for a good bumper sticker too.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, something is fishy in here today. One thing that is fishy is the hon. member talking about how the Liberals have done a great job on affordability.

We had a debate in here last night about the school meal programs, something they promised in 2019 and still have not delivered on. If we are talking about costs and people struggling, certainly in his riding of Winnipeg North, where children are living in some of the highest levels of poverty, families could benefit from this program.

Although the Liberals and Conservatives banter back and forth about who is more in line with affordability, both of them continue to prop up their corporate friends and not go after the big grocery chains for gouging families.

I would like to ask the hon. member across the way if he agrees that the Liberals have haphazardly put this forward because they really do not know how to make things more affordable for Canadians and are really not committed to doing so.

Business of Supply

• (1710)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member is just wrong on so many accounts.

Does she not realize that the Canada child benefit program generated, in Winnipeg North alone, over \$9 million a month to support children? Thousands of children, hundreds from Winnipeg North, were lifted out of poverty because of that one measure.

Does the member not realize we now have \$10-a-day child care across Canada? This federal Liberal government ensured we could lower the price of child care, which provides many benefits to women and many others, as a direct result of this policy.

We have made affordability an issue on many different fronts. I would hope the NDP would see through the Conservative con job on this motion and do the right thing, which is to stand up for the environment and ensure that we continue with affordability for Canadians.

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise to correct the record on something we hear quite consistently from the Conservative side, which is that eight out of 10 families in Canada do not get more back from the carbon pricing system that we have put in place. It is in fact the case that many families do get more money back.

Also, I want to address one thing that we never really talk about, which is who those families are. They are the least fortunate families in Canada, who heat smaller homes and do not drive to work but take public transit. Those are the families this helps the most, and I would like that to be on the record.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it is important to recognize that the independent Parliamentary Budget Office has made it very clear that it is 80%, and the biggest benefactors are seniors, many children and those in smaller homes.

However, this is something that the Conservative Party of Canada wants to take away. It is something they do not talk about, but that is the reality. Whenever we hear a member from the Conservative Party say that they are going to axe the tax, we need to realize that they would be taking money out of the pockets of 80% of homes, and I can guarantee that in the riding of Winnipeg North.

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise again today, but it does feel like Groundhog Day. It must be a dozen times that we have had this same debate on the carbon tax since the member for Carleton became the leader of the Conservative Party. It is ironic because the same party ran on putting a price on pollution in the last election, and now, for probably the twelfth time, we are having this debate about cutting it.

The Conservatives are masquerading about this being an affordability measure and the reason that the cost of living challenges are high right now. However, earlier this week on the finance committee, we heard from the Governor of the Bank of Canada, who said that the price on pollution was only responsible for one-sixth of one per cent of the inflation that we are seeing right now in Canada. Also, since 2020, the carbon price on home heating oil has only in-

creased by 12¢ a litre to a total of 14¢ a litre, while the average price for home heating oil is now 75¢ higher.

Canadians are overwhelmingly feeling the impacts of geopolitics and fossil fuel inflation, but this is not because of climate policy. What is boosting the price of fossil fuels in Canada? What is responsible for that other 63¢ a litre, which is five times more than the price on pollution?

That, of course, would be the illegal and unjustified war of aggression that Russia is waging in Ukraine right now and what that has done to global energy markets. It is sad we are not hearing the leader of the Conservatives stand up for Ukraine or in support of the people of Ukraine in repelling this unjustified invasion.

Also, OPEC is taking on measures that are constricting the supply of oil. However, rather than criticizing these measures, the Conservative government in Alberta rolled out the red carpet for Saudi Arabia and, indeed, said that we should follow the advice and projections that Aramco has for fossil fuel use in the future.

Obviously, the Conservatives say nothing about the record profits of the fossil fuel sector, which is soaking up that extra 63¢ a litre, and it is gobbling that up at the expense of everyday Canadians. We know that, since 2022, the oil and gas sector in Canada has made a \$30-billion increase in profits, or a 1,000% increase since 2019.

We know that putting a price on carbon is the most efficient way of reducing emissions. It is why the right-of-centre government in British Columbia, the former B.C. Liberals, brought this measure in and, of course, the current Conservative MP for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge was part of that team. The economy of B.C. has been one of the strongest in the country ever since.

While B.C. has its own system, the federal system is set up in a way that offsets the costs such that eight out of 10 Canadians get more back than they pay. This is not just a measure of influencing behaviour and a climate measure. It is an affordability measure. This, of course, is one of the reasons Canada's current emissions reduction plan has allowed Canada to reduce emissions by more than any other G7 country since 2019. Obviously, we have a long to go after the Conservatives did absolutely nothing for a decade. They not only did nothing, but also caused embarrassment to Canada around the world by undermining climate policy globally.

Business of Supply

Members know the saying, “If you tell a lie enough times, eventually even you will believe it.” The Conservatives live in a post-truth world, and they must think that, by repeating this, they can eventually convince Canadians of the same as well. Not only is the argument they make on carbon pricing factually incorrect, but the Conservatives will also say that we have not met a single climate target, which is disingenuous because our targets on reducing emissions have always been 2030 and 2050, and we are making significant progress in getting there.

The Conservatives say that we have not reduced emissions, but by the measures we brought in, we have done the equivalent of taking 11 million cars off the road annually. They do not actually want people to have lower heating bills. They want them to be strapped in to ride the roller coaster of volatile fossil fuel prices.

• (1715)

In contrast, we know that we need to decarbonize how we heat our homes and how we transport ourselves. Studies have shown that a Halifax resident can save over \$1,400 a year by switching from oil heating to a heat pump. Just yesterday, I spoke to a fellow British Columbian who was able to get over \$20,000 in grants from the federal government, from the B.C. government and from Vancity to be able to purchase and install a heat pump in B.C., so there is already a lot of support for these types of measures. Together with switching to an electric vehicle, we know that families can save as much as \$10,000 a year.

Our government is intent on making sure this happens with a series of incentives and programs. It is working. We know that just last year in British Columbia over 18% of new vehicles sold were zero-emissions vehicles.

Unfortunately, the only climate plan we are hearing from the Conservatives is that we need to burn more fossil fuels. Yes, it is hard to believe that we need to increase our production of natural gas as a way of reducing emissions. They say to use technology, but what technology would that be? Is it any technology that is actually available today?

They are not going to talk about any of that technology. They are going to talk about technology that is unproven and that maybe a decade from now we will be able to use. The Conservatives talk about things such as small module reactors and carbon capture, which have not been proven and are not ready to use today. This is what we call greenwashing.

Instead, we see the Conservatives giving new meaning to cancel culture. We have seen the Government of Alberta very recently put a six-month moratorium on the renewable energy industry, which has been growing rapidly in the province and represents a \$33-billion economic opportunity. We have seen, in this very House, the Conservatives filibuster and oppose the changes to the Atlantic accords that would create the foundation for a vibrant green-energy future, including with offshore winds in Atlantic Canada.

I will say that this is because the Conservatives do not actually believe that climate change is real. In fact, this is exactly how they voted at their policy convention just two years ago. I would also posit that they do not actually care about affordability because, if they did, they would be saying something about the record profits

that are being made, and they would be standing right here with us on measures that would ensure that people can get off the use of fossil fuels for home heating and for transportation.

Rather, this motion and the dozen motions that we have debated in the House on the carbon tax are just a distraction from the real reason that the cost of energy is high in Canada. The Conservatives would rather keep Canadians strapped into the volatile roller coaster that global energy prices are right now. We know that they are going to be a challenge as we live in a very uncertain world.

We are focused on reducing emissions. That is why we are rolling out this heat pump program and why we have been implementing all these different measures as part of our emissions-reductions plan. It is also why I will be voting against this measure.

We need to make sure that we utilize the most efficient program that we have at our disposal for reducing emissions, which is, of course, having a price on pollution. This is a measure that Conservatives used to believe in. We know the government of Stephen Harper was on board with this idea, and the Conservative Party ran on this in the last election. In my home province of B.C., we had a right-of-centre government that brought this in, and none of the doom and gloom that some people said would happen ended up happening.

With that, I look forward to some questions and comments from my colleagues.

• (1720)

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, it seems even the Conservatives are not interested in their own motion. I would like to call a quorum count.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will ask the clerk to count the members present.

And the count having been taken:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We now have enough members to continue.

We will move on to questions and comments. The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill has the floor.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, earlier this week—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Excuse me for a moment. I would like the attention of the House. I would ask members, instead of having conversations in the chamber, to take them out. We are still doing business here.

The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

Business of Supply

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about efficiencies in terms of the fight against climate change. I am going to quote from an Edmonton Sun article. It says, “Answering in question period Wednesday on behalf of an absent Prime Minister...[the member for Edmonton Centre] suggested unhappy Albertans and other Canadians could always switch their natural gas furnaces for heat pumps”.

The article goes on to say that this would cost \$20 billion or more if this was to be implemented across the country.

How is that efficient?

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Madam Speaker, I cannot speak to the numbers that are behind that. What we do know is that heat pumps save people, as I mentioned before, \$1,400 a year if they switch from home heating oil to heat pumps. That is why we have had programs in place for multiple years now, like the greener homes grant, which is a \$5,000 grant. We also have the greener homes loan, which people can access.

I mentioned in my speech that we are already seeing this take-up right across the country, including in my province of British Columbia where we have a province that has similarly seized the importance not only of climate action but also of people saving money on home heating bills. It saves money for people, fights climate change and actually creates local jobs in Canada. We need to have more measures like this, so we can tackle all those things together.

• (1725)

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member is my neighbour, so it is always good to see neighbours get up and do work in this place.

I recognize that we are in a climate crisis. I know that if we look across B.C., we are seeing terrible forest fires and whole communities are being washed out by rivers literally falling from the sky, and people are becoming increasingly concerned. We know this is having a huge impact on insurance costs, and things like that, as we are dealing with those significant challenges. I also recognize that people are struggling profoundly right now with trying to make ends meet, and it is getting increasingly scarier.

This motion really does not address a key factor, which is that B.C., Quebec and the Northwest Territories have their own carbon pricing process. That means if this is voted on in a positive way, then it would not have an impact on those communities. The NDP offered an amendment to the motion to save GST on those provinces and territories so that they could see results as well.

Can the member speak to that and to why the Conservatives did not take that opportunity?

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my neighbour and colleague from North Island—Powell River for the question.

Indeed, we are seeing the impacts of the climate crisis right across the country this year, particularly with record wildfires. It has caused untold economic and human harm. It is incredibly tragic to see. That is why it is so important not only that we do everything we can to mitigate emissions, and the carbon price is a key part of

that, but also that we make sure we continue to adapt to a rapidly changing climate.

As we do that, we need to make sure that we keep affordability front and centre, and that is why we are offering a rebate, so that eight out of 10 Canadians will get back more than they pay. At the same time, it is very much up to the provinces and territories that have their own systems as to how they want to operate carbon pricing in their jurisdictions.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and implore colleagues to support the common-sense and fair-minded motion before us today. For those watching at home, the motion reads:

That, given that the government has announced a “temporary, three-year pause” to the federal carbon tax on home heating oil, the House call on the government to extend that pause to all forms of home heating.

The motion is about the carbon tax, but it is ultimately also about being fair to all Canadians, regardless of region and home heating source. That is what this motion is asking for: fairness.

It also acknowledges something else, in direct response to the assertion made this morning by the member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River. He asserted that the carbon tax is working and that it is worth the immense cost to the constituents in his expansive riding, many of whom pay a lot to do things such as heating their homes and getting around.

I want to lay out for the House that the carbon tax is not working and is not worth the cost. In the heart of this motion is the fact that, after eight years of Liberal government, not only is the carbon tax not working, but it is also exacerbating the inflationary crisis and financial hardship for Canadians. This is another reason Conservatives have put the motion forward today.

Ahead of our Wednesday morning caucus meeting and as winter temperatures began to set in across the country, the Leader of the Opposition announced that Conservatives would in fact force a vote in the House of Commons on Monday to extend a three-year carbon tax exemption to all forms of home heating in every part of Canada. The exemption was announced by the Prime Minister last week for Atlantic Canadian home heating oil.

I know that the temptation for Liberal and perhaps NDP colleagues will be to continue to toe the line the Prime Minister took this week and vote against this motion. Perhaps the Bloc will as well. This line was that no additional carve-outs on the carbon tax would be forthcoming.

Business of Supply

However, that position would be a mistake, both morally and politically. If anybody in this chamber cares about public support for climate action, the inflation crisis and, frankly, keeping their jobs, they should vote in favour of this motion. Here is why: While inflation and the cost of living remain the top electoral concerns for Canadians, a very recent survey by Leger suggested that about 70% of Canadians are worried about climate change. However, support for keeping the Liberal signature climate policy, the carbon tax, only registers with the support of 18% of Canadians.

The reason for the vast delta, that gap between public concern for addressing climate change and support for the climate tax, is something that few NDP, Liberal or Bloc intelligentsia appear to have considered. This blind spot is now both biting them in the rear politically and preventing Canada from meeting its emissions targets.

What is the reason behind that gap? It is that the carbon tax is failing to move consumer preferences away from high-carbon products and practices in the way Liberals promised it would, and Canadians know it. In the middle of a generationally high cost of living crisis, all Canadians, even those very concerned about climate change, are unwilling to pay for a policy they know to be ineffectual. Put differently, people will only choose alternatives to things such as driving carbon-powered vehicles and heating their homes with carbon-based fuels if other options exist and if those options are readily available and affordable.

Those circumstances may be partially available in more temperate and highly populated regions of the world, but that is not so much the case across the rest of our country. Even though the Liberals, the NDP and, frankly, the Bloc, seem to be content with keeping the tax in this scenario, Canadians are not choosing to purchase alternatives; in most parts of Canada, they do not widely exist and are completely unaffordable.

● (1730)

If one is ever in the beautiful riding of Calgary Nose Hill, I encourage them to come and drive up a piece of road called Centre Street, which turns into Harvest Hills Boulevard. There is a beautiful laneway along a big chunk of that for a light rapid transit. For 10 years, I have been imploring different levels of government to build out light rapid transit in that corridor. That would pull 50,000 cars off the road every day. Yet, we do not see leadership from the Liberal government on building out this type of critical infrastructure that would actually deliver social inclusion for my community, and could materially reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Instead, we see this dogmatic adherence to a policy that does not work. This concept is simple to grasp for even the most politically disconnected Canadians, particularly when they fill up their car and pay a carbon tax, but have no public transit alternatives and pay a carbon-based home heating bill for six months of brutal cold with no other option.

There are LRT debacles in Ottawa. I encourage everybody to try to take the LRT to their place here in Ottawa tonight. I wish them good luck. Edmonton, Calgary and the greater Toronto area are perfect examples of this situation.

Another good example is that after nearly a decade of wasted time, greenhouse gas emissions and hundreds of millions of dollars

spent on the administration of the carbon tax, the Liberals have not managed to deliver alternatives to things like heating oil. The measures the Prime Minister announced this week, a decade late and thousands of dollars short, would not even pay for a Big Mac value meal for rural Canadians each month. Earlier today, the NDP member for Timmins—James Bay said as much in the debate when he said that in Canada, heating homes is not a luxury. He is right. It is not a luxury, it is a necessity. If people cannot heat their home, they freeze.

The Liberal member for Kings—Hants also said something similar when he said that if Canadians do not have the money to make a change to a different form of heating, then they are stuck. Stuck is a great way to describe the situation many Canadians find themselves in right now.

The question Canadians now want answered is how the Liberals and their coalition partners in the NDP plan to get them financially unstuck after a decade of failure. A decade of Liberal rule has also shown people that the federal government is not, putting it mildly, particularly good at building out the infrastructure, like public transit, beefed-up electrical grids or a national system of EV charging stations needed to do things like pull gas-powered cars off the road.

The Liberals expect people to pay a carbon tax, with no alternative. They expect people to pay a carbon tax on home heating, with no alternative. That is the record of eight years of Liberal government. The carbon tax is not working and yet the Liberals expect people to pay for it in the middle of winter, on their heating bill.

However, the Liberal government does seem to be good at one thing, blowing a lot of tax dollars and political attention on waste and scandal, like the SNC-Lavalin scandal, the WE charity scandal, the ArriveCAN scandal and the foreign interference crisis. None of those things would bring inflation under control or address climate change.

The Liberal government's record on both fronts is abysmal, and it does not want to be held to account on that front. The government is not meeting its climate targets. It is just taxing Canadians with a policy that does not work.

Further to this point, this week's serious whistle-blower allegations regarding allegations of gross misappropriation at Sustainable Development Technology Canada, an agency that is supposed to spur the development and deployment of emissions reductions technology, will undoubtedly further erode public trust in the Liberal government's capacity to provide lower-cost alternatives to carbon fuels.

Business of Supply

I want to read from this article, because I do not think people at home have heard much about this scandal. It just broke this week. Somebody named Doug McConnachie, assistant deputy minister at Innovation, has been working with whistle-blowers on this file, and they recorded him. This is what came out of the recordings when they were looking at the misappropriation of funds in this giant slush fund that is supposed deliver low-cost alternatives and combat climate change.

● (1735)

This is from a CBC article:

By late July, McConnachie was convinced certain spending decisions were badly handled, including the payments of nearly \$40 million during the pandemic that was not based on precise needs and did not require follow-ups.

“It was free money,” he said....

I know there are a lot of people in my community who would like free money. This was free money designed to combat climate change that went to some Liberal cronies. We do not even know how, and the people who made these decisions still have jobs. The government has known about this for months or years. Those people still have jobs, and the Liberals expect us to believe that they care about getting inflation under control or that they care about climate change.

The article goes on: “‘It was free money,’ he said, before making an analogy with the controversy that affected Jean Chrétien's Liberal government in the early 2000s.” “Affected” is putting it nicely. It was brought down. “That is almost a sponsorship-scandal level kind of giveaway.”

This is a fund that was supposed to address climate change in Canada, and it turned into, as everything else has with the government, a slush fund for Liberal cronies. People who care about climate action and care about getting inflation under control should not look at the Liberal government, because it does not care. Its members just virtue signal on these things and give away tax dollars to their friends while people are expected to pay tax on home heating in the middle of a Canadian winter. That is disgusting. That has an impact on climate change. Again, how do those people still have jobs?

Members do not have to take my word for all of these facts, because the results are laid bare in recent government reports that show that even with the carbon tax, Canada will still miss its 2030 emissions targets by close to 50%. I have heard so many Liberals get up today and talk about forest fires and the impacts of climate change, yet they are dogmatically supporting a policy that does not work and that, according to the Governor of the Bank of Canada at the finance committee, is affecting inflation in a major way. Tiff Macklem said this at committee yesterday. The Liberals are dogmatically adhering to a policy that does not work when they know that Canada is on track to missing its emissions targets by 50%. Canadians know this. They know the carbon tax is not working.

There is proof of these facts in recent political trends too. The Liberals' capitulation on the tax on home heating oil should have been viewed as an inevitability for even the most lay observer. The signs have been present for months. For example, in August, a Nova Scotia provincial riding that had been a safe Liberal hold from

time immemorial was flipped by provincial Conservatives due in part to the unpopularity of the federal Liberal carbon tax.

Within the federal Liberal backbench there has also been extreme dissent over this issue, likely due to the sustained precipitous drop in polls that the party has seen. These incidents have followed nearly a year of high-profile campaigning by the leader of the Conservative Party against the tax. I have heard colleagues in the Liberal Party complain that we have brought motion after motion in this House to fight the tax. They are absolutely right. We are going to keep doing it, because it does not work and it is costing Canadians.

Now that same crisis has overlaid the tax and it means millions of Canadians are facing the prospect of choosing between heating and eating, never mind considering, as some of my colleagues are talking about, buying expensive alternatives that might not even exist in their regions. That is the most bourgeois concept I have ever heard. It is much like when the member for Edmonton Centre said that everybody can buy a heating pump. Does he not know that people in his own community cannot even afford their rent?

The Prime Minister's late-stage partial capitulation on removing the tax for heating oil but not other carbon heating fuels also risks creating perverse incentives, like the one mentioned by Rural Municipalities of Alberta, which suggested that the Liberals' partial tax exemption may generate higher demand for higher-emitting heating oil in certain circumstances. Keeping the tax's regional inequities will also further divide our country at a time when we need to unify. The world has changed, and those in our country need to be strong, not pitted against each other by inequitable policies that do nothing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in our country.

● (1740)

Contrary to the opinions of many left-leaning pundits, after eight years of climate failure and the creation of an inflationary crisis, no one here should continue to lean into this tax. It needs to go.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: I am sorry to have to interrupt the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

[*English*]

It being 5:43 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

The question is on the motion.

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

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the division stands deferred until Monday, November 6, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I suspect if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to call it 5:58 p.m. so we can begin private members' hour.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1745)

[English]

RADIOCOMMUNICATION ACT

The House resumed from September 19 consideration of the motion that Bill S-242, An Act to amend the Radiocommunication Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is interesting subject matter. I do not believe it would be in our best interest, ultimately, to see Bill S-242 pass. I understand that the Bloc in particular came up with an alternative idea of having the matter brought forward to a standing committee. I do believe there is a great deal of merit in that.

What we are talking about is an issue that I think there would be a great deal of sympathy toward. I care deeply about rural Manitoba, and at the end of the day, whether one is north of Dauphin or in any region in the province of Manitoba, we would like to deliver a modern spectrum that would incorporate rural connectivity. I think that is really important, and it is very admirable to see what we can do as a House to better facilitate that maximum connection. I do not believe that the bill itself would achieve that. I think it could add a great many complications and there could be some side effects that members would not necessarily want to see, like the billions of dollars in licences that have already been given out over the last decade and how that could potentially be jeopardizing. There are some very well-defined timelines that are being incorporated into the legislation.

I do not think that would be the intent of what the mover was suggesting. I think the intent is wanting to see more rural connectivity, like I do. That is why I think the INDU standing committee is well positioned. I believe it might actually be initiating a study on it now. I would like to allow that standing committee to continue to do the study, and hopefully we can come up with some good ideas as to how we can achieve two things: dealing with spectrum deployment and meeting the needs of rural connectivity. To me, a big part of it is about the infrastructure. We need to recognize that we need more infrastructure in our rural communities. I had the good fortune of being able to acquire a relatively modest cottage in Sandy Hook, between Winnipeg Beach and Gimli. Even though it is only 45 minutes away from the city of Winnipeg, there are some connectivity problems there. We now see fibre optics being brought into more rural communities in Manitoba.

Private Members' Business

Interestingly enough, the other day I was talking about the Canada Infrastructure Bank. One of the projects through the Canada Infrastructure Bank is rural connectivity. The point is that whether it is the private sector or government working and encouraging this through the possible spectrum auctions that take place, we should be doing what we can to encourage connectivity. That is why I was glad to see the Canada Infrastructure Bank had that as a project. Manitoba is not alone; it is one province that is actually dealing with some of the infrastructure through that particular bank. I am hoping the Conservatives might change their opinions on the Canada Infrastructure Bank, especially if they take a look at all the different projects out there.

Why is connectivity so important? I believe it is one of the ways in which we can ensure ongoing rural economic diversity. We can look at what is on the web today. There are a number of small businesses. We often hear about small businesses being the backbone of Canada's economy. I go to some smaller workshops and community gatherings where there are small business entrepreneurs getting their businesses up and running.

• (1750)

One of the things we will always find on their business cards is a QR code, which we can take a picture of to go to their website, where we will find amazing products being sold through the Internet. The nice thing about this is that we can live anywhere and do not have to be in the big cities, whether it be Winnipeg, Edmonton, Regina, Toronto, Vancouver or wherever. The Internet can play an important role in levelling the field, providing opportunities for people in rural communities that were never there before. I see that as a positive thing.

When we talk about the issue of spectrum deployment and going forward, I think that the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology, or INDU, is doing its job in coming up with some ideas and recommendations of how we can incorporate these ideas when we do auction off spectrum so that all Canadians would be able to benefit by it. People would be surprised by the number of communities where a dial tone is virtually the best they are going to get in terms of speed, it would seem, at times.

The need to move on this is important, but I do not believe that Bill S-242 is going to advance the cause to the degree some might imply. In fact, it could be the opposite and could cause more damage. For that reason, I will not be supporting the bill. I would encourage members to go to the INDU committee and let us see it do some wonderful work and come up with some recommendations, because I am sure that it will.

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am rising this evening to speak to Bill S-242, an act to amend the Radiocommunication Act, an issue that I care a lot about. I have championed this issue since I was elected in 2019, and yet here we still are four years later.

Private Members' Business

I want to paint a picture of what is happening in Laurentides—Labelle in this regard. I want to show my colleagues this wonderful riding, but they better not get lost because, quite honestly, there are many roads in Laurentides—Labelle where the GPS cuts out because there is no signal. People do not have to bring their phone if they come to visit us. Is that acceptable in 2023?

I want to take 30 seconds to name some of the 43 municipalities in Laurentides—Labelle. They include Sainte-Lucie-des-Laurentides, Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts, Lac-Supérieur, Lac-Tremblant-Nord, Mont-Blanc, Notre-Dame-du-Laus, Notre-Dame-de-Pontmain and Ferme-Neuve. I will not name them all, but nearly all of them have areas where there is no cell coverage. Cell connectivity is not just intermittent but completely lacking in some cases. I have experienced it myself many times.

I am thinking of Sainte-Lucie-des-Laurentides in particular. There is no signal next to city hall. It is not the time to get lost in the woods, and having a good sense of direction is key. We are talking here about 1,475 residents who are held hostage by a lack of service, which is, quite frankly, essential in 2023. This is also a community whose economic, social and community development is being hampered by this lack of service, which should be essential.

As everyone knows, the housing crisis has reached every corner of Quebec, and Laurentides—Labelle is no exception. Sainte-Lucie-des-Laurentides would like to attract real estate projects, welcome new residents and offer them a dignified place to live, but it has to wait. A major obstacle stands in the way. Unfortunately, a lack of cellphone service has put a damper on all potential plans, and the municipality is paying the price.

In 2023, what are people being told? Are they being urged to come live in Sainte-Lucie-des-Laurentides for an outstanding lifestyle surrounded by lakes, rivers, hiking trails and even a child care centre, as long as they can do without their cellphone because the area has no signal? It is the same story for other municipalities in Laurentides—Labelle. Only the names change.

I can think of another example. Let us imagine an entrepreneur, the president of a small business, who has to set his cellphone on the kitchen table to be able to work, to have the slightest access to the network. There is almost no chance of teleworking, with a network that cuts out every two seconds. How can anyone be efficient? I think this is unacceptable.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, I really care about the issue of cell coverage. During the 2019 election campaign, however, I quickly realized how much the Liberals were ignoring the issue. I also quickly realized how important this issue is to Quebecers and Canadians. It is even a question of public safety. When people in a municipality tell us that, during a power outage, they have to knock on neighbours' doors because the Internet, cellphones, landlines and wireless phones at home do not work, that is another matter altogether. It is a question of public safety.

● (1755)

In recent years, the mayors of the 43 municipalities in Laurentides—Labelle signed a letter. The reeve of the Pays-d'en-Haut RCM also signed the letter, which was sent to the former economic development minister, the member for Ahuntsic-Cartierville. Twen-

ty-four resolutions from 24 municipal councils calling on the federal government to take action were tabled in the House.

I even sponsored a petition started by an individual named Lynne Gornon. I applaud her mettle and hard work. She asked the federal government to work with big telecoms to build cell towers in rural areas quickly for public safety reasons. Thanks to grassroots efforts, the petition garnered nearly 3,500 signatures in a matter of weeks. Since then, nothing has happened, nothing at all. That is a difficult thing to explain to people, and it is hard to make the claim that this is an important file.

Along my route from here to home, I go through about 10 places where there is no cell service. I just found out that I can make a call with a signal if my car breaks down. I cannot actually call someone, but apparently I can call 911 if I have to. I hope I never have to try.

Why is the federal government doing nothing? If this is so important, why is it not doing something?

Let us talk about the bill before us. Telecommunications companies can acquire spectrum licences during auctions organized by the federal government, but they are not required to use them in their entirety. That is what happens and it does not sit well with us. For rural and remote areas, the licence ends up being unused, which does not serve the public. The bill will not be favourable to our proposal.

It is not that the objective of connecting every under-served area is not commendable. We believe that if the bill is referred to committee, a tremendous amount of amendments will need to be made. From the outset, we will have to ask stakeholders to testify to give us answers to some of our questions so that we know, as legislators, whether this is viable. In its current form, the bill is not the right vehicle to meet the objective, even though I agree this is an urgent problem.

This study in committee will allow us to have a bill that is much more comprehensive and better overall, allowing us to respond more favourably to potential investments.

I would like to talk about how the spectrum areas are managed. This could help the people who are watching us to understand this issue. This could be delegated to the Government of Quebec. As in all areas, the Government of Quebec is well positioned to know and recognize the most pressing needs of its communities. It has proven it. With operation high speed, Quebec managed to gradually meet its objectives.

Private Members' Business

The Government of Quebec's commitment and dedication in this particular matter show that we are capable of implementing ambitious connectivity strategies for Quebecers. Finally, I think it is worrisome that the bill gives additional powers to the CRTC, particularly with regard to the management of spectrum areas and auctions.

It is of the utmost importance to me that the federal laws and Quebec's provincial laws complement one another rather than compete against one another. We need to think about our constituents. I think that sending the bill to committee is a good idea.

● (1800)

[English]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to rise and offer my thoughts on Bill S-242, which was first introduced into the Senate by Senator Dennis Glen Patterson of Nunavut and, of course, the bill is being sponsored here in the House by the member for Bay of Quinte.

Essentially, what we need to discuss with respect to this bill is spectrum. A lot of people may wonder what that is.

I would say, first and foremost, that it is a very important public resource. It is essentially the resource that refers to the range of frequencies used for wireless communications, such as Wi-Fi and cell service. These are services that many of us take for granted, especially in urban areas and in work environments such as this.

Every time we pull our phone out, we just know that we are going to have access to the Internet and to important information. It allows us near-instantaneous communication with many of our work colleagues and our constituents, even though the constituents that I represent are three time zones away from Ottawa.

There are different lanes, or frequency bands, within the wireless spectrum. They all have different speed limits, and each is suited to a different type of data traffic. The government's job in this is to regulate and allocate frequency bands to different companies and organizations for use to ensure that there is enough spectrum available for everyone and that different devices can communicate without interfering with one another.

That regulation of wireless spectrum is the responsibility of one department, that is, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. ISED is responsible for developing and implementing policies and programs related to the efficient and effective use of spectrum resource. This includes licensing and allocating spectrum to various users, such as wireless carriers, broadcasters and government agencies. The decisions that ISED makes affects how quickly Canadians are connected.

I want to talk about rural Canada, especially my riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. My riding is about 4,700 square kilometres of beautiful southern Vancouver Island real estate, and it is a very rural riding. I would say that about 90% of my riding's population lives along the east coast of Vancouver Island, going from Chemainus down to Langford. The most beautiful part of my riding, I would argue, is over on the southwest coast.

When a person is driving up to Lake Cowichan, gets down to Mesachie Lake and takes a left turn to go to Port Renfrew, they know that they are out of luck in terms of cell service until they get to the water's edge. This happens within a few kilometres of having departed the highway.

There are significant geographical chunks of my riding where, when one is out there, one does not have access to cell service. Indeed, this is true for most of British Columbia.

I acknowledge that British Columbia is a very complex province to get these services to. This is because of our terrain. We are the most mountainous province. It is a source of great pride and great beauty, but it comes with its challenges when one lives there. The mountains make a perfect physical barrier between two devices trying to connect with one another.

My constituents are experiencing these problems but, right across Canada, we know that the stats show a picture in which 63% of rural households do not have access to high-speed broadband. That includes 14% of highways and major transport roads that do not have access to LTE wireless services, the really fast kind of wireless service.

Up in the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut, no households have access to high-speed broadband. Moreover, 72% of highways and major transport roads do not have access to LTE wireless services.

This is a critical service that is important in connecting us to the outside world, to safety services and for our work. However, so much of rural Canada still does not have access to that.

The Canadian Internet Registration Authority released 2021 data as a part of its Internet performance test. This showed that the median rural download speeds were measured at 3.78 megabits per second, compared with an astounding 44 megabits per second in urban Canada, a difference of 11.7 times.

The digital divide between urban and rural Canada is starkly seen in these statistics. We know that urban speeds have actually been climbing, while the rural Canadian upload speeds, on average, are falling and have not been keeping the same pace.

● (1805)

Let us turn to Bill S-242. I was looking at the introduction speeches in the Senate and here in the House, and I have looked at how other colleagues have responded to the bill. I think the senator who sponsored the bill in the other place summed it up quite well when he said that the bill is essentially the "use it or lose it" bill.

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Bill S-242 would essentially amend Canada's spectrum policy to ensure that this very important and critical resource is used to connect Canadians and is not used as a vehicle for billionaires to be trading back and forth with one another. It would require that all spectrum licence holders deploy spectrum to 50% of the population within prescribed geographic regions contained in the licence area, known as tier 5 areas, within three years of acquiring the licence. It would ensure that those buying larger licence areas would not be able to meet deployment conditions simply by deploying to the urban areas within those larger tiers. They would also be required to service the smaller rural and remote areas nestled within. It would give the minister the flexibility to decide whether to revoke the entire licence outright or to reallocate those tier 5 areas within the licence to other providers that are ready and able to service the underserved areas.

There is also a third component to the bill, which is a civil liability clause. The intent of this clause is to ensure that if the licence holder, by acting in bad faith, does not meet the deployment conditions and has had its licence revoked, the population that had been serviced by it and had the service lost due to the revocation could initiate a civil claim for damages.

I will conclude by saying that we have a situation here in Canada where, if we look at the history of spectrum sales and allocation, we know that the Canadian government, over time, has been deeply discounting spectrum for smaller regional carriers that have consistently failed to deploy it. There are areas all across this great country of ours that are sitting unserved by broadband because of limited access to the spectrum resources. It is a scarce public resource, but it has been squandered because it has been licensed to regional carriers that have preferred to flip it for profit rather than improve the lives of the Canadians it is supposed to serve. This is very important, because it is estimated that next-generation 5G connectivity will add billions of dollars to Canada's GDP over the next half-decade. The lack of reliable connectivity in rural communities is depriving them of access to the 21st-century economy and all the opportunities that it has.

As the NDP's agriculture critic, I know that in rural communities right across the country, with the incredible advancements in agricultural technology and innovation, connectivity to the Internet is so crucial, especially with the next-generation machinery that is coming out, with its ability and artificial intelligence. If we want our farmers to stay on the cutting edge of agricultural technology and to continuously punch above their weight as the agricultural powerhouse that is Canada, we need to solve this problem and make sure that connectivity is where our farmers are doing their important work for our country.

Fundamentally, Bill S-242 is about making sure that those who buy spectrum actually use it. When somebody buys a public resource, especially at significant discounts, as has been our country's history, they should be buying an obligation to connect Canadians. This is an essential service. We must find pieces of legislation that would protect it and protect consumers, and that is why I am proud to say that I will be voting in favour of the bill's going to committee for further study. I believe there is an opportunity for some amendments to be made there. I look forward to listening to other colleague's comments.

• (1810)

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the opportunity to talk about a bill from a senator who has become a great friend. The senator is from Nunavut, with a lot of deep history in Nunavut and Northwest Territories even before the boundaries had been reformed.

Many call this the “use it or lose it bill”, but I think it should be called the “connecting Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Yukon and northern Canadian communities bill”, because that is what it is about. My file, officially, is shadow minister for northern affairs, Arctic sovereignty and northern economic development. Connectivity is absolutely imperative now. It is across the country, but even more so in these remote communities that we represent.

I was a little puzzled. I heard the Liberal member across the way say that they were not going to support the legislation. I am troubled by that, in that it has been said, and I have said it before, that the NDP-Liberal government has abandoned the Arctic. By opposing this bill, it just further proves that that is exactly what is happening.

I am going to get into what the bill is, and I am going to give Senator Patterson a lot of credit. This is from his summary:

My name is Dennis Patterson...serving as Senator for Nunavut since 2009. Prior to that I served as a 4-term Member of the Legislative Assembly for the Northwest Territories (pre-division) representing the riding of Frobisher Bay, now known as Iqaluit. I spent 16 years in office as a senior minister and spent 4 of those years as Premier.

Given the remoteness of my region, adequate and reliable access to internet services was a major focus of mine during my time in office and I have continued to work hard on the issues during my time in the Senate. In today's society, access to internet is much more than recreational; we have become increasingly reliant on internet for a host of things that include, but are not limited to, work, school, the administration of justice and health applications.

Use-It/Lose-It is the policy that those who buy spectrum are taking on an obligation to deliver services to Canadians. It sets out that if you get a fair chance to use your spectrum, and if you don't, the government should take it away and give it to someone who will use it. This policy treats spectrum like the public utility that it is.

I could not agree more. There are examples where somebody had said, “buy it and flip it” for a huge profit, without building a stick of infrastructure that is very important.

I want to give a shout-out to some of my fellow shadow ministers for their work on this. The shadow minister for innovation, science and economic development, the shadow minister for pan-Canadian trade and competition, and the shadow minister for rural economic development and connectivity are all doing great work on this.

In summary, for the people who are watching today, including residents from Nunavut, Yukon and Northwest Territories and northern parts of Canada, the bill would implement a “use it or lose it” approach to licence spectrum. The legislation would force licence spectrum holders “to deploy the spectrum to provide service to at least 50% of the population within the geographic area covered by the spectrum licence, within three years of the licence’s issuance” or potentially have the licence revoked.

The bill permits the minister to revoke the spectrum licences that do not abide by the aforementioned regulations, and the minister must, within 60 days, reissue the revoked licences to competitive bidders.

One of my colleagues, the shadow minister for pan-Canadian trade and competition has spoken about how we have the most expensive cellular service, Internet services in the world. What I would expect from that, as I think every Canadian should, no matter whether they are from Iqaluit or Toronto, is that these big telcos, that are making huge amounts of money, would be building infrastructure in the remote communities. That really comes with getting that spectrum. It is expected, and this bill would set out to make that the way it is going to be.

I am just going to refer to an article from the Nunatsiaq News. This is one of the publications specifically in Nunavut.

Nunavut senator touts law that could improve communications in North.

Patterson said his bill, which passed third reading in the Senate on April 20, would improve access to wireless services in rural and underserved communities like those in Nunavut.

● (1815)

The senator went on to say, “What’s happening now is that telecom companies who are operating are tending to favour larger communities, so we have a disparity in services such as they are between the larger and smaller communities.”

As an example of how telecom companies flip spectrum and make hundreds of millions of dollars while doing nothing for our local communities, the article says, “He said in 2008, Shaw Communications bought a particular spectrum licence for \$190 million and sold that licence for \$350 million in 2013. Then in 2017, Shaw purchased another spectrum licence from a company called Vidéotron for \$430 million, which netted Vidéotron a \$243-million profit.” This is all while building zero infrastructure in Canada, but in the north especially, in communities that need it desperately. The senator said, “Broadband access is critical to Nunavut in particular because of the vital services that we rely on here, including health and telehealth, education, business and economic development and communications with the broader world.”

Part of my role is economic development in northern regions in our country. I have been to all three territories several times, and a common topic of conversation is connectivity. Residents in those communities order from Amazon, as we all do, but they do not just order things; they order food in many cases because they cannot access it in their remote communities. It is therefore even more necessary that they have good connectivity.

I have known Senator Patterson for many years, and anybody in this place who has ever met the senator will know that he has a pas-

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sionate desire to serve not just the region of Nunavut but the people of Nunavut and the north. Anytime someone speaks to him, he has a sealskin vest on or something with sealskin made by a local in one of the communities he represents. He always has a smile for the north. Those in the room might not know, but he is reaching age 75 pretty quickly and soon will no longer be in the Senate chamber. We will miss him there. I want to give him a lot of credit for advocating for people in the north and the things that really matter in the north. I know he is doing his best with this.

The bill has gone through the Senate and is in this chamber, and while I have accused the Liberals of abandoning the north, it is an opportunity for them to support the north and make this happen. However, we have to look at it in a different way, as a geographical area. It is a geographical area with real people who rely on connectivity for their daily lives, as I just said, including for food and health. It does not get more important than that.

This is such an easy thing for the government to support. Hearing the member from Manitoba say Liberals are going to oppose this bill is surprising to me. I should not say “surprising”. It is upsetting to me. However, as I have said many times before, the NDP-Liberal government has abandoned the north. I would challenge members to change the direction they are going on this bill and prove to residents of Nunavut, Yukon and Northwest Territories that they support them and that they indeed have not abandoned the north. I will leave it up to them to make that decision.

The viewers tonight can see the way the government is going to vote on the bill. If it votes in favour of this bill, good; if it votes no, it again proves my point that the NDP-Liberal government has abandoned the north.

● (1820)

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the importance of universal connectivity and the importance of putting wireless spectrum to use to achieve that objective. I am also pleased to speak about the steps that our government is already taking to see that Canadians from coast to coast to coast benefit from affordable high-speed Internet and cellphone service.

When I was elected four years ago, over 5,000 households in my riding did not have access to suitable high-speed Internet. I am very glad to say that in the last four years, we have cut that number in more than half. There are less than 1,500 that still need an upgrade in service, and we are working day and night to make sure that hap-

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[*Translation*]

Today, 93.5% of Canadians have access to high-speed Internet, compared with 79% in 2014. More than 99.7% of Canadians have cell phone coverage. That said, we want to do more. Our government is committed to universal Internet connectivity. That is why, since 2016, our government have committed more than \$7.6 billion in funding to expand broadband services. It is working. We are on track to reach 98% coverage by 2026 and 100% coverage by 2030.

Since 2016, our government has also more than doubled the amount of spectrum available for mobile services. Our spectrum rules are designed to complement our investments in high-speed Internet. We impose strict “use it or lose it” rules that require providers to meet increasingly ambitious deployment timelines and targets. For example, over the next few years, the rules we established for our recent 5G spectrum auctions will mean that the benefits of this spectrum will extend to 97% of our existing wireless network footprint, which covers 99% of Canadians. These rules improve services for millions of Canadians.

Our government is also implementing other “use it or lose it” spectrum policies. We recently announced a new licensing policy that will give easy local access to 5G spectrum for Internet service providers and innovative industries as well as rural, remote and indigenous communities. We are also strengthening older deployment requirements and developing policies that will give new users access to unused spectrum even in areas where deployment conditions have been met. These policies are designed to support rural connectivity and rural economic development and to provide essential access to indigenous communities.

• (1825)

[*English*]

Bill S-242 wants to ensure spectrum is put to work connecting Canadians, particularly those in rural and remote regions of Canada. Our government's actions make it clear we share this intent. While the goal of Bill S-242 is to be commended, I question whether it is the right vehicle to get us there.

I am concerned Bill S-242 would create several unintended consequences that, rather than improve connectivity, would let big players off the hook and actually reduce existing services. I worry it would limit competition, chill investment and increase costs for Canadians.

First, the bill would set a universal population coverage requirement for every spectrum licence issued. It is important to mention spectrum licences are issued for a wide variety of important services and not just for mobile and Internet access.

Bill S-242 would apply to all spectrum, regardless of its intended use. This includes spectrum used for things like firefighting, transportation, precision agriculture, municipal services, earth monitoring and national defence. These users would risk losing their spectrum under the framework Bill S-242 would create.

Bill S-242 would also be applied retroactively to spectrum where the rules have been made, creating uncertainty and disrupting investment plans. Investments are already rolling out on the basis of meaningful “use it or lose it” requirements. That includes for 5G

spectrum auctioned only two years ago. Changing the rules now is unfair to businesses and it sends the wrong signal to attract future investments.

I am also concerned the bill's timelines and coverage requirements would be impossible for small providers, leaving only the largest players in the game. This would reduce competition and drive up prices for consumers at a time when we are trying to accomplish the opposite. More competition is a good thing.

[*Translation*]

Given all these uncertainties, I am concerned that Bill S-242 would not even improve connectivity. In most regions, the 50% coverage required under the bill is much lower than the actual targets set for 5G spectrum, which can be up to 97% of a carrier's mobile network coverage. Collectively, these networks already serve 99% of Canadians. However, in very remote regions, these requirements are too stringent and could force service providers to close down and leave communities with no service at all.

That is why the government sets coverage targets based on various factors, and only after public consultation. These targets are becoming more and more ambitious, yet they are achievable and are designed to encourage investment and expansion in new regions over time.

[*English*]

Access to affordable and reliable high-speed Internet is a right of every Canadian, no matter where they live, and we are on a clear path to achieve it. While I applaud the intent of Bill S-242, the government will not be supporting the bill because it would clearly do more harm than good.

Spectrum is one of several elements that support universal connectivity. It goes hand in hand with other enablers, such as technology, infrastructure and investments. These tools are all backstopped by policies and programs designed to best leverage these elements for the benefit of all Canadians. A one-size-fits-all approach to spectrum management ignores that reality altogether.

[*Translation*]

Of course, that was not the bill's intent, but rushing into a legislative solution is not the best way to move forward. I congratulate the hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue on his motion to study the telecommunications sector more broadly. A closer look at the factors limiting access to the regions that are hardest to serve, and the tools at our disposal to remove those barriers, will only bring us closer to our objectives.

We need to ensure that we have the right framework in place to encourage investment, lower prices and improve services for Canadians. At the same time, such a study could examine ways to improve the overall competitiveness of our wireless communications sector and ensure that Canadians have access to high-quality, affordable and reliable high-speed Internet services no matter where they live.

We continue to take steps to improve Internet connectivity and the availability of services in rural areas. We look forward to studying these issues further in committee in order to promote the objectives we all share.

● (1830)

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this bill is multi-faceted. Unfortunately, it is rigid and highly technical and urgently needs a number of amendments. It encompasses commercial interests, logistical issues, economic considerations and, for good measure, regional development and the vitality of rural and remote communities.

We are living in the 21st century. Our lives are not what they were in the last century. These days, everything has to move quickly. Access to bandwidth, commonly known as a network, is a necessity. Millions of people started teleworking during the pandemic, which shows that work habits are changing, and reliable, secure Internet access is a must.

In November 2018, the Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development launched a consultation to determine whether creating a fifth tier was necessary, given spectrum saturation and the introduction of new technologies like 5G. Tier 5 is the very local spectrum, the smallest service areas. After several meetings, the Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development concluded that it was indeed necessary to create these areas. By subdividing further, it became possible to improve broadcast coverage in rural and remote areas, providing coverage that tier 5 could not. That is where things stand right now.

Experts found that the least densely populated areas lacked adequate coverage and that telecommunications giants were buying usage rights to spectrum that they were not necessarily actively using. Experts explained that telecommunications giants chose to do nothing with this bandwidth. They turned it into a product for financial speculation so that they could resell the usage rights for much higher prices than the initial auction price. That is capitalism 101.

Currently, telecommunications companies can acquire spectrum licences at auctions organized by the federal government, but they are not required to use them in their entirety. This situation is problematic for remote, rural areas where a company can hold a licence for a certain range of frequencies, but because it is not considered economically viable, it remains unused and inaccessible to the public.

The wording in Bill S-242 is very rigid, as I said earlier. A major problem is that there are no provisions that would provide an incentive for the industry to invest. More specifically, there is nothing in the bill to require any consultation with the industry that could lead to the development of a strategy that would benefit all parties involved.

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What is needed is a formula that shares the investment risk. Of course, absolutely no one is against connecting people in remote areas or who are underserved, but at the same time, it is critically important to ask questions and call things as they are. Is any reasonable person going to put up a \$1-million tower and provide expensive annual maintenance and upgrades in a place that can only be accessed by air? We will have to talk about the importance of public service.

The answer to that question may be obvious, but I would say that, in this particular case, it is not quite that obvious, and there could be loopholes. If the bill goes to committee, the Bloc believes it will need extensive amendment and stakeholders will have to testify so lawmakers can come up with an effective public policy. In its current form, this piece of legislation is not the right way to achieve those goals.

The bill does not take into account the interests of co-operatives and businesses or provincial and territorial efforts to connect the most remote communities. If the federal government wants to move forward, the risk has to be shared. No private company, no matter how big, is going to invest in sparsely populated areas where the investment and the operating costs eclipse any possibility of realizing a marginal profit.

Presumably areas of commercial interest, those likely to produce a profit, are already covered by companies or co-operatives. The reason some regions are poorly served or not connected is that existing policies offer companies no incentive to fill those gaps. That said, all telecom observers and experts agree that more competition in this key economic sector is absolutely necessary.

● (1835)

The telecommunications share of Canada's GDP is constantly growing. The government's shift to digital in areas such as health records, distance learning, income tax returns, car registrations—we know a thing or two about that in Quebec—is making Internet access even more critical. Then there are the numerous businesses that are transforming their operations by migrating to the Internet. Not being connected in 2023 leaves people vulnerable and excluded from new ways of interacting with the government. I would even go so far as to say that it excludes them from society.

Ottawa promised 98% high-speed Internet connectivity by 2026 and 100% by 2030. Comparing data from CPAC, or the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada, and the CRTC, one quickly realizes that Canadians will have to perform a major national blitz to achieve this ambitious goal.

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Quebec, however, grabbed the bull by the horns in 2021. That year, the Quebec government launched its Opération haute vitesse, or operation high speed, which was spearheaded by the province's high-speed Internet and special connectivity projects secretariat. The aim is to provide coverage to the 250,000 Quebec households that, despite private initiatives by providers and financial incentives from government programs, do not have access to adequate coverage in their region.

It is Quebec's department of energy and natural resources that has the mandate to track the progress of the rollout of telecommunications services. There is no doubt that this initiative has accelerated the rollout of services, a problem that has gone on for far too long for many Quebeckers. My colleague from Laurentides—Labelle talked about that and said that it has been her cause since 2019.

In the context of the Government of Quebec's operation high speed, the preferred technology for making internet services accessible was fibre optics. However, there are all kinds of other technologies that can be used to connect every home: the coaxial cable, fixed wireless and the low Earth orbit satellite. Several technologies can be used.

Let us come back to Bill S-242, which we are describing as very imperfect. It is not normal for countless communities to be so underserved or, worse yet, have no telecommunications service at all. Contrary to what people living in cities might believe, this does not only happen north of the 56th parallel. Again, my colleague from Laurentides—Labelle said it best. It is more important for federal and provincial laws to be complementary and not in competition than it is to think about strengthening the powers of the CRTC, which is what Bill S-242 does.

[*English*]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Bay of Quinte with his right of reply.

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to again thank Senator Patterson for bringing this bill forward. I think he did the work he needed to do in the Senate. It has been very enjoyable to debate this bill and hear the responses from all members of Parliament.

Canadians understand that they pay some of the highest cell phone bills in the world, but some are surprised that they pay the highest cell phone rates and some of the highest Internet rates in the world. Rogers, Telus and Bell are numbers one, two and three of the priciest telecommunications carriers in 48 countries out of the whole planet. Canadians already know that they pay this.

However, the bill coming out of the Senate was to do one thing and one thing only: it was to tackle spectrum speculation, such as companies buying spectrum at auctions and then making money on that. The two examples we used were, first, Rogers, which had bought, in 2013, a bunch of spectrum, and only five years later it made a \$189.5-million profit. It held that spectrum, and when the spectrum became valuable, it sold it. The second was Quebecor and Videotron. In 2008, it bought \$96.4-million worth of spectrum and sold it for an \$87.8-million profit just nine years later. This bill was only meant to look at spectrum speculation and to ensure that we tackle that.

The current spectrum rules say that a company who buys and keeps spectrum can hold it for 20 years and has to serve a population model only after 20 years. The new rules under this bill maintain that, after three years, a company would have to hit a 50% geographical area, meaning that it cannot just look at population. A lot of these providers are looking only at the city of Toronto and not hitting the northern portions of it, or to the riding of the member for Milton, who spoke earlier. They are looking at the denser populations but not outside of those.

What is most important about this bill, which normally I am against, is that it would give the minister a new power to decide what is best for a community, which means that the minister could decide if the auction was bought and was only speculative. The minister could then change that auction and ensure that it went to someone else. However, if a provider was attempting to develop an area that it was purposed for, then the minister could extend that auction and make sure that the area gets through by that auction. That is what this bill is all about: giving the minister more power to stop spectrum speculation.

What is the point of this? Well, some members have talked about that 60% of rural Canada, where seven million Canadians live, that is not being serviced by high-speed Internet, and when they are, they are served by American companies, such as Starlink and Xplore, which are both American owned and controlled. However, when we look at Canadian companies serving Canadian markets, especially in the north and rural Canada, this bill was to ensure that we have companies that do that.

Members talked about this does not quite do what they do, which is spectrum auction reform, meaning that we are going to look at the \$9 billion that Canada makes that goes into general revenues and ensure that perhaps some of that needs to go back to rural Canada to connect the north and connect rural municipalities. We have 3,500 municipalities in Canada and only 94 of them are urban, which means that over 3,400 municipalities in Canada are rural. It would be best for all of us as MPs to look at rural strategies to look at this.

Most importantly, let us get rid of this spectrum speculation. This whole premise is an anomaly and it was a flaw in the original bill of spectrum auctions, which allowed companies to make money simply because they bought an asset that is publicly owned, a public resource. Spectrum is for all Canadians. When we look at this bill, and I think it is a good one coming from the Senate, it would ensure that we tackle that flaw in this bill and ensure that we then look at the future.

In the future, yes, we need more competition in Internet. We need more competition for cell phones. We do not just need a fourth carrier, we need 40 carriers to ensure that we look after Canadians' Internet needs and that all Canadians are connected to the Internet. We need it for health, for safety, and for employment, and we certainly need it for the prosperity of this great nation.

I am thankful for this opportunity. This is a great bill, and I hope everyone can support it.

• (1840)

The Speaker: The question is on the motion.

[*Translation*]

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

• (1845)

[*English*]

Mr. Ryan Williams: Mr. Speaker, we request a recorded division.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, November 8, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this evening's adjournment proceedings. I am pleased to be able to rise to pursue a question I originally asked on June 7 of this year.

It was in question period and I had the honour to address my question directly to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. We could actually feel the smoke in Parliament that day. I do not know how many of my colleagues remember that, but on June 7, the forest fires across Canada had reached the inside of Parliament. As I said in my question, the Ottawa bubble had been pierced by the reality of the climate crisis. We felt it in the chamber. There was smoke in our eyes. Our eyes were burning and it brought home forcibly that we are in a climate emergency.

My questions to the Prime Minister were directly about what a government would do if it understood that it was an emergency. I know the Liberals continually claim that they have done more for climate than any previous government. That is possibly true. Certainly, the climate plan put forward under the government was never as complete or as effective as it could have been if Paul Martin's government had not been brought down on November 28, 2005. Money was in place in the 2005 budget and the plans were stronger and more comprehensive.

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However, here we are and it is 2023. Time is literally running out. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has told us clearly that in order to hold to 1.5°C global average temperature increase, which is not a political goal but a goal required by physics and chemistry to ensure a livable climate for our kids, global greenhouse gas emissions must peak and begin to drop rapidly by 2025.

That is why António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, has said that continued investments in fossil fuels and fossil fuel infrastructure is “economic and moral madness”.

We started talking about the forest fires this year. All around the world, scientists have tracked Canada with alarm. We had a fire season that started earlier and lasted later. In total, it burned approximately 19 million hectares. We also had floods that took lives in Nova Scotia. We also had fires that extended as far as evacuating all of Yellowknife. Both in total area affected and in the number of people affected and lives disrupted, nothing should have said so clearly to the Liberals as this forest fire season that it is not enough to put in place policies on one hand to reduce greenhouse gases, if we keep subsidizing fossil fuels with the other hand.

Now is the time to bring in an excess profits tax on the fossil fuel industry, which is bringing in \$4.2 billion as Motion No. 92 would have it. Now is the time to cancel the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion before wasting a single additional dollar of public money. Now is the time to say that if we are serious about reconciliation, we do not drive that pipeline through Stk'emlupsemc te Secwepemc Territory. Now is the time to understand this is an emergency and we act like it.

From now on, we take it so seriously that building fossil fuel infrastructure and expanding fossil fuel production will stop, and stop now.

• (1850)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is nice to see my friend and colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands on the screen, but it would be nicer to see her in the House. I hope she is feeling better soon and will be able to rejoin us, because I know she loves it here and does such great work.

It is extremely refreshing, after a couple of days in the House of arguing about whether climate change is real with the Conservative Party, and great to get a push in the opposite direction. I say this with all sincerity. Would it not be great if what we debated in this House of Commons was how to fight climate change and not whether to fight it?

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In the last couple of years, the member for Carleton took over the reins of the Conservative Party; when it ditched Erin O'Toole, it ditched all progressive values and the word "climate change" from its vernacular, despite having run on a promise to price carbon. Conservatives deny that now. They say they never said that and that they do not believe in climate change. Today, when we were having a debate about carbon pricing, I heard some things from the other side that I prefer not to repeat and will keep off the record. Their climate change denialist rhetoric is not worthy of debate in this House.

I would like to thank the member for her questions, for her strong work and advocacy on climate action and for mentioning the climate emergency over and over in this House, because it needs repeating. We are not just in a climate emergency in Canada, but around the world. I can assure the House that the Government of Canada is taking this very seriously. As the member said, our government is the Canadian government that has done the most to advance our country on climate action.

It is also important to share some facts about the global energy future that we are advancing toward. The International Energy Agency projects that, by 2030, almost half of the world's electricity supply will come from renewables, and 80% of new electricity capacity from now until 2030 will be renewable. That is great news: Canada's electricity grid is already 80% renewable. Despite efforts from Danielle Smith, the Premier of Alberta, to put a moratorium on all new renewable energy projects, we will continue on that path.

In addition to all that, 50% of all new U.S. car registrations will be electric. Heat pumps and other electric heating systems will out-sell fossil fuel boilers. We will continue to work in that direction; in order to ensure that Canada is able to seize the economic opportunity in front of us and stave off the climate emergency, we have invested in job-creating measures, such as renewable power development. In budget 2023, we announced a wave of strategic investments to continue our work to catalyze job creation and to attract international investors.

Let me provide a couple of examples of that progress.

In Nova Scotia, EverWind Fuels recently received approval from our government to build North America's first facility to produce hydrogen from renewables.

In Ontario, Volkswagen, Umicore, Stellantis, Marathon Palladium and others have decided to invest in our battery ecosystem, and we are supporting those investments.

These are great examples of getting projects built, whether by responsibly developing critical minerals in a manner that unlocks economic opportunities for rural and indigenous communities or by helping the next generation of steel and auto workers build the electric cars, buses and trucks that the world needs to displace fossil fuel vehicles.

I will highlight MTB in Milton, a truck company that is doing Canada's first ever diesel-to-electric city bus conversion. I am very proud of that.

Out west, we see big things happening in Saskatchewan. We are seeing BHP construct the largest potash mines in the world, to have among the lowest emissions. Cowessess First Nation has built one of the largest wind farms in the country. Sadly, Premier Smith's moratorium on renewable energy approvals is ongoing, but this has not stopped Alberta's renewable energy industry from pushing forward, and it will continue to do so.

I will be back in a moment with a soft rebuttal to my hon. friend and colleague.

• (1855)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague that we need to have a sensible discussion in this place. The climate emergency is not going away; it is galloping on and threatening lives.

When we talk about affordability, we need to recognize that climate emergency events make life less affordable for everyone. In fact, they threaten our very lives, livelihoods and communities. We need to take the climate crisis far more seriously than we do. This means that the Liberals cannot continue to do one thing for climate and another for fossil fuels at the same time, all the time, and think that amounts to climate leadership. It does not.

We need to cancel the Trans Mountain pipeline. We are building it with public money. We are violating indigenous rights while building it. If it is finished and starts shipping diluted bitumen out in tankers in larger numbers, it is not a question of if but when there will be a major spill, despoiling the Salish Sea in ways that can never be cleaned up.

Please, for the love of God, we must take this seriously.

Mr. Adam van Koevorden: Mr. Speaker, I will just reiterate what a refreshing debate this has been to participate in.

I sincerely wish we could be having conversations in this House about how to fight climate change, not about whether to fight climate change, as with the Conservatives. Climate change is an existential threat. We are in an emergency, and the debate from the Conservatives over whether we should do the bare minimum is beyond the pale.

Fighting climate change is about creating good, sustainable jobs for generations to come and is not beyond our government, but it is so disappointing to see the Conservative Party of Canada filibustering the sustainable jobs act. Earlier today, the Canadian Labour Congress, which represents three million workers, called on Conservatives to end that debate. The Conservatives are also against Bill C-49.

It is astonishing what we have to tolerate in this House with respect to the level of debate when it comes to climate change. I once again thank my friend and colleague for her extraordinary leadership on this. I appreciate everything she does. I hope we can debate and have a conversation in person sometime very soon.

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I rise in the House to ask a question I asked in this House just last week about the Impact Assessment Act and the Supreme Court's ruling that overturned the federal government's move on the Impact Assessment Act, Bill C-69. The government moved ahead despite everybody it could possibly consult with, including opposition parties, every provincial legislature, 100 first nation bands across Canada and many other parties, saying the Impact Assessment Act as written was unconstitutional and treaded on their rights. So many rights are expressed in legislation, yet this was ignored for so long.

The Government of Alberta was backed by nine provincial governments at various points in time throughout the process. It took four years because the reference case took two years to go through the appeal court system and then almost another two years to get to the Supreme Court of Canada. It was four years of lost economic activity and, effectively, constitutional strife in Canada. That is a long time.

How many projects were held up in Canada in that time? It was hundreds of billions of dollars in projects. Right now, 42 projects have not received an environmental assessment. About half of them are under the old regime, the one before the Impact Assessment Act, called the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, which was passed by the previous government and effectively allowed a whole bunch of environmental assessments to be done.

What amazed me was the response I got from the parliamentary secretary for housing when I asked a question about the federal government's involvement in this. He said at that point in time that the previous government's legislation got nothing done and had a gutted process. We cannot have it both ways. I cannot say how many times I hear from the other side of the House that they have their cake and eat it too and that the old legislation they tried to fix did not get anything done and yet was gutless. We cannot have both those things at the same time, but that is the continued narrative I hear on this all the time. It bewilders me to some degree, because it contradicts itself in so many ways, but he said that.

This was supposed to deal with the fact that the Impact Assessment Act had to go back and get corrected as quickly as possible. Getting it corrected as quickly as possible would bring forward economic activity in Canada so we can get something done in this country again, including in all the provinces across Canada. This has to happen.

I think about all the economic activity that has been held up because of the uncertainty created by the Impact Assessment Act and how it has affected so many project proponents across Canada. It is an embarrassment. It is an international embarrassment too that so much capital, including Canadian investments, is being deployed elsewhere and not here in Canada. That includes the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board. This is a travesty. We need to get over it as quickly as possible.

Adjournment Proceedings

How do we do that? We could put forward legislation that is constitutional very quickly; stop sitting on our hands; take some lessons from some environmental advocates, environmental experts and constitutional experts; and listen to what they are saying: Stay in our lane, abide by our jurisdiction and get some proper legislation we can abide by in this country.

• (1900)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by reminding the hon. member for Calgary Centre that the Supreme Court of Canada's opinion on the constitutionality of the Impact Assessment Act confirmed that there is no doubt that Parliament can enact impact assessment legislation, so this government will stay in its lane and continue the 50-year-long tradition of assessments to support the environment and the economy, while respecting the boundaries clarified in the Supreme Court's opinion.

I would also remind my hon. colleague that the Impact Assessment Act was necessary to fix the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act of 2012, which created uncertainty in timelines and lacked accountability. Canadians were calling for greater transparency, trust and confidence in the environmental assessment process after the introduction of CEAA 2012, a need which the current government responded to with the Impact Assessment Act.

I have some local context to this. There is a local project that was assessed under the Environmental Assessment Act, and it had a tragic outcome, I will say. The Impact Assessment Act sought to create a better set of rules that respect the environment and indigenous rights, and that ensures that projects are assessed in a timely way. In fact, the government recently approved the Cedar LNG project under the Impact Assessment Act, working closely with the Government of British Columbia. Colleagues will not hear that from the member for Calgary Centre or any Conservative who continually says that the current government never gets anything done, which is false. We are approving sustainable and renewable projects that respect environmental considerations all the time.

For this assessment in particular, the federal government relied on the provincial assessment process, meeting the goal of "one project, one assessment". Final decisions have been made in seven other projects in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec after a thorough and public planning phase, that no further impact assessment was required, allowing those projects to proceed.

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Attracting investment and supporting the major job-creating projects of a cleaner, 21st-century economy requires regulatory certainty from the Government of Canada, and we will continue to deliver that. That is why the government is working quickly to introduce targeted and meaningful amendments to the act that would align with the opinion of the court. In the interim, we are providing guidance to businesses, provinces, indigenous groups and stakeholders to ensure that projects currently in the assessment process have an orderly and clear path forward. To this end, we have introduced a statement on the interim administration of the Impact Assessment Act. The guidance in that statement provides clarity and continuity for proposed projects in the system or entering the system, until amendments are brought into force.

Protecting the environment while growing a sustainable economy, in line with international commitments for net-zero emissions, requires robust environmental legislation, something the previous Harper government was incapable of producing. As work is undertaken to amend the Impact Assessment Act, the principles to protect the environment, respect indigenous rights and maintain public confidence in the process will remain ever central to the impact assessment process.

• (1905)

Mr. Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's input on the matter, although, again, he is picking and choosing where he gets to take his facts on this.

Think about the greenhouse gas pricing act that happened at the Supreme Court just two years ago. In fact, at that point in time, the government did not consider that reference an opinion; it took it as if it were actually the law of the land. Now, the government is saying that it was just the opinion of the Supreme Court of Canada, that it will work with it, and that it accepts that as confirmation, of course, that the federal government has the right to work in this realm. That is exactly what it said. However, the federal government can do that only in its lane. Effectively, 11 sections of the bill, out of 168 sections, are where the government actually has a lane. The Supreme Court does want the federal government to go back

and refine that. That is what the government seems to be ignoring at this point in time.

The best thing to do is to be surgical about this, amputate most of the bill, as people say, and go forward with making things capable of being built in Canada so we have an economy in this country again.

Mr. Adam van Koevorden: Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court of Canada's opinion on the constitutionality of the Impact Assessment Act upheld the federal government's role in enacting federal environmental assessment legislation, while clarifying federal jurisdiction. The government will carefully and quickly work to introduce targeted and meaningful amendments that are in line with the court's opinion, while continuing existing work to respond to budget 2023 commitments to improve regulatory efficiency.

There is one thing that people watching back home can be sure of: this government is focused on a balance, not just casting a quick "yes" over to any organization, agency or company that wants to explore an energy project. That is really important because the environment matters to the government, and it matters to most Canadians as well. The result of that process will be an improved one for assessing major projects which protects both the environment and the economy. In the meantime, the government will provide guidance to our many stakeholders and indigenous partners to ensure as much clarity as possible for projects currently in the system, as well as for those ready to enter it.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Brantford—Brant not being present to raise the matter for which adjournment notice has been given, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:07 p.m.)

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