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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, February 1, 2024

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

VACANCY

LASALLE—ÉMARD—VERDUN

The Speaker: It is my duty to inform the House that a vacancy has occurred in the representation, namely Mr. Lametti, member for the electoral district of LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, by resignation effective Wednesday, January 31, 2024.

Pursuant to paragraph 25(1)(b) of the Parliament of Canada Act, I have addressed a warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a writ for the election of a member to fill this vacancy.

* * *

[*English*]

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

The Speaker: It is my duty to inform the House, for the purposes under the provisions of section 50 of the Parliament of Canada Act, the following members have been appointed members of the Board of Internal Economy, namely: the Hon. Ruby Sahota, the member for Brampton North, in place of the Hon. Karina Gould, the member for Burlington, as a member of the King's Privy Council; and the Hon. Mona Fortier, the member for Ottawa—Vanier, in place of the Hon. Ruby Sahota, the member for Brampton North, as a representative of the government.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

FINANCE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), and consistent with the policy on the tabling of treaties in Parliament, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a treaty entitled “Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Bank for International Settlements on the Establishment of an Office of the Bank of

Canada for the Operation of the BIS Innovation Hub Toronto Centre”, done at Ottawa on January 31.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-62, An Act to amend An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying), No. 2.

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

* * *

• (1005)

PETITIONS

NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of constituents in Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon today to present two very important petitions.

The first petition is in relation to Red Tape Awareness Week and the attack by the Canadian government on producers and manufacturers of natural health supplements.

Constituents in my riding are calling on the government to stop over-regulating and let Canadians use the natural health supplements and Chinese medicine that are a very big part of their daily regimen.

NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I am presenting today comes from the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers in Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, and it relates to the needle exchange program the government is about to implement in federal institutions.

Drugs and drug paraphernalia are considered contraband in prison, yet the government is forcing our correctional officers to simply turn a blind eye and allow dangerous drugs to be used inside our institutions. These correctional officers are calling on the government to cancel the prison needle exchange program, to stop permitting the use of illegal drugs in Canadian prisons and to focus their efforts on helping inmates recover from their addictions in a compassionate way.

Routine Proceedings

JUSTICE

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by Canadians calling on the government to take all necessary measures at its disposal to overturn an unjust decision of the Supreme Court of Canada that struck down a just law passed by the Harper government. The law would apply consecutive parole ineligibility periods to criminals convicted of multiple murders, taking into account each life lost.

The petitioners call for the government, among other things, to invoke the notwithstanding clause to override this decision.

BASIC INCOME GUARANTEE PROGRAM

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise and present this petition on behalf of folks who note that a guaranteed livable income would, first of all, establish an income floor below which no Canadian could fall and reflect regional differences in the cost of living.

The petitioners go on to note that it could replace the current patchwork of federal and provincial income assistance programs with a single, universal cash benefit. They note that it could be administered through the existing tax system and require no means testing, thereby dramatically reducing federal and provincial administrative costs.

The petitioners go on to note that it could reduce poverty, thereby reducing the demand on social services, law enforcement and health care, resulting in additional cost savings for government and taxpayers. Most importantly, it would provide a financial safety net for all Canadians, especially through major economic shifts, pandemics, natural disasters and industry automation.

As a result, the petitioners call on the Government of Canada to implement a guaranteed livable income for all Canadians.

RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present, which says that preserving the petitioners' Christian heritage, rooted in the Canadian Bill of Rights and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, is vital. They seek to celebrate December as Christian heritage month annually, promoting love, equality and peace. They say that their Christian foundations, recognized globally, shape their identity.

The undersigned residents of Canada call upon the Government of Canada to celebrate December as Christian heritage month annually.

UKRAINE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by constituents who are calling upon all members of Parliament to actually stand and support the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement.

The petitioners recognize that it is coming up for debate, and they hope that every member of every political party will in fact vote in favour of this particular trade agreement.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have four petitions to present today.

The first one specifically calls to the attention that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, section 2(b), protects freedom of thought, belief and opinion. It further goes on to discuss how the Canadian Bill of Rights, section 1, protects the rights of individual life, liberty and personal security, and enjoyment of property.

The undersigned members of my community are calling on the Prime Minister and Minister of Justice to protect Canadians' right to advocate without fear of reprisal for Palestinians to live in peace and security.

• (1010)

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition actually had good news, because the government announced measures with respect to it towards the end of last year.

This petition specifically talks about the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and says that we have been warned repeatedly that rising temperatures over the next two decades will bring widespread devastation and extreme weather, that addressing climate change requires a drastic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and that, 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 upon 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.

Mr. Speaker, I have presented a lot of petitions in my day. I have never had the Leader of the Opposition or the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman heckle me while doing that. I will just jump straight to the petition.

UKRAINE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this petition is meant for the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman. This comes—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I will ask the hon. member to rephrase his statement so that we could just talk about the subject of the petition. As members know, the Speaker has made a ruling in this respect, not to make comments about where these have come from.

Will the hon. member please withdraw his comment?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the comment singling out the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

This petition calls on all members of Parliament. It states that, back in September 2022—

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order with respect to consistency. The member just did again what you asked him to withdraw about a minute before. This was a big deal this week with my colleague from Battle River—Crowfoot.

Routine Proceedings

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, you made me apologize for doing something similar; you are not being consistent. This has been the accusation all along. You pick your battles, and we lose most of them, Mr. Speaker, while the Liberals are allowed to just keep doing what they are doing. I wish you would be consistent, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I would like to thank the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies for raising this point. Indeed, as the Chair had made clear in a ruling late on Monday, the idea is an apology and a withdrawal. Members are first asked to withdraw a comment, and that opportunity was offered to the member for Battle River—Crowfoot. It went to a second round, involving an apology and a withdrawal. I asked the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands to withdraw the comment, and he did. If he had—

Some hon. members: And then he did it again.

• (1015)

The Speaker: Members will forgive me if I review Hansard to see if that is the case. I was occupied with another issue.

However, I am glad that the member for Kingston and the Islands withdrew the comment. We do not want disorder in this House. I hope, given the current controversy, that he will stay far away from causing disorder.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just so there is no ambiguity on this, I apologize and withdraw that comment.

Now, what I was saying was that this petition specifically calls on all members of Parliament to immediately and swiftly enact Bill C-57, which would put into law the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. This would assist Ukraine in rebuilding after it defeats the illegal invasion of Vladimir Putin. It actually says in the petition that misinformation regarding the effect of Canada's carbon pricing scheme on this agreement has been widely debunked. The petition states, therefore, that the undersigned citizens of Canada call upon the House of Commons and all parliamentarians to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to Ukraine by swiftly adopting the updated free trade agreement.

FOOD SECURITY

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the last petition that I have today comes specifically from members of the Nexus and Bayridge Secondary School community in my riding. The petitioners are calling upon the Minister of Finance; the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development; and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to prioritize a national school food program through budget 2024 for implementation by the fall of 2024.

As petitioners specifically draw to the attention of the government and the House, Statistics Canada indicates that one in four children in Canada lives in a food-insecure household—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is heckling me. I am just trying to present this on behalf of my constituents.

Finally, the petitioners state that school food programs are recognized around the world as essential to the health, well-being and ed-

ucation of students, with over 388 million children in at least 168 countries receiving free and subsidized school meals.

I really want to thank the community at Bayridge Secondary School in my riding of Kingston and the Islands for—

The Speaker: The member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies is rising on a point of order, but he is not in his seat. I will just give him a bit of time to go to his seat.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Speaker, a bit of the ruling yesterday was with respect to how long these were taking, and we were told that there are tight rules about how petitions should be presented in this House. We were not to mention members, and it was supposed to be a brief statement, which I had brought to you, Mr. Speaker. Where is the brief statement in this case? Again, we are seeking consistency. I wish you, Mr. Speaker, would be consistent in this case.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies. What was also mentioned in that ruling is that, although the Standing Orders have been very clear about terms, if we were to strictly interpret that, it has been the habit of this House through all Chairs and people who have assumed the presidency here to allow a bit of latitude in terms of the length. However, we ask members not to offer opinions as to whether they agree, but just present the points of view of the petitioners to the House.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, in conclusion to that petition, I was just saying that I wanted to thank the incredible school community of Bayridge Secondary School in Kingston for its advocacy on this issue and for using its voice in Parliament.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise here today on the traditional territories of the Algonquin Anishinabe nation. To them, we say “*meegwetch*”.

I am presenting a petition that speaks to an issue that has seized this House in a number of different ways in terms of pending legislation. The petitioners are asking the government to take account of the degradation of Canada's waterways and watersheds. The current laws do not adequately protect Canada's waterways and watersheds from irresponsible industrial practice. The petitioners call on Canada to update our water laws to ensure that no industry or single corporation can take precedence over the health of Canada's waterways and watersheds and, by extension, over the health of the people of Canada and the very species that also rely on the health of these waterways. We must ensure that Canada's water laws are updated under the guidance of professionals and specialists in the field of water conservation.

Business of Supply

● (1020)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CARBON TAX

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

That, given that the carbon tax has proven to be a tax plan, not an environmental plan, the House call on the Liberal government to cancel the April 1, 2024, carbon tax increase.

He said: Mr. Speaker, after eight years in office, this Prime Minister is not worth the cost. That is why Canada needs a common-sense government that will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop crime.

[English]

After eight years, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. That is why we need a common-sense Conservative government that will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. Today, I rise on the first of those Conservative priorities. I think members across the way are becoming more and more convinced that we might be onto something with this four-point plan to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime.

Why do we want to axe the tax? Let me start with yesterday's debate with the Prime Minister.

I highlighted, once again, the Medeiros family farm. It produces mushrooms for all the city of Ottawa but has been facing tens of thousands of dollars in monthly carbon tax bills alone. Now, the Prime Minister claimed that I told the farm to stand on its own two feet when it was trying to bring natural gas to the farm and that I could not possibly understand what he was referring to because, of course, I helped the farm. I dug up the quote, and I said, in response to high energy prices, that the goal was “to find a commercially viable way that this kind of...project”, natural gas for farms, “can stand on its own two feet, pay for itself and create some jobs”.

From that moment, I went to Enbridge, which, being a large multinational pipeline company, had been hard for an individual farmer to contact on the phone. I got the executives on the phone. I told them the pipeline was needed to take gas to the mushroom farm in order to generate the steam and the other power that is needed to produce mushrooms. Ultimately, the project got done without any tax dollars and paid for itself, because natural gas is significantly cheaper and less polluting than propane and oil. That is an example of how we can do great things for our farm families

without costing Canadian taxpayers money and without creating new federal bureaucracy.

The Prime Minister's comments do speak to his patronizing view of all Canadians. He believes that Canadians can never stand on their own two feet. In fact, the only reason Canadians are struggling to do so is that he is on their backs. It is like the Canadian people are carrying a backpack, and he comes along and asks: “Can I help you with that? It looks heavy.” He puts the backpack on his shoulders, and then he piggybacks on the Canadian who was carrying it in the first place. Now, they are not only carrying the bag but also carrying him. In this case, the analogy refers to his carbon tax.

That same family farm, which was thriving through intelligent investments, including in natural gas that he and his radical environment minister want to eliminate, was thriving and employing dozens of people in our community. Now, it is paying carbon taxes of \$10,000 to \$20,000 per month, an amount the Prime Minister wants to quadruple to 61¢ a litre and place an equivalent charge on natural gas. On April 1, the Prime Minister, with the full support of the NDP, intends to raise the carbon tax by 23%. This is at a time when Canadians cannot afford to eat.

Moments ago, the Prime Minister had one of his parliamentary secretaries, the member for Kingston and the Islands, get up and say that one in four school children is not able to eat. That is quite an admission by a government that has been in power for eight years. It used it as a justification to create a new federal bureaucracy. The Liberals say that it is a school food program, except there is no food in the program. In fact, it is not even in the schools; it is in Ottawa. In downtown Ottawa, the Liberals propose to create a series of meetings, bureaucracies and organizations that will collect yet more money from the rest of the population in order to talk about creating agreements and frameworks for discussions and consultations about an eventual program that supposedly will feed the one in four kids who is hungry because the government is taxing their food. Why not skip all those steps and just stop taxing the food?

● (1025)

Like everything the Prime Minister does, he doubles housing costs, and then he says we need a new government housing program. He doubles the number of shootings in Canada with his catch-and-release policies, and then he says we need new government programs to combat the gun violence the government unleashed with its Criminal Code changes. He causes these problems, and then the problems he causes are a pretext for him to have more power and more money. We all know that the Prime Minister is not the solution. He is the problem. The last thing we need is to take more money from our working-class families, our farmers and our seniors and to put it in his hands.

Business of Supply

We stand in the House of Commons as the only party that opposes the carbon tax hike. The NDP has betrayed working-class people in places like Vancouver Island, northern British Columbia and northern Ontario where its constituents rely on pickup trucks, where the rural people and the farmers use energy to power their combines, their tractors, their farm drying equipment and their barns. The NDP raises taxes on all those people. The NDP wants to shut down Canada's resource sector. Just the other day, the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie cheered at the prospect of shutting down the entire natural gas economy, which would devastate the people in the NDP riding of Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

What we have is a radical agenda by the Prime Minister and his NDP allies, coalition partners, to quadruple the carbon tax to 61¢ a litre, all while shutting down our resource sector so that we can import from dirty dictatorships.

What we have from the Prime Minister is a pro-Russia energy policy that shuts down our energy industry to give more and more business to power Putin's war machine. All of that is supported by the NDP.

These facts build a firm and final case that only common-sense Conservatives stand on the side of working-class people, who need their pickup trucks to do their jobs and to build the country; seniors, who need to heat their homes in Edmonton in -50°C weather; single mothers, who are putting water in their children's milk because the cost of produce has risen under the Liberal-NDP carbon tax; children, one in four of whom, by the government's own admission today, are going hungry in our schools. This is the misery that Canadians are living after eight years of the Prime Minister.

The definition of insanity is when one does the same thing over and over again and expects a different result. Raising taxes and shutting down industries has sent two million people to the food bank. It has doubled housing costs. It has led to homeless encampments that we never had before in cities across this country. There are 30 homeless encampments in Halifax alone. There is the re-emergence of illnesses that were long ago banished, like scurvy, because people have become malnourished under the Prime Minister's impoverishing policies.

We, as common-sense Conservatives, will undo this damage. We will axe the tax to lower the cost of gas, heat and groceries so that our seniors can heat their homes, and our families can feed their kids. Our farmers can, once again, repatriate production of food to this country and can use the best environmental stewardship on planet earth. Our energy and resource companies can harvest the cornucopia of bounty that our country has beneath its feet and can use those resources to lift the world out of poverty in the most environmentally friendly way that could possibly be imagined.

We are the best. Our workers are the best. Our inventors are the best. Our businesses are the best. If we could get the government out of the way, then we could have the best. We will have that, and we will do it not by big powerful government dictating from on high, but we will do it by the great Canadian people standing on their own two feet and by the common sense of the common people united for our common home: their home, my home, our home. Let us bring it home.

• (1030)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives make it sound like using tax policies to fight climate change is never a good idea.

We disagree with some of the measures the Liberals have in place because we think they are unnecessary. I am talking about measures like the tax credit for carbon capture, utilization and storage, the clean tech tax credit and the hydrogen tax credit. I would like the member for Carleton to tell us about his vision for these tax credits.

Do they actually work, or does using tax policy to fight climate change only work when the money does not end up lining the pockets of oil companies?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, first of all, we are not lining any industry's pockets. Furthermore, our energy industry is capable of increasing its own revenues in a free market. It is the barriers put in place by the Liberal government that prevent these companies from doing business properly. It is not that we do not want to subsidize anything. Rather, we want to allow free enterprise.

When it comes to green energy, we have to green-light green projects. We have to green-light hydroelectric dams in Quebec, not tie them up for years, as the federal government wants to do with the Bloc Québécois's support. We are the ones who want to allow lithium, cobalt and graphite mines to open quickly, within 18 months instead of 18 years, so we can produce electric batteries here in Canada. We are the ones who want to allow nuclear energy that will provide zero-emission electricity. We are going to green-light green projects.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week the Leader of the Opposition referred to two Quebec mayors as being incompetent. I wonder whether he has had an opportunity to reflect on that and whether he still feels that way, or whether he would like to apologize for having called two mayors in Quebec incompetent.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely false. I referred to far more than two mayors as being incompetent. The former mayor of Vancouver, who made it \$1.3 million in government costs for every newly built home, is incompetent. The current mayor and council in Toronto, bringing in a 10% tax increase on their people, are absolutely incompetent.

There are many competent mayors across the country: in Victoriaville, in Saguenay, in Trois-Rivières and in other places. The former mayor of Langley was very competent. They got out of the way and accelerated construction.

Business of Supply

Conservatives believe that we should reward those mayors and councils that get out of the way and let builders build. Let us incentivize local municipalities to speed up and lower the cost of construction so that we can put roofs overhead after the Prime Minister doubled housing costs.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have been witnessing flooding, extreme weather and droughts, and experts have been clear that what is raising costs on food is far more the climate crisis than carbon pricing.

Over a decade ago, when the Leader of the Opposition was a minister, the Harper government cut the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, which collected information on the costs of the climate crisis. He says he wants to cut taxes, but we know he wants to cut child care and the school food programs. He wants to cut the experts who would—

• (1035)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre is rising on a point of order.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, I know it is really hard for the Conservative men to control their toxic masculinity. They do support “men gotta go their own way”. My colleague is trying to ask a question, and—

The Speaker: I am going to ask all members to please allow questions to be asked and comments to be made without interruption so we can hear.

The hon. member for Victoria.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Mr. Speaker, he says he wants to cut taxes, but what we know is he wants to cut child care. He wants to cut school food programs, and he wants to cut the experts who will refute his misinformation.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, first of all, let us go through this point by point. She says that natural disasters would be stopped by a carbon tax. The carbon tax has now been in place for five years, and, as she points out, these events continue to happen. Clearly the carbon tax is not solving the problem; in fact, it has not even reduced emissions. The government has missed its own targets in all but one year, and that was when we were locked down for COVID. Its own environment commissioner says the government will not hit its targets by 2030.

Second, she just revealed what she wants to spend money on: a national round table of a bunch of activists, lobbyists and bureaucrats in Ottawa. She refers to a food program she claims I want to cut; there is no food program. What the government has is a program to bring a bunch of bureaucrats and activists to Ottawa to talk about food. This is exactly the kind of waste and mismanagement we will get rid of so we can bring home affordable food.

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to follow up on our leader's speech about our opposition day motion today, which is calling on the Liberals, the NDP and the Bloc Québécois to support common sense.

After eight years of the Prime Minister and the NDP-Liberal coalition, Canadians by the millions are getting increasingly frustrated at the out-of-control tax increases under the Prime Minister.

Let me give an example: \$27,571.29 on an invoice from Rutters Elevators. I was speaking to Michael Aube in Chesterville yesterday and again this morning. That is the carbon tax bill, the line on the bill, for drying at their elevator for one farm in Chesterville, Ontario, last year.

Canadians believe that this is getting absurd. The worst is yet to come. On April 1, the carbon tax is going to increase by 23%, and the Prime Minister and the NDP, coalition partners together, are going to quadruple the carbon tax in the coming years. This means Canadians are dumbfounded at the fact that the Prime Minister, the finance minister and their government believe that putting a \$100,000 carbon tax bill for one farm alone is not going to increase the cost of food and inflation in this country. Nobody believes it. Again, just this week, the finance minister and Deputy Prime Minister went out and said that the carbon tax is revenue-neutral. It is no wonder we cannot balance the budget in this country under their watch. They cannot do basic math and economics to understand that.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed the impact the tax is going to have on farmers; \$1 billion in carbon taxes is coming under the current plan and the continued carbon tax increases to farmers in the coming years. Nobody believes that one can add a billion dollars in taxes to the bills of Canadian farmers and not expect food prices, the cost of living and the cost of doing business in this country to go up. That does not even include the carbon tax on trucking.

In my family, I am proud of my father, Ed, now happily retired from JED Express in South Mountain, Ontario. We were in the trucking business for years. One cannot put 61¢ a litre on the price of gas in the transportation business and not have it drive up the cost of food and of everything that Canadians buy. Everything has to be shipped and trucked in this country, driving up the cost. Canadians are tired and have had enough of these tax increases.

We have our common-sense Conservative motion here today that builds on our four priorities: axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. That is resonating because it is what Conservative members heard in every part of the country once again over the Christmas recess and holidays, out and about in our community.

Business of Supply

Let us talk about being out of touch. I want people to picture this for a second if they can. We went home to our ridings, to Christmas open houses and to public events, and we were dropping by. I want people to picture a Liberal MP and just how out of touch they are. Apparently they went home and went to the local Tim Hortons coffee shop to grab a coffee and shoot the breeze with people in Avalon, rural Newfoundland. They came back to Ottawa and, after weeks of feedback, the Prime Minister had a great idea this week.

They said they heard the message about the carbon tax loud and clear: People do not like the name of it. The Liberals' idea, after going back and hearing from Canadians, apparently, was that it was not the fact that the carbon tax was going to quadruple. It was not the fact that it is driving up costs, and it was not the fact that we are adding a billion dollars in taxes to Canadian farmers in the coming years. It was the fact that maybe Canadians just do not like the name of the carbon tax. The Liberals are out of touch.

On this side of the aisle, the motion is clear. On April 1 the carbon tax is going to increase by 23% as part of the plan to quadruple it from its current rate. If Canadians think it is bad now, just wait until, year after year, it gets to the totals in their plans. They may not even be done after that.

• (1040)

There is no part of this country that is not impacted negatively by the failed carbon tax, and it has been a failure. Emissions are not going down; they are going up. The cost of living and the cost of doing business are skyrocketing at rates like we have never seen before.

I want to point out a couple of things in this country. Just this week, CTV News had an article headline that said, "40 per cent of N.S. households struggle to pay their electricity bill". The Liberals still plan to quadruple the carbon tax and drive bills up even further.

The part of the country I would like to highlight today are the good people in northern Ontario, who, for years, have overwhelmingly elected Liberal and NDP MPs to go to Ottawa. They are now seeing week by week, month by month, and budget by budget, just how out of touch their Liberal and NDP MPs have been.

It was very interesting here, and I want to call out the hypocrisy particularly of the NDP members. They always talk a big, tough game. They yell and do all their things, whether it be at committee or in question period, and they always claim they have these great ideas. They vote and do all these things that make it look like they are fighting on behalf of folks, particularly in northern Ontario. At the end of the day, when the budget comes, the NDP are just as complicit as the Liberals in driving up the carbon tax.

On hypocrisy, I have to call out the member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, an NDP MP who goes on record about the carbon tax and says, "I think it's a black eye for the Liberals for what they have done." Excuse me to the NDP members, but they have voted with the Liberals every single time, and they are going to quadruple it. The only reason Canadians do not have a choice right now is that the NDP keeps propping the Liberals up time and time again.

I think what is important here is that the NDP members say one thing back in their ridings, but then they come to Ottawa and vote a completely different way. What we say is that rent is up, gas is up, the carbon tax is up, housing costs are up, and for the NDP, time is up. Canadians, particularly in northern Ontario, are not buying it anymore.

One of my favourite parts is the NDP member for Timmins—James Bay, who gets triggered. I am glad he is here this morning. I am glad that at the—

• (1045)

The Deputy Speaker: We cannot refer to whether someone is here or not. I think the hon. member knows that.

The hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, what I can say is that when I visited Timmins last year, and when our Conservative leader has visited Timmins time and time again, the constituents said they never see or hear from their NDP MP. They say just how out of touch the NDP has become. It has sold out working families, particularly in northern Ontario, in Timmins—James Bay, and continues to prop up the Liberal government.

It was just in the news last week, in *The Daily Press*, up in Timmins. The airport manager of the Victor M. Power Airport said he has a serious concern about the rising cost of living in this country. I am going to quote him. He said:

We're burning hundreds and hundreds of litres of fuel and that price is going to go up a huge amount. That cost gets passed onto the traveling public right out of Timmins. So my budget is going to go through the roof in the next couple of years.

My focus is running the business of the airport. I need to do something to make sure...people can afford to fly, and not have [to pay] \$800 seats to [go to] Toronto.

That is because carbon taxes are driving up the cost of living in northern Ontario. It gets cold in northern Ontario. To heat their homes, people need to have heat. They should not be penalized for doing that.

They have to drive. If they are going from Timmins to Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, North Bay, Kapuskasing, Hearst or any point in between, there is no subway. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance just hops on the subway. I have been up there a few times in northern Ontario. I found a Subway restaurant, but I have not found the subway that she suggests people in northern Ontario can just use.

Business of Supply

The motion we have is clear. Our position, as Canadian Conservatives, is clear as well. We will axe the tax entirely, on everything, for good. The Prime Minister is playing games with Bill C-234 and giving an exemption or carve-out to farmers to save \$1 billion. They will not go for that. They are playing games in the Senate and now here in the House. They now have the opportunity to go on the record. They do not have to increase the carbon tax again on April 1.

It is time to cancel the increase and give Canadians some much-needed relief after eight years of the Prime Minister and his NDP partners.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives, and that member in particular, want to talk a lot about the price on pollution but do not want to talk about the other things the government is doing, in particular for the agriculture sector.

There is one riding in Ontario that receives \$6.8 million through the agriculture sector emissions reductions and clean-tech funding. This is money that is actually given to the agricultural sector to help it reduce its emissions and find clean technology.

Do members know whose riding receives \$6.8 million a year from the federal government for that? It is that member's riding. That member's riding receives \$6.8 million of federal money to help the agricultural industry move away from emissions and in the direction of clean tech.

I am wondering, in the interest of axing everything, whether the member would comment on whether the Conservative government would axe this clean-tech funding and this \$6.8 million to his riding.

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, the member for Kingston and the Islands talks about six-point-some million dollars. I just went through and told him that the millions of dollars in carbon tax that is being paid by farmers is going to be quadrupled in the coming years. They are getting tax increases like they have never seen before.

A billion dollars is what Canadian farmers are going to pay in the coming years. The arrogance of the Liberal government, and that Liberal member in particular, says that the government knows best. It is driving up their taxes and giving it back. We have a common-sense solution. It is to get green technology red tape out of the way, like on tidal energy in New Brunswick. There are numerous hydro-electric projects in Quebec that are being stalled because of federal red tape. The Liberals' answer is to tax them, jack up their taxes and carbon tax, and try to cut a cheque for some of it back. The provinces do not believe it. It has failed, and it is not working.

I encourage the member to come and visit a farmer in Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry; he would get an earful about the Liberal record on everything.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to preface my question with how disappointed I am in the member opposite. The member speaks about being out of touch, while we see, in my home province of Alberta, children and trans kids being attacked. That member has the power and should have the courage to stand in this place and condemn that violence.

Will the member now, as I give him the opportunity, stand to protect trans rights in this country and stand against Conservative preachers who, as we speak, are attacking children's rights? Will he have the courage to do it now?

• (1050)

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, that does not have anything to do with the motion and the debate here at hand on the carbon tax, but I will say, as a proud gay man, that he should not question my integrity or my commitment on anything. I have been proud, as an example, to stand up to end the discriminatory blood ban that the NDP and Liberals propped up for far too long. I will not take any lessons from him trying to lecture me about anything.

Back to the matter at hand, talking about out of touch and talking about aloof, we have that member from Edmonton. Temperatures in Edmonton reached -50°C or -45°C only about a week or two ago, and that member does not like the inconvenience of it. He is going to have to go doorknocking in the next election and explain to people in Edmonton why he wants to quadruple the carbon tax and their home heating bill when temperatures hit -45°C.

The reason people are using food banks, the reason people are struggling, the reason housing costs and the economy are out of control is the constant tax increases that the member keeps voting for. I know he does not like talking about it, but it is about time he smartened up and did.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week a dairy farmer in my riding called me. He was calling in reference to one of these federal government grants, and he said that it is almost as if the government is forcing him to spend money on something. He said that what the Liberal government does not seem to understand is that he wants to lower his input costs and make his barn as efficient as possible, but he does not want to be cajoled into a single program by a bureaucrat in Ottawa about what he should be doing with his business and his family farm.

Maybe the member from Ontario can comment on what a Conservative approach would be to letting farmers produce the food we need and not letting government get in the way all the time.

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I agree wholeheartedly. I hear the same thing from farmers. I mentioned before about the elevators, about Rutters Elevators in Chesterville. I talked to Mike Aube about the carbon tax bill and the massive increases they are seeing there. Mike was telling me that they want to build greenhouses and expand their operations, but whenever they see their bills go up by the hundreds and thousands of dollars and look at their overall cash flow, it creates a serious problem. The increases they are forced to pass on to everybody else do not allow new projects for Canadian-grown food to be expanded. Chesterville is a perfect example.

Business of Supply

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

Here we are once again, talking about the same motion based on the same red herrings we have seen time and time again coming from the Conservatives. I listened to the question from the member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon just moments ago, where he tried to imply that the federal funding toward the reduction of emissions and toward clean technology was only one particular program. It is clear the member has no concept whatsoever of what the federal government is doing for farmers, in that there are so many programs.

When I said \$6.8 million, I was giving the total number over a whole vast array of various different programs. It is not a single program, but it is not new and not unique to me to hear Conservatives talking like this. It is what they want to do repeatedly. They want to take an issue like global inflation and try to apply it to Canada and say that it is a problem only in Canada. They say that this is a problem that has been created by the price on pollution, which is ludicrous.

We know, according to the Governor of the Bank of Canada, that the price on pollution contributes to 0.15% as it relates to inflation. It is literally negligible and could be chalked up to a rounding error, yet Conservatives jump on it as though this is what is making life unaffordable for many Canadians right now. They do not want to talk about the realities. They do not want to talk about what is actually going on throughout the world and how Canada is positioning itself to be at the forefront when it comes to these new technologies.

I heard the Leader of the Opposition talk about building car batteries in Canada. Is he not aware that the member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington, one of his Conservative members, had the largest investment, not in Canada but in North America, for building batteries to go into vehicles? That is all happening a 20-kilometre drive from where I live, in Hastings—Lennox and Addington. This is setting the course for the future in terms of the industry being at the forefront, so that we will not be importing technology and so that we will be the ones actually creating the technology and developing those products right here in Canada. That particular facility, Umicore, will produce 800,000 batteries to go into vehicles each and every year. It is a multi-billion dollar investment from Umicore, not just into Canada but into Ontario, into Hastings—Lennox and Addington, into the Kingston region.

This is huge, but it is only one example. We are well aware of Stellantis and the other various different players emerging in Canada as it relates to environmental technologies and the green technologies of tomorrow. People look toward Canada. Companies and businesses look toward Canada because they know we have the resources and the political will to push toward this new and emerging technology. This is why we are seeing people come and invest here.

While I am on the topic, do members know why Umicore even picked Ontario? The president of Umicore said, in his press conference, and the member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington was there with a big smile on her face when it happened at Queen's Uni-

versity two summers ago, that Umicore chose Ontario because it is producing environmentally sustainable products and it wants to know that what goes into those products is environmentally sustainable. A vast majority of the resources that go into building those batteries comes from electricity, and he recognized that Ontario does not burn coal to produce electricity. That is thanks to a previous provincial Liberal government, by the way. He recognized that Ontario has taken great strides toward ensuring that we have renewable, sustainable electricity produced in a responsible way. That is why companies are choosing to invest in Canada. That is why they are choosing Ontario. That is why they are choosing Hastings—Lennox and Addington.

The mayors in the surrounding area, including in Kingston, are thrilled about this. The city councils are thrilled about this. The economic opportunities that are being produced as a result of investments like this, because of the initiatives of the Liberal government, will last for generations, quite frankly.

● (1055)

I get real kick out of it when I see Conservative members being super excited about these things when they are back in their ridings, but when they come to the House of Commons, they toe the line of the Leader of the Opposition, that the only solution forward is to go back to burning as much fossil fuel as we possibly can.

When we talk about the price on pollution and what Conservatives are proposing today, it is really important that we actually talk about what they are proposing. They talk about axing a lot of stuff. What they are going to be axing are rebates to families. It might not be the families that they are interested in, because lower-income families receive more through the climate action incentive rebate than higher-income families. However, the reality is that what Conservatives would be axing, is a family of four, in the spring of this year, will receive \$244 for one quarter; in Manitoba, \$264; in Saskatchewan, \$340. The same family living in Alberta, for one quarter, would receive, and currently receives, \$386.

We hear the Conservatives routinely say that we are going to double it or triple the tax, but of course they do not tell us the timeline, because some of the timelines are a decade out. However, what they forget to say is that the rebate doubles and triples as well. We recognize that in order to transition away from fossil fuels, which I want to do, and I know many members of the House of Commons, the Canadian population and a majority of our constituents want to do, we have to incentivize people to make change.

In an economic model that is built on capitalism, that is built on supply and demand, the way to incentivize people is by putting a price on things on which we want to change behaviour. We would think that the Conservatives before anybody else would know this. The same thing happens with taxes on tobacco. The same thing happens with taxes on other products where we are looking to change behaviour. However, the key difference to any other tax, and what the Conservatives never want to mention, is that in order to accomplish this, but still be reasonable for families to absorb those prices, is to return all the money to them.

Business of Supply

The natural question is, “Why do it in the first place?” I just assumed that Conservatives could understand how market mechanisms work to incentivize and change behaviour in the market. Apparently they do not.

The good news is that we know that it is working, and we are starting to see it. The projections are showing that by 2030 over a third of the reductions in greenhouse gas emissions will be attributed specifically to pricing pollution.

We are not the only ones that price pollution. Countless jurisdictions throughout the world price pollution. Ukraine prices pollution. Ukraine, a country that is literally at war right now, prices pollution, and it has since 2011. It was the only way that the European economy was going to let it participate in the economy. Most, if not all, European economies have a price on pollution in one form or another, whether that is a direct price, or cap and trade or one of the various different models.

The Conservatives never miss an opportunity to try to conflate and confuse Canadians as to what the realities are when it comes to the price on pollution and how it works, generally speaking.

Once again, we find ourselves in a position where the Conservatives have brought forward motion after motion on the same issue, not just the issue of pricing pollution and the fact that they are against it but on an issue that they ran on in the last election. All Conservative members in here, whether they say they agree with it or not, ran under a policy that included pricing pollution. Now they have such buyers' remorse over their last leader that they have used just about every opposition day in this session of Parliament on this issue.

I am looking forward to answering questions that my colleagues might have. I am quite certain that this is not the last time the Conservatives will bring forward this motion, but it is certainly a policy that will be to the benefit of our environment in the future.

• (1100)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is my first opportunity to rise today to explain the many reasons why the Green Party will be voting against today's opposition motion, but I would like to ask my friend from Kingston and the Islands to comment on this. We had an earlier exchange about whether enforcing the carbon tax or raising the carbon tax could stop fires and floods. The answer from science is clear that it cannot.

We cannot turn back what has happened to the atmosphere with respect to atmospheric chemistry and physics, but we can avoid runaway global warming, the kind that self-accelerates and becomes unstoppable. We must not stoke the furnace further on future warming to destroy the lives of our children, which is why we need carbon pricing, and we need more to reduce emissions much more quickly.

Does my my hon. colleague have any comments on that?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with my colleague from the Green Party on this. The reality is that this false narrative or red herring reminds me a lot of the one that we hear quite often from Conservatives about Canada's fossil fuels being

the cleanest in the world, as though that is some reason why we should not seek to do better. Rather than doing something about a problem, their solution is to exploit our resources because they are slightly more cleaner than other jurisdictions.

We know that what it really comes down to is that Canada is a leader. We are a G7 country. We benefited from the industrial revolution immensely. It is to the benefit of every citizen in our country, like all our other G7 partners. We have an obligation to the world to be at the forefront, to lead the charge in terms of changing our environmental practices throughout the globe.

This idea that we can somehow dismiss the issue away because we are a bit better than some other countries is a huge red herring. It is what we hear time and time again from Conservatives and it is getting pretty stale.

• (1105)

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in December, the Atlantic caucus of the Liberal Party came together with the Prime Minister to make an announcement on heat pumps. It just so happened that the announcement was taking place at the same time as the carbon price was about to go up. For all the rhetoric we are hearing from the member from Kingston today, when push came to shove, when the government was faced with a price increase that people in Atlantic Canada could not afford to stomach, it backed down.

Does the member think it is okay for Canadians to pay more in carbon taxes than heating like natural gas, which is very commonly found on bills in Canada today?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, eight out of 10 Canadians get back more than they put in. Yes, some Canadians who have very large homes and multiple vehicles probably end up spending more than they get back. In particular, individuals who are on the lower end of the economic spectrum are certainly getting much more back than they are paying.

I find it really interesting that he accuses me of all this rhetoric. Conservatives continually miss the point of explaining to Canadians that they are going to get back more than they are paying. They would rather seek an opportunity to capitalize from a political narrative that suits them right now because it will benefit them politically. However, it will do nothing for the environment and nothing for our country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I wish we had started the year the same way you did, with a new look and new priorities. I wish the Conservatives would do the same and let us move on to something other than the carbon tax. That said, it is the topic of the day, and we will respect that.

In his speech, my colleague said something about the energy transition that I find very interesting. He talked about the Stellantis investments and the spin-offs for Ontario.

Business of Supply

Not only is the government spending billions of dollars to shift one of Quebec's flagship economic sectors, transport electrification, to Ontario, but it is doing so by trying to one-up the U.S. with investments and subsidies. That is what it is doing instead of developing the industry from the mine up and building up the entire supply chain for our mines, our regions. The government should be thinking about how it can ensure that economic development and a green economy are created at each stage. If it had done that, it could have saved money and jump-started a sustainable energy transition.

Right now, the government is subsidizing the top without building the base, and it is buying Chinese lithium. This is the result. What are this government's priorities when it comes to transport electrification? Electrification is the way to avoid the carbon tax.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, the priority is to build in Canada. I spent five minutes of my 10-minute speech talking about Umicore, a multi-billion dollar plant that is being built right outside my riding, in the Conservative member's riding of Hastings—Lennox and Addington. It will build 800,000 car batteries per year.

There is also a lot of rhetoric. I got a kick out of the member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon when, in the previous question, he talked about Atlantic Canada, again trying to pigeonhole this as though it is something just about Atlantic Canada. Twice as many people in Ontario will benefit from the three-year cap on heating with oil than in Atlantic Canada. Does that change the narrative of the Conservatives? No, of course not, because it does not suit them right now. It would be better to make it seem as though there was some big deal that contributed to that announcement.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I begin my speech, I would like to point out that I believe there is an error in the wording of the motion. The motion calls on the Liberal government to cancel the April 1, 2024, carbon tax increase.

However, there is no carbon tax. It is actually a price on pollution. I believe that both the House and Canadians are being misled on this issue.

Why is it not a tax? For it to be a tax, the government would have to put the money into its coffers with a view to spending it on programs or investing it in the future of Canadians.

That is not what the price on pollution does. With the price on pollution, the government is only an intermediary, because the proceeds are returned to Canadians. It is a price mechanism, something that the Nobel-winning economist Milton Friedman endorsed as an economic measure for fighting pollution.

How does this mechanism work in terms of carbon pricing? It is very interesting. It involves a little bit of magic. When a consumer goes to spend money and sees that the price is perhaps a little higher, they are not thinking about the quarterly deposit they will receive from the Government of Canada in their chequing account as compensation. They just look at the price and decide that, since it is a bit more expensive, they will consume a little less. That saves them money in the short term, and then, on January 1, April 1 and

so forth, they realize that money has been deposited in their bank account.

They will feel doubly lucky, because they saved money at the pump and also got money from the government. That is how carbon pricing works, and it is the key to its effectiveness as a measure for fighting pollution, especially greenhouse gas emissions.

• (1110)

[*English*]

What is very frustrating about this debate, in addition to the fact that it is the same debate over and over again based on a very symbolic and superficial understanding of what the price on pollution is, are these flimsy conclusions that the official opposition wishes to draw about the impact of the price on pollution on inflation and, more specifically, on food prices. However, rigorous academic study after rigorous academic study has pointed to the fact that the impact of the price on pollution on food prices is extremely small.

Now, we know that the official opposition has no respect for the Bank of Canada and that it would like to take the Bank of Canada under its wing and dictate monetary policy, but it is an incredibly credible institution filled with some of the best economists in this country. What does the Bank of Canada say about the supposed link between the price on carbon and inflation? It says that the price on carbon contributes about 0.15 % to inflation overall.

The University of Calgary, is not, I might add for anyone who does not follow schools of thought and academic life in this country, what I would call a hotbed of socialism. What did the University of Calgary say about the supposed link between the price on carbon and food inflation? University of Calgary economist Trevor Tombe estimates that the price on carbon I will call it, because I do not want to mislead people as it is not a tax, is responsible for less than 1% of grocery price increases. How did Professor Tombe come to that conclusion? Did he just pull a number out of the air the way the official opposition likes to do? No. He used a Statistics Canada modelling program. Again, we have some of the country's greatest econometric experts working at Statistics Canada, like we do at the Bank of Canada. I do not know if the official opposition members are calling into question the integrity and expertise of Statistics Canada, maybe they are, but I would say that the Statistics Canada modelling program is a credible instrument and that is what Professor Tombe was using.

Business of Supply

He goes on to say that in Alberta, because this is very much focused in many ways on Alberta and the oil industry, the price on carbon has increased prices by about 0.3%, which is 30¢ on a \$100 bill, in Manitoba it is 0.9% and in Ontario it is 0.4%. These are credible, rigorous academic studies. However, we do not get any of that from the official opposition; rather, we get this kind of false logic, like the shin bone is attached to the knee bone and the knee bone is attached to the thigh bone, etc. It starts with the idea that there is a price on carbon, which means it is going to cost more to drive a truck, or this and that, and eventually it is going to show up on the shelves. The fact of the matter is that is not real logic founded on a rigorous analysis.

The other point I would like to make is that the price of food has gone up. However, according to credible news media like CTV News, and an article posted on its website, there are a number of factors that are contributing to the high price of food.

The first is climate change. Devastating wildfires continue to rage across Canada, destroying forests and farmland. Let us use a bit of simplistic logic that maybe the official opposition can understand. If farmland is destroyed, what happens to the supply of food? It goes down. The Leader of the Opposition thinks of himself as a wonderful and great economist, but what happens when the supply of food goes down and the demand stays the same? What happens to the price? It goes up. That is the number one cause of rising food prices. It is basic logic.

The really interesting thing is that greenhouse gas emissions from the agricultural sector are not regulated. There is no price on carbon on greenhouse gas emissions from the agricultural sector. As a matter of fact, a lot of people have been writing to me saying that we have to price greenhouse gas emissions from agricultural lands, but we have not done that.

What is another aspect that is causing challenges to the supply of food? Can members guess what Ukraine has been called? It has been called the breadbasket of Europe. I think it is going through some tough times, which may be limiting the supply of wheat from that part of the world. Again, if we constrain supply in the face of a demand that is stable or even increasing, we get higher prices.

I do not know why the leader of the official opposition does not click into that. It is basic economics 101. Therefore, we have to look at these other causes. The price on carbon is not the cause of all the woes around the world and we have to stop saying that.

What the members of the official opposition like to do, over and over again, through these opposition day motions is build straw men, which they then demolish on social media while pretending to be heroes. That is all this is about. It is all about social media hits.

• (1115)

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

Before I begin, I want to recognize the life of a very significant individual in my riding, Bob Gieselman, who passed away recently. Bob devoted a lot to the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo and around in service to the community. My condolences to his family. May perpetual light shine upon him.

My hon. colleague said that we are having the same debate and that it is superficial and symbolic. What is not superficial and symbolic are the people who are writing me letters saying that they have to choose between heating and eating or that they cannot afford a \$6 bag of lettuce. What are we supposed to be doing here if not talking about the issue of Canadian affordability?

I really take issue with the Liberals framing this as if there is nothing to see here. There is something to see here, which is that people cannot afford to live in Canada. The Liberals should be ashamed for ignoring that.

• (1120)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, my condolences to the hon. member on the loss of his constituent. I am glad that he took the opportunity to mention that. I am sure the constituent's family will appreciate that deeply.

The member was just not listening. We do not deny that the price of food is high. We are just reminding the member and his party that it is not because of the price on carbon. There is a war in Ukraine. There are wildfires and floods that are destroying farmland in Canada. These are the factors that are driving the price of food. Fortunately, food inflation is coming down to match general inflation. That is a good sign, but let us hope that continues.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is funny that we are talking about the carbon tax today, because just this morning, the Parliamentary Budget Officer released the costing of the tax credit for carbon capture, utilization and storage.

How much will this measure cost over the next five years? It will cost approximately \$5.5 billion.

I would like to know if my colleague agrees with me that it would be a far better idea to invest this money in true green energy than to try to convince us that oil can be environmentally friendly.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I have not seen the report my colleague is talking about.

The Liberal government is obviously not trying to eliminate fossil fuels. We are going to have to live with that for a while yet.

Yes, there are clean energy sources. The member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry was talking about green tidal energy. We have to invest, and the government is investing. There are technologies that are still in development, like what my colleague from Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry was talking about.

Business of Supply

The Bay of Fundy project did not fail because of federal government regulations. The problem is that it is very hard to reap the benefits of that kind of technology at this point in time. There are limits, but we have to keep investing. Unfortunately, we have to deal with fossil fuels for a while yet.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have great respect for my hon. colleague, but I was a little frustrated this morning because in trying to use logic on a party leader who bases everything on a bumper sticker slogan, my colleague is wasting his efforts.

The issue at hand here is that the Leader of the Opposition is accusing the Liberals of not having an environmental plan, which I might agree with on most days, but there is no Conservative environmental plan other than letting the planet burn. What are the Conservatives willing to throw under the bus to let the planet burn right now in Alberta? Not a single member of the Alberta or Saskatchewan MPs have stood up about the climate disaster that is unfolding. Thirteen counties have declared environmental disasters from the drought. This is four years into a drought. There is no snow in Edmonton. The climate crisis and a burning planet are affecting farmers and not a single one of them would ever stand up and defend farmers from climate change. They would rather throw them under the bus so that Rich Kruger and Suncor can make more money. That is the Conservatives' environmental plan.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, the member is totally correct. There was an article on the CBC website last night about how Alberta farmers are very worried about the loss of groundwater. Therefore, at some point, the Alberta farmers are going to go to see the Alberta government and say, "Look, we have a problem here. We know that the oil industry is important in our province, but think of us for a change."

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the incomparable member for Mirabel.

Today I would like to address a serious problem. Canadians are being legally robbed of their savings as they struggle to make ends meet, pay all their bills and find housing. This legalized robbery in the context of the soaring cost of living and the affordability crisis involves the price of energy, the main cause of inflation.

We have to face the fact that carbon use is expensive. While exhausted and financially strapped Canadians are paying high prices, an elite group out of touch with the people is reaping the benefits and enjoying a privileged life. As citizens struggle to make ends meet, the oil and gas sector is making record profits. In 2020, 2021 and 2022, they raked in several billion dollars in profits, half of it in 2022 alone. Profits for 2022 are estimated at \$270 billion. We should think about what this figure means.

These \$270 billion went into the pockets of major companies, 70% of whose shareholders are foreign. Of course, these companies need the oil monarchy in Ottawa to provide them with lavish guarantees and hefty direct and indirect subsidies, which they could easily do without.

Of course, the Conservatives do not talk about this, since they have an incestuous relationship with the oil companies, which are awash in profits. Despite their rhetoric of common sense, the Conservatives, who have no plan to end our dependence on fossil fuels, prefer to blather on for the umpteenth time about the carbon tax, which does not apply in Quebec.

Let us be serious for a moment. If we want to talk about the real problem, we can talk about the six tax credits, worth a total of \$83 billion by 2025, granted in the last two Liberal-NDP government budgets. In particular, two of these tax credits stand out. First, there is the clean technology investment tax credit, which, despite its name, will encourage increased bitumen extraction and gas exports. Then there is the carbon capture, utilization and storage investment tax credit, which helps oil companies pump out every last drop of oil by supporting an experimental technique that shows all the signs of being a greenwashing scheme.

This is not to mention the fact that the federal government nationalized the Trans Mountain pipeline, whose expansion will cost \$30.9 billion, most of which will be paid for by taxpayers. This is nothing new. According to a report by Equiterre, in April 2019, Finance Canada and Environment Canada failed to keep their promise to cancel subsidies for fossil energies. According to Equiterre, they gave the oil companies \$1.6 billion. In November 2018, the same group estimated that, between 2012 and 2017, Export Development Canada gave 12 times more money to fossil fuels than to clean energies.

Some people believe that Equiterre is an environmental group. Let us see what the International Monetary Fund has to say. In 2019, the IMF estimated that direct subsidies and indirect support to fossil fuels in Canada amounted to \$54 billion in 2017. The problem is clear. It should jump out at anyone who has eyes to see.

While our fellow citizens are suffering from rampant inflation, wealthy oil and gas companies are benefiting, with the aid of the Liberals and Conservatives. All this is happening while scientists are saying that, if we want to be serious about it, if we want to be responsible, we should be leaving 80% of our oil underground. Moreover, more than 95% of Canadian oil comes from the tar sands, one of the most polluting oils on earth.

Business of Supply

Climate change, which the Conservatives never speak of, is costing everyone. In 2025, it could cost Canada's and Quebec's economies \$25 billion. In addition to being unfair and ecocidal, Canada's "everything for oil" religion is not even a good economic choice. It hampers the diversification of the Canadian economy. The exploitation of natural resources is closely linked to the decline in the manufacturing sector. Members might remember that there were hundreds of thousands of jobs lost in Quebec, jobs related to the increase in the value of the Canadian dollar, which was itself linked to the increase in bitumen exports.

The question that arises is, how can we ease the financial burden on our fellow citizens?

• (1125)

Of course, we can listen to the Conservatives propose eliminating the so-called carbon tax in a motion that does not even define what that means. Let us not forget that the carbon tax does not apply to Quebec, which has its own carbon exchange system. In 2013, Quebec partnered with California, with which it shares a greenhouse gas cap-and-trade system, and there has been no negative impact so far. The measure was adopted under Jean Charest, aspiring leader of the Conservative Party. Because of this system, Quebec is not affected by the tax.

The other carbon policy, which some on that side of the House call a second tax on carbon, is not a tax at all because none of it goes to the government. Not a penny from the clean fuel regulations finds its way into government coffers. These regulations are nothing more than an update of the regulations adopted in 2010 by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, under whom the current Conservative leader served as a parliamentary secretary.

There is only one difference between the two versions of the regulations. Instead of imposing an average, namely, the 5% ethanol content of the gasoline prescribed in the former Conservative version, the government is imposing an outcome. In practical terms, the new regulations require that each litre of gasoline produced in 2030 must generate 15% fewer greenhouse gas emissions than in 2019. That is all.

Unlike the previous version adopted under the Conservatives, the government is not telling the oil companies how to reduce their emissions. They can reduce the emissions they generate during their crude oil extraction or refining activities, use a cleaner type of oil that generates less pollution than oil sands during the refinery process, or mix more biofuels, like ethanol, in with the gasoline to reduce its oil content. All options are on the table. The choice is up to them.

The regulations have minimal, if any effect in Quebec. The Quebec government has already passed its Regulation respecting the integration of low-carbon-intensity fuel content into gasoline and diesel fuel, which already stipulates that fuel sold in Quebec must contain 15% biofuels. Just as they seem to do every single day, the Conservatives are once again proposing a measure that will increase pollution. This measure offers a bonus to those who heat with dirty fuels and offers nothing to those who do not pollute, such as people who heat with electricity or renewable sources.

That is unfair, because, on some level, it is primarily lower-income households that benefit from the carbon tax. The government has committed to returning fuel charge proceeds directly to individuals and families through climate action incentive payments. This fuel charge therefore benefits low-income households, since they get back more than they pay. In other words, suspending the carbon tax does not serve the most vulnerable.

Making up problems is not going to solve anything. Quebeckers have been relatively spared from the high cost of heating not because the federal carbon tax does not apply in Quebec, but because they chose renewable energy, including for heating, a long time ago.

Canadian taxes are not the problem. It is the billions of dollars of taxpayer money that Ottawa is giving in direct or indirect subsidies to the oil and gas companies in western Canada that is the problem. Let us put an end to that. Let us come up with a serious energy transition plan. The economy and our planet will benefit from that. We will all come out ahead. That is what real common sense looks like.

• (1130)

[*English*]

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I admire the way in which the hon. member presented his case. He is really quite concerned about the effect of climate change on the country.

If, in fact, he thinks that the revenues from oil sands are, shall we say, problematic, is it his position that the transfer payments that go to Quebec under the revenues of the federal government should be reduced accordingly so that the position the hon. member is taking would have some consistency?

• (1135)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I would simply like to remind my colleague that equalization payments are largely a myth. I would also like to invite him to read an excellent document that was released a few months ago on the finances of an independent Quebec, which shows that we would have more than enough money. What is more, our finances would not have to be administered by a state whose priorities are different from ours. For example, our money could be put toward the aerospace industry, renewable energy or the many other sectors that are completely ignored and neglected by Ottawa, unlike western Canada's oil industry and Ontario's auto industry.

[*English*]

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talks about wanting to solve the environmental issues, but only from lens of what suits Quebec. It does not suit other places, such as Alberta, where the temperature was -50°C a few weeks ago. The carbon tax is not working. Emissions are not being reduced, and Canadians are paying more than they receive.

If the system is not working, does the member believe that we should continue with it, or should we halt it to move to another way of dealing with the environment?

Business of Supply

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, we have to be careful. I have repeatedly talked about the impact on the Canadian economy. It goes without saying that climate change is a global and therefore international issue, and that can pose a problem when one country's decisions impact all the others. That goes without saying.

I spent a lot of my speech explaining that the system does not work. The problem I have with this carbon tax is that it is a small measure with little or no impact. If there is an impact, it is not particularly negative. There is not much to it. In fact, the crux of the problem is the billions of dollars in funding that go to the oil and gas companies, which are raking in the profits. That is the problem. There are no real programs or real plans for energy transition. That is the crux of the problem.

The system does not work. Of course, for some it works very well. It is a system that favours only the wealthiest, an elite group. Unfortunately, the Conservatives do not challenge that.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague knows, people find it frustrating to pay higher bills when big oil CEOs are raking in the profits at their expense. Why does he think the Liberals and the Conservatives are refusing to make these CEOs pay their fair share and help put money back in people's pockets?

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by congratulating my colleague on her excellent French. I was genuinely impressed. I think we should applaud her efforts. I do not know if she is currently learning French, and we will talk about that after, but kudos to her.

With that praise comes criticism, however. Unfortunately, I have to remind my colleague that she voted in favour of Liberal budgets full of even more goodies for oil companies. Nonetheless, I do agree that we need to be able to demand more of them and redistribute that to the people.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I felt a little uncomfortable giving a speech today. The House leader of the Bloc Québécois called me yesterday to tell me that the Conservatives would be moving a super original motion today on the carbon tax. I read the motion and told the House leader that the speech should be given by the member for Montarville, because he is the foreign affairs critic.

As we know, this whole issue does not really apply to Quebec. One day we will be our own country, and we will discuss this at the UN. For the time being, we have to debate it in other people's parliaments, but this does not apply to Quebec. I see it as a diplomatic issue, and anyone who knows me well knows that I am probably not the best person to engage in diplomacy; yet here I am, rising in the House today.

We are here to debate a motion that is, as usual, ridiculous. To be frank, the motion is utterly ridiculous. It is patently false. We do not know whether this motion stems from bad faith, incompetence or a combination of the two, as is often the case. The reason the Conservatives write these motions is to create an echo. It is so they can once again say that the Bloc Québécois voted in favour of the car-

bon tax. They are trying to create an echo, but the echo that comes from these Conservative motions is like any other echo. It is hollow. When someone stands on the edge of the Grand Canyon and shouts "hello", it comes back as "hello, -o, -o, -o". When we look at the Conservatives' motions, they talk about a first, second, third, fifth carbon tax. It is an echo, and it is hollow.

The Conservatives started with the first one. The first one was the real carbon tax. They fell on it like rabid animals. They did not know that it did not apply to Quebec. I guess they did not have the expertise. Mistakes happen. They began to backpedal. In politics, it can be hard to admit to being wrong. In time, they came to the conclusion that it was true that it did not apply to Quebec, so there would have to be a second carbon tax.

That was when they invented the second carbon tax, referring to the clean fuel regulations. Then they realized that Quebec already had its own regulations, that its regulations were already in effect, and that the federal regulations were for 2030. Nevertheless, they began saying that the price of gas would jump by 13¢ or 14¢ a litre. The price of gas did go up. Then they said that people would no longer be able to afford turkeys, so Thanksgiving would be ruined. The price of gas has dropped 20¢ since then. It even dropped on Thanksgiving. The Conservative leader and the members from Quebec were not there to say so, so the price went down. They looked silly, but they are resilient. We like them, really. They are resilient. Conservatives are tough.

They figured there must be a third carbon tax coming down the pike. To hear the Conservatives talk, when I buy a piece of furniture at Ikea, it must have been made in Alberta. Everything comes from Alberta. It is transportation, it is this, it is that, only now we have the figures for inflation. Now they are interested. They talk about it all the time. Inflation is one point higher in Quebec than in Alberta, but the federal carbon tax hurts Albertans more than anyone else.

Business of Supply

Then they decided that they needed to come up with a fourth one. The fourth one was a good one. It did not last long, because we took care of it. We are onto them now. We have become experts at nipping this in the bud. The member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles is the Conservative envoy to Quebec, a future minister if ever there were one. He is the opposition leader's Louis XIV in Quebec. He is the king. He told the House that it is true that Quebec has its own emissions permit system, but it is the federal government's fault that the cost of the permits has gone up in Quebec. We want to table a document to prove that this is not true, but he is opposing that. The member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, the Quebec lieutenant, thinks there is a correlation. To him, there are more drownings in the summer because of ice-cream sales; the two go hand in hand. That is how it works, in his mind. We explained to him that emissions permits in Quebec are issued under a government order that predates the federal carbon tax. It is a government order. It was done with California, which is 10 times bigger than we are. It is consistent with our goal of reducing our emissions by 37.5% below 1990 levels. The biggest factor driving the price of permits is demand from California.

It is not that I do not like Canada, but Californians could not care less about the federal government. It is the least of their problems. They buy permits, and that has an effect on the price. That is where things stand now. The next step, the sixth carbon tax, will be a world economic forum for Freemasons.

• (1140)

That is where things stand now. We are on the fifth or sixth carbon tax. I have lost track. I am not sure what number carbon tax we are up to. Now the carbon tax is no longer an environmental plan, but a tax plan. Incidentally, the translation is bad because the French version of the motion uses “mesure fiscale”, or tax measure, but the English one uses “tax plan”. “Tax measure” sounds milder in Quebec, whereas a “tax plan” sounds like something worth ranting about.

The Conservatives are saying that the carbon tax is a tax plan. That is what the motion says. The Conservatives seem to have forgotten about the “environmental” part of environmental taxation. That is understandable because they do not see any connection between the economy and the environment, innovation, the development of new technologies and collective prosperity. The Conservatives only understand the connection between two things: extraction and extraction. They can understand that one equals one. That is easy.

However, the Conservatives think taxation has no place in an environmental plan, except when they find themselves in a situation where they need tax credits for their buddies in Alberta. That, Quebeckers pay for. When the time comes for a carbon capture tax credit, when businesses need a tax credit from us, suddenly taxation is important. However, that is not a tax plan, no matter how much they rant and rave that it is.

When the conversation turns to a clean technology tax credit, when the Conservatives tell us that they would like Quebeckers' taxes to be used to fund small nuclear reactors so that we can stop using gas to process oil sands and instead take that gas, pump it through new pipelines to the port in British Columbia that is near-

ing completion, and then sell that gas, all with the support of taxation, they do not see that as a tax plan at all.

When it comes to tax credits for dirty hydrogen, which plan is it? All of a sudden, they see a connection between the environment and taxation.

However, when it comes to acknowledging the science that clearly links emissions reductions with carbon pricing in other provinces, when it comes to the system we have in Quebec, which uses very robust empirical evaluations, when it comes to the regime in British Columbia, when we know that trading emissions permits with Europe and the United States works, when it is time to acknowledge the science, the Conservatives absolutely never agree.

They say it is a tax plan. These are Conservatives who supposedly have faith in the market. The people on the right say the market works. The market sets a price, and people react to that price, until the environment is involved, that is. Then, suddenly, economics 101 goes by the board.

What do the Conservatives support time after time, especially the ones from Quebec whom we never see talking about this? Maybe it is because they are too embarrassed. Maybe it is because they are working on the eighth, ninth or tenth carbon tax, working ahead so they can give us all of them at once. What they support is a plan to help oil companies by taxing Quebeckers. As I have said, they are compulsive taxers.

We are talking \$83 billion in subsidies for Alberta oil companies, paid for by Quebeckers through their taxes. Meanwhile, we have people waiting in hospital hallways and we are asking for way less than that in health transfers, but where are the Quebec Conservatives? They are nowhere to be seen. They are hiding. We do not see them.

Immigration and taking care of irregular migrants has cost Quebec \$470 million, and the feds are supposed to cover that, yet they say they are going to give Quebec a mere \$100 million and will not be paying Quebec's debt. None of the Quebec Conservatives are standing up because no expense is too great for oil companies, but any expense is too great when it comes to taking care of Quebeckers.

The Quebec Conservatives all think that they are going to become ministers. I do not know what they will be ministers of, and I would not want to be the one who has to make those decisions, but I will say that Quebeckers will have to pay dearly for those members' cabinet seats. The Conservatives have already started to abandon Quebeckers. They are good at that. I want to remind the House of a deadline that is coming up, when we will have to explain our platforms to Quebeckers and justify our actions to them. The Bloc Québécois will be able to say that we have been completely trustworthy.

• (1145)

Quebeckers are going to listen to what I just said about the Conservatives because they are a lot smarter than the members on this side of the House think.

Business of Supply

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member when he said that Canadians as a whole are smarter than what the Conservatives are giving them credit for. In fact, what we are seeing is a great con job by the Conservative Party on the issue of its so-called “first priority”, that being getting rid of the carbon tax.

The type of misinformation that is out there is quite significant. One of them is tying the price on carbon to inflation. Interestingly enough, when the issue was brought up with the Bank of Canada, Governor Macklem indicated, when referring to the carbon tax, that the “contribution that's making to inflation one year to the next is relatively small. If you want me to put a number on it, it's in the range of 0.15 per cent, so quite small.” That is incredible.

If we listen to the Conservatives' spin, one would think that it is the driving force of inflation in Canada. I wonder if the member would attempt to dispel that particular untruth that is being spread by the Conservative Party of Canada.

• (1150)

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader is obsessed with the carbon tax. I would not dare to speculate on how many times a day he thinks about it. He even blames the carbon tax for inflation.

Now, it is true that studies have been done. The Parliamentary Budget Officer and the Bank of Canada have concluded that the carbon tax had very little effect.

There are other factors in Quebec that are driving up prices, such as the housing crisis. During question period yesterday, the Liberals were bragging about having paid Quebec so much money, saying that they had matched Quebec's investment. We had to fight for the money that Ottawa owed Quebec. No housing has been built for years. Negotiations dragged on. When it comes to housing, the Liberals refuse to give Quebec City any money. They would rather squabble and see the Liberal logo in front of construction sites. It has an impact.

I realize that the parliamentary secretary wants us to turn on the Conservatives and criticize them. Sooner or later, the Liberals will have to admit that they, too, have made mistakes and that they, too, often underestimate Quebecers' intelligence by saying that they are building housing.

As far as immigration targets are concerned, Quebec wants to be consulted. The Minister of Immigration is literally telling us that Ottawa is not an ATM, as though Quebecers are no more than freeloaders who are not paying their fair share into the federal treasury. The parliamentary secretary can criticize the Conservatives if he wants to, but I think that the Liberal government has lot to account for too. I think he should reflect carefully on that.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am going to try to ask another question in French.

Quebeckers are fortunate to be able to rely on an electrical grid powered primarily by hydroelectricity. Can my colleague explain

his vision of a more equitable carbon pricing system for Canadians across the country?

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to seem like I am sidestepping the question, but that is none of our concern. The federal carbon tax is none of our concern. The taxation of carbon in the other provinces is none of our concern. It does not apply in Quebec.

Quebec decided to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 37.5% below 1990 levels by 2030. It came up with the means and found partners to achieve its goal. Some Canadian provinces were initially involved, but they left this system. They did not want to participate, and now they are stuck with the federal government meddling in their own affairs.

In Quebec, we are proud of this system because we do not have to deal with these issues. We have a system that reflects who we are, that is based on the quantity of emissions instead of on the price. It is consistent with the way we produce our electricity and how we heat our buildings. I will let the nine other provinces deal with their own problems.

[English]

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Timmins—James Bay.

Canadians across the country are feeling the squeeze. After years of successive Conservative and Liberal governments, Canadians are left with being priced out of home ownership. They are skipping meals to save money. They are unable to afford to pay for their home heating and unable to afford their medication. At the same time, they are witnessing extreme weather events: flooding, droughts and record-breaking heat waves.

However, the Liberal government continues to delay, downplay the crises and disappoint Canadians. We are living in an affordability crisis and a climate crisis, and it seems like the government is comfortable just sticking its head in the sand.

While the Conservatives love to talk about affordability, the truth is that they want to cut the services Canadians depend on. They have no plan when it comes to tackling the climate crisis. Conservative members refuse to actually acknowledge the impacts of the climate crisis. They are not sure whether the climate crisis is real. Their party's national governing body is made up of about 50% lobbyists from the corporations that are gouging Canadians, in big oil and gas, big pharma and real estate development. These are the wealthy people who profit at the expense of everyday Canadians.

Business of Supply

We have had this debate in the House several times, and every time, Conservative members are showing Canadians that they think big oil should get away with polluting in obscene amounts. The Conservatives believe that megacorporations should be able to pollute and have Canadians pick up the tab. Corporations like Imperial Oil feel they can operate with impunity. They do not feel they have any responsibility to Canadians to keep the environment healthy. I urge my Conservative colleagues to listen to the first nations and Métis people in northern Alberta, who have been shouting from the rooftops for decades that corporations like Imperial Oil have no regard for human health, the environment or the future of our planet.

Every summer, crops are failing because conditions are too dry and too hot, or because there is flooding. Food cannot grow effectively in these conditions. Do my Conservative colleagues not understand the connection between the climate crisis and the cost of groceries, or are they willing to ignore this reality? Having no plan is not an option.

On the other hand, the Liberal government is also failing Canadians. While Canadians are struggling with the cost of living, the Liberals have refused to implement a windfall profit tax on the record-breaking profits of the oil and gas industry. The Liberals keep giving huge handouts to oil and gas giants to fund false climate solutions like carbon capture and storage. Now it has come out that the Trans Mountain pipeline has cost taxpayers \$35 billion. That is \$35 billion that increases oil and gas pollution, increases our national debt and operates at a loss. This is \$35 billion that could have gone into green infrastructure, renewable energy and home retrofitting. It is \$35 billion that could have gone into sustainable jobs and supporting communities impacted by the climate crisis.

It is bewildering to me that when there is the opportunity for creating high-quality union jobs in the clean energy sector, the government continues to pour money into supporting the corporations that are making record-breaking profits, all while wildfires rage and ravage our forests every summer.

We need to take real climate action. Currently, buildings are the third-highest source of emissions in Canada, so retrofitting buildings is essential if we want to achieve our climate targets. It is essential if we want to achieve net zero, and it is essential if we want to make life more affordable for Canadians.

If the government can make taxpayers pay for a \$35-billion pipeline, surely it can afford to fix and expand the greener homes program. Surely it can provide heat pumps for Canadians who need them, not only to heat their homes but also to cool them when we are having record-breaking heat waves that take the lives of hundreds of British Columbians.

We are also living in a cost of living crisis. Tackling the climate crisis can actually make life more affordable for Canadians. In fact, there are so many ways the government can help Canadians save money and fight the climate crisis at the same time.

● (1155)

Unlike the Conservatives and the Liberals, New Democrats have a plan to tackle the climate crisis and the affordability crisis. Last fall, the NDP presented a motion to make heat pumps free for low- and middle-income Canadians, as well as to take the GST off all

forms of home heating. Instead of providing Canadians with real solutions to fight the climate crisis and the affordability crisis by voting with the NDP, the Liberals and the Conservatives teamed up to vote our motion down.

Heat pumps are such an easy solution for making home heating more efficient. They use up less energy, reduce electricity and heating bills, and will play an important role in decarbonizing buildings. They also save lives in heat domes. An average family would save \$700 to \$1,900 per year if they were supported to switch to a heat pump, but the current government grants for heat pumps are difficult to apply for, require folks to pay up front and wait months to get their money back, and are inaccessible for so many, especially low-income Canadians. Instead of fixing these problems for this very popular program, the Liberals have decided to cut funding.

There are simple, cost-effective solutions out there. Renewable energy and installing heat pumps will make the cost of electricity cheaper, but the Liberals and Conservatives show time and time again that they are not looking out for the best interests of Canadians; they are looking out for the best interests of CEOs of oil and gas companies. These parties show their true colours and will always take the side of corporate elites and billionaires over everyday Canadians.

Canadians are tired of watching the government fail to take action when we are living through a cost of living crisis and a climate crisis. People should not have to choose between a party with no plan and a party that continues to drag its feet.

New Democrats have a plan to tackle the climate crisis and the affordability crisis, and we will keep fighting for everyday Canadians.

● (1200)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in many ways, I think it is important for us to look at the contrast on the table today in regard to what the Conservative Party of Canada continues to propose, and which will no doubt become a major election platform. It is determined to get rid of a price on pollution. That policy is in contrast with what other opposition parties are saying and what the government is saying. The amount of misinformation that the Conservative Party is spreading through social media and in other ways is, I believe, to the detriment of sound policy.

Could the member provide her thoughts on the damage caused by the misinformation that is out there today about the price on pollution?

Business of Supply

Ms. Laurel Collins: Mr. Speaker, I think the misinformation is incredibly concerning. The Conservatives have come to British Columbia, my home province, with a campaign to axe the tax. The federal carbon tax does not apply in British Columbia. British Columbia has its own carbon tax that was put in by a small-c conservative premier years ago, yet this Conservative caucus and its leader seem shameless in promoting this kind of misinformation.

Canadians also do not realize that the current carbon pricing system that the government has put in place really allows big corporations to pay a small fraction of the carbon price. Suncor pays 1/14th of what Canadians pay. This is appalling. We need to fix the loopholes in the output-based pricing system that let big corporations off the hook.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know that the member is part of a party whose members are always up on their feet talking about unaffordability and the way that Canadians are struggling. However, does she not realize that the carbon tax is part of the problem, because farmers are being taxed, as are the shipping of food, the processing of food, grocery stores, and people's heating bills? This is part of the affordability problem.

Other G7 countries have just decided to cut taxes because they know that will help people. Does she not see that this is the right approach and that we should axe the tax?

Ms. Laurel Collins: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the Conservatives continue to ignore the fact that what is causing the increases in the cost of food and in so many costs along our supply chain is the climate crisis. The climate crisis has a huge impact on farmers. When I speak to farmers, they talk about the droughts, heat waves and flooding, and how these impact the work they do. Experts have been very clear about what disproportionately impacts food prices in Canada.

Why does the Conservative Party still have no plan to tackle the climate crisis?

The member also raised the issue of other countries. Because other countries are also seeing the need to implement carbon pricing, the borders are soon going to have carbon adjustments. If we do not have a real plan, we will be paying higher prices.

• (1205)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that last answer was very good.

I often say the same thing because I come from a very agricultural riding. Many people assume that farmers are polluters, but that is completely false. If anyone can understand or if anyone is experiencing the effects of climate change, it is farmers.

To come back to the member's speech, I agreed with many of the points that she made and with the main idea of her speech, but I want to ask her a question. In the Liberal government's last two budgets, there were at least six tax credits that will give billions more dollars in gifts to the oil and gas industry. I would like to know why the member voted in favour of those budgets.

[*English*]

Ms. Laurel Collins: Mr. Speaker, I agree wholeheartedly. Farmers understand the climate crisis, are speaking out and are also doing incredible work to combat the climate crisis at the same time.

With respect to his question about the fact that the Liberal government continues to hand out billions of dollars to carbon capture and storage and to other false climate solutions, it is shameful that we have a government that seems more interested in taking care of the rich oil and gas CEOs than everyday Canadians. This is part of the reason I am part of the New Democrat Party, which is pushing the government to do better.

Without our pushing the government, it would not have implemented dental care to support millions of Canadians. It would not have implemented a sustainable jobs act. It would not be doing the things that actually help everyday Canadians and fight the climate crisis. We will keep pushing the government because it seems unwilling to do it on its own.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured, as always, to rise in this House. I have been here 20 years, and I have never seen a time when I feel that our country and our planet are at risk as much as they are now. This is a time when people should be looking to parliamentarians to come together to deal with solutions. Instead, we are dealing with yet another Conservative motion, which shows that the Conservative Party leader's entire economic plan could fit on a lapel button.

I think what is missing in the discussion today is the fact that we are in the midst of a global crisis. Europe is worried that it could be dealing with a massive expansion of a potential war with Putin. There is the need for Canada to be a strong ally. Contrary to what the member who lives at Stornoway says, Ukraine is not some far-away land, as he quotes Neville Chamberlain, but it is the front line in the fight for democracy. This is something we should be coming together on.

We are seeing a mass humanitarian disaster unfolding in Gaza, with Canada cutting off supplies at a time when people are facing starvation. This is a humanitarian disaster that Canadians could step up for. Instead, we are siding with Benjamin Netanyahu. We are dealing with the fact that every hour 30 million tonnes of ice melt from the Greenland ice floes; that is 30 million tonnes an hour. Last year, 200,000 Canadians were forced out of their homes because of climate fires, yet the Conservative leader flew into the fire zones to brag that he would make burning fossil fuels free.

Business of Supply

The Liberals do not really have an environmental plan. That is something we should be arguing; they do not. However, the Conservatives refuse to put forward a climate plan, other than to let the planet burn. That is the sum total of what I have heard from the Conservatives for the last three years: let the planet burn. At a time when our young people are facing a future that is increasingly unstable, we are left with yet another dismal debate in the House of Commons on slogans and bumper-sticker excuses.

When Kelowna was facing a potential catastrophic disaster with fires, the member for Kelowna—Lake Country was bragging that if her party formed the government, it would make fossil fuel burning free. In Alberta, when I was there last week, there was just a little powder of snow on the ground in January. It is above freezing now. It is now coming into the fourth year of a serious drought.

There are 13 counties in Alberta that have declared environmental disasters because they cannot get their crops out. In 2021, the cattle farmers were talking about how only 36% of their crops were in good condition; that was in 2021. They made it through that year by getting the holdover pay from 2020.

Now, coming into 2024 with no snow on the ground, we are seeing rivers drying up, and not a single Conservative from Alberta or Saskatchewan has ever bothered to stand up to defend their farmers in the face of the biggest climate crisis since the dirty thirties. They would throw them under the bus to satisfy their leader, who lives in a 19-room mansion, because it is about letting the planet burn.

The Conservatives from British Columbia will get up and falsely try to mislead their own citizens that they are paying a federal carbon tax when there is not one. Not a single Conservative from British Columbia has dared to stand up in the House to talk about the fact that the rising hydro prices in B.C. are from the depleted reservoirs from the droughts. British Columbia, a hydro superpower, had to import 20% of its energy capacity last year because it could not keep the lights on because of the droughts and the low reservoirs. That is the effect of the climate crisis.

We are dealing with real-time planetary breakdown of the disappearance of the ice shelves and of unprecedented fires, where much of last summer, across from Chicago and across North America, children could not go outside without getting sick. What did we hear from the Conservatives? Let the planet burn.

• (1210)

In all my years, there were times we came together on simple things, like jobs. However, that is not in the Conservative agenda because the Conservatives tell people that Canada is broken, even though we were voted number one in the world. If Canada is not broken, the Conservatives will make it broken.

Bill C-49 is a bill so that Canada could get in the game with the clean energy projects that are taking off in the United States, right now. Since 2021, under the Biden administration, \$360 billion in clean energy projects got off the ground, and they are not getting off the ground here for two reasons. While the Liberals are trying to get their tax credits and work it all out, Biden is getting that money out the door. We are also seeing the Conservatives blocking sustainable jobs legislation and doing every kind of monkey-wrenching, idiotic stunt to stop workers from having a seat at the table.

Even more astounding is Bill C-49 where the Newfoundland and Labrador premier and the Nova Scotia premier have called for Ottawa to come to the table because the United States is moving ahead so rapidly on offshore wind development that would set up projects for construction and long-term jobs in the hundreds of thousands of homes that are getting clean energy. However, the Conservatives from Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia are determined to block jobs because that is what their leaders said: Make Canada broken. If it is not broken, they are going to break it. Their plan is to let the planet burn.

Here is the thing. The Premier of Nova Scotia said that Bill C-49 is the necessary first step in unlocking our energy potential, yet the member for Cumberland—Colchester, a guy who has just been elected for two or three years, is announcing that he is going to oppose offshore development and jobs in Nova Scotia. The member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame said that he thought the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador had been hoodwinked and that the premier was not bright enough to negotiate good construction and permanent jobs in Newfoundland and Labrador. There was a time when we all would have worked to get those jobs off the ground because we know sustainability in every part of Canada is important. However, these are clean-energy jobs, and that is something that the leader of the Conservative Party does not want to have happen, because his environmental plan is to let the planet burn.

The Conservatives talk about affordability. It was the Conservatives who led the fight against taking the HST off home heating. This is not about making it easier for people; it is about making people angrier. That is his one plan.

However, what really concerns me now is that we are in the midst of a climate catastrophe that is unfolding in real time, and we need to bring our plans to the table. We need to debate them. We need to find out how Canada can, number one, get in the clean-energy market that is taking off in China, in Europe and in the United States while we are sitting at the side of the road. Even more, there is the need to reassure this young generation that we will have their backs in trying to address the catastrophic collapse of the ice shelves and the unimaginable burning that we saw last year. We still have fires burning in northern Alberta today. That is unprecedented. The northern boreal forest burned at an unprecedented rate. What do we hear from the Conservatives? They do not have an environmental plan. They have a bumper-sticker slogan and if people push them hard, it is “let the planet burn”.

Business of Supply

I did not come here to tell my kids and their next generation of kids, “Guess what. We let the planet burn because it was easy.” Yes, it is easy to let the planet burn and, yes, it is going to be hard to make sure that we stand up for our kids. Yes, it is going to be hard to stand up to Putin. Yes, it is going to be hard to come together, but we need to do that as a nation right now. This is a nation that will be judged on the absolute failure to put forward a plan in the midst of the biggest existential crisis the human race has faced, and it needs something better than a bumper sticker and a toxic lapel-pin slogan.

• (1215)

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, when I was listening to the member from Timmins, Ontario, speak about the floods and fires that happened in Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, I could not help but remember the Order Paper question I received this week, which outlined that the government came to my riding on multiple occasions and said that it was giving billions of dollars to help rebuild British Columbia and to help rebuild the climate infrastructure we need for the future. Barely a penny of it has arrived.

Just this week, the Sumas River is on flood warning again. Just this week, we are about to have another flood. The government could have fixed that, but it cannot because the NDP backs up everything this irresponsible, slogan government does. My community is suffering because it is not taking action on the very things it talks about day in and day out.

When will the money for the DFAA to fix British Columbia actually be allocated to the communities that need it the most?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, we finally see someone from British Columbia stand up and actually speak for his community that is facing a climate disaster.

What have we heard? We have heard “get that tax off”, “let us burn the planet” and “all the people in British Columbia who are not paying a federal carbon tax, we have to get them all stoked”.

I would like to say to the member that, yes, he is ground zero in the climate catastrophe, and his leader's response is to let them burn. He has done nothing. Does that member have a climate plan? No, he does not. He has a bumper-sticker slogan and some toxic little lapel pin that says, “Let them burn”. That is their only response. They are leaving their people behind. We will stand up.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, at the beginning of the member's comments, he made reference to Ukraine. I want to pick up on that point because it is somewhat profound.

We had the President of Ukraine come to Canada last year. We have a trade agreement, which has the support of Liberals, the New Democrats, the Bloc and, as I understand, the Green Party, too.

For the Conservative Party, one of the red herrings, the reason Conservatives say they do not support it is due to the fact that there is a reference to a carbon tax or a price on pollution. We then find out that Ukraine actually has had a price on pollution since 2011.

I am wondering if he could provide his thoughts in regard to the degree to which the Conservative Party is prepared to go in order to have the bumper sticker he is talking about.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I would interpret it slightly differently. What we have seen online is the far right is a Putin troll machine. We see that Tucker Carlson, a white supremacist who is a Putin propaganda puppet, was vetted and treated by the great leader, the great visionary of the Conservative movement, Danielle Smith. Then, the leader of the Conservative Party gets up and quotes Neville Chamberlain, of all people, about Ukraine.

As for the leader of the Conservative Party, his defence critic and his foreign affairs critic, I watched them stand up and vote against Operation Unifier.

They are sending a message to Putin and to Europe that the Conservative Party is against us standing the gaff with Ukraine. They are willing to let President Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian people fall to Putin, because they said they do not like the carbon tax. How on God's earth can one go into the—

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will take the liberty of asking my colleague, the member for Timmins—James Bay, who is also my neighbour, about a climate change issue that directly affects his riding, as well as mine. I am talking about the forest fires we have seen happening.

He talked about this when he discussed the impact on farmers. The carbon tax has a very small impact, we agree on that. However, I am wondering how we can actually help our farmers. I would have liked to hear more about that today. There are problems caused by drought, which I am sure has been an issue in his riding, as it has in mine. There is also the winter freeze, which must have affected his riding, since it affected our region. This has an impact on hay and all the other seedlings that are failing to grow. The AgriStability and AgriInvest programs have not been rolled out in our region.

What were the consequences for the member's riding? Has the federal government stepped up to help the farmers he represents?

I would like to hear my colleague's comments on this.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, it was very important to set up a plan to address the climate crisis in the Far North. The massive fires were an unprecedented disaster in our region. In the James Bay area, many huge fires affected indigenous communities. The federal government did not have a plan and provided no support. Canadians and Quebeckers need us to address the climate crisis to protect the future of our region.

*Business of Supply**[English]*

Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, unfortunately, we are in a cost of living crisis. Inflation, tax hikes and rising prices are emptying people's pockets. Seniors' pensions are quickly losing their purchasing power. People are drowning in debt and barely staying afloat. What has the Prime Minister done? He has thrown them an anvil with this heartless plan to hike the carbon tax once again on April 1.

I should mention that I will be sharing my time with the great member for Peterborough—Kawartha.

Families and seniors are struggling to put food on the table. Everybody who goes to a grocery store knows exactly what I am talking about, and there is simply no end in sight. The latest food price report is deeply troubling. It shows that food costs will continue to climb, with the prices of meat and vegetables being the highest.

We only have to look at the skyrocketing numbers of people visiting food banks to get a clear picture of what is happening in our great country. Almost two million people are now using a food bank at least once a month. This is not just a statistic. We are talking about our fellow Canadians, many of whom have full-time jobs, who still cannot afford groceries. The problem is that their paycheques can no longer pay the bills and feed their families. It pains me to know that parents are cutting back on healthy foods for their kids because they simply cannot afford it.

My amazing wife Cailey and I were blessed with a beautiful baby girl just a few weeks ago, and it has given me a deeper understanding of what it means to be responsible for and to care for others. My heart goes out to the families who are feeling the weight of the unpaid bills and their maxed-out credit cards. I know that moms and dads are having to make incredibly difficult decisions about how to feed their kids and how to give them the best lives possible. That should not include watering down baby formula just to be able to afford it. Even if they do that, many can still barely pay to heat their home or keep a roof over their head.

The cost to rent a place in Canada has hit another record high, going up another 8.6% in the last 12 months alone. For those looking to purchase a home, under the Prime Minister, we have now become a country where millions, particularly young people, will forever be shut out of the housing market. This is so disappointing to millions of Canadians. In the province of Manitoba, the average price of a home shot up 6.7% in the last three months alone. To make matters worse, the number of homes on the market plummeted 71% in the last couple of months, and the total properties sold is down 35%.

The one thing about the Liberal government that boggles my mind is that it always blames its communications for why people do not like its policies. In interview after interview, Liberal MPs say that, if they just found better words to explain their carbon tax, they could convince families living off their lines of credit that they are actually better off. If they could just hire a new wordsmith in the Prime Minister's Office, preferably one who does not use incredibly crude language on Twitter, they would figure out a better way to gaslight Canadians. At this rate, it will not be too long until there is a ministry of truth, where war is peace, ignorance is strength and the carbon tax is good for people's wallets.

When the carbon tax is applied to almost every aspect of our economy, it does not matter how many millions of tax dollars are spent on fancy commercials promoting it, people will still not buy it. Of course, the latest plan is to rebrand the Liberals' climate change incentive payments. This rebranding exercise explains a lot about how the government thinks and responds to issues. It is not about getting results or solving problems. Liberals think their words and wonderful symbolism will somehow fix people's problems.

The Liberal insiders and their consultant buddies are not going to like this, but I can save the government some time, effort and money that will be spent on rebranding the carbon tax. It will not work, so do not do it. Stop it. It is time to axe the tax.

It is a tax plan. It drives up the price of everything. It contributes to inflation, and it is making life harder for families to make ends meet. It does not matter what we call it. People cannot afford it. Families cannot pay their rent or mortgages using Liberal talking points. Houses do not get built at the photo ops of announcements, and press conferences threatening tax hikes on our grocery stores has not reduced food prices one bit.

• (1225)

I get that governing is difficult, and when one is out of ideas and out of touch, it gets a lot harder, so maybe it is time for that carbon tax election the Prime Minister clearly wants so badly. Everyone knows the hardships being caused by the ever-increasing carbon tax. Even the Prime Minister acknowledged that fact when, under heavy political pressure from his Atlantic Canadian members of Parliament, he gave one group of Canadians a carbon tax exemption. To quell his internal caucus revolt, he gave 3% of Canadians a temporary carbon tax exemption on their heating bills, lasting just past the next election to hopefully get their votes, but he left 97% of Canadians out in the cold.

The one lesson we did learn from the Prime Minister is that he has no shame in giving special treatment to one group of Canadians he thinks might vote for him. Here is my advice to the Prime Minister: Give all Canadians the same deal. Stop dividing Canadians. Stop pitting one region against one another and stop picking winners and losers. Heating one's home in this country is not a luxury. It is a necessity.

Business of Supply

Not only should the Prime Minister exempt all home heating for all Canadians, but he should immediately cancel the upcoming tax hike on April 1.

I represent a rural riding made up of small towns and small cities, and the reality is that people must drive long distances to get where they are going. It seems like every hockey game or baseball game we play is about an hour away, each way. This is part of our way of life and our quality of life, and it is how we live our lives.

Some folks commute to the next town over for work. They could be commuting 50, 60, 80 or 100 kilometres each way to work to put food on the table and a roof over the head for their families.

Portage—Lisgar is not unique in this sense, and many of my colleagues on this side of the House represent rural constituencies. What we all have in common is that there are no LRTs. There are no subways and no busses to take us from one town to the next. There are no bike lanes on our highways, and even if there were, it would not be very pleasant riding for six months on snow-packed roads with cold, wintery weather.

While the Minister of Finance can proudly claim she does need to own a car in her constituency, in my riding, we do not have a limo service that can shuttle us around from town to town.

A good example of how widely out of touch the Liberal government has become is how it has mishandled Bill C-234. Almost every single Liberal MP, including the Minister of Agriculture, voted against this common-sense legislation. The bill would have finally exempted farmers from the carbon tax on drying their grain or heating and cooling their livestock barns.

As someone who grew up on a farm, has worked for farmers and now represents the voices of farmers, I find it a bit rich when I hear Liberal and NDP MPs who have never stepped onto farm have the audacity to tell farmers they should just be quiet, shut up and take the carbon tax. It is offensive to farmers, and I am not surprised at how angry they are with this tax, but now they are going to have to brace for the upcoming increase on April 1, too.

Where does that leave the rest of my constituents, who live and work and play on the land? As it stands, the carbon tax is about \$65 a tonne, and for every litre of gas they put in their car or truck, they are paying 14¢ a litre more. If someone is one of the countless people who drives a pickup truck and has a 90-litre gas tank, that is close to \$12.60 every time one fills it up. The average rural person who is driving a pickup truck is paying at least \$360 a year more in carbon taxes. That does not include the carbon tax on their home heating or that is baked into the cost of everything they buy in their day-to-day lives. Imagine when that \$65 a tonne will go up to \$170 a tonne in just six years.

In closing, I would urge Liberal MPs across the way to stand up for their constituents who cannot afford to pay their bills and put food on their tables. I urge them to vote in favour of the Conservative motion to scrap the carbon tax by April 1 to stop the unnecessary suffering people in this country are facing right now. I urge them to be honest with themselves and acknowledge the last thing people can afford right now is another tax.

It is time to axe the tax. It is time to build the homes. It is time to fix the budget, and it is time to stop the crime. To my colleagues across the way, they should give their constituents hope that their MP will stop making their lives more unaffordable because it is never too late to do the right thing.

• (1230)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is interesting how Conservative members stand in their places and have no problems whatsoever giving misinformation. Let me give an example. The member talked about inflation and tried to give the false impression that inflation is being caused by a carbon tax, even though a majority of the constituents I represent will get more back in the carbon rebate than they will pay in carbon tax. That is a fact.

The Bank of Canada has been very clear that the impact of the carbon tax, as the Conservatives call it, is less than 1%. It is 0.15% on inflation. When one listens to the Conservatives, one would think it is an 8% increase. It is ridiculous the type of false information the Conservative Party is giving to Canadians. Why do they do it?

Mr. Branden Leslie: Madam Speaker, I agree that the government's policies are ridiculous.

I think it is important to highlight that the carbon tax is not the only thing driving inflation in this country. I agree. There are a whole host of terrible Liberal government policies that are driving up the cost of living. The fact is that we have foreign investment fleeing this country, a number of businesses are closing in this country, and the number of businesses starting in this country is lowering.

The holistic view of the government is what we should be looking at. It is not just the carbon tax—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, with respect to the principle of not intentionally misleading the House, the member said that foreign investment is fleeing the country, yet Canada is number one—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is a point of debate, and I would rather we leave that for the discussion.

The hon. member for Portage—Lisgar.

Mr. Branden Leslie: Madam Speaker, I would say that, while the member may have convinced his constituents that they are better off, my constituents have the common sense to know that this country so badly needs to know that it is getting ripped off with this tax plan, which is doing nothing for the environment. It is time to bring home—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Continuing with questions and comments, the hon. member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou has the floor.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to clarify a few things for the member.

First, they keep talking about the carbon tax, so apparently we have not said this enough, but there is no carbon tax in Quebec.

Second, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, fuel charge proceeds go to households and provincial governments in return for increased program spending. They have zero impact on balancing the budget.

Third, the Conservatives talk about the carbon tax and only the carbon tax. We are not getting anywhere. We are constantly going backward. This is 2024. They do not have an environmental vision or a transition plan. We are talking about forest fires and floods. My region has had both. They want to abolish abortion rights. They do not talk about economic realities. None—

• (1235)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the hon. member for Portage—Lisgar a chance to respond.

[English]

Mr. Branden Leslie: Madam Speaker, yes, there is a carbon tax in Quebec, called the clean fuel regulations, and it is adding extra costs to Quebeckers and people right across this country.

I mentioned during my speech how the other parties love to divide and distract, but I can tell members that, when I and many of my colleagues are back in our ridings talking to our constituents, they are talking about the fact that they cannot afford food for their children, that their mortgages have doubled or that they are being evicted because of the policies and inflationary spending of the government. They are mad, and rightfully so.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, that was an interesting speech from the member. I would like to congratulate him on the birth of a child. I think that is an important thing.

First of all, I want to say how much I love rain. I am lucky to like rain because I live in a rain forest. Right now, in my riding, we are in a moderate to severe drought across that area. At the same time, we are seeing extreme storms and rain in our area that are washing away so much because we do not have the normal amount of water being absorbed into the land. We are seeing forest fires in my area, and we have never seen that before.

Therefore, I feel so confused that Conservatives continue to mislead, especially British Columbians, who do not pay any federal pricing, that somehow their plan is going to work. Can the member tell us what their environmental plan is?

Mr. Branden Leslie: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the kind wishes on the birth of my daughter.

As a farm kid, I am well aware because we have been dealing with a number of droughts and floods for decades, but obviously there is some concern regarding the frequency of those. That is why I think it is important that we rely on technology and not taxes. I

will use the case of agriculture as an example, in which we can use genetic improvements to improve drought and moisture resistance.

The reality is that punishing Canadians with this punitive carbon tax is not going to do anything to stop the pollution coming out of major economies such as China and India, which are a bigger cause of this. Driving Canadians into poverty is not going to help—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Peterborough—Kawartha has the floor.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a true honour to rise in the House of Commons and speak on behalf of the folks of Peterborough—Kawartha.

Today, it is a real honour, because we get to present our opposition motion, a common-sense opposition motion that would make life more affordable for Canadians, and I will read it into the record for folks at home. It reads:

That, given that the carbon tax has proven to be a tax plan, not an environmental plan, the House call on the Liberal government to cancel the April 1, 2024, carbon tax increase.

Just so folks at home know, that planned tax increase on April 1 by the Liberal Prime Minister is 23%. Now, I do not know who they are speaking with, but I do not know anyone right now who can afford that, and that is the reality of it. People are really struggling after eight years of this Prime Minister, and it is a sad reality.

How does the carbon tax contribute to the cost of living? I will share the story of Jen Wight, this amazing, charismatic woman who may not be so young but looks young. She has freckles, and she is just this dynamic woman who is talented.

Eight years ago, Jen started her business, Emily Mae's Cookies & Sweets. Her grandma gave her her recipes, and she is so talented and community-minded. In fact, for those who are watching, they should follow this woman on all social media. They will love it and not regret it. If there is a television producer watching, please pick this woman up and give her a show.

I saw Jen just before Christmas, and she looked more desperate than I had ever seen her look in my life. She is not a dramatic person by any means, but she said, "Michelle, the carbon tax is crippling me," and she kept talking about butter. Members can imagine how critical butter is to someone running a bakery and making cookies. She would buy upwards of 40 pounds of butter a week. She said, "Michelle, when I started my business eight years ago, butter was \$2.49. Today, you can expect to pay upwards of \$10 for a pound of butter." In most communities, it is about \$7.49; \$10 is on the extreme end, but today it is about \$7.49, which is a 200% increase.

Shortly after the new year, I was scrolling through social media, and Jen had made a post on Emily Mae's Cookies. She said, "This is the hardest thing I have ever had to do in my life. I have to close down my business." I asked her if I could come and talk to her. She is just so polite, and it is hard for her to get political. People do not want to get political. They like to be congenial and get along with people, but the reality is that every single thing comes back to politics; everything comes back to policy.

Today, in the House, I heard a Liberal member say that the carbon tax is so minuscule that it does not matter. From \$2.49 to \$7.49 for butter is just a couple of bucks. However, it is cents that add up to dollars. Butter was the demise of this woman's heart and soul, and it is so simple. It is a household item that everyone should be able to afford. That is the reality of the carbon tax, and I challenge that Liberal member who thinks it is so minuscule and does not understand it to go and speak with Jen and to go to the farmer who has to pay the extra carbon tax to heat his farm, pay the extra carbon tax to feed the cows the grain and pay the extra carbon tax to ship the milk to the trucker. The trucker then is going to ship the milk to the factory where they make the butter, where they will have to pay extra carbon tax to heat the building to make the butter, and then to the trucker who has to ship it from the factory that makes the butter to the grocery store. It is really common sense that this is going to be catastrophic for people.

Jade phoned me this week, and she said, "Michelle, I'm a single mom with two kids. I've worked really, really hard. I make \$62,500 a year, and for the first time in my life, bill collectors are calling me."

• (1240)

Politically, I do not even understand how the Liberals and NDP can stand here today and say they want to increase the carbon tax. Nobody wants that, not the premiers of this country and not constituents. It is actually political suicide as well. It makes no sense.

I want to read these into the record. I asked folks to send me their heating bills.

Michelle, I am just sending a snapshot of our Enbridge bill that contains the carbon tax. This is for a family of three in a brick bungalow approximately 1,000 square feet, heated by natural gas.

The gas supply charge is \$38.96; the federal carbon charge, \$39.15, and wait: There is a tax on the tax. They can expect to pay \$20.38 in HST.

Hello, Michelle. I am a resident of Ennismore and a widow who is trying her best to make ends meet since my husband's passing. Yesterday I received my gas bill. I was shocked to see the total carbon tax applied to my bill. This is absolutely criminal!

The federal carbon charge is \$104.33; the gas supply charge is \$106.42, and the tax on the tax, let us not forget that, is \$49.59.

Michelle, if the federal government wants to charge us the carbon tax, it should be on the gas used, not other fees like delivery or transportation. It's like charging someone the carbon tax on buying a coffee in the gas station on the same bill. I used \$28 in gas [and] the carbon price is \$28. Sounds like a 100% tax to me.

It should be removed. I'm for supporting the reduction of carbon but alternatives are too expensive to implement. We're all struggling to get by. And this isn't helping. Food or heat, right?

This one has the federal carbon charge, \$94.91; gas supply charge, \$101.27; and HST, \$53.28.

Business of Supply

Every member in this House should be asking their constituents to do the same thing. We were elected to create policy to help Canadians. This is genuinely hurting them. Full stop. There have been members of the opposite party, and good for them for having the courage to stand up. I am looking at one right now who says that this does not work. I thank him. He lives in Newfoundland and Labrador. He knows. He clearly listens to his constituents.

Not one emissions target has been met. What is wild is that there are commonalities between us in this House, and for them to sit and say that the Conservatives want the planet to burn, what? The ideology and the belief system in this place is so deep that I cannot even believe it.

The Conservatives have put forward a four-pronged approach in this session. We do have the solutions. The reality is that life was not this hard before this Prime Minister and it does not have to be this hard after him. It is going to be a lot of work to get out of this; I understand that. There are incredible people with incredible ideas that really truly innovate and are going to revolutionize our world, but carbon tax is not it. We need to axe the tax. We need to build more houses. We need to fix the budget. We need to stop crime.

The first piece of that, axing the tax, is the simplest and most common-sense thing to do. Everybody who is watching at home is so frustrated by this place. I want them to know that we are, too. They ask what we are doing. We are in opposition, and the NDP and the Liberals signed a coalition, which they call a supply agreement. They can call it whatever they want, tomaty-to-mahto, but the reality is they are going to work together for a majority.

However, Conservatives know that the majority of people watching at home do not want this tax. We know that. We will not stop. We will continue to fight for this. I urge every member to do the right thing and vote for this motion to axe the tax.

• (1245)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, how things change for a bumper sticker. In 2021, the member who just spoke actually campaigned on an election platform that had a price on pollution. There are actually 19 members who not only campaigned on it in 2021 but also campaigned on it in 2008. There are 19 Conservative members, including the leader of the Conservative Party. How things have changed.

As other countries in Europe are accepting the need for a price on pollution, and even many American states, places south of Canada, we recognize that the environment matters.

Business of Supply

Why is the Conservative Party today, that far right MAGA party, in so much disagreement in recognizing that climate issues need to be addressed? When will the Conservative Party come out with a climate—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Peterborough—Kawartha has the floor.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, I think what the member opposite is talking about is listening, gathering data and, as a real leader would do, recognizing when something they are doing does not work. That is actually what we are asking the Liberals to do today. Instead of doubling down on something that they just believe is great, we are saying the data is in and the carbon tax is not helping anyone. It is not an environmental plan. There have been no targets met. A true leader listens, pivots and changes according to the needs of the people they are elected to serve. That is exactly what leadership is, and that is exactly not what the Liberals are doing.

• (1250)

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, at the beginning of her speech, the member read the motion. I would like to do the same. The motion reads as follows:

That, given that the carbon tax has proven to be a tax plan, not an environmental plan, the House call on the Liberal government to cancel the...carbon tax increase.

I would suggest to the member that the tax credits being offered to oil companies for carbon capture are also more of a tax measure than an environmental measure. I just want to know, in the interest of consistency, if the member is also proposing to abolish the tax credits for carbon capture.

[English]

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, the reality is that we have to axe the tax. People and Canadians are taxed into oblivion. Those bills I read into the record are asinine. We are being taxed on a tax. I go back to the butter. If we take away anything, it is the butter effect. It is melting away businesses and families. When butter goes from \$2.49 to \$7.49 in eight years, that is catastrophic. It is the one example of how the carbon tax does not work. We must get rid of the tax.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I care about the price of butter. I am a cook, and I admit that I tend to go the Julia Child route: If there is more butter in the recipe, it never hurt anybody.

I know the price of butter has gone really sky-high, but I just googled to check. The price of butter in both Canada and the U.S., in both countries, has increased dramatically.

There is a reason, which I have dug into a bit because I was prompted.

I wish Emily Mae's Cookies the very best. I double-checked, and we are not related. Her name is spelled "Mae" and I am "May". Anyway, I wish her the best, but the price of butter in Canada and the U.S., where they do not have a carbon price, has gone sky-high.

The explanation, when we look for it, is that the heat waves through the summer meant that cows produced less milk at the

same time that consumer demand for dairy products like ice cream, because it was hot, went sky-high, so we ended up having a double whammy for dairy producers.

I am meeting with dairy producers next week. I can ask them about it, but the price of butter in the U.S. ranges in U.S. dollars from \$2.92 a pound to \$8.76 a pound, which converts to Canadian dollars from \$3.92 a pound to \$11.57—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the hon. member for Peterborough—Kawartha a few seconds to answer.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, I think if people have any conversation with these dairy farmers, they will say, without a doubt, that this carbon tax is crippling them. That is across the board. Bill C-234 is about that. That is what I would push back on. I would—

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

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

I am standing here to speak against this motion. It is a motion that is so based on ideology. It would do great harm to Canadians. A carbon tax is regarded by a majority of economists and policy researchers to be the most simple and powerful tool to limit carbon dioxide emissions. It is based on a premise that the polluter pays, which is the basis for most of our just systems, that people who do harm pay for that harm. It taxes polluters.

A price on pollution is not a new idea. Norway initiated a carbon tax in 1991, taxing 80% of all its fuel emissions. In fact, since then, its fuel consumption and greenhouse gases emissions have gone down by 25%. Sweden and other Scandinavian countries did this in 1997. In 1991, Sweden brought in a \$177 Canadian per tonne carbon tax. That is six times what we pay now in Canada. Other countries like Denmark and Finland all initiated carbon taxes in 1991. Their greenhouse gas emissions have fallen considerably and their economies and jobs have improved and increased.

I do not want to just talk about other countries globally. I want to talk about our own backyard. I want to talk about my province of British Columbia and the fact that it initiated a carbon tax in 2007. Since then, greenhouse gas emissions have gone down by 15%, and it has not harmed the economy. In fact, the British Columbia economy is one of the most vibrant in all of Canada. After seven years of having a carbon tax, B.C.'s GDP increased by 12.4%.

During the 2008 recession, when the Conservatives were in government, B.C. outperformed the Canadian average, increasing its GDP by 12.4%. In fact, it is now one of the lowest GHG emitters in Canada. It is now thriving in its economy and moving upward.

It has created 123,000 new jobs in the green tech sector. Those jobs are paying an average of \$90,000 per capita. That is pretty good money. It is attracting a lot of young people to British Columbia to work in green tech. At the moment, it has attracted 300 new companies from around the world to invest in British Columbia. Why? Because of the premise of a carbon tax, which is a federal premise that is revenue-neutral that goes back in rebates. The rebates and the revenue neutrality has given British Columbia the ability to lower taxes on some economies and industries; the ability to lower personal income taxes; and the ability to pass on money to low and middle-income Canadians, who get back more money than they pay in their fuel consumption tax.

What it is finding is that because of a low commercial and personal income taxes, 300 companies have invested in British Columbia.

British Columbia has also invested in green technology, which is what the federal government is doing as well, which has created new, well-paying jobs. Lower and middle-income people, farmers and businesses benefit from that low tax rate and from rebates. They help families, businesses and farmers.

• (1255)

I know that the World Bank and the United Nations have cited British Columbia as having the best tax in the world and is a model to follow. However, I know that party does not think well of the World Bank and would like to leave the United Nations. I hear that this is one of its plans. Therefore, I am going to cite somebody else whom the Conservatives might find more credible, which is the OECD. It says that the B.C. carbon tax is a “textbook” example of how to get it right.

Let us balance that with what the tax is doing, how it is helping people and what it has done to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with what the Senate committee said in its report called “Treading Water: The impact of and response to the 2021 British Columbia floods”.

What is the cost of doing nothing? What is the cost of climate change to us? Apparently, climate-change damage cost every Canadian \$700 each year because of the money spent to remediate the problems we had with the fires and floods. In fact, we have had wildfires now for six years in British Columbia and two of those wildfires cost \$720 million in insured losses last year, making it the most costly insured extreme-weather event the province has ever seen.

Over the past 50 years, the costs of storms, floods and wildfires in Canada have risen from tens of millions of dollars to billions of dollars annually. Who pays that? Who helps out? It is the federal government. Therefore, that is costing us money. It is billions of dollars. In fact, in 2019 and 2010, the insured losses for catastrophic events were over \$18 billion. With respect to the health costs, in Ontario alone, the health costs were shown to be \$770 million last year because of the fires in Ontario.

In British Columbia, when the floods occurred, the farmers, whom the Conservative Party says it cares about, lost millions and millions of dollars in farmland and in livestock, and the government had to help them. Both the B.C. and federal governments had

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to put money in to help these farmers out of their problems. A thousand farms in British Columbia were impacted in the floods last year, 15,000 hectares of land and \$2.5 million in livestock in one flood.

The Province of B.C. is still trying to calculate the loss of tourism due to the fires. I am not hearing anything from the Conservatives about what they would do about the extreme costs that governments have to bear and all the problems we face when we do this.

Professor Tombe, an economist and public policy professor at the University of Calgary, said that if we were to axe the tax, as we have been hearing repeatedly from those people, it would benefit the highest-income bracket in Canada and be hardest on a “large fraction of low- and middle-income” families, and businesses.

I want to end by quoting Mark Twain. He said, “Never let the [facts stand] in the way of a good story” or, in this case, a good bumper sticker. Let us talk about facts, and I brought facts to the table. Let us do away with the ideology, really do the math and clearly see that B.C. is the best example in the world as to what a carbon tax can do.

• (1300)

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will bring facts to the table. BCBC is a very reputable industry representative and it has been very concerned about where CleanBC is going. I will get to my question, but this is from BCBC's article, entitled “BCBC warns CleanBC will lead to ‘serious job losses’ on path to 2030”. The article states, “That data suggested that B.C.’s economy would be \$28.1 billion smaller in 2030 due to the impact of CleanBC policies.”

The member across the way swears that everything is going to be grand in B.C. Our economy is going to contract by almost \$30 billion because of policies like this. Could the member please explain that?

Hon. Hedy Fry: Madam Speaker, I think I said it all in my speech, but I will reiterate it. BC Stats and Statistics Canada say that the B.C. economy rose by 12.4% when other economies in Canada were going down. They said that 300 new companies, since the tax took effect, are now moving into B.C. to work in green technology. We are looking at about 130,000 new jobs in B.C. and about \$90,000 per capita.

I have no idea what the member is talking about. The statistics prove it.

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[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, I found some aspects of my colleague's speech really interesting. She has done a great deal of research on this to justify the carbon tax, and I commend her for that. However, I would like to hear her thoughts on the following fact. In the last two federal budgets, the government introduced six tax credits that will total \$83 billion by 2035. These tax credits are primarily intended for oil companies.

What does she think of that? Is that okay? Should that money not be invested somewhere else? She was talking about climate change. Should investments not target climate action?

• (1305)

[English]

Hon. Hedy Fry: Madam Speaker, it is very clear that we do not just have a price on pollution. As we can clearly see, we are investing in green technologies across the country. In Quebec, B.C. and across the country, we are helping to build new industries. We are giving them start-up funds, we are moving them forward and they are growing extremely well. That is one of the things we are doing.

At the same time, some of that money has to go to paying the costs. I just read the amounts out from the Senate report. The costs of fires and floods, the damage to farmers and livestock and the damage to families have to be reimbursed somehow. There is a cost of not having a carbon tax. There is a cost of climate change.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to reiterate that I agree with much of what was said around the impacts and costs of the climate crisis being experienced by people across the country and in my home province of British Columbia.

One thing I noted was when the member talked about how if we use it, we should pay for it. I have one observation that contradicts that. Suncor, with carbon loopholes, paid one-fourteenth of what it should have paid last year in taxes. In fact, Canada's five biggest oil and gas companies had \$38 billion in combined profits last year at the expense of Canadians. This is why my NDP colleagues have been calling on big oil to pay what it owes.

I am wondering what the member can share around why the Liberals are continuing to protect the profits of big corporations instead of finally calling out big oil and gas to pay what they owe.

Hon. Hedy Fry: Madam Speaker, I do not think the Liberals are doing that anymore. They have moved to stop helping oil and gas companies. When I talked about British Columbia, one of the things that happened was that fuel usage went down by 16%, so it is not using as much fuel. We are investing in electric cars. Across the country, there is a whole highway that allows for the use of electric cars. We are putting money into the electric car industry and we are bringing down all the causes of pollution at the same time.

It is not a one-shot deal. We cannot just poke at one thing. There are multiple factors that go into changing greenhouse emissions. It is something that this government is addressing. It is something that the British Columbian government addressed.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this most esteemed House and to see many of my colleagues here this afternoon.

On this opposition day, and in reference to the opposition motion, I have much to say. First off, as I stated yesterday in the House, the IMF has put out its economic forecasts for the year, for 2024-25. With our economic policies in 2024, we will be the top quartile for economic growth in the G7 and, for 2025, we will actually lead the G7 in the economic growth rate, in real GDP.

As a very competitive person, whether it is through sports, working on Bay Street or Wall Street, or in all my experiences, I like to win. When we compete globally, with our economy, we need to win. Canada is winning.

Through the many economic policies and pillars that we have put forward, we will continue to win. We will continue to grow a strong economy from the middle out and from the bottom up, not from the top down. We will grow an economy that works for all Canadians, with inclusive economic growth.

It is February 1. February is my favourite month in many ways, although I prefer summer over winter. We know that, as of today, the Canadian dental program is going to be hitting another milestone. Seniors aged 72 to 76 in this country will be able to enrol in the Canadian dental program. Amazingly, 400,000 seniors had already signed up. Now we will get several hundred thousand more signing up.

This will deliver real savings to seniors, both in the riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge and across this country. It is a very exciting thing that we are implementing, the way that it is being implemented, with the provider, Sun Life, working with the Canadian Dental Association. Day in and day out, Canadians expect us to do this: to work for them, strengthen our economy, make sure life is affordable and deal with the issues at hand.

Another issue I would like to raise is that I was really happy to see that the European Union has reached a unanimous agreement to provide Ukraine, the brave Ukrainian people fighting for freedom and democracy, with a €50-billion package as they fight against the tyranny of Russia, the unjustified invasion by Russia into Ukraine's sovereignty.

I would hope that, when this House again addresses the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement, the opposition party stands with the brave Ukrainian soldiers and the brave Ukrainian people, who are fighting for their freedom and democracy. This would be much like what our allies, our friends and our NATO partners in the European Union are doing. It would be a real shame if the Conservative Party of Canada voted against the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement.

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Another measure that we have introduced is the first home savings account. Over 500,000 Canadians have opened an account. This combines the great features of a TFSA and an RRSP. Making a contribution is tax deductible. It grows tax-free. When one pulls it out to buy one's first home in the years down the road, the withdrawals are tax-free. Again, this is another major measure that we have put in place.

I could talk about the Canada child benefit, which has lifted hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty. I could talk about two middle-class income tax cuts that are literally providing nearly \$10 billion of annual tax savings to Canadians.

I could talk about a national early learning and child care plan. By September 2025, here in the province of Ontario, on average, day care fees will be \$10 per day. My family is quite blessed in many ways, and our little one, Leia, goes to day care. The annual amount a family was paying at Leia's day care went from nearly \$1,600 to \$1,700 a month to, now, just a couple hundred bucks. This is in after-tax funds, so we can think about the before-tax calculation. Those are real savings.

• (1310)

This is in collaboration with the Province of Ontario. Ontario's minister of education, who is my neighbour and a good friend, touts this plan and how great it is probably every other day. That is what Canadians expect.

When I turn to pure economic policy, we have a AAA credit rating, of course. We have the lowest deficit-to-GDP ratio. We will have the strongest economic growth. What does that translate into for Canadians? It means strong and real wage growth, strong incomes and strong job growth. This is where we are going. We are going to the economy of tomorrow, and it is happening today. This is what we need to embrace.

This is what climate change is pushing countries to do. It is leading countries to do this, not only here in Canada but also in the United States. Countries like China, Australia and the European Union are all going in that direction. When one thinks about climate change, one thinks about artificial intelligence. Canada is a leader. We are leading and will continue to do so.

We have a great country filled with over 40 million wonderful people; every morning, whether in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge or across the country, these folks get up and want the best for their families and their kids. They want to make sure we keep this country on a track where inclusivity and economic growth are paramount, where every child has an opportunity to succeed and put the best foot forward in life.

The following is with regard to the motion and so forth.

[*Translation*]

Yes, I am pleased to take part in today's debate. My opposition colleagues want us to once again make it free to pollute in Canada. I wonder, though, how allowing people to pollute without cost would really make life more affordable for Canadians.

[*English*]

How are we helping Canadians? With the carbon rebate, we know that eight out of 10 Canadians are better off. We know that businesses continue to grow and 84% of the electricity generated in Canada is carbon-free. We know we are putting forward investment tax credits that will boost economic growth and generate clean electricity.

I see some of my colleagues here from the east coast on the opposite side. There is Bill C-49 for such measures, which the Premier of Nova Scotia and the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador want to see put into law, that would generate economic activity. As I have said many times in this place, I love capitalism, growth and wealth creation. That is how one lifts all boats. I love free trade. Canada is a signatory to so many trade agreements.

Up to a point in time, members opposite were in favour of free trade agreements, such as CETA, CUSMA and CPTPP. Now the world is dealing with climate change. In reality, I am not sure most of the members opposite believe in climate change or even in science anymore, unfortunately. Vaccines for polio and measles—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

• (1315)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I hear some heckling on the other side.

Vaccines are required, and kids get them when they go to school. This is much like what we needed to do to fight COVID.

This is where we are at today; this is the debate, so let us have a debate. We put forward a plan to fight climate change, as well as many measures in this House that are leading us in the right direction. We see the investments in the auto sector here in Ontario, such as the one announced by the Premier of Ontario and the Prime Minister in St. Thomas, a Conservative member's riding, with the Conservative MP cheering on this massive investment. However, the official opposition does not comment.

It is the same thing with Bill C-49, so let us have a debate.

In terms of putting a price on carbon, when one has an externality, one needs to internalize it and put a cost on it. We need to do that in a way that moves the economy forward and makes life more affordable for Canadians. This is exactly what leadership means.

I look forward to answering some questions from the opposite side. It is always a pleasure to rise in this House. I want to wish the residents back home a wonderful day. To my wife and my three daughters, daddy will see them tomorrow night and we will have dinner together.

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Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, my question for the hon. member is simple and straightforward. All indications tell us that the carbon tax is not working, and it is not reducing emissions. That is a very fundamental reason to scrap the tax and axe it.

Does he believe the carbon tax is working?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, it is really nice to see the hon. member for Edmonton Manning. He is a gentleman, and I consider him a dear friend in this House.

I will say this: When we put forward a full plan to fight climate change, whether it is with innovation or putting a price on carbon, the parts are all interlinked. They all work together to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We are leading the way with strong economic policies and internalizing the cost of an externality, according to Coase's theorem, if I go back to my graduate days in economics at university. That is exactly what we are doing. That is exactly what we will continue to do.

It is always great to see the hon. member for Edmonton Manning.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, we know full well that the Liberal government and the Conservatives get along just fine when it comes to doling out billions of dollars and tax breaks to Canadian oil companies. We know that the Minister of the Environment said that this government had abolished subsidies when in fact they never were abolished. The government nationalized the Trans Mountain pipeline, which has cost \$30.9 billion to expand. Most of that cost will be passed on to taxpayers.

I would like the member to explain to me what the government is going to do to improve the environment and the cost of living.

• (1320)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, first, let me say that I support the oil sector across the country.

[*English*]

I fully support the energy sector here in Canada and the over 800,000 workers who work in the sector. They are and will continue to be a crucial part of our economy as the experts of oil and gas, natural gas and so forth. The usage of these fuels will be critical for our economy for years to come, as the world adopts new sources of energy and electricity. It is very important.

On the affordability front, the \$10 day care and other benefits for Canadians, such as the child care benefit, are long-lasting measures that are going to be in place well after all of us have gone on to retirement in some shape or form. They will continue to benefit Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I had an important question, but then I got caught up, when the member was talking about how much he loved capitalism, in reflecting on the fact that we are here talking about solutions around the climate crisis. It is a little concerning to me that, when we are talking about a system that focuses on growth and profit at the expense of everything else, we are continuing to pro-

mote the reproduction of the system that is creating the climate crisis that we are in. I could go down a whole rabbit hole on that one.

I wanted to ask about the greener homes grant. My colleague was talking about the emissions coming from residential buildings. Will there be further investment into the greener homes grant? What will be happening to ensure accessibility of this funding? We know that there were huge issues with people being unable to access the funds. Having to pay ahead, for example, is a barrier for people living on low incomes.

Can you please tell me what the Liberals are committed to when ensuring that everybody has access—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will not be able to tell the hon. member anything.

The hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I thank the member from Vancouver Island for their question.

As we know in this world that we live in, and from economic history and world history, capitalism works. It has lifted billions of people out of poverty and raised standards of living for people across this world on any measure. We know it is a system we are blessed to have. Communism, socialism and all the other forms people want to think and talk about have failed; look at other countries. I do not need to say more.

On the greener homes grant, it is imperative, as a government, that we continue to support Canadians, particularly low- and middle-income Canadians and folks who are on heating sources such as oil. I remember growing up in Prince Rupert, British Columbia. My grandmother's house had an oil tank in the back. We got rid of it in the 1970s and 1980s, but we need to get rid of them all and put heat pumps in and—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to resume debate.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague, the member for Kootenay—Columbia, which is such a pleasure. British Columbia will always have a dear spot in my heart because I lived there myself.

On behalf of the great people of Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame who have entrusted me to come here and bring their thoughts to this place, I stand today to beg the Liberal-NDP coalition to not increase the carbon tax by 23% on April 1.

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After eight long years of the Liberal government, people of Newfoundland and Labrador are tired. They say it has gone past its expiry date. People are hurting; they have had enough, yet the Prime Minister jets off to the Caribbean and has an \$89,000 vacation passed on to him for free by one of his rich friends. However, that is not the sad part. While he is taxing Canadians with the carbon tax to slow us down on our burning of fossil fuels, in one week he puts 100 tonnes of emissions into the atmosphere, while the average Canadian puts out just 15 tonnes of emissions per year.

People are hurting. The inflationary carbon tax hits the farmers who grow the food, the truckers who truck the food, the grocers who sell the food and the consumers who simply drive to the grocery store to buy the food. This is why the Conservative Party put forward Bill C-234, which would take the tax off farmers who grow the food.

We have heard some rhetoric from the NDP-Liberal coalition. My hon. colleague for St. John's South—Mount Pearl, with his famous words last year, said he was sick and tired of people's talking about a cold winter and what they are doing. Then there is my colleague, the member for Avalon, who sometimes does not know whether he is coming or going when it comes to the carbon tax. We will see, I guess, where he stands on Monday. We hope that he does not just turn into a quicker flipper-flopper-upper and that he hangs in there and supports his constituents. I know where I stand; I stand with the people.

Last week, the CBC interviewed me and wanted some comments about the statement from my colleague, the member for Avalon, about the desire for a leadership review. I told them that I understood the member's frustration after seeing his leader being involved in the Aga Khan scandal, SNC Lavalin and the WE scandal. After all, his leader is the son of the guy who brought home the Constitution. It is unbelievable to see the Prime Minister continuously working against the Constitution, which his dad was so proud of. For example, there was the unconstitutional use of the Emergencies Act, the single-use plastics ban, the oil and gas emissions cap, the unconstitutional Bill C-69, the environmental impact assessment bill. Now we are being faced with Bill C-49 in committee, which references, 73 times, the unconstitutional Bill C-69.

The Liberals want to stop the production of oil off Newfoundland and Labrador, and in fact in all of Canada. They want to tax us and surrender the production of our clean, environmentally soundly produced oil with good labour standards and turn that production over to dictators with bad human rights records who produce dirty oil, under no environmental regulations for the most part.

If the NDP-Liberal coalition wanted to do something about cutting world emissions, it would be turning its attention to coal. In 2023, coal usage in the world set a record. Next year, it is going to go to new record heights.

• (1325)

Meanwhile, Canadians are being punished with a carbon tax. Coal produces 40% of the world's emissions. Natural gas produces half of the emissions coal does. The Chancellor of Germany came last year, begging us to supply Germany with liquefied natural gas to get it off dictator Putin's natural gas and to support the people of Ukraine. The Prime Minister said there was no business case for

producing liquefied natural gas on Canada's east coast. Newfoundland and Labrador is the closest point to Europe in North America. We have trillions of cubic feet of natural gas sitting there, being reinjected, which we could bring ashore—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Can I interrupt the hon. member, please? There is a lot of noise in the courtyard.

The hon. member.

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, what is Germany doing right now? It is building three new ports to take liquefied natural gas, predominantly from the U.S., which last year exported 90 million tonnes of liquefied natural gas.

Newfoundland and Labrador is half the distance to Europe as the Gulf of Mexico is. Is that not something? Another country, Argentina, is right now building a \$10-billion LNG production facility. There is nowhere in the world farther from Europe than Argentina is. Maybe the South Pole is.

People might ask what the big deal is. Why can we not produce more liquefied natural gas, and use technology, not taxes, to get the world's emissions down? We do not understand it. It is mind boggling for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatchewan and Alberta, and for all those across this great country of Canada who understand the dilemma the world is facing. However, we have a big part of the solution right here in Canada. We can export to China and to Japan from British Columbia, which is the closest point in North America to Asia.

The big question is how, on Monday, the member for Labrador, the member for Long Range Mountains, the member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, the member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl and the member for St. John's East will vote. I think I know how the member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl will vote.

About the member for Avalon, I am not so sure. I see him over there contemplating, and I think he is going to vote with us. He is a great fellow; all in all, I really have a soft spot in my heart for him, but we are taking bets on the member for Avalon. In the last two votes, one time he voted for axing the tax and the next time he voted against it. What will it be this time? I do not know. It is 50/50, and two out of three is not bad. I know he is listening. *Two Out of Three Ain't Bad* is a famous song by Meat Loaf. We will see how he goes.

I will tell the House one thing for sure: I am going to vote to stop the tax increase on April 1. There is another thing that is certain: When Conservatives are elected, we will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. Let us bring it home.

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• (1330)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we just witnessed the four bumper stickers in the last five seconds of the member's comments.

It is interesting that he makes reference to flip-flopping. If we want to talk about a fish out of water, we can take a look at what the Conservative Party's approach has been with the price on pollution, as it has flip-flopped over the last number of years, dating all the way back to 2008, when 19 Conservative MPs who still sit in the House, including the leader of the Conservative Party, said they supported a price on pollution. However, that does not comply with the need for the bumper sticker, I guess.

A question for the member is this: Why is the Conservative Party being so selective in what it is telling Canadians, when there is a carbon rebate that more than compensates for the so-called carbon tax for more than 80% of the constituents I represent and in fact for 80% of Canadians as a whole? Why is the Conservative Party manipulating Canadians?

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, the member stands here constantly flapping his gums and contradicting the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who said that 60% of Canadians are going to be worse off. The government has had eight years and is putting a carbon tax on Canadians with no results.

Our message is straight: We are going to axe the tax, and bring it home.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague from Newfoundland for his passion. I serve with him on the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. We heard a very strong plea in favour of oil and oil-related prosperity.

Apparently, we need to stop putting a price on carbon. We need to invest in oil and create greenhouse gases. That will give us plenty of money to clean up the mess caused by climate change, so that is great. I would like my colleague to tell me what his arguments will be when people become victims of climate change. More and more people are becoming victims of climate change right now.

What do the Conservatives have to say to the people of Baie-Saint-Paul who are still waiting to find out whether their homes can be salvaged after the flooding this summer?

Climate change is going to continue to happen. What does my colleague have to say to the victims? Will the oil industry generate enough money to support all the victims of climate change?

• (1335)

[*English*]

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, in my speech I laid out pretty clearly that coal usage last year was at an all-time high. It is going to be at another high next year. A new record is going to be set in 2024 and in 2025. Therefore, while the people of la belle province are being hammered by carbon tax 2, emissions continue to skyrocket.

We want to produce natural gas and supply it to China, India and Germany, which brought back online new coal plants last year, to bring down coal emissions.

We need technology, not taxes. Let us bring it home.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, there are thousands of jobs being created offshore in the United States because of Biden's investments into clean energy.

The member said that the Premier of Newfoundland is just not very bright and has somehow been hoodwinked by the nasty Liberals because he wanted to create clean energy jobs in Newfoundland. He also said that the Premier of Nova Scotia got the wool pulled over his eyes. My family is from Nova Scotia, and they are not dummies there. However, when they want to create thousands of offshore jobs, Conservatives, including the member, have to vote against it because their only plan is to burn the planet. He is outraged that the leaders of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland are pushing for a clean energy Atlantic accord. He is going to vote against it. He is going to tell his people he is going to vote against those jobs and that his own premier is some kind of dummy for supporting jobs. I think he should look in the mirror because he has it all flipped.

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, the people of Timmins are just disgusted with their MP. They are being carbon taxed to death. The people of the member's riding have to put up with the cold and their energy bills this winter, as well as the cost of food, which is being driven by the carbon tax. They cannot stand this—

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

Mr. Rob Morrison (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Madam Speaker, right now every generation is giving up the dream, the dream of owning a home, the dream of warm holidays, the dream of a secure retirement, the dream of not living paycheque to paycheque and the dream of being able to afford heat and groceries for their family.

The actions of the Liberal-NDP coalition with this carbon tax has caused significant harm to Canadian farmers and consumers alike. The government has been making every effort to prevent farmers from receiving a carbon tax exemption for drying grain, barn heating and other farm operations, as well as hard-working Canadians from heating their homes. A carbon tax on all forms of home heating has already been voted down by the Liberal-Bloc coalition, and the Liberals and NDP still plan to quadruple the carbon tax on farmers. This increase of 23% will only lead to a further increase in the cost of food for Canadians.

Business of Supply

It is clear that taxing the farmers who grow the food, as well as the truckers who transport it, will inevitably lead to higher prices for consumers. The Liberal-NDP coalition's actions have completely left Canadians out in the cold. It is critical that steps are taken to support our farmers and ensure affordable food and heat for all Canadians.

I am not sure if the government fully understands the financial pinch that the majority of our country is in right now. Any of my constituents who can fly around on a private jet know what it costs when they see the bill. When was the last time our Prime Minister saw, read or paid a bill for private flights? I believe he is too far removed to keep this country going and feel the financial pressure that even a small percentage increase in grocery prices can bear.

Furthermore, Liberal-appointed senators voted significantly to change Bill C-234, which aims to provide relief to farmers from this carbon tax. This will only make the situation worse for farmers who are already struggling to keep up with the rising costs of production. These appointed senators gutted the bill before sending it back to the House of Commons, which means that it will have to go through further amendments before it can be passed into law. More red tape, more stopgaps, while the government fails to come up with solutions that do not just benefit themselves. We need to take action and ensure we can provide much-needed support to our farmers.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has released a report estimating that Bill C-234 will save Canadian farmers \$1 billion by 2030. This would result in a reduction of food costs for Canadian families, many of whom are currently struggling to afford groceries. The report highlights the importance of passing this bill to support the agricultural industry and improve the financial well-being of Canadians. It is concerning to me, and should be a concern to everyone, that with this report, the Liberals are still against it. I would question the motive behind not wanting to reduce financial stress on Canadian citizens.

It is time to stand up for our hard-working farmers and families. I have heard from many of my constituents in Kootenay—Columbia about the effect of the carbon tax on their everyday life. We are experiencing a 52% increase in monthly visits to the food banks and have also had reports of previous donors now becoming clients. This level of increase is something I never imagined we would be experiencing in Canada.

Theresa in Wasa has recently moved into her car due to the continuous prices increases. Alex in Cranbrook has three jobs to make ends meet for him and his wife. Richard in Creston was charged \$39.25 for his natural gas with a \$57.00 carbon tax fee, and then that tax was taxed.

Why is the Liberal-NDP government implementing a tax and also taxing that tax? It looks like another way for it to line its pockets with our constituents' money so that it can continue to overspend with its off-balance budget. The government's goal seems to be testing how hard it can push Canadians to their financial breaking point. I can tell this House that we are already there. Families are feeling the financial strain and it is spilling into all areas of their lives.

Julie, a senior, called me and said that she had a piece of toast and half an apple for breakfast. Why only half an apple? She said she saves the other half for lunch. She could not remember the last time she had eaten meat. It is critical that the government fully understands the appalling financial state it has put this country in. Our seniors have worked their younger adult lives to contribute to society and better this country, and their reward? Taxes upon taxes, and deciding which half of an apple to eat for their meal. The government's legacy is going to be its citizens choosing between heat or food to make ends meet.

● (1340)

ATCO Wood Products, a third-generation sawmill in my riding, produces wood veneer, wood chips, biomass, wood gardening supplies, posts and landscape ties. It has reported it paid \$400,000 in 2023 for carbon tax. In 2030, it will be \$1.2 million.

The family-owned and run business gives back and provides excellent resources to our community and the country. It is successful in sustainable forest management on both Crown and private lands by thorough planning and responsible practices. It is hard to fathom that the tax that was meant to be an incentive to cut emissions has now become a noose for businesses providing essential products to our citizens.

What is really interesting is the tax on the carbon tax. This year that is \$500 million, rising to \$1 billion in 2030, and a total tax grab of \$6.23 billion over the next eight years.

It is concerning to see the failure of the NDP-Liberal government in promoting Canadian LNG to the European Union. Instead, the EU had to fund Russia's war machine, which is not a sustainable solution. As a country with the most ethical leader in production energy, it is disappointing to see no action being taken. That is a missed opportunity for Canada to promote its clean energy resources on the global stage. We urge the government to take immediate action in promoting Canadian LNG to the European Union.

I am deeply concerned about the rising unaffordability in Canada, which is causing many Canadians to lose their homes and contributing to homelessness. This crisis is having a devastating impact on individuals, families and communities across this country.

Business of Supply

Further to that, the homelessness crisis is directly contributing to the ever-expanding opioid crisis, as many individuals who are homeless are turning to drugs to cope. Due to the increase of opioid users, business owners are reporting damages to their stores and property, resulting in them no longer contributing to the community in the ways they need to. We need to stop the crime. This trickle effect directly takes away from the community, since business owners are now putting money back into repairs and not into the community.

As I have mentioned, our food banks are seeing the results of this effect. This is a complex issue that requires attention from all levels of government, and the Liberal government needs to take immediate action to address the root causes of this unaffordability: overtaxing.

Conservatives believe that it is critical to support our farmers and our families by ensuring that they are not burdened with additional taxes. Adding a frivolous tax to make up for the government's budgetary mismanagement is downright shameful and it needs to stop. We need to fix the budget.

We will continue to fight for the elimination of the tax on everything, for everyone, for good. We believe Canadians should be able to keep more of their hard-earned money and not be burdened by unnecessary taxes.

We believe the red tape on the housing industry, preventing homes from being built, needs to stop. We need to fix homes.

We believe that the dream of owning a home, going on a warm holiday, having a secure retirement and not living paycheque to paycheque should not be a dream at all, it should be a reality. Overtaxing is taking away from our Canadian citizens. Our hard-working constituents should not be weighed down by the necessity of having multiple jobs or choosing heat or food.

We need to axe the tax.

● (1345)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Bank of Canada has made it very clear that the impact of the price on pollution or the carbon tax is actually having on inflation is less than 1%. It is actually .15.

Canadians have a choice. They can listen to what the independent Bank of Canada is saying the impact on inflation is, or they can listen to the Conservative propaganda and spin that is an attempt to provide misinformation and give the impression that the impact on inflation is 4% or higher because of the carbon tax.

Can the member indicate to the House what he believes? Does he believe the Bank of Canada is right, or his leader?

Mr. Rob Morrison: Madam Speaker, I believe the actual answer is .6. It is massive. I do not think the parliamentary secretary has the facts correct.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I share the concerns of the member for Kootenay—Columbia with respect to food bank lines. The fact is, though, in my community, the lowest income folks get more back in rebates than they pay in a

carbon tax, because they do not have multiple homes and multiple cars.

The carbon tax went up 2¢ a litre last year. Do members know what does not have a rebate attached to it? The gouging of oil and gas companies across the country, and the reason why gas prices have gone up 18¢ a litre. What does the member think should be done about the gouging of the oil and gas industry, if he claims to care about affordability?

Mr. Rob Morrison: Madam Speaker, the reality is that a senior called me to say she does not remember the last time she ate meat. When we talk rebates, where is the rebate in that case if she cannot afford to eat? She eats half an apple. That is absolutely unacceptable.

We need to quit taxing our citizens, especially seniors and those on limited incomes. Single-parent families are being taxed and they cannot afford to eat.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, I find it interesting that the Conservatives have started sharing their election platform this week.

I have a very specific question for my colleague. Good intentions are all well and good, but what is the cost of doing away with the carbon tax? How much less money will be in the government coffers?

[*English*]

Mr. Rob Morrison: Madam Speaker, it comes down to affordability. When the carbon tax costs a small family business \$400,000 and going up to \$1.2 million, how can we expect businesses to be successful? How do we expect our grocery stores to sell affordable products when we are taxing the farmers, the truckers and the stores? The rubber will hit the road when Conservatives remove the taxes.

● (1350)

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am a little confused about the speech by the member today, who is also from B.C., specifically because, since 2007, B.C. has created its own carbon pricing mechanism and people in British Columbia do not pay a federal carbon tax.

Could the member clarify for the House exactly what he is talking about?

Mr. Rob Morrison: Madam Speaker, how about this? If the federal government axes the carbon tax, I think the B.C. provincial government will as well, as I believe it was pressured into creating a carbon tax when it was told if it did not, the government would.

Business of Supply

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I will read a quote by the Governor of the Bank of Canada. It states, “The contribution that’s making to inflation one year to the next is relatively small. If you want me to put a number on it, it’s in the range of 0.15 per cent”. It is not 0.6% and definitely not what the Conservative Party says. That is from the Bank of Canada.

Will the member now apologize for saying it was 0.6%? It would be a bonus to hear him apologize on behalf of the leader of the Conservative Party for continuously misleading Canadians.

Mr. Rob Morrison: Madam Speaker, I would ask the member about the \$6.23 billion that is being grabbed due to the tax on the tax, the GST on the carbon tax.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are here today to talk about the opposition day motion that is being brought forward by the Conservative Party. Members know that I love to have the opportunity to speak to this and to have some good back and forth with my Conservative colleagues across the way, but I have a little work to do before I get there.

This place is always an opportunity for us to bring together Canadians of great excellence and people who are doing extraordinary stuff. The hon. member for Waterloo and I, and indeed the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, were just in the Speaker’s salon to celebrate U Sports’ top eight athletes in the country, and those athletes may be here in Ottawa. I know we have rules around highlighting those individuals in the House, so I will not flirt too closely with that, but members should perhaps be observant of where there might be some young, athletic-looking individuals here in Ottawa who do tremendous things in sport. However, the hon. member for Waterloo and I want to do two things, specifically.

We are proud of all our athletes, and as a former varsity athlete myself, I was named an Academic All-Canadian. I was told today that, on average, there are about 4,900 students out of approximately 20,000 in the country. Therefore, I am proud of that accomplishment, and I talk about it, but this is not about me. What I want to highlight is that we then take the top eight of those and celebrate them.

I am very fortunate to have a constituent of mine here today. Haley McDonald from Port Williams was an excellent basketball player in her fifth year at Acadia, and she graduated last year. She is now giving back to the community in tremendous ways, not only through volunteering her time to coach the varsity team but also through community programs. She is here in Ottawa today, and I want to make sure her name is on the record. I am very proud of her.

The second name that I agreed to say, and again, I would love to say all eight, but I do not have all the details, is Hannah Blair who is an athlete from Waterloo. She did not stray far from home. She went to the University of Waterloo to continue her education. She mastered in kinesiology, and she is a heptathlete, which means that she competes in multiple disciplines in track and field.

As I look around at the potential athletic ability of the House, there are some great people who would be good at shot put and some skinny, athletic-looking MPs who I am sure would be good in the 100 metres. There are heftier people like me who might be good

at the pole vault, or whatever. However, the beauty of a heptathlete is that they can do it all. They are the five-tool athlete in the sense of track and field. I know that Hannah is here in Ottawa, and my hon. colleague for Waterloo wanted to make sure that was put on the record, and I am happy to help her out and to assist her in that. Enough with the nice sentiment. We are very proud of athletes.

I will now talk about the opposition day motion. The motion is about the Conservative opposition proposal to pause the carbon price altogether this year. Of course, this is one of the many opposition day motions we have seen from the Conservatives about either eliminating the carbon price altogether or pausing it and doing anything they can do denigrate a policy that is actually one of the most important we have in our fight against climate change. There are a variety of policies the government has brought forward. The Conservatives love to focus on carbon pricing. In the 15 minutes I have left and after question period as well, I will talk a little about that.

I like to think I bring a certain level of credibility to this debate, because I have been both supportive of carbon pricing and calling for adjustments to the national program. I am proud to see that the government made adjustments before Christmas, which I think is going to create more equity across the country. Those are a higher rural rebate and exemptions in home heating oil, and they are making sure the policy fits for all Canadians.

I know that I have drawn the ire of my Conservative colleagues, and I look forward to a time when we are able to have that conversation. I know the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan will stick around after QP, and I cannot wait until we have that back and forth.

However, the opposition would ask: Why do we even have a carbon price? It is that climate change is real, and the science is real. We need to have policies that work to reduce GHG emissions.

● (1355)

Might I remind members in the House that 2023 was the hottest year on record? Climate change is no longer some distant challenge and something we have to work toward as a collective society; it is on our doorsteps today. We saw it this past summer, and indeed we saw it in Kings—Hants with the worst forest fires in Nova Scotia’s history and some of the worst flooding we have seen in decades. Sadly, it resulted in the deaths of four of my constituents in the terrible flooding we saw. We saw infrastructure impacted. We saw houses destroyed. This is no longer something we can just talk about as a future challenge; it is on our doorstep today. It is here. It is now. It is present.

Statements by Members

Members of Parliament in the House who want to see action in this regard also have to be realistic about how we talk about the policies. I have heard some members of Parliament, particularly in the opposition benches, ask question like these: How is a carbon price going to stop the next hurricane? How are environmental policies going to stop the next forest fire? They are not wrong to point that out, but they are missing the point that the carbon price today is not about stopping the hurricane next summer. It is about fighting for our kids and our grandkids years down the line. Therefore, it is an oversimplification where they try to suggest that environmental policy and affordability cannot go hand in hand. I look forward to talking about how we are doing just that.

Let us also recognize that there are real affordability challenges today. Many of us who sit in the House are quite privileged. We have opportunities, and perhaps the affordability crisis is not hitting our shores in the same way it is for other Canadians. We have to remember that. Most Canadians, including many of my constituents, are thinking about getting through to the next day. They are thinking about getting to next week, in terms of their paycheques and in terms of their ability to pay rent.

It is disappointing the way that the Conservative Party has positioned environmental action as contrary or somehow mutually exclusive to affordability. I do not see that as being the case. The Conservatives never talk about the fact that money is rebated to Canadians. They never talk about the fact that climate change itself has huge impacts. Whether it be insurance premiums or whether it be the way governments at all three levels have to step up and to help support and rebuild communities, it has a cost to all of us. The Conservatives never talk about the fact that there are 77 jurisdictions around the world that have a form of carbon pricing. They never talk about the fact that there is the ability to walk that line between environmental action and affordability.

I cannot wait until the next part, and I look forward to engaging with my colleagues on this matter.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[*Translation*]

FRANÇOIS TARDIF

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Madam Speaker, today, I would like to pay tribute to a great man, a great soccer coach in my region, but above all an exceptional human being with a huge heart who left us far too soon.

Everyone called him Frank. He was a man with a zest for life, a loving husband, an exceptional father, a generous friend and an outstanding soccer coach who devoted more than 40 years of his life to teaching others and sharing his passion for soccer and life. He was a pioneer and a model to us all. His passion, joie de vivre and sense of humour left a positive mark on the careers and lives of many a young athlete.

In a book on the history of soccer, François Tardif was quoted as saying, “Soccer, what a great sport! You chase after a ball, but it is so much more than that. This sport is also about living together, re-

specting others, learning to put your shoulder to the wheel; it is a way of socializing. Without teamwork, we would just be kicking a ball!”

My condolences go to his wife, Micheline, his children, Audrey and Alex, his grandchildren, his friends, and all the players he coached. Thank you, Frank.

* * *

[*English*]

STANLEY BOYD JOSEPH UPPER

Mr. Charles Sousa (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today, I rise with a heavy heart to acknowledge the passing of a valued community leader, Dr. Boyd Upper. We pay tribute to the life of a champion of many charities. Throughout his long and illustrious career, Boyd was involved in Canadian politics and contributed to key elements of national unity. In the early 1960s, Lester B. Pearson enlisted him to help plan the basis for universal public health.

Boyd also served for 30 years as president and chief medical officer for Associated Medical Services. In honour of his contributions to Canadian medicine, Queen's University created the annual Associated Medical Services/Boyd Upper Award for deserving students. As president of the Clear the Air Coalition, he also helped to develop a national air quality management system.

Above all, Boyd was a loving husband to Eva and a father to John. He was a mentor to many of us, and we are grateful for his sage advice and leadership. We thank and honour Dr. Boyd Upper for his years of dedicated service to Canada.

* * *

BLAKE SPILLER

Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Portage's very own Blake Spiller, the head coach of our Portage Terriers, who recently broke the Manitoba Junior Hockey League's record for the most regular season wins, which was previously set at 670 games. He not only smashed the league's win record but also is now one of just four MJHL coaches to have been behind the bench for over 1,000 games. As a young man, Coach Spiller played for the Terriers, and then he went on to become their assistant coach before becoming their head coach in 2006.

Coach Spiller is a role model to so many in our community and has mentored countless players throughout the years. We are so incredibly proud of his achievements, such as winning multiple MJHL championships and the Royal Bank Cup.

I also want to thank his family and the Terrier organization for supporting Coach Spiller all these years. Success would not be possible without the love and support of the entire team. Let us keep bringing home those wins, Blake.

Go Terriers, go.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past several weeks, my colleague and I have had many productive conversations with Brampton residents about the importance of keeping our community safe. This is why this government responded to the request from law enforcement agencies and municipalities to organize a summit on combatting auto theft on February 8, to define real actions and implement impactful solutions with partners in policing, government and industry across Ontario.

This week, the Minister of Public Safety made a federal investment of \$121 million to help prevent gang violence and auto theft in Ontario. This is yet another step to continue supporting law enforcement agencies on the ground, resulting in criminals behind bars and more successful operations. We are also strengthening Canada's Criminal Code, keeping repeat violent offenders in prison with Bill C-48 and supporting the—

• (1405)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît

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[*Translation*]

DONNA NICHILLO BIGRAS

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with great sorrow that I rise today to share news of the passing of Donna Nichilo Bigras, a wonderful resident of Saint-Chrysostome. Ms. Bigras was a beloved mother, wife, friend, valued community leader, force of nature and model of positivity. The luckier among us would also say that she was a generous culinary genius.

Ms. Bigras actively lobbied elected officials in the Huntingdon riding. I remember this woman of conviction for her deep respect for others, her warm personality and her absolutely remarkable dedication. Life for Ms. Bigras had its trials, but each time she emerged stronger, more loving and more radiant.

I offer my sincere condolences to her husband, Gilles, who has lost his loving companion of the past 53 years, to her daughters, Michelle, Tammy and Joanna, and to her loved ones in Quebec, Texas and Italy.

Donna, we will remember you.

* * *

[*English*]

DATA PRIVACY WEEK

Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, January 22 marked the start of Data Privacy Week, which is an important time to discuss how we can strengthen privacy and security for Canadians. Findings from a recent survey by Interac revealed that nearly eight in 10 Canadians believe their data is more exposed than ever, with six in 10 saying they lack the confidence to protect their personal information.

Statements by Members

The government is taking action here by moving forward with a framework for consumer-driven banking. This framework will eliminate the need for the dangerous practice of screen scraping, whereby consumers are forced to share their banking credentials. Not only will this give Canadians more control of their financial data; it will also keep them and their data safer.

* * *

HON. NOËL KINSELLA

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I reflect on the Hon. Dr. Noël Kinsella, 42nd Speaker of the Senate, who passed away last December.

Dr. Kinsella was a human rights advocate, scholar and parliamentarian. With his passing, New Brunswick has lost one of its greatest sons. Dr. Kinsella was renowned for his brilliance, decency and fairness. He spent 41 years as a faculty member at my alma mater, St. Thomas University.

Prime Minister Mulroney nominated Dr. Kinsella for the Senate in 1990. He was selected by Prime Minister Harper to serve as Speaker of the Senate in 2006, a role he held until his retirement in 2014.

While he is well known for his work, the love he and his wife shared was remarkable. Our hearts are with Ann.

Noël Kinsella has earned his rest. He was a champion of human rights and principled public policy, a staunch adherent to parliamentary procedure and the rule of law and a man whose quiet dignity spoke volumes.

* * *

CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week we found out the Conservatives have four priorities. One of those priorities is budget cuts. That, to me, speaks volumes. It is about the hidden Conservative agenda. When people think of that agenda, I want them to think about the vulnerability of health care. I want them to think about the vulnerability of child care. What about the dental care program?

One of the things we also found out this week is that the Conservative Party is going to cut the Canada Infrastructure Bank. That is hundreds of millions of dollars for every region of this country and taps into additional billions of dollars of other forms of investment. Building our infrastructure is building a healthier Canadian economy. It creates jobs. It creates opportunities for all Canadians.

I ask them to tell us more about their hidden agenda.

*Statements by Members***TOURISM IN HALIFAX**

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tourism is an economic anchor in Nova Scotia, and in Halifax the sector is recovering faster from COVID than expected. This is not surprising, perhaps, as we were the only Canadian city on Forbes' top 24 places to visit in 2024 list.

People want to visit us, and now, with the grand opening of the very first Marriott brand Moxy hotel in Canada, they are going to have a fabulous new option for their stays. The hotel is scattered with thoughtful accents of Halifax history and references to its present and future.

Inside, one will find decor from Pier 21, our bridges and the Port of Halifax, as well as a hidden room adorned with stained glass and pipe organ installations to invoke Trinity Anglican Church.

I want to congratulate Joe Metlege, Norman Nahas and the entire team at Moxy Halifax Downtown on their recent grand opening.

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● (1410)

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on this first day of Black History Month 2024 to honour the rich tapestry of our great nation and the contributions Black Canadians have made to the fabric of Canadian society.

From Mathieu Da Costa's pivotal role as a translator in the 1600s to when we revel in Oscar Peterson's timeless music, watch our children's hockey games and remember the innovative Colored Hockey League in Halifax, founded in 1895 and where the first slap shot was pioneered, African Canadians have made substantial contributions to Canadian society, including in academia, arts, sciences, sports, business and politics.

As we observe Black History Month, let us cherish and unite in our shared Canadian past and our common future.

* * *

HARNESS RACING

Mr. Heath MacDonald (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this upcoming weekend, Prince Edward Island will be the proud host of the prestigious 35th annual Joe O'Brien Awards. Standardbred Canada is thrilled to be returning to P.E.I., where the famous Joe O'Brien had his start, just like many other Islanders who are finalists in several harness racing categories this year.

The harness racing industry has deep roots in P.E.I. as part of our culture and community fabric. For many, it is generational. It also provides employment and economic opportunities for Canadians and rural communities across this country.

A huge thanks to organizers, volunteers and Standardbred Canada for hosting this event. I wish all finalists, particularly those with Island roots, good luck this weekend. I congratulate everyone for their contributions to this industry.

As the legendary harness racing announcer Vance Cameron has said, we will be at it and to it on P.E.I. this weekend. It is showtime.

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal-NDP government, everything in Canada feels broken. The costly coalition continues to raise the carbon tax every year, making it more difficult for Canadians to fill their cars up with gas or pay their home heating bills. Many Canadians cannot find a place to live, and those who can are struggling with rent and mortgage payments.

The debt goes up every year as the Liberals and NDP continue to mortgage our children's future by running deficits. Crime rates continue to rise because of the Liberal and NDP's catch-and-release policies toward criminals. Clearly, this Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

Whether the election comes this year or next year, a new Conservative government would axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. Those are the priorities of Canadians, and those are the priorities of our Conservative team. That is what we would do in government.

* * *

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday at the industry committee, the former CEO of the Liberals' billion-dollar green slush fund revealed that the Liberals were aware of corruption and self-dealing at the fund for years. As early as 2019, the then industry minister, Navdeep Bains, was informed that the company of the Liberal-appointed chair was receiving millions of dollars from the fund. Despite this outrageous conflict of interest, the Liberals allowed the chair to remain in charge.

This new evidence completely shreds the credibility of the current minister, who claims that the Liberals only recently learned of corruption at the fund, corruption involving the misappropriation of tens of millions of taxpayers' dollars. The minister knew about the corruption. He turned a blind eye to it, and when he got caught, he tried to cover it up. It speaks to the utter rot and corruption on the part of the Liberals. Canadians deserve so much better.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

ANNE-MARIE PHILIPPE

Hon. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to Anne-Marie Philippe, a caring woman and outstanding volunteer who dedicated her life to her community here, in Ottawa-Vanier. She left us far too soon and too suddenly in early January.

Anne-Marie Philippe was not only a familiar face in our area, she was also known for her community involvement and dedication to volunteering. She was a fixture at every community event, and the yellow Optimist Club jacket that she wore with pride made her easy to pick out of a crowd. For more than 30 years, she worked alongside her second family, generously giving her time to the Optimist Club's many community activities and contributing to Perspectives Vanier. To top it off, she channelled her contagious energy into her work with children affected by cancer through her involvement with the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario Foundation.

It has been a true honour and a gift to have known her all these years. I thank her for her volunteer work and for the tremendous difference she has made in our community.

* * *

• (1415)

[English]

KLYDE BROOX

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate Black History Month, let us honour the legacy of our recently departed brother, Klyde Broox, who ascended to our ancestors on January 20, 2024. Klyde Broox, a.k.a. Durm-1, was a beacon of literary brilliance and activism. Born in Jamaica and making Hamilton his home, Broox's journey from an award-winning dub poet to an international literary figure is a testament to the power of words to inspire change.

His accolades, including the Nathan Brissett Poetry Prize, the James Michener Fellowship and the Hamilton Arts Award, barely scratch the surface of his impact. Through works like *Poemstorm* and *My Best Friend Is White*, he challenged us to confront complex racial dynamics with honesty and empathy, and he did so by bridging divides and celebrating our shared humanity. In fact, more laudable than all of his formal accolades in life, Klyde's contribution was capturing contemporary oral Black history.

Rest in power, my brother.

[Translation]

The Speaker: Happy Black History Month.

The hon. member for Manicouagan.

* * *

BERNARD DESCÔTEAUX

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the former director of Le Devoir, Bernard Descôteaux, passed away on January 13, and people's reactions to this sad news say a lot about the kind of man he was.

Mr. Descôteaux, who worked in just about every job there is at Le Devoir, including that of parliamentary correspondent here in Ottawa, was a boss who was well-loved by everyone. He deserves much of the credit for the survival of this veritable Quebec media institution, which he successfully guided through the print media crisis.

This soft-spoken man was a powerful force who always stood up for the independence of his journalists. At a time when the winds of polarization had already begun to blow on our social debates, he remained moderate and objective. Honest, caring, calm and inclusive, this quiet nationalist's intellectual rigour and kindness made a lasting impression on everyone he met.

Our thoughts are with his family and friends, as well as his entire extended Le Devoir family, who just lost a great man.

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[English]

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government remains in denial that its punitive carbon tax causes inflation. Who says the carbon tax is inflationary? It is the Parliamentary Budget Officer; the Governor of the Bank of Canada; every farmer, manufacturer, producer, distributor and retailer in Canada; and Canadians who buy food. Maybe Canadians are just experiencing this differently. The Prime Minister is just not worth the cost.

After eight years of the Liberal-NDP government, food inflation is out of control. When we tax the farmer, food gets more expensive, yet the costly coalition keeps its head in the sand. Inflation will get worse when the Prime Minister increases the carbon tax on April Fool's.

In contrast, common-sense Conservatives brought forward a solution to address high food costs with Bill C-234, exempting farmers from the carbon tax, but Liberal-appointed senators were whipped to gut the bill.

A Conservative government would axe the tax, fix the budget, build homes and stop the crime.

* * *

STUDENT ATHLETES

Ms. Anna Gainey (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the top eight Academic All-Canadian student athletes, who were recognized last night by U Sports and the Governor General for their outstanding achievements: Madisson Lawrence, Jordan Canham, Hannah Blair, Ashton Miller-Melançon, Yoan David, Haley McDonald and Aiden Goslett.

Finally, I give a special shout-out to Emmy Fecteau, captain of the Concordia Stingers women's varsity hockey team, who call NDG's Ed Meagher Arena home. In addition to stellar grades and many athletic accolades, Emmy is active in our community, coaching girls' hockey and as the lead instructor at the Stinger hockey school.

Oral Questions

● (1420)

[Translation]

I thank Emmy for having such a positive impact on our community and for inspiring future generations of young girls to play field hockey. I congratulate her and all the student athletes. I encourage them to continue their exceptional work.

ORAL QUESTIONS*[Translation]***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, this Prime Minister is not worth the chaos.

His Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship admits that Quebec's housing and services are under intense pressure as a result of the refugee crisis. This crisis followed the Prime Minister's decision to remove visa requirements for Mexicans, increasing the number of refugee applicants from 250 to 17,000. Only 11% of them are accepted as genuine refugees.

Will the Prime Minister reverse his decision, do an about-face and restore order to our system?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you well know, this kind of decision must be taken seriously. We must first take very important diplomatic steps with Mexico. We will not be making any rushed statements in the House of Commons.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is not worth the chaos, nor is he worth the crime.

Auto theft is a federal crisis. The decision to amend the Criminal Code to release car thieves was a federal one. Mismanagement of federal ports makes it possible for thieves to send our vehicles off to terrorists and organized crime. The RCMP, which is responsible for fighting organized crime, is federal, too.

Will the Prime Minister reverse course on his mismanagement and his changes to the federal Criminal Code in order to fight the crisis he caused?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the opposition leader likes coming up with reasons to blame everyone.

I would like to set the record straight by saying that we are working with provincial partners in both Ontario and Quebec on this very important issue. We have invited provincial ministers, police forces, the manufacturing industry and insurance companies to meet with us next week. I myself had an excellent meeting with the Conservative Premier of Ontario, and we are going to do even more to tackle this problem.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, lots of meetings, lots of photo ops, lots of spending and lots of car theft, after eight years, the Prime Minister is not worth the car theft crime, which is up 300% in Toronto and 100% in Montreal. This is a federal problem. It is his mismanagement of federal ports that allows our cars to be stolen and sent abroad. His quick release of criminals on catch-and-release who steal our cars is a federal matter and it is mismanagement of our federal police force, which is responsible for organized crime.

Will the Prime Minister reverse his failures, so we can stop the car theft?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Again, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition forgets one important thing that this government did in collaboration with the provinces from coast to coast. We strengthened bail conditions to ensure that precisely the circumstance that my hon. friend continues to repeat, inaccurately, is not the case.

I was very pleased that Premier Ford thanked our government at the event yesterday for working with them constructively to put these auto thieves behind bars and do everything we can to bring an end to this unacceptable practice.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here are the facts. The Liberals brought in catch-and-release bail. They reversed part of it, but guess where catch-and-release remains in place, even after their most recent bill, car theft. Therefore, car thieves can still get catch-and-release, same day bail because of the Prime Minister's amendment to the federal Criminal Code.

Ports are federal; he mismanaged them. The RCMP is federal; he mismanaged that. The Criminal Code is federal; he brought in catch-and-release. Will he not own up to his failures and reverse these decisions so we can keep our cars?

● (1425)

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, when the Minister of Public Safety and I were with the Premier of Ontario, we announced \$121 million of funding to help with attacking crime in places like Ontario. That will help to stop this flow of what we see in terms of auto theft.

The other thing we heard from the premier, and what we have heard from the law enforcement officials who were there, is that if we want to tackle this we have to tackle organized crime. Interestingly, the Leader of the Opposition is directing his caucus to vote against anti-money laundering initiatives that are contained in the fall economic statement to address exactly that.

FINANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has accomplished something only he could do. Our central bank, which can create cash, is actually losing money. How did this happen? He forced the central bank to create \$600 billion in cash to fund his overspending over the last three years. To pay for it, the bank makes deposits into the accounts of large financial institutions. Interest rates on those deposits, of course, have gone through the roof, meaning that taxpayers are now forced to bail out those losses.

Will he admit that his incompetence now forces Canadians to pay twice: once for the inflation the money printing caused and twice to bail out the bank, which is failing?

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if the Leader of the Opposition is aware, but Canada has the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio and the lowest deficit in the G7. What we do on this side of the House is maintain prudent fiscal responsibility, while investing in Canadians, especially vulnerable Canadians.

Let us look at the Canada child benefit, let us look at \$10-a-day child care and let us look at the Canada dental benefit. On this side of the House, we actually have compassion for Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the CMHC report confirms that the housing crisis is worse than ever. The vacancy rate is the lowest it has been in 20 years. Rents are up 8%, and finding a new home in Quebec is 17% more expensive.

Why is this happening? It is because the population is growing too quickly. To be clear, immigrants are not responsible for the housing crisis. The Liberals are to blame, thanks to their out-of-touch immigration policy. They got everyone into trouble, starting with immigrants.

Will they amend their immigration policy and bring it in line with our integration capacity?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is interesting. The Bloc does not want to blame immigrants, yet they are telling us to amend our plans.

I would like to ask the Bloc members from rural ridings to go and visit the farmers in their ridings to see where they are finding workers. Would they want to reduce the number of temporary workers?

The Bloc members need to answer the question, because it is a very important one that needs an answer.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is a shortfall of 3.5 million housing units according to the CMHC. Meanwhile, the Liberals are increasing immigration levels again in 2024 and 2025. They refuse to spread out asylum seekers among the provinces to alleviate the burden on Quebec. As a result, a heartbroken asylum seeker anonymously told the Journal de Mon-

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tréal, “I’m scared because I am with my daughter. She is only nine. I do not want to end up on the street.”

When will the Liberals realize that their irresponsible policy is affecting real people?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is true that this affects real people. People should not be treated like cattle. They need to be treated with respect and compassion. It is true that we are making efforts to send asylum seekers to other provinces when they request it, but people need to be treated with respect.

That is why I announced yesterday more than \$300 million to house asylum seekers. Canada is not exempt from the historic influx facing the west.

* * *

GROCERY INDUSTRY

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers never get a break when it comes to buying groceries. Metro’s CEO, Eric La Flèche, is telling people to brace themselves because, starting today, eating is going get even more expensive.

What is the Minister of Industry doing? He tells us to keep an eye on the flyers. Then he tells us that he wants to stabilize prices that are already too high. Now he wants another inquiry. That is classic Liberal dithering. We know what the problem is. People are getting pummelled at the cash.

When will this government stand up for people instead of millionaire bosses?

• (1430)

[English]

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every day, we are going to do our work to make life more affordable for Canadians, including addressing the issue of food prices in our country.

Of course, members will recall the introduction of the grocery rebate recently, but we are also putting forward new measures to strengthen our competition laws and are launching recruitment efforts to bring more international grocery chains into Canada, which will create competition in the market place, creating better prices for families.

We are going to continue to do what we can to help people who are struggling, including implementing reforms that will help address the cost of food.

*Oral Questions***HEALTH**

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Manulife just cut a deal with Galen Weston that forces Canadians to fill their prescriptions at Loblaws. This robs patients of their choice of pharmacist and hurts local community pharmacies. Experts say that this will restrict Canadians' access to over 250 medications. This is not only anti-competitive, but once again shows Liberals putting corporate greed ahead of people's health, while the Conservatives say nothing.

Will the government protect patients and block this corporate collusion, as Quebec has done?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are deeply committed to ensuring that Canadians have access to the drugs they need for their health and well-being. We have worked hard to make hundreds of millions of dollars in savings, nearly \$300 million in savings, through bulk purchasing.

We are working with provinces and territories through our bilateral agreements to continue to find ways to improve health care across the country and to ensure that Canadians have access to the health care they need.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. The carbon tax is going to drive up food prices again on April 1, when he drives it up by 23%. What is that going to do for food prices?

The Keilstra poultry farm in Okotoks has said it is going to go from paying \$180,000 this year to \$480,000 when the carbon tax is fully quadrupled. These are hundreds of thousands of dollars in extra taxes that all get passed on to the shoppers in the grocery aisles, and the rebate does not cover any of it.

If the Prime Minister will not axe the tax, will he at least cancel his April 1 increase so food prices do not go up even further?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, families in my community do raise the cost of food as a very real concern. That is why we put forward measures like the grocery rebate. That is why we are introducing new reforms that will increase competition.

If the Conservatives would like to help, there is something the opposition leader can do. He can pick up the phone. As I am sure he knows, his chief adviser, Jenni Byrne, is actually a registered lobbyist for Loblaws in Ontario.

Before the Conservatives sling arrows at this side of the House, I would invite the opposition leader to do what we all know is one of his favourite things: take a look in the mirror.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this from a government that literally wrote a cheque on taxpayer dollars to give Loblaws millions of dollars for new fridges.

I would like to correct the record. It is not families that are raising grocery prices in stores; it is the government with its carbon tax.

The principle of the carbon tax is to make everyday things in life more expensive and more punishing. The Prime Minister does not care because he never has to deal with those costs. He does not have to pay the carbon tax on his flights or put packages of beef back on the shelf.

Will he finally have some mercy on Canadian families and axe the tax?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure members will agree with me that it is hard to accept criticism from Conservatives when the person responsible for running their campaign is getting paid on the side to lobby to government Loblaws, the giant grocery chain, which is causing families to pay so much more for groceries than they were previously.

On this side of the House, we are going to put measures on the table that are going to help families put food on the table.

The Conservatives will align themselves with big grocery chains. We are going to do everything we can to make life more affordable.

• (1435)

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Conservatives tabled a motion asking the NDP-Liberal carbon tax coalition to cancel its plans to increase the carbon tax on April 1.

After eight years, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost, and farmers' tax bills prove that. The numbers are staggering.

Prairie Gold Produce in southern Alberta is paying \$1,500 in carbon taxes every single day. That is unsustainable. It has no option but to pass that onto consumers.

Will the Prime Minister finally axe his plan to increase the carbon tax on April 1 and make food and farming more affordable?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the impacts of climate change on our agricultural sector are incredible, which is why we have put in place measures to help our farmers diminish their greenhouse gas emissions.

Let us talk about how much the farmers in the ridings of our colleagues have received: in the riding of the member for Carleton, \$2.4 million; in the riding of the member for Dufferin—Caledon, \$3.7 million; in the riding of the member for Haldimand—Norfolk, \$22 million.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the environment minister is struggling to find some positive numbers.

I will tell him the number. When the Liberals quadruple the carbon tax, it will cost Canadian farmers \$1 billion a year. That does not include the GST, also \$1 billion, that the Liberals are charging on top of the carbon tax. Higher carbon taxes and more GST will mean higher food costs for Canadians.

When two million Canadians rely on a food bank every single month, the Prime Minister is clearly not worth the cost. How many Canadians need to rely on a food bank before the Prime Minister cancels his plan to increase the carbon tax on April 1?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that Conservative members of Parliament should stop misleading Canadians.

The carbon price is a thoughtful approach that addresses climate change and affordability. Eight out of 10 Canadian families get more money back. The Leader of the Opposition's plan to address the climate issue is to take rebates—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Colleagues, some members are having great difficulty hearing the response over the furor. I ask members to allow the answer to be given, so that all members can understand what is being said.

The hon. minister, from the top.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, I would just say that the Conservative Party needs to stop misleading people.

The carbon price is an appropriate and thoughtful way to address climate change in a manner that actually addresses affordability. Eight out of 10 Canadian families get more money back. The Leader of the Conservative Party's plan to address climate change is to take rebates away from Canadian families. It is to let the planet burn. It is to actually ensure that Canada's economic competitiveness will be eroded going forward. He should be ashamed of his thoughtless policy on climate change and the Canadian economy.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what the Liberals should be ashamed of is the fact that, after eight years of this Prime Minister, food banks are stretched to the limit because too many Canadians can no longer afford to put food on the table. Things are only going to get worse on April 1 because the Prime Minister is going to further impoverish families with a new carbon tax hike. We can also count on the Bloc Québécois to support that new tax hike because the Bloc Québécois wants to drastically increase the carbon tax.

Rather than carrying out the Bloc Québécois's political will, which will punish families, will the Prime Minister give Canadians a break instead of a bill to pay on April 1?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Conservatives, we are here to support the agricultural industry in the energy transition so that it can produce the food that Canadians need while reducing its greenhouse gas emissions.

In our colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent's riding, farmers received over \$5 million to help them reduce their greenhouse gas

emissions, and farmers in the riding of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier received \$1.2 million. We gave farmers across the country \$1.5 billion.

What has the Conservative Party done? It voted against all of these measures to support the agricultural industry.

● (1440)

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will always vote against. These taxes will drive up the price of food and make it impossible for Canadians to feed themselves. They will force two million Canadians to use food banks every month. Of course we will vote against these measures.

I highly doubt the Prime Minister visited a food bank during his \$84,000 one-week trip to Jamaica. Surely he has seen how many Canadians go to food banks because they can no longer afford to put food on the table.

Will the Prime Minister cut taxes so that families do not have to cut back on the amount of food they put on the table, yes or no?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite says that he will vote against. I am going to talk about what the Conservatives voted against.

They voted against the climate action fund to support sustainable agriculture. Last month, they voted against the dairy innovation and investment fund and funding to help supply-managed dairy, poultry and egg producers. That is what they have voted against.

What do they vote for? We are not sure, but it is certainly not for farmers.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers have spent \$470 million on asylum seekers. Rather than reimbursing them, the minister is instead announcing \$100 million for temporary accommodation for future claimants.

That is fine if it means lower accommodation costs in the future, but he has yet to reimburse the costs that have been piling up since 2021. It is as though the minister has not paid his rent for two years and now he is showing up with part of his February rent, saying we are even. Most people would kick out a roommate like that pretty quick.

When will he pay Quebecers back?

Oral Questions

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we can hear the members laughing, but yesterday in the House, the leader of the Bloc Québécois compared immigrants to heat pumps. Then, during my announcement of more than \$300 million to help house refugees, he was talking about social housing. They are not taking this seriously. It is an issue that needs to be taken seriously.

We are not negotiating with the federal member for Beloeil—Chambly, the leader of the Bloc Québécois. We are negotiating with a serious government, the Quebec government.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if he cannot bring himself to answer questions in the House of Commons, he might as well stop coming.

There is nothing there to reimburse Quebecers for taking in asylum seekers over the past two years; there is nothing for education, nothing for francization, nothing for health, nothing for last resort assistance, nothing for sharing intake among the provinces, nothing for reinstating visas for Mexicans, nothing for supporting our overwhelmed community organizations, nothing to speed up the file processing for asylum seekers, and nothing for work permits. That is supposed to be his job.

When it comes right down to it, what tangible difference does that announcement make to Quebecers?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as people heard yesterday, we are providing the money. Quebec has done more than its share, and we applaud its efforts.

There is still work to be done to speed up the work permit process, and we are doing that. We are working with Quebec to speed up the process so that asylum seekers can work in the health care sector.

That is very important, but the starting point is working collaboratively with the Government of Quebec.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about math. Quebec takes in 45% of all asylum seekers in Canada but receives just under 28% of new investments in temporary housing. Quebec continues to contribute far more than its share of the effort and continues to receive far less than the financial share it deserves. This is one more injustice on top of a bunch of others.

Frankly, at this point, does the minister realize that we Quebecers are starting to feel like we are being laughed at?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is not doing anything. Apart from asking questions in the House, Bloc members are doing absolutely nothing while the minister works, collaborates and holds discussions with Quebec.

We started by contributing \$50 million. That is a huge amount. Next we paid close to \$70 million, and yesterday, \$100 million. That is a lot of money. The Bloc should not ridicule these financial efforts. We commend the Quebec government for the enormous amount of work it has done. We applaud the work done by the Government of Canada, which has been also enormous.

We will continue to work collaboratively despite what the Bloc wants, which is bickering. There are no quarrels here. We are working together.

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CARBON PRICING

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are having a tough time. Two million of them are relying on food banks to feed their families. Meanwhile, the out-of-touch Prime Minister wants to increase the carbon tax again on April 1. Together with their partners in the Bloc Québécois, the Liberals keep making matters worse for Canadians with their so-called environmental plan, which in reality is just a tax plan.

Will the Prime Minister use some common sense for once and cancel the April 1 tax increase?

• (1445)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the Conservative Party does not seem to realize is that farmers are among the first to be affected by the impacts of climate change.

Look at the droughts in the Prairies. Alberta thinks it may need to ration potable water this summer for all residents and for farms. What is the Conservative Party doing while this is happening? It is saying that climate change is not a problem and that we can just let the planet burn.

Our plan is working. We have already reduced greenhouse gas emissions by the equivalent of more than 30 million tonnes, and it is certainly not thanks to the Conservatives. We will continue to be there to fight climate change and work with our farmers.

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is just further proof of how out of touch this government, including the environment minister, is with reality.

Canadians across the country are suffering. In Quebec, the carbon tax is having a direct and indirect effect on the cost of groceries, regardless of what the Liberals and the Bloc Québécois are saying. The second carbon tax adds another 20¢ per litre of gas, which has a direct impact on people in Beauce. Unlike the Bloc Québécois, I understand that what is good for Canadians is also good for Quebecers. We need to reduce the cost of producing and transporting food so that Canadians can put food on their tables.

I will ask the same question again. I hope that the Liberals will understand it. Will the Prime Minister cancel the April 1 tax—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transport.

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to being out of touch with reality, I think the member is leading the pack. He knows very well that the tax, the price on pollution, does not apply in Quebec. He should know that.

What I would like to know is whether he understands the impact that climate change is having on our farmers.

Where was he during the floods and forest fires? Where was he when people were displaced? He was asleep at the switch.

[English]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the NDP-Liberals, my constituents are hurting. Edmund from Whitewater is a senior who lives on \$20,000 a year. Since November, he has paid \$200 in carbon tax on home heating alone. His quarterly climate bribe was \$118, yet the Prime Minister says that Canadians are somehow getting ahead.

The Prime Minister is not worth the cost. Will the Liberals stop the April 1 carbon tax hike so groceries, gas and home heating do not get more expensive for Edmund?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, folks are entitled to their opinions, but not their own facts. The hon. member knows very well that 80% of Canadian families get more money back, and it works in reverse order of income, so the most vulnerable and poorest people in this country are actually much better off. The Conservative Party would take away the rebate. The Conservative leader's climate plan is to let the planet burn. In fact, when the member for Calgary Forest Lawn was recently asked on television what the Conservative Party's climate plan is, he said it was to build more pipelines and produce more oil. However, they are upset when people call them climate deniers. My goodness.

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HOUSING

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, rent is due today. For workers in Port Moody—Coquitlam, that rent will cost over 50% of their monthly paycheque. Some seniors are facing renovation and homelessness because corporate investors are buying up their affordable homes. The out-of-touch Liberals created this mess alongside the cut-and-gut Conservatives, who work for greedy corporations. Why are the Liberals dragging their feet when Canadians desperately need affordable rental homes now?

• (1450)

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I sincerely thank my hon. colleague for her advocacy for vulnerable people who are struggling with the cost of finding a place to live. The fact that people are in dire need of housing is why we have significantly increased the pace of introducing policies to build more homes in this country. We have removed taxes from new apartment construction so more apartments will be built, committed an additional \$1 billion through the affordable housing fund to get more affordable homes built for low-income families and put federal money on the table to incentivize cities to change their ways, to increase their ambition and to speed up the process of homebuilding. We are going to continue to do what it takes to end the national housing crisis.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that response, but it is just not good enough. Today, rent is due. A new report just came out telling Edmontonians what we already know: Rent is going up while the number of available affordable homes is going down. Meanwhile,

Oral Questions

the Prime Minister turns a blind eye as Danielle Smith sells off affordable housing just to make her rich CEO friends happy. When will the government stop catering to rich CEOs and put forward a plan to build non-market and co-op housing, so working people can afford a home?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his advocacy. We are committed to building more homes, including affordable housing for low-income families. In fact, in the member's own community, a Métis-led project is going ahead that will provide affordable homes for community residents and support for women and children fleeing violence. We have increased funding for co-operative housing for the first time in decades, with a program to be launched soon that is backed by \$1.5 billion. We have increased funding for affordable housing in the recent fall economic statement, with an additional \$1 billion. We have constructed or renovated hundreds of thousands of affordable housing units. We care about the most vulnerable and know that they deserve to have a roof over their heads.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, supporting the growth and future of indigenous communities is critical in advancing reconciliation. This includes land.

Last weekend, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations was in Nanaimo for the signing of a historic land reconciliation agreement.

Can the minister elaborate on how this historic agreement with the Snuneymuxw First Nation aligns with Canada's broader commitments to reconciliation and the protection of indigenous rights?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the history of Canada is built on displacement of indigenous peoples from their lands, which they hold very sacred. This landmark agreement with the Snuneymuxw First Nation, involving the return of Camp Nanaimo lands, represents a significant step in honouring our commitments to reconciliation.

Oral Questions

By returning these lands and supporting the nation's vision for development, we are rectifying past injustices and walking the path of reconciliation. I want to thank the tireless advocacy of generations of people who have advocated for this.

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CARBON PRICING

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this NDP-Liberal coalition, Canadians cannot afford to eat. Forcing those who grow the food we need to pay the carbon tax is nonsensical policy. In fact, Vermeer's Dairy, a farm near Camrose, paid \$1,700 in the carbon tax alone in December. They expect that to double when the bill comes for this past January.

The Liberals will, once again, increase the carbon tax on April 1.

Can someone over there please stand up and admit that it is time to finally lower the cost of food by axing the tax so Canadians can afford to eat?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, being a farmer and being a former dairy farmer, it is hard to imagine what farmers had to deal with with hurricane Fiona. Farmers woke up and went out to their barn. The barn was destroyed. The cattle were killed. It killed the dairy cattle. That is a great cost to the cost of food.

I am so proud to be part of a government that has an environmental plan, that will make sure that we will continue to work with farmers and to make sure that they are able to deal with the climate issues that they have to deal with in this country. We have and will continue to—

The Speaker: The hon. member for King—Vaughan.

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is the birthday of Vishal, the founder of Sai Dham Food Bank, which serves 3.17 million meals per month and delivers groceries to 3,000 seniors.

The carbon tax has made life and food unaffordable for our seniors. The carbon tax is not an environmental plan. It is a tax plan.

Vishal's birthday wish today is to donate to Sai Dham Food Bank so that he can provide more food for our seniors.

Will these Liberals support the motion to stop the April 1 increase of their costly carbon tax—

• (1455)

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour and Seniors.

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me emphasize, once again, that with this carbon plan, eight out of 10 Canadian households do better than they would otherwise.

The question is: unless they revert to their platform commitment of the Erin O'Toole Christmas wish book, where government will decide what they will do with their money, what will they do with the cash that Canadians currently get, that seniors get every month, that seniors know that they can rely on, that they put toward food, that they put toward rent?

Where will that money go?

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 40% of Nova Scotians are struggling to pay their electricity bills. Rates have jumped 14% in the last two years and Nova Scotians have to choose between heating and eating. After eight long years, this Prime Minister is just not worth the cost.

This NDP-Liberal government is going to make things worse on April 1, when its next tax hike comes into effect, when it quadruples the carbon tax.

Will this costly coalition show some common decency and cancel the tax hike, so Nova Scotians can feed themselves, keep a roof over their heads and keep the heat on?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the price on pollution is an affordability measure. The vast majority of Canadians receive more money through the carbon price than what they pay. Research from the University of Calgary shows that the Conservatives' plan to cut the carbon price would only benefit the richest 1% and hurt the other 99%.

While the Conservatives are fighting to give money to the rich and take money away from those who are most vulnerable, we are building a climate plan that addresses climate change in a manner that—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I would please ask all members to keep their comments to themselves. I would ask the hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands to please allow the minister to answer without interruption.

The hon. minister has 10 seconds on the clock.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, we have the reverse Robin Hoods over here who want to take money out of the pockets of the most vulnerable in Canada and give it to the wealthy in a manner that actually has nothing to do—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this government, people are running out of money. Food banks were emptied over the holidays.

We have found out that the Bloc Québécois fully supports the Liberals' policies and wants to hike the infamous carbon tax yet again. Voting for the Bloc Québécois is costly for people in the regions, because the Bloc Québécois has lost touch with regional realities, as we know.

Could the Liberals come back down to Earth and support our common-sense motion by at least refraining from raising the tax on April 1?

Oral Questions

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have lost count of the number of times I have risen in the House to explain to members of the Conservative Party of Canada that federal carbon pricing does not apply in Quebec.

It is not complicated. It does not apply. The Government of Quebec introduced its cap-and-trade program over a decade ago, long before the federal program. If the member opposite has a problem with carbon pricing in Quebec, he can call the Premier of Quebec, François Legault. I would be pleased to give him the premier's telephone number.

* * *

CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Canadian Heritage opened the door to additional federal funding for Radio-Canada, even though the public broadcaster is about to announce the elimination of 600 positions.

A number of analysts believe that the cuts planned by CEO Catherine Tait were premature, possibly even excessive, and clearly unfair to the francophone side of the network.

Will the minister insist that CBC/Radio-Canada cancel these ill-timed layoffs before it receives any additional funding?

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the president of CBC/Radio-Canada made it clear that the announcements she made took into account the public broadcaster's current financial situation.

We know how important Radio-Canada is to Quebec. That is why we are currently assessing how we can better support CBC/Radio-Canada and ensure its survival not just for this fiscal year, but for the long term. Obviously, my goal is to protect jobs at both Radio-Canada and CBC.

• (1500)

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I like that. That is a good answer. We share the same objective of protecting jobs.

Demanding that CBC maintain the 600 jobs it has decided to cut is the least they can do before doling out any part of the public federal budget, any amount of money.

There is also the question of fairness to our private broadcasters, who are struggling even more. Both Bell and TVA have cut hundreds of jobs, and then with Meta blocking news stories, the entire news sector is hurting. So we are all for supporting the CBC, as long as the jobs are protected.

However, is the minister also going to do her job to help all our broadcasters, all our written online news media, as much as the public broadcaster?

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue to work to make sure that we have news media, whether that is private media, our public broadcaster or community media, which play an essential role in every community in Canada.

We have been there by increasing the payroll tax credit for newsrooms. We are currently looking at all the other measures we can take to better support the sector because we know it is essential to have quality information, particularly in order to fight misinformation and propaganda.

We are still convinced that this is the right thing to do, and we are going to be there for our media.

* * *

[English]

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the past president of the billion-dollar green slush fund shocked committee last night when she revealed that the government was warned of blatant conflicts of interest. The Prime Minister is not worth the cost of his corrupted billion-dollar green slush fund.

The minister claimed that he learned in 2023, but we now know that the ministry was informed in 2019. After eight years, Canadians cannot believe a word from this NDP-Liberal government. So, why is it that this minister chose to mislead Canadians?

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. As soon as we found out about these allegations, the Department of ISED acted quickly. The Minister of Innovation has already accepted the resignation of the CEO and Chair.

We take these allegations extremely seriously, which is why we are doing proper due diligence. Our government is committed to ensuring that organizations that receive federal funding adhere to the highest standards of government. We are committed to get to the bottom of these allegations.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the former CEO of the Liberal green slush fund revealed that she warned Liberals that the Prime Minister's hand-picked chair, Annette Verschuren, should not be appointed because of her conflict of interest and that green slush fund staff also told the minister of this conflict, but Liberals appointed her anyway. Then, Liberal board members went on award to their own companies more than \$20 million of green slush fund money. Liberals had officials in every meeting, but did nothing about this corruption until it was in the media.

Why did it take a media story for the Liberals to act on this corruption?

Oral Questions

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives will say anything to oppose fighting climate change, including saying they want to slash an organization that was voted in by this Parliament two decades ago. We are sticking to the facts and due process. We will continue fighting to get to the bottom of this.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberal government has built the worst imaginable system for government contracting. The arrive scam watchdog report found that the government built a system where companies that charge the least are penalized. They actually built a system in which people are rewarded for charging a high price and punished for charging a lower price. “Please sir, we want to pay even more.” It is no wonder the Prime Minister is so out of touch and is not worth the cost.

After eight years, the only explanation for this is complete insanity or outright corruption. Which is it?

Mr. Charles Sousa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the report from the ombudsman yesterday that released all the issues we have been talking about in our committee over this very issue, and we have taken those recommendations. We have already started to act upon them, and we have already made some inclusions that the ombudsman has identified.

The member opposite uses that committee to do his TikTok videos, and he is very good at it, but what is really important is that we ensure that we improve procurement, and we are doing so.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Telefilm Canada has always played an essential role in the creation of films and television shows. Its productions reflect our cultural diversity and put Canadian talent on the world stage. Recent years have brought major challenges.

Can the Minister of Canadian Heritage tell the House about measures in place to support the sector, promote Canadian French-language content and support our very own content creators?

• (1505)

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right. Quebeckers and Canadians are deeply attached to our culture. We like watching our films and television shows because we are so proud of who we are and of our stories.

That is why I was so pleased to announce yesterday that we are boosting Telefilm Canada's budget by \$50 million so it can keep producing quality content here in Canada.

We know the Conservatives will make cuts to culture and our public broadcaster, just as they did under the Harper government.

Here on this side of the House, we will continue to support the industry because it provides 180,000 jobs and it is very important.

* * *

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal-NDP government, our troops are being forced to use food banks and live in tents. According to the Halifax emergency manager, young soldiers are coming to work hungry. The Royal Canadian Legion in Nova Scotia said actively serving members are living rough in tents, living in their vehicles, couch surfing and even entering into relationships that have put them at risk of domestic violence to secure housing.

Why is the Liberal defence minister allowing this to happen under his watch? Why is he failing our troops?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, the member opposite is once again badly misinformed. In fact, when this was reported in the press, the Canadian Armed Forces in Nova Scotia canvassed all of the members of the armed forces and determined that all of them were properly housed and that the reporting was false.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, those are actually not the facts. Nearly 4,500 serving military members are currently awaiting housing, but the Liberals are building fewer than 20 homes per year for our troops. To add insult to injury, that Liberal minister just cut a billion dollars from the defence budget, and a leaked report confirmed that the minister is hiking the rents for our armed forces members.

Our military heroes know that those Liberals are just not worth the cost, so why does the Prime Minister always shovel money into the pockets of consultants and Liberal insiders, but cut spending on the backs of our troops?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an extraordinary question coming from the member, inasmuch as he voted against the pay raise we recently gave to Canadian Armed Forces members. He should also be aware that Canadian Armed Forces policy caps rents for all members using armed forces military housing at 25% of their gross income.

We will continue to make investments in Canadian Armed Forces housing and all of the supports that he keeps voting against.

*Oral Questions***GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES**

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, auto thefts are up a striking 34.1% after eight years of the Liberal-NDP government. In my home community of Kamloops, there was recently a car chase that ended with an RCMP cruiser getting rammed, and everyone can imagine our shock when the car was stolen. The NDP-Liberal government just is not worth the cost when it comes to one's own property and safety.

When will the NDP-Liberal government start putting Canadians and their property first ahead of fancy vacations and meaningless meetings?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government takes the alarming issue of auto theft very seriously. That is precisely why we invested, for example, with the Government of Ontario and local and provincial police forces, and increased resources yesterday to ensure that we are collaboratively doing everything we can do. We are going to add resources for the Canada Border Services Agency. We are going to ensure that the RCMP can continue to partner in the work that it is doing against organized crime.

We take this seriously and are going to bring this alarming level down very quickly.

* * *

DENTAL CARE

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over 400,000 seniors aged 77 and over have successfully applied to the Canadian dental care plan since the government launched the plan in December. These numbers, which include seniors in my riding of Kitchener—Conestoga, demonstrate strong support for the plan. Conservatives voted against funding for the dental plan, despite one in four Canadians having reported they could not afford the cost of their dental care.

Can the Minister of Health please update the House on our work to provide accessible and affordable dental care for Canadians?

● (1510)

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Kitchener—Conestoga for his advocacy to make sure that oral health is available for all Canadians.

It is now available for those who are 72 years of age and older, and it is going to be rolling out to nine million Canadians. That is 3.5 million seniors and more than a million kids under 18. It is deeply disappointing that the Conservatives are voting against this and looking to get rid of dental care. It is essential not only as preventive medicine but also for the dignity of seniors who are finally being able to replace their dentures and get the oral health care they need.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government says it respects reproductive rights, but the closure of Clinic 554 means that Fredericton is without a single provider for

safe, trauma-informed abortion care. Despite the Prime Minister campaigning on keeping this clinic open, he has failed to protect the charter right to abortion, and Conservatives are actively threatening this right through backdoor legislation. Abortion rights are human rights.

Will the minister enforce the Canada Health Act and protect abortion rights in New Brunswick?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ensuring that women across this country have access to the health care they need in order to protect their reproductive and sexual health is absolutely essential. Of course, we did withhold funding from New Brunswick because of the lack of funding for Clinic 554. It made the decision on its own to shut down, but we are deeply concerned with the impact that this is going to have on the ability of women to get access to an abortion.

I have already reached out to the Government of New Brunswick. We are continuing a conversation because it is essential that those services be kept open to women across the country, and certainly in New Brunswick.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, some UNRWA personnel are said to have participated in the October 7 Hamas terror attack. However, Canada had sent UNRWA \$48 million by the time the government got around to suspending its funding. Aside from transparency, timing and creative accounting, International Development, Global Affairs, is now shocked to learn taxpayer dollars have been going to an agency joined at the fanatical hip with Hamas.

Does the Minister of International Development still think UNRWA is a “trusted” agency, or is he finally going to recognize that taxpayers do not like funding an agency linked to a listed terror group?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these allegations are very disturbing. We have expressed our concerns to the head of UNRWA, Philippe Lazzarini. We are encouraged by the fact that the United Nations has launched an investigation. While we wait for the results of that investigation, we are increasing our support to the tune of \$40 million to support trusted international partners on the ground that are delivering much-needed life-saving supplies.

What we will not do is jump to conclusions and smear a UN body, like the leader of the official opposition. If the hon. member wants to do that—

The Speaker: That is the end of question period for today.

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

Business of Supply

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, a number of times in question period, the Parliamentary Budget Officer's—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I ask all members to take their conversations outside the House so I can hear the point of order.

All those who can hear my voice, please say “sh”. Thank you.

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot, from the top, please.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, since this was brought up a number of times in question period, I am hoping that if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to table the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report that says very clearly that—

The Speaker: I am hearing many “no”s.

I encourage all members seeking unanimous support to please negotiate it in advance with the different House leaders.

* * *

● (1515)

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to welcome the minister of state in the House of Commons, who will take on the role of Leader of the Government in the House of Commons for the next few weeks and months.

I would like to ask him if the government has planned to put anything of interest to Canadians on the agenda tomorrow, and what the plan is for next week.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Quebec. I assure him that the House of Commons is in for a good time. There will always be interesting things to debate because we keep introducing good bills in the House.

[*English*]

Tomorrow, Bill C-57, an act to implement the 2023 free trade agreement between Canada and Ukraine, will be the subject of debate.

When we return on Monday, we will call Bill C-59, the fall economic statement implementation act, 2023.

[*Translation*]

I would also like to inform the House that Tuesday and Thursday will be allotted days. On Wednesday we will begin debate on Bill C-62 on medical assistance in dying, which was introduced earlier today by my hon. colleague the Minister of Health.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CARBON TAX

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to come back to the points I was raising just before question period. The Conservatives never talk about the rebates that are given to families and businesses in Canada, nor do they talk about the fact that 100% of the revenue collected from the price on pollution is given back to families and businesses.

There are also costs associated with climate change. Climate change is costing all three levels of government exorbitant amounts and it is also affecting the cost of insurance coverage for individuals and households in Canada. Let us also not forget that 77 jurisdictions around the world have some type of price on pollution or carbon. Canada is not the only one.

Finally, the reality is that it is possible to address climate change and to make life more affordable. The Conservatives do not think that is possible, but we think that it is very important to do both of those things.

[*English*]

I want to bring it back to Kings—Hants, my riding in Nova Scotia, and I want to talk about affordability and environmental action at the same time. We introduced a heat pump program in 2022. It was called, simply, the oil to heat pump program, and it is to help individuals who were on home heating oil to make a transition.

There are one million Canadian households that still use heating oil in this country, and 286,000 of them are in Atlantic Canada, but they are spread all across this country. The evidence would suggest that the majority of people who still use heating oil are people who are lower income and who do not have the ability to transition off that fuel source. That is exactly why the government introduced a \$10,000 program to help people be able to make that transition.

When I went out in my riding this past summer, I talked to seniors. They would tell me that this is a great program, but the project cost is about \$15,000 or \$16,000. By the time they would put the heat pump into their home, get the electricity and upgrade things in their house, it would cost a bit more than the \$10,000. They told me that they could really not afford that and that they did not have the money to make the transition.

Business of Supply

Because of the leadership of members of Parliament on this side, and because the government listened, we introduced a program that is going to help provide up to \$20,000 to households that are below the provincial median income in Nova Scotia. This will also be in New Brunswick, if New Brunswick wants to sign on with Premier Higgs, and certainly in Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador. I know conversations are happening with the Government of Manitoba and the Government of British Columbia. This is a program that would be open across the country, where three-quarters, or \$15,000, of the money would be paid by the Government of Canada, and \$5,000 would be coming in from the provinces.

I remember having a conversation with the member for South Shore—St. Margarets a few weeks before Christmas, and I compared it to this. Our affordability plan is that we paused the carbon price on home heating oil for three years to help people utilize the program I just talked about to be able to make a transition. I said to the member for South Shore—St. Margarets that his party's affordability plan is to take 17¢ off a litre of home heating oil. Make no mistake, that is extremely important in today's context, but what we are offering is not only that 17¢ a litre right now but also a long-term savings where people can save up to thousands of dollars a year by being able to move over to a heat pump, which is more affordable than home heating oil.

It is not slogans; it is solutions. That is what we are focused on. That is good for the environment and good for affordability, and what I am focused on is affordability for my constituents. Of course, the Conservatives are opposed to that.

How about the fact that we have increased the rural rebate? I represent the type of riding in Atlantic Canada where my constituents do not have the same public transit options available to other Canadians, particularly those in more urban areas. I was very pleased to see the government make changes that help ensure greater equity under this system to ensure that, as we return the proceeds of the carbon price, which of course eight out of 10 families receive more money back, we are being mindful of how rural families are impacted.

That is something this government has done. Liberal members of Parliament have been able to adjust policies because we have asked important and intelligent questions. We have not just stood up and said that we want to get rid of carbon pricing altogether in the country. We achieved more, in terms of the adjustments, than the Conservatives had in eight years, just as they denigrated the policy.

• (1520)

Conservatives do not just oppose carbon pricing. They oppose all forms of what this government is doing on climate change, and I will give a few examples.

This is on Bill C-49, and I will give the Conservatives their due in that, in a world of communications, we have to be slick in how we communicate to the public. Not everyone watches the House of Commons, of course, so they have the line “technology, not taxes”, which is the idea that we will look to focusing on renewable energy, I presume, or different types of technology to help drive down emissions. This is great. I believe in that too. I think the price signal

is important, and they actually support one another. However, we then have an example in Atlantic Canada.

Bill C-49 would amend the Atlantic accord, which is the agreement between Nova Scotia and the federal government, and between Newfoundland and Labrador and the federal government. The reason it is a joint partnership is that it was tied to the oil and gas development that happened in the 1980s. This is extremely important to Atlantic Canada, and we take the Atlantic accord seriously. I remember when the legislation was introduced before Christmas, and it is just as simple as allowing those accord provisions to extend to the regulation of offshore wind, which plays into green hydrogen, and we all know that is a technology that could help bring down emissions. It is also really good for jobs. I thought this was going to get unanimous approval. I did not think there would be any issue. However, the Conservatives gave us a gift because they stepped up and basically went against their own slogan. They do not even support the type of technology that can help bring down emissions and drive really good jobs to Atlantic Canada.

My job is not only to talk about why that is important to the region I represent, but also to highlight and parse out what it is that the Conservatives do not like about this bill. I sat at the natural resources committee for two hours this week, and the Minister for Natural Resources appeared, but two hours later, I still had not heard a credible idea from the Conservatives about why they are against the bill.

This is part of a continuing trend because, under the Harper government, members will remember that the member for Cumberland—Colchester at the time, Bill Casey, left the Conservative caucus. Why did he leave the Conservative caucus? It was because Harper was trying to impact and denigrate the Atlantic accords.

Let us not forget that the last Conservative prime minister—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I would ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to quell the noise that is in the hallway.

The hon. member for Kings—Hants may continue.

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, thank you for trying to keep the decorum. I think members are probably cheering so loudly in the back benches, but that is good. We will get them calmed down in here for interpretation.

Let us remember, the last Conservative prime minister in this country said that Atlantic Canadians had a “culture of defeat”. That was Stephen Harper. I have not heard that from the member for Carleton, but he was part of that government.

Business of Supply

However, as we try to drive economic opportunities in Atlantic Canada, the Conservative Party suggests that it knows better than the duly elected Conservative Premier of Nova Scotia and the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador. These provinces want to agree to these provisions. They want to move quickly. We are in a global race. To listen to the way in which the Conservative Party suggests it knows better than the governments of my region is unbelievable. I do not have words for it. However, I am going to make sure that Atlantic Canadians know, and we are going to make sure that Nova Scotians know.

The last bit I will say is that the Conservatives do not believe in the price signal for carbon pricing, which could actually help drive economic models. They talk about technology, not taxes, but how do we get it? How do we incentivize companies to want to invest in the technologies that are going to drive emissions down? We hear the member for Carleton talking about that all the time. The member for South Shore—St. Margarets made it very clear at the natural resources committee that he does not believe there is a role for public funding in these types of technologies. He was talking about projects such as EverWind, which could mean billions of dollars to Nova Scotia. He was running that project down, and it was disappointing to hear. I think it symbolizes where the Conservative Party is at right now in this conversation.

Conservatives are against clean fuel regulations. I can appreciate that the oil and gas emissions cap has particular sensitivities in western Canada, and perhaps in Newfoundland and Labrador. I have stood in the House and said that I believe in the Canadian oil and gas sector, but I have also said that we need to make sure that we can find ways to use things such as nuclear technology and green hydrogen to help bring down the emission intensity of the barrel of Canadian oil. In a world where we become more constrained on demand, Canadian oil is not only competitive on price but is also competitive on carbon intensity. Again, that is what this cap could help do, by working with industry, and Conservatives oppose it.

I also want to talk about how the environmental policies of the government could actually lead to positive outcomes for farmers and foresters, particularly through offset protocols. This is something that I will say in the House, which is that I would like to give a nudge to the ministry at Environment and Climate Change Canada. I think they have done some good work, but I would like to see more on offset protocols around farming practices and forestry. How can we change the conversation that the carbon price? Notwithstanding that the Conservatives are not helping on that, but about the economic ability, how do we turn that into the environmental policies of the government and create huge economic opportunities for our farmers to support the good, sustainable practices they are doing and also make sure our forestry sector is supported? I would like to see a little more on that.

We also have to give some context to what is happening around the world. The European Union, the United Kingdom, and the Biden administration in the U.S. are all talking about carbon pricing adjustments at their borders. They are talking about putting carbon pricing as part of our economic trading model. I have to ask my Conservative colleagues a question: If we are going to cut carbon pricing altogether in this country, what could that mean for our in-

dustries that are then otherwise going to face tariff barriers at those potential borders as we start to line this up?

Canada has a tremendous opportunity. Our industries are sustainable. They are world class, and they are innovative. With the existing carbon price right now, we could have a global advantage, as that is the way in which the world is potentially heading. We should be focused on that. Why would the Conservatives want to mess with that? Why would they talk about eliminating it altogether? If Conservatives have good, thoughtful ideas on adjustments, they should be bringing those forward, but I am not hearing a whole lot.

● (1525)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am happy that the member opposite likes our idea about technology, not taxes.

I would inform him that the U.S. is the only country in the world that met its Paris targets, and it did that by providing capital incentives to industry to reduce emissions and by implementing more nuclear technology and more green technology. That is the right direction.

Would the member admit that, since the carbon tax is not helping the Liberals meet any of their emissions target, it is time to abandon that, cap the increase planned for April 1 and focus, instead, on the same kind of incentives that were successful for the U.S.?

● (1530)

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I will reject part of the question. I would agree with the hon. member that nuclear technology is extremely important and it will be part of where we have to get in terms of net neutrality. I am proud to continue being a member of Parliament calling for the government to do more on this, and we have done more. I am very proud of the fact that nuclear is now part of green bonds. I agree with the approach that the government is taking on the investment tax credits in this domain with respect to trying to match and line up with what the United States is doing.

Make no mistake, though, if we talk to CEOs and leaders of companies, whether in the clean energy sector or not, the carbon price is an important signal to help justify investments. I would encourage the member to speak to companies and businesses that actually believe the carbon price is an important signal and they want some certainty about whether it will stay, because it is driving billions of dollars of investment in clean energy right now the country, in her province, in my province and provinces across the country.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague and I agree on several points. I wonder if he could talk about what we can do to recognize what is being done on the ground in the agricultural sector. Should farmers who adopt good practices not be rewarded for that? My colleague is very familiar with this idea because I often explain it to him.

Business of Supply

The idea is to recognize good practices and create a decentralized fund that does not depend on the goodwill of the big, fat government in Ottawa, but rather on the will of entrepreneurs whenever they are ready to invest, so that they can go on to the next environmentally positive investment.

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I support Bill C-234. I also agree on the importance of acknowledging our farmers' relentless work in support of sustainable agriculture and having a certain tool to achieve it.

That is exactly why I spoke about offset credits and their recognition by the Government of Canada in relation to the clean fuel regulations and the clean electricity regulations.

Some companies could pay our farmers for their hard work. Of course, in addition to the government, big companies like Coca-Cola and Pepsi should be making the same kinds of contributions.

[*English*]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, could the member bring some reality to this chamber? I know we have had conversations back and forth between the Conservatives and the Liberals. The Conservatives keep going with their slogans, but they seem to be out of touch with reality.

Could the Liberals talk about how rebates and income back to families matters?

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I mentioned this in my remarks that it is unfortunate that the Conservative Party has sought to denigrate the idea of carbon pricing so much that it is all that ill Canadians, that what we see in challenges around affordability is tied to one policy. That is not the case. There are many other external factors.

One of the things that is perhaps the most unfortunate is that there has not been a recognition from the opposition benches on the way in which the government went about establishing the policy, that more money goes back to families than they pay into it. That has been established by the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

If the Conservatives are talking about eliminating the carbon price, I have concerns about what that means economically with respect to where the world is headed and what it means for those businesses, as I said when I took the question from the member for Sarnia—Lambton. It also means that we are taking money away from vulnerable households that genuinely receive more money back than they pay.

That is where we have to take this conversation so that Canadians understand the way the policy works, the fact that there are rebates, because if we listened to the opposition benches they would never know that, and the fact that if they were to cut that policy, it would hurt many vulnerable Canadian families.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, one debate we have never had in this place is on whether any of the claims about nuclear energy are remotely true; they are not. Nuclear energy is expensive. It is not a solution to the climate crisis. Solar and wind costs have plummeted from 2009 to 2021. Solar has dropped by 90% and onshore wind has dropped by 72%, but nuclear energy has increased by 36%. It is in the way of replac-

ing carbon electricity. It is not helping us. I would like to have that debate in this place.

Would he be prepared to ensure that the government put forward a reasonable debate on the evidence to assess whether nuclear is an asset or in the way of climate action?

• (1535)

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, the hon. member knows that I do not necessarily have the power to persuade the government to do anything in this House, but I can certainly be a voice.

There are a couple of things I would say. The hon. member and I have some shared things I would want to focus on; yes, these are solar, wind and renewable electricity. I presume, or at least hope, that she will support Bill C-49, which is the Atlantic accords act, which would drive the opportunity for green hydrogen.

However, the member and I would differ on the importance of nuclear. The lights in this building right now are generated by 60% of nuclear energy in Ontario. Yes, there are important considerations in each jurisdiction about the cost mechanism and how best to move forward. However, I think it is a technology, among the many she mentioned, that is going to help drive our zero-emissions future. We can have that debate if the House allows us to have it; if not, we can have a nice drink outside and talk about it.

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my friend and colleague from Kings—Hants for his leadership as chair of the Atlantic caucus and for advocating for the pause on the carbon price for home heating fuel and the doubling of the rural rebate to our government.

We often hear across the aisle about axing the tax and the carbon price being tripled, but never do we hear about the climate cheque that comes back to Canadians four times a year. Many constituents in my riding appreciate that very much. Eight out of 10 houses get more back than they actually spend with the increase.

Would my colleague comment on that?

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, the good people of Saint John—Rothesay have a real champion here in Ottawa. He gave me a compliment, but let me say this: I believe the hon. member has indicated that he will not be re-offering in this place in the next election. That will be a great loss to Parliament, because he is one of the best constituency advocates in Ottawa for his people. When I watch him on social media, he never forgets where he comes from. He is always out on the go.

Business of Supply

I would say what I have said to other colleagues here today: For Conservatives, the entire conversation is about the price signal, but they never talk about the rebates that come back to Canadian families. In the member's riding, eight out of 10 families receive more money back. Conservatives are not talking about what it would mean for families in Saint John—Rothesay and, indeed, across the country if they were to cut that.

I think it is important for him and all of us here to make sure we remind our colleagues about that.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have been around this place long enough to recall the carve-out that was implemented in Atlantic Canada, which was as a result of bad polling numbers and the fact that the carbon tax is not well received in Atlantic Canada. That is why the Atlantic caucus forced the Prime Minister to do this carve-out.

With a quadrupling of the carbon tax, everything is going to cost his constituents more by the time it is fully implemented. Can the hon. member honestly stand here and tell this House that his constituents approve of and support that?

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, what drove that policy was a focus on vulnerable households. The member knows this policy applies across the country. I will not apologize for fighting for my region, which is energy insecure. We had to make some adjustments to a national policy that has made a difference across the country, including in his own riding. This was driven by equity in a national policy.

I also want to say that, when he talks about quadrupling, the whole goal here is to be able to reduce the actual reliance on carbon. Eventually, people will not be paying the price, because we have been able to help them move over. I will provide the one quick example of heat pumps, where the goal is to help people reduce their use of home heating oil. It is a good affordability measure.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte. I am proud to rise on behalf of my constituents in the common-sense riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

After eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, Canadians are hurting. They are hurting because of bad policies—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members that, if they want to have conversations, they should take them outside.

The hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

• (1540)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, common-sense Conservatives have a real plan to turn that hurt into hope. It starts with axing the carbon tax, which is pushing up the cost of everything. Canadians understand that, when a government has an official policy to increase the cost of energy, it increases the cost of everything that requires energy, which is everything. However, the socialist coalition members think Canadians are stupid. They think all they need to do is slap a new label on their carbon tax and Canadians will just forgive them for increasing the cost of living.

Unfortunately, the Liberals are not the only ones who think Canadians can be fooled. The far left media allies are already hard at work, rebranding the carbon tax. It is no longer called a tax. Now they call it a “carbon price”. How long will it be before the CBC starts to rebrand income tax as a “price on earnings”? They can rebrand GST as a “price on shopping”. They can call it whatever they want, but Canadians know that a tax is a tax.

It does not matter how much carbon the Liberals burn to keep their gaslights burning bright; the truth outshines it all. The truth is this: Their carbon tax is going up in April. Therefore, as long as these proud socialists hold on to power, it will go up year after year. It will keep going up until they have redistributed every last dollar from hard-working Canadians in small towns without transit to the wealthy urban elite, such as the finance minister, who brags about how easy it is for her to get around without a car. Of course, most Canadians would find it a lot easier with a personal chauffeur, a six-figure salary and a taxpayer-funded luxury SUV.

What about Canadians like Edmund? Edmund lives on a fixed income. His after-tax income is \$20,000. He just received his climate bribe for this fiscal quarter. He also received his natural gas bill for December. The carbon tax on that bill was \$72.36. That means he paid \$9.41 in HST on the carbon tax. That is for just one month of winter. One month eats up half the quarterly rebate, and that is before Edmund has driven a single kilometre.

I would seek unanimous consent to table his tax statement and gas bills, but I already know the Liberals are too cowardly to face the truth. They would prefer to stay in their nostalgia-infused fever dream, where everything is awesome. They desperately want to take Canada back to the 1960s, when the CBC was popular, the UN was relevant and Canadians loved a prime minister named Trudeau. They really believe they can control the weather with a tax. They just wave their Liberal wand and say “zap, you are frozen”. Only a Liberal could summon the level of arrogance required to believe that, if they just tax Canadians hard enough, it will stop flooding.

Business of Supply

The carbon tax is about punishing the types of Canadians these Liberals call “unacceptable” and rewarding the ones who vote for them. It is a tax plan, not an environmental plan. The fact is that it is generous to even call it a plan. The Liberals' agenda is little more than a string of slogans, such as “30 by 30” or “net zero”. Now, they have gone all-in on expensive, dirty electric batteries, just as the oil and gas industry is discovering vast reserves of clean hydrogen. That is why the Liberals are adopting Soviet-style car sales mandates. The only way their battery subsidies will not bankrupt us is if they force people to buy cars that do not work in the cold weather. Before any of my colleagues jump up and shout about what all those electric cars in Norway are doing, I would remind them that the average temperature in January in Ottawa is three times colder than that in Oslo.

Even the Liberals' net-zero promise is a fantasy. The only way to reach net zero is with direct carbon capture. Carbon dioxide molecules make up only .04% of the atmosphere. It takes a lot of energy to remove carbon dioxide molecules, but these proud socialists oppose cheap electricity. Many of these radical environmentalists even oppose carbon capture. They claim it is a way of keeping on using oil and gas, but if all the emissions are captured, why would they still oppose it? Maybe this was never about reducing emissions in the most economically sensible way but about reducing capitalism and increasing the size and the scope of the state.

• (1545)

Last month, I reached out to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and the Minister of Environment. I asked if they could provide technical experts to explain the government's proposed protocol to reduce enteric emissions from beef cattle to farmers in my riding. After watching this train wreck of a government mishandle the communications about reducing nitrogen emissions on farms, I wanted to make sure my constituents knew exactly what the government was proposing.

I naively thought the government would jump at the chance to prevent misinformation or promote its protocol. Instead, both offices took a pass on the offer. Considering the massive farm protests in Europe, a competent government would have jumped at the chance to engage with farmers. Therefore, it was up to me to explain to farmers what this socialist coalition government was proposing.

Reducing enteric emissions is bureaucratic language for reducing cow burps. The proposal is that farmers could undertake measures to reduce methane emitted from belching beef cattle. In return, they would receive offset credits for every tonne of methane they reduce from a set baseline. Several farmers in my riding are pioneers in the field of capturing emissions. I wanted to ensure they would earn the credits for the innovations they are already undertaking. They are farmers like the Klaesi brothers, who built Canada's first biodigester to turn manure into electricity that they could sell back into the grid, and farmers like Don Russell, whose patented technology eliminates methane from manure.

As the member of Parliament for these leading-edge farmers, I wanted to make sure they knew what was coming. While they had many questions, everything always circled back to the bottom line: How much will it cost? How much will they earn? They are basic

questions everyone operating a business will ask. Unfortunately, the government does not have those answers, and not just because members could not be bothered to drive out to the Ottawa Valley. The government does not have the answer because it does not know.

It even admitted it on its website. Here is what the government says about the price of the carbon offset credit: “The price of offset credits is primarily influenced by supply and demand. If there are many offset credits available with little demand, prices will be low. If there are few offset credits available and a large demand, prices will be higher.” There it is, in digital black and white. The offset credit is the real carbon price, a price that emerges from the intersection of supply and demand. A tax is set by government decree. The carbon tax is not a price on pollution. It is a tax on energy. It is a tax on mobility. It is a tax on life.

The government knows what the tax on carbon is, and Canadians know the tax on carbon is going up on April 1. That is why Conservatives are calling on the government to cancel the tax hike. Canadians know we are going to axe the tax, just like Canadians know that we will build more homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. The longer the tired, flailing NDP-Liberal socialist coalition ignores the will of Canadians, the bigger the reckoning will be.

To increase the tax when everyone knows it is not long for this world is to rub salt in the wounds of high inflation. No amount of rebranding, gaslighting or fearmongering will work. It is time for the Liberals to listen to Canadians struggling with the cost of living fuelled by reckless Liberal spending. It is time for them to stop punishing Canadians for heating their homes. It is time for common sense.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Conservative members, including the member who just spoke, often talk about the impact of the carbon tax and how it is increasing inflation. They try to give the false impression that we are talking about 4%, 5% or even higher, in terms of percentages.

I am going to quote the Governor of the Bank of Canada, who states, “The contribution that's making to inflation one year to the next is relatively small. If you want me to put a number on it, it's in the range of 0.15 per cent, so quite small.” What is interesting is that Statistics Canada suggests the carbon tax increases the average cost of food by about 0.33% relative to what it would be in the absence of the carbon tax.

Business of Supply

Can the member explain why the Conservative Party of Canada today continues to mislead Canadians on the important issue of inflation?

• (1550)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, I will say that getting rid of the carbon tax will decrease inflation immediately by 20%.

Let me give a real-life example of what their carbon tax is doing. It takes energy to cut the trees that—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am not sure what is going on here, but there seem to be more than a couple of people wanting to chime in on this response or make comments. I would just ask them to please hold off.

The hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, let us talk about how the carbon tax is exacerbating one of the most critical pieces of Canadian life right now, our housing crisis.

To cut the lumber, they need a machine to take down the trees. That machine takes energy. They then need a machine to drag those logs out of the forest and another picker to pick them up and put them on the truck. That takes energy. The truck has to go to the sawmill. That takes energy and carbon tax on the fuel for the truck. It gets to the sawmill and is taken off, and then the people who work at the lumber mill have to saw those logs so that they can be in the right shape to make homes. That sawing takes energy, and there is a tax on that. Finally, it gets shipped to the lumber yard, and the lumber yard brings it to the job site, and that costs carbon tax.

All those taxes at each step along the way are one of the reasons their carbon tax is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have to allow for other questions.

The hon. member for Mirabel.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. Her speeches are always very interesting.

My colleague said that, to her, a carbon tax is not a price on pollution. When I go to the grocery store, I buy oranges. I use a resource, the oranges, and I pay the price. When I buy paper, I use a resource, the paper. In exchange, I give an amount of money. That is the price. In the other provinces, except Quebec, when I use a resource such as CO₂, I pay—

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind members, if they want to have cross-conversations, to please take it outside. I am sure that when they are standing and answering questions or delivering their speeches, they do not appreciate when other people are interrupting them. I would ask all members to please be respectful.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Mirabel.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, I was simply saying that when we go to the store to buy oranges or paper, or when we use resources, we pay a price. It is a specific amount. When we create pollution and there is a tax per volume of pollution emitted, that is a price and it takes the form of a tax. My colleague seems to think that it is not a price on pollution. I am just going to ask her very simply to clarify something.

Can she give me the definition of what she believes a price is?

[*English*]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, I explained that in terms of supply and demand.

Just because a carbon tax is not itemized on one's grocery bill does not mean it is not there. It is insidious. It is hidden.

Let us talk about groceries. They want to get rid of all one-use plastics. How are we going to get our fresh oranges that the member just talked about? They have to be put in plastic to protect them. Anyone who goes to Florida and picks them up will know they are in the plastic netting.

What is worse is that a study came out today, and to get the value and the benefit of any reduction in the use of petroleum products out of a reusable grocery bag, that bag has to be used 710 times. A person can get more uses out of a plastic grocery bag that they can line their wastepaper basket with.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to start with the fact that the hon. member started her intervention talking about the socialist coalition, which makes me think she does not understand what socialism is or what a coalition is.

I also want to say that from my perspective, what I see is both the Liberals and the Conservatives supporting big oil time and time again. I thought of a few other names. We have the “corporate coalition”, the “corrupt coalition”, the “co-opted by big oil coalition”, which, in fact, is CBC. We could use CBC as an acronym.

Why does the member always side with big oil and never with the people in Canada who expect our oil and gas companies to pay their fair share?

• (1555)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, perhaps the member does not realize I am from Ontario, but what I do support is the ability for my constituents and all Canadians to live a good life, to have a house to live in, to have food to eat, and to have hope for the future and a peaceful retirement where they do not need to worry about money when they go to sleep at night.

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to be here today and partake in this important discussion. It is a tough act to follow; my colleague from Renfrew did a great job.

It is an honour to take part in this very important and timely debate on behalf of the great people of Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte.

Business of Supply

I have received countless communications from residents in my community who are concerned about the inflationary pressures they are facing due to the government's reckless policies.

Under the Liberal government, there have been a record two million food bank visits in a single month, housing costs have doubled, mortgage payments are 150% higher than in 2015, violent crime is up 39%, tent cities exist in almost every major city, and over 50% of Canadians are \$200 or less away from going broke.

Just when it feels like it has all become too much, on top of the 30-year inflation highs that Canadians are facing just to live, the Prime Minister will increase the cost of the carbon tax on April 1 to reach \$75 a metric ton. The impact will continue to increase, as the per tonne rate will rise to \$170 by 2030. This will send families in my community further into economic despair.

Despite being given every opportunity to make life more affordable for Canadians by removing the tax on their gas, home heating and groceries, the Liberals, the NDP and the Bloc all vote time and time again to raise taxes on the backs of hard-working Canadians who are struggling to feed their families.

At the centre of this crisis are our hard-working Canadian farmers who work day in, day out to grow and raise the food we eat and who are disproportionately impacted by the carbon tax.

The Conservative private member's bill, Bill C-234, has returned to the House and, if passed in its original form, would bring down both the cost of groceries and the tax burden on hard-working farmers by giving farmers a carbon tax carve-out for grain drying, barn heating and other operations.

This bill would make the cost of food more affordable for everyone by saving farmers almost \$1 billion between now and 2030, according to the independent Parliamentary Budget Officer. However, while Bill C-234 passed in the House, the Prime Minister's Senate appointees gutted our common-sense bill under pressure from the environment minister, who threatened to quit if the bill was passed.

The Liberal, NDP and Bloc members who represent farmers, rural Canadians and any Canadian who is struggling to afford their grocery bill have this opportunity to reject the gutting of this legislation and bring home lower food prices for all Canadians. I sincerely hope they do the right thing.

Farmers in my riding are counting on legislation like Bill C-234, and I wish to highlight a few of their stories. I have here with me, which I will use as reference, a bill from Enbridge Gas for a chicken farmer in my area. This is a large poultry operation. The bill in my hand shows a carbon tax of \$2,700 on the cost of fuel used to dry their grains. The overall bill was just over \$9,000, so one-third of that, not including the HST put on the bill, is the carbon tax. Shockingly, the carbon tax is actually more than the value of the gas before delivery and global adjustment.

Moving on to the poultry side of the operation, this farm pays a comparable tax on the cost to heat its barns. Every 24 weeks it places over 3,000 day-old breeder chicks in the barns. These barns need to be heated to 32°C, as the chicks are so small they cannot heat themselves. This temperature is slowly reduced as the chicks grow stronger. The cost to heat the barns during this placement is

approximately \$7,000, with approximately a third of that cost being the carbon tax.

It appears some of my colleagues from places like Toronto and Vancouver are not aware of how essential it is for farmers to dry their grain and heat their barns. It is a necessity, not a luxury, and there is no alternative. The burden this misguided tax places on farmers has a direct impact on the cost of food for Canadians.

Farmers in my riding know better than anyone that when we tax the farmer who grows the food and tax the trucker who transports the food, we tax the Canadians who buy the food, making everything more expensive. This is especially true for families in my community who are struggling to put food on their tables.

Food bank usage is at an all-time high. Between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2023, over 800,000 people in Ontario alone accessed a food bank. In total, there were 5.9 million visits to a food bank in this time period.

• (1600)

The Barrie Food Bank, which is located in my riding, is currently seeing an incredibly high demand for services. In October, the Barrie Food Bank assisted nearly 7,000 clients, including 731 first-time visitors, which amounts to a 94% increase from last year alone.

Sharon Palmer, the executive director of the Barrie Food Bank, told CTV News that “We are seeing more employed people than ever before, more large families, seniors, and more people on government support programs”.

The crisis is getting worse. Projections show that, in 2024, there will be a 2.5% to 4.5% increase in food prices, with meat, vegetables and bakery items rising from 5% to 7%. Due to these rapidly rising prices, the “Canada Food Price Report 2024” says the following:

It is important to note that Canadians are spending less on food...despite inflation. Food retail sales data indicates a decline from a monthly spend of \$261.24 per capita in August 2022 to a monthly spend of \$252.89 per capita in August 2023, indicating that Canadians are reducing their expenditures on groceries, either by reducing the quantity...of food they ...[buy] or by substituting less expensive alternatives.

Business of Supply

That means Canadians are skipping meals. They are buying lower-quality food. This is unacceptable in a G7 country, and the costly carbon tax is only making these inflationary pressures worse for Canadians who are struggling.

For reference, I have another bill from Enbridge. It is from a senior in my area. Diane is in her 80s and lives off a pension. She intentionally reduces the heat in her apartment, keeping it low. Nonetheless, her bill is over \$22 for the gas alone, and the carbon tax is \$21. She is paying almost as much in carbon tax, not including the HST, as she is for the gas itself, just to heat her apartment. This is unacceptable. We know Diane is struggling, but we are here to try to help her by reducing the tax. The total cost of her bill for a month was \$108.

Seniors, especially those like Diane on fixed incomes, cannot afford yet another carbon tax increase. They are choosing between putting food on the table and heating their homes, and the Liberal government simply does not care.

The Prime Minister and his environment minister have touted this costly tax program as being a great deal for Canadians. When it was first announced, they made it sound too good to be true. First, it would fight climate change and second, it would not cost Canadians a cent because the government would rebate whatever they spent.

We know now that is not the case. In fact, the independent Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed what many common-sense Canadians already knew; they pay more in carbon tax than they get in rebates. The Parliamentary Budget Officer shows that the carbon tax cost the average family between \$402 and \$847 in 2023, and that is before the increase, even after the rebates. By 2030, the Prime Minister's two carbon taxes could add 50¢ per litre to the price of gasoline, according to the same source.

Let me be very clear. The carbon tax is not a climate plan. It is a tax plan that places an undue burden on families, small businesses and farmers. Meanwhile, the Liberal government has failed to meet a single solitary emissions target after eight years in power. In fact, Canada's environment commissioner has made it clear, once again, that Canada will not meet its climate targets, despite the Liberals' punitive taxes on Canadians.

The government is not bothering to set implementation deadlines for 49% of its measures. It has also admitted that only 43% of their so-called "climate measures", many of which are actually just taxation measures, will have any direct impact on emissions. The government's plan did not even bother to include a target or expected emission reductions for 95% of its measures.

Conservatives have a real plan to bring home lower prices for Canadians. We would cap costs and stop wasteful government spending to bring down inflation and interest rates.

A Conservative government would introduce a dollar-for-dollar law so that every dollar of new spending would be matched with a dollar of savings. Instead of creating more cash, we would create more of what cash buys. That means growing more food, building more homes and creating more energy right here at home through technology, not taxes. We will cancel the Prime Minister's tripling of the carbon tax that punishes hard-working Canadians just for

buying food, filling up their cars and heating their homes. These things are not luxuries. They are necessities.

Canadians should not be forced to choose between putting food on the table and heating their homes. The only way to reverse the damage the Liberal government has caused is by reversing the course and doing the opposite. Canadians want change. They want lower taxes, more homes, a balanced budget, safe streets and, most of all, they want a change in government.

The common-sense Conservative promise is simple: We will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. We will restore hope to our country and put Canadians back in control of their lives.

● (1605)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît on a point of order.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, during question period today, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship misled the House by insinuating that the leader of the Bloc Québécois compared immigrants to heat pumps. That is not what he did. I think we need to listen closely to what the leader of the Bloc Québécois said because he was actually condemning the minister's refusal to reimburse Quebecers for the costs they have incurred by generously welcoming asylum seekers to Quebec. Serious questions deserve serious answers from the minister, not contempt.

Madam Speaker, I would ask that you have a listen and direct the member for Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs to withdraw his remarks and apologize.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will consult Hansard to see what was said. The Chair will ask for an apology if necessary after watching what happened during question period.

Questions and comments, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member asserts to conclude his remarks by again emphasizing the four priorities of the Conservative Party. They could fit them onto bumper stickers. My issue is that just because it fits on a bumper sticker and might sound nice, it does not necessarily mean it is good, sound public policy.

Business of Supply

Would the member not agree that we see other countries around the world looking at and, in many cases, putting in a price on pollution as a public policy, because it does work and is effective? Why is the Conservative Party, today, the only political party inside the House of Commons that continues to deny climate change?

Mr. Doug Shipley: Madam Speaker, I question the member opposite when he says this is not good policy. I am willing to go to a campaign or an election any time and run on these. I can tell members that the people of Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte are very supportive of axing the tax, building the homes, fixing the budget and stopping the crime. Those are the four things I am hearing day in, day out from the residents in Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte.

They are very reasonable people, but they are struggling right now. We want to bring common sense back, and I will run on those four themes right there.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, would my colleague agree that the Conservative motion we are currently debating erroneously suggests that the federal government is generating revenue from carbon pricing? We know that the Alberta government puts \$23.7 billion in oil royalties into its coffers every year, the cost of which is passed on entirely to the consumer. However, the federal government does not generate any revenue related to this policy. Ottawa actually pays it back to households and provincial governments where applicable, excluding Quebec.

• (1610)

[*English*]

Mr. Doug Shipley: Madam Speaker, as I am a member from Ontario, I do hear when some colleagues in Alberta are speaking, but I am going to, again, speak about my constituents from Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte in Ontario. They are struggling, and yes, I do believe this carbon tax is taking money out of their pockets, and it is going to the government. It is not just the tax itself; it is the GST on the tax. We are trying to bring it forward to people, but I am sure the members opposite are always trying to hide that. There is a lot of tax going into the government coffers, and I think they are taking advantage of us, especially with the tax on the tax.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I think it is really important to highlight the hypocrisy from the Conservatives on this issue, especially with the fact that they were the ones who brought in the GST, some of the most regressive commercial taxation on citizens we have ever seen. Then, under Stephen Harper, they doubled down with the HST. Unbelievably, they had to borrow money to buy off a couple of provinces to implement the HST, which we are now paying interest on because we are in debt. All this debt and all this cost is back on the consumers from the Conservatives.

I am wondering if the Conservatives at least have some remorse and regret for Brian Mulroney and Stephen Harper, who brought in some of the worst taxation processes for consumers we have ever seen in this country.

Mr. Doug Shipley: Madam Speaker, again, we cannot live in the past. I am living for today.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Doug Shipley: I do not know what is so funny.

Madam Speaker, I am trying to help my constituents today and not 10 or 20 years ago. I am not getting calls from 20 years ago. I am getting calls today from residents who need our help. If I was in the House 10 or 20 years ago, perhaps we would look at those things, but I am here today to represent the citizens of my area and to axe the tax today.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, we often hear our colleagues talking about getting more money back, but they took it away first. However, they have not talked about the hundreds of millions of dollars it is costing for this program. That is huge.

Maybe my colleague would like to respond in regard to the huge cost of this tax program.

Mr. Doug Shipley: Madam Speaker, I wish I had more time, but I agree that any time there is anything put in place by the government, it is bureaucracy growth. We saw that over the last eight years, and I am sure that as this increases, the bureaucracy is going to increase also. We need to cut back some of that and get back to helping our residents in Canada.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to pick up on the words that the member across the way was just saying. He said he wanted to speak about “today”. Maybe I could do a bit of a reflection on today's Conservative Party—

Mr. Damien Kurek: There is no one else to talk. I am shocked.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I want to remind members if they do not have the floor or if they want to have conversations, to please step out. It was not just one individual, but that member was maybe the loudest.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I want to talk about today's Conservative Party. Today's Conservative Party is not the same political party that was there during the time of Brian Mulroney and Kim Campbell and Joe Clark. It is totally different. In fact, to do a fair comparison of today's Conservative Party, we really need to look south. We need to look at it in terms of the whole MAGA movement that is taking place in the United States and how that movement of sorts is coming into Canada and being ushered in by today's Conservative Party.

Business of Supply

Canadians need to be aware of that because it is having a real tangible impact on public policy. The best example one can likely talk about is the price on pollution, or the carbon tax versus the carbon rebate. The amount of misinformation that the Conservative Party today is circulating through all forms of communication, in particular through social media, would shame most people, especially leaders of the Progressive Conservative Party from the past. I do not say that lightly at all.

If I may, let me read a couple of quotes that I was provided. One is from Joe Clark, former prime minister of Canada and former leader of the Progressive Conservative Party. He is reflecting on today's Conservative Party. He says, "I think it's a party that does not respect the progressive traditions of the Progressive Conservative Party and, consequently, does not reflect the country.... My party is over."

Let us go to Brian Mulroney, again, a former Progressive Conservative prime minister. He said, "I led a Progressive Conservative government. We were very progressive in areas...". He went on to name a few, and continued, "...we were more conservative" in other areas. He even referenced that he might have at times been more conservative than Stephen Harper. Then he says, "That's the way it should be for a progressive conservative government, but they amputated the progressive part of the name, which is okay, but you shouldn't amputate the part of our heritage and I think that they work better together when both are prominent and Canadians feel more comfortable with it." He spoke of that progressive side.

That is not just hearing it from me as a Liberal. We are talking about former prime ministers of the Progressive Conservative Party who are saying that today's Conservative Party is not a progressive party at all; that the Conservatives have abandoned that aspect of their heritage.

The first woman prime minister of Canada was a Progressive Conservative prime minister, Kim Campbell. What does Kim Campbell say about today's Conservative Party? She said, "Well, I've never joined the Conservative Party of Canada. I think Joe Clark expressed it that he didn't leave the party, the party left him. It is not the Progressive Conservative Party, and...our party was the party of the Acid Rain Treaty, the Montreal Protocol.... I'm sorry, I have no time for climate deniers and anybody who is trying to pussyfoot around it."

Today's Conservative Party should not be in any way looked at from the heritage of the Progressive Conservative Party because it has completely gone to the extreme far right. It is, for all intents and purposes, a MAGA Conservative Party here in Canada and that is the style and the approach that the Conservatives are taking.

• (1615)

Earlier this week, they came out with their "four priorities". They have already indicated what their four priorities are going to be in the next election. What is going to be their campaign election platform? It is no surprise that number one is to get rid of the price on pollution.

An hon. member: Axe the tax.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, as the member says, to "axe the tax", as they thump their chest and feel so good about that, the only political party, one of the reasons why they have lost so much respect from Progressive Conservatives.

It is a great bumper sticker. They like that bumper sticker. That is the reason why they want to use it.

Let me remind people who might be following the debate and the Conservatives who are here listening. They have heard me say, in the past, that in 2021, under the leadership of Erin O'Toole, every one of them campaigned on an election platform that said they favoured a price on pollution. That was only two years ago and they were in favour of a carbon tax, every one of them.

How things have changed. There is a special group of 19 Conservatives today who campaigned, as candidates, back in 2008, when Stephen Harper was there.

As far as Stephen Harper's campaign literature is concerned, let me read directly from "The True North Strong and Free: Stephen Harper's plan for Canadians".

This is what he says: "A re-elected Conservative Government led by Stephen Harper will implement our Turning the Corner action plan to reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions in absolute terms by 20 per cent over 2006". It goes on. He supported a price on pollution. There are 19 members here today who campaigned on a price on pollution going as far back as 2008.

Interestingly enough, the leader of the Conservative Party today was one of those 19 people. It is hard to imagine what Canadians would think. A word that would come to my mind would be "hypocrisy".

A simple answer would be that they have completely abandoned any sense of a progressive nature to their party. That is the reason why, when they talk about their four priorities, every Canadian needs to be aware of, especially, priority number three. Their priority number three is to cut government expenditures. My constituents and, in fact, Canadians from every region of our nation, love our health care system.

They love our child care program and the rolling out of the dental care program. These are all programs that Canadians want to see. One cannot trust the Conservatives with regard to them. They will cut, if history has shown. Even, at times, Progressive Conservatives have cut those programs.

Can we imagine what a true Conservative far-right party would actually do? They talk about common sense. Common sense to them is cut, cut, cut. Be aware of a hidden Conservative agenda. That is what I would suggest.

The misinformation that they provide to Canadians continues to grow. Again, let us talk about the price on pollution. They will stand up and say, "Do we know what? We are concerned about the impact it is having on the price of inflation on groceries."

Business of Supply

They howl from their seats on that issue. They try to give the false impression that it is 6% or 7% or more. Earlier today, there was one member who said 20%, as a direct result on inflation. I do not know where the member gets her math from.

• (1620)

At the end of the day, they are trying to create this impression to Canadians that the price on pollution is causing inflation. That is just not true, and the sad thing is that they know it, but it does not prevent them from saying it.

It is not just me saying this. The Bank of Canada is recognized around the world as a politically independent agency that has monetary control in good part in terms of the things that are taking place here in Canada. What does the Bank of Canada say in regards to the carbon tax and the impact it has on inflation? Well, the Governor of the Bank of Canada, the man who runs it, says that the “contribution that’s making to inflation one year to the next is relatively small. If you want me to put a number on it, it’s in the range of 0.15 per cent, so quite small.”

Well, we know that the leader of the Conservative Party was saying that he did not like the Governor of the Bank of Canada and that he was going to fire him. At least at one point he was saying that, but I think he might have reversed, and the member for Abbotsford is paying the price for saying that it was a stupid thing for the leader to say that, because now he sits in the far back.

However, if members do not want to believe the Bank of Canada, Statistics Canada does a lot of work. We all look at Stats Canada results. Private industry, governments, non-profits rely very heavily on Stats Canada. Stats Canada suggests that “carbon taxes increased the average cost of food by about 0.33 per cent relative to what they would be in the absence of carbon taxes.” That is the entire effect. “Other necessities such as clothing and footwear are approximately 0.2 per cent more expensive due to the carbon tax.”

Members do not have to believe me. Look at what the Bank of Canada is saying. Look at what Stats Canada is saying. Contrast that to the disinformation, the intentional misleading information that is funnelled out of the Conservative Party of Canada today. It is disgraceful. That is what I mean by the far right.

However, it does not end there. We get member after member stand up and clearly mislead not only their constituents but Canadians as a whole when they say that they are going to axe the carbon tax. However, what they do not mention is the carbon rebate. Over 80% of the constituents I represent, when we take a look at the carbon tax and what they pay into it and compare that to the carbon rebate, or the money they get back, actually get more money in their pocket than is taken out.

Again, members do not have to believe me. The Parliamentary Budget Officer, an independent office, is the one who is saying that. Yet, we get the Conservative Party time and time again saying that they are going to cut the carbon tax, that it is more costly for Canadians, and it is just absolutely misleading information.

It does not matter to them, because they have their agenda, and we had a sample of that earlier this week when they talked about those four priorities. They want a bumper sticker that says “axe the

tax”, and that is what it is all about. They do not care about good, solid public policy.

• (1625)

They tell us to look at other countries. I can talk about France, England, Portugal, Norway, Sweden, Mexico and many states in the United States, which all have a price on pollution. Even Ukraine has a price on pollution. Canada is a trading nation—

An hon. member: No, it doesn't.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Yes, it does have a price on pollution.

An hon. member: At 80¢ a tonne?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, this is the problem.

Maybe there are those in the Conservative Party who do not really look at the notes provided to them by their party. When they do some independent research, they will find that a lot of the stuff they are given is misinformation. However, they purport it to be true.

Let us look at Ukraine. The Conservative Party today, for the first time, is going to be voting against a trade agreement on the floor of the House of Commons. Why is that? Even the New Democrats are voting in favour of the Canada-Ukraine trade agreement. I believe the Green Party and the Bloc Party are also doing so. It is only the Conservative Party.

They come up with this red herring that they are voting against it because it has the words “carbon tax”, or it is dealing with a price on pollution, and they do not want that in a trade agreement. Well, duh. Ukraine has had a price on pollution since 2011. Can we imagine this? The President of Ukraine came to Canada, at a time of war in Europe, to sign off on an agreement that is beneficial to Ukraine, Canada and, ultimately, many others, and the Conservatives have chosen to vote against it. It brings us back to the question of why. I believe the price on pollution is a bit of a red herring for them on this, and it has a lot more to do with their current leader wanting to imitate Donald Trump. The Conservative leader and his MAGA politics are very real. As we get closer to an election, Canadians are going to become much more aware of the Conservative agenda, even the hidden aspects of it.

We recognize the importance of trade. Earlier, when making comments, a Conservative member talked about how foreign investment is down. How can Conservatives justify giving false information on foreign investment? If we look at last year, with respect to dollars of investment on a per capita basis, no other country in the world received more foreign investment than Canada did. However, Conservatives go around giving a false impression and have no problem doing it.

Business of Supply

I can provide proof of the comments I have made on the record in the last 19 or so minutes, but Conservative members will still stand up and say the absolute opposite. For me, it creates a number of ethical issues that I will not necessarily get to talk about.

What blew my mind earlier today in question period was when the Minister of Housing said that Jenni Byrne, who is the campaign manager and former girlfriend of the Leader of the Conservative Party, is now an active lobbyist for Loblaws. I hope Conservatives will ask me a question on that. I would be happy to expand on the bizarreness of that issue.

• (1630)

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for taking away 20 minutes of my life, which I will never get back.

I often laugh at this comical narrative the Liberals are trying to build of comparing the Conservative Party to Donald Trump because it wants to stand up for working families across this country by making life less expensive for them.

I see my good friend from Saint John—Rothesay, whom I deem a reasonable and practical Canadian.

I recall in 2015, when the Liberals talked about taxes, debt and deficit. Because of these comparisons, I often hear from people that this is not the party of Chrétien-Martin, but a radical, ideological, leftist cult led by a two-bit actor, who memorizes lines given to him by much smarter socialists.

What happened to the Liberal Party of Chrétien-Martin?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, this is a political party that has not abandoned its heritage. It has built additional supports in health care, supported Canada's middle class by providing tax breaks and supported seniors by dramatically increasing the guaranteed income supplement. It has invested more in housing than any other political party in the last 60-plus years. It has driven an economy that has generated close to 2.5 million additional jobs since 2015, and it has built Canada's infrastructure. The list goes on. It is a proud Liberal heritage.

However, there is a lot more work to do. I believe that the more Canadians get to know the member's leader, the more people will be coming back and wanting to see us continue on.

• (1635)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, the member for Barrie—Innisfil got up and said it was one of the worst 20 minutes of his life, yet on every Conservative opposition day, debates drag on for so long that they feel like several lifetimes.

That said, we are in a parliamentary setting. Words matter. Tone matters. We have to be careful about our comparisons. The parliamentary secretary said that the leader of the official opposition was behaving like Donald Trump. That is wrong. I think that Mr. Trump could learn a lot from the Conservative leader's methods.

I would like the parliamentary secretary to tell us what Mr. Trump could learn from the Conservative leader's methods.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I am somewhat convinced that there have to be some ties there. We had a commercial go out that compared the type of language being used by the MA-GA far right in the United States, and it is actually quite surprising how much the current leader of the Conservative Party has adopted that. For example, the way he talks about Ukraine as being a far-away land, the way he talks about budget-related matters and so forth. It is a great comparison, and I wish I could flash the link on the screen. It is a wonderful comparison between Donald Trump and the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada. I would encourage people to watch it.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, earlier in the debate, the Conservatives raised the issue of the GST and HST, which is something they created through Brian Mulroney and then Stephen Harper. Then they dished it off by saying that we cannot go back 15 years or 20 years, but every bill we pay still has the GST and HST on it. In fact, the history of this country is bringing in the GST with the Conservatives and the Liberals to actually reduce corporate taxes for the oil and gas industries, the telcos and the pharmaceutical companies and shift that tax burden to the general public, the consumers, with prices at the pump, at the grocery store and other places. The reality is that we have actually reduced the GST at certain points in time and taken it off feminine products and other things.

In the Liberals' past behaviours and practices, they so-called fought among themselves with cutting the corporate taxes a lot faster and deeper. Will they amend these behaviours, reduce the GST and the HST, take the burden off consumers and put it where it belongs, on the richest corporations that abuse Canadians?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, there are different ways in which we can support Canada's working class, especially at the low end, through the credit system.

We see basic income increases and even cuts, as I pointed out earlier, to the middle class. We have seen dramatic increases to supports for children through the Canada child program and, more recently, the enactment of a child care program that will see \$10-a-day day care. I believe most provinces are now providing that. We are talking about literally hundreds of millions of dollars of investment. The dental program has been helping children and will be helping seniors this year. We continue to work at expanding that.

There are all sorts of investments a progressive government can actually make, and that we have made, in order to ensure that there is higher equity among the population. That includes, by the way, getting tougher on—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member can maybe add to his next answer.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Business of Supply

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I appreciated the parliamentary secretary's focus on the question of what former Progressive Conservative prime ministers and leaders have said about the current state of the Conservative Party. They are obviously two very different parties.

My focus is on lamenting that only in Canada, and now in the United States, do we have a division over how to respond to the climate crisis that falls along left-right lines in politics. That is really a shame, and it is not necessary.

If we look back, who were the leaders in addressing the climate crisis in the 1980s? There was Margaret Thatcher. No one would suggest she was a leftist. The Iron Lady was pretty darn right wing, but she was trained in science and chemistry. She set up the Hadley Centre in England to take on climate change and be serious about it.

Brian Mulroney was an early leader on climate change globally. He still calls on his successors, in what still calls itself a Conservative Party, to do the right thing and address the climate crisis.

• (1640)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question, and that is why I spent time emphasizing what Progressive Conservative leaders have talked about when reflecting on today's Conservative Party. We are starting to see more distance. A lot of Progressive Conservatives are disappointed because, at the end of the day, they have completely disregarded that aspect of the Progressive Conservatives' heritage.

I think that is not healthy. We should see all political parties of all stripes looking at science and doing things to improve our climate. Sadly, we have real Conservatives today who still deny that climate change is happening.

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his wonderful speech today; it was very enlightening.

We know this for a fact: The party opposite ran on pricing pollution. Whether its members want to admit that is totally up to them; it was in their platform, and we all know it. We also know that the official opposition's job is to challenge our government, to hold our feet to the fire and so on; however, its job is also to offer solutions and alternatives.

Have the members of the party opposite ever offered a solution to pricing pollution? We know our climate is warming. Have they ever offered a solution, or are they just going to let it rip?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, this is the first time that we have seen absolutely no indication whatsoever, in a tangible way, from the official opposition party as to what its environmental policy actually is. That is very discouraging. Many say it is because of the element made up of complete climate deniers, who just do not see it as a priority at all. Therefore, they continue to want to deceive Canadians on the price on pollution.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as fol-

lows: the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill, Carbon Pricing; the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, Natural Resources.

[English]

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Madam Speaker, before I begin I would like to recognize that I will be splitting my time with someone I think is one of the greatest MPs in the House of Commons, the member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

I want to do some carbon tax math to begin. This is carbon tax 101. I would actually suggest that the members opposite grab their calculators, follow along with me and do this math. Two years ago we had the Governor of the Bank of Canada, Tiff Macklem, at the finance committee. I asked him how much the carbon tax is responsible for inflation. He said 0.5%. He came back in a subsequent meeting two years later and said it is actually 0.6%, and he had underestimated a bit. We got that. We are clear on that. This is from the Governor of the Bank of Canada. I do not think he is going to make up these numbers.

Then, he was actually at the finance committee today, and I asked him about the increase on April 1. I said it would probably be 0.1%, and he said I had once again underestimated and it would actually be 0.15%, so that gives us 0.75%. We can put this in our calculator if we want. Currently, the inflation rate is 3.4%. If we divide 0.75 by 3.4, that gives us a percentage. My 10-year-old is learning that in school right now. That gives us 22%. I am sorry. I actually underestimated, and I apologize to the House. I said it was 20%. I underestimated again, as I did with the governor as well. It is 22%. We could bring down inflation by 22% today if we eliminated the carbon tax, and that would almost bring us in range.

Of course, the Bank of Canada has a range of inflation that it is trying to get to. It is trying to get to 2%. We would almost be there if we took just one action and eliminated the carbon tax. That is carbon tax math. Once again, it is 0.75 divided by 3.4. My 10-year-old is learning this—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1645)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There seem to be some members trying to ask questions. I would ask them to wait until the appropriate time to do that.

The hon. member for Northumberland—Peterborough South has the floor.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, I appreciate that, and I apologize. I get passionate as well.

Business of Supply

However, the reality is that the rebate is taken into consideration. The Governor of the Bank of Canada looked at the entire picture, including the rebate, and said that if we eliminated the carbon tax today, we would reduce inflation by 22%.

We have had some fun about the math and stuff like that, but that has real impacts. I am sure members in their ridings have heard from people, because I certainly have heard, in mine, from the ones who are about to lose their homes. Why? It is because interest rates are high, as the Governor of the Bank of Canada must do the work that the government is unwilling to do.

The government is blindly pushing people into losing their houses and losing their jobs, as well as sending two million people to food banks. They laugh at this, but it is math. It is 22%. All they would have to do is eliminate that carbon tax. If they believe in that carbon tax like they say they do, let us have a carbon tax election, and let us do it today, because I know who will win that election.

Then we will hear them cast aspersions like, "They're climate deniers, they're this, they're that." The reality is that the carbon tax has failed. If anyone is a climate change denier, they are on that side of the aisle. The Liberals are failing to achieve their climate targets. Their own climate change commissioner said that they will not achieve their 2030 targets. They have yet to achieve one single target, so if we want to talk about climate change denial, it is on that side of the aisle.

Let us talk a bit about the economy and why it is so important to get a new direction.

The member from the other side said that there has been a recent uptake in investments, which is true. I am glad for that, but let us look at the overall picture. Since 2014, we have had some of the weakest foreign investment in the world, and we are forecasted by the IMF to actually have the worst foreign investment over the next 40 years. Our GDP per capita over the last 10 years is 4%, which is the total growth for GDP per capita. Do we know what it is in the United States? It is 47%, or 10 times ours.

GDP per capita, by the way, is not just any number. GDP per capita is the number one way of measuring the economic impact on the individual. The reality is that the split has not been even. Who has been hurt the most? It is the most vulnerable; those who are in an economically weak position are hurting. That is why there are two million people going to the food banks.

I hope everyone understands the carbon tax math. Hopefully, over there, they will understand this too. GDP per capita is the economic measure of the welfare of the individual in a given state. In the U.S., in the last 10 years, it has grown by 47%. In Canada, it has grown by 4%, which is 0.8% per year. We need change, and we need it fast.

Underpinning that weak per capita GDP number is a lack of productivity. I will be candid: Our weak productivity numbers date back decades, but it has taken on an exponential weakness in the last decade. Our productivity numbers put us near the bottom of the OECD. Quite frankly, I do not mean to be an alarmist, but it is just the reality: On the trajectory that we are on with our productivity numbers, we will not even be an advanced economy in the next 20 years. It is wild.

If we look at the GDP per hour, which is a measurement of how much a worker in Canada contributes, in the U.S. it is \$75, in Switzerland it is around \$95, and Canada it is \$55. Why do we look at this? Productivity has three pillars that underpin it. One is capital investment, and as I said, over the last 10 years we are among the weakest in the OECD. The second is our workforce. We actually have a really strong and great workforce and the best workers, I believe, in Canada.

• (1650)

The other part of it is innovation, and that is where we are falling down. We have great minds here who produce great ideas, but we are not making it intellectual property. What is happening is that many of the best minds are going to Silicon Valley or other places in the world, and we need to make sure that Canadians feel comfortable and that they win.

There is one area where our productivity is among the highest in the world. I said that Canada's GDP is, on average, \$55 per hour. In the energy sector, it is \$500 per hour. What is the government doing in that sector, one of the few bright lights of our otherwise dim economy? It is crushing it. It is trying to kill the energy sector in Canada. Members over there will say that we have to, for the sake of the planet. In reality, we are shutting down Canadian energy and it is just going to other parts of the world. Instead of having manufacturing in great places like Cobourg, Port Hope or Hamilton in Ontario, or in many of the great towns and cities out west, it is being transported across the world.

The reality is that it could be powered by hydroelectric power in Winnipeg, Quebec or Niagara Falls, or by clean, emission-free nuclear power in parts of Ontario, or we could ship those jobs, as is going on right now, to Guangdong province, where it is powered by coal. The carbon tax plays into and affects this, because it is pushing jobs there.

The reality is there is no carbon tax in West Virginia; there is no carbon tax in Guangdong province, and there is a very small carbon tax in Mexico. As we increase costs here, we are shooting ourselves in the foot. We are making emissions in the world higher, because, to a certain extent, it matters what Canada's emissions are only in terms of how we are affecting global emissions. Pollution knows no borders. Our focus really has to be on how we reduce global emissions.

Business of Supply

What is happening now and what has happened over the last 10 years is that we have made the cost of doing business so difficult in Canada, not least through the carbon tax, that we are pushing manufacturing and natural gas exploration outside of our borders. We actually increase emissions while at the same time decreasing our economic welfare. This is not a recipe for success.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for giving us this pseudolesson on economics.

It is confusing to me that he does not understand basic economic terminology such as “taxation”, since the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the carbon pricing system is not a concept of taxation and is understood in a constitutional context. What Conservatives really want us to do is axe the facts.

I understand that “axing a regulatory charge and the climate action incentive payment” is not a good bumper sticker slogan. What Conservatives want to do is distract Canadians from what is really happening, ignore the facts and ignore science while our country burns. I would like to hear a comment about that.

• (1655)

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, when the government takes money and no one has the ability to say no, it is a tax. That is just the reality. I do not care what the Supreme Court says on that. If the government wants to take money, but people do not pay it and they go to jail, that is a tax. It is simple.

I went through the math. The Liberal-appointed Governor of the Bank of Canada, not some Conservative, said that even with the rebate it is 22% of inflation. I dare you to go back to your constituents and say you are going to increase inflation today by 20%, because that is what—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the hon. member that he is to address questions and comments through the Chair.

The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, obviously, just like on any other Conservative opposition day, we are still talking about the carbon tax. People watching the debates might wonder if what MPs do all day amounts to anything. I will let them in on a secret: We sometimes wonder the same thing.

I have enjoyed working with my colleague on bills. I know him to be an extremely intelligent and friendly guy. I will give him a chance to prove it by asking him a question on a different topic that is nonetheless related to the one at hand.

I know that he is passionate about agriculture. What does he think about the federal budgets for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada? Does he think they are adequate? I think they need to be increased significantly.

The most important thing is research and development. Does it receive enough support in Canada and Quebec? Is the federal government making its fair share of the efforts? I do not think so. For everyone in the House, research and development is the future.

That is how we are going to adapt to climate change, which is already here, to be able to be productive while polluting less.

[*English*]

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, I have appreciated working with the member. I would say that I take a bit of offence to some of the member's comments. My presentation was full of numbers and data. I was not just meandering about, with whatever insult I felt about the Conservative Party. I had statistics and am happy to share them with the member.

Winston Churchill once said that taxing oneself into prosperity is like a man standing in his bucket and trying to pull it up. It is impossible. Yes, we can talk about funding arrangements and support for farmers; that is all well and good, but the first thing we need to do is get off their back.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am sorry; I do not recall to whom to attribute this, but I have also heard it said that taxes are the price we pay for living in a civilized society. I often think that to the Conservatives, taxes are a bad thing, but taxes are the monies we collect and pay people to provide police services, schools, roads, ports, highways, community centres, arenas, auditoriums and other things that provide the ability for people to live their lives and connect in culture.

My question, though, is about the climate crisis. I hear a lot of criticism of the carbon tax. There are many economists who have said that the price of not dealing with the climate crisis is in the multiple billions of dollars. What is the Conservative plan to deal with the climate crisis? If we were to get rid of the carbon tax, what would the Conservatives do to help protect the planet for future generations, or do they not think that the climate crisis is real or needs to be dealt with?

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, I will give a brief answer; there will certainly be more to come on this. We believe that ultimately the solution for this, as for most problems, is the Canadian people. We have the most resourceful, most caring people, including farmers who spend every day caring about the land, upgrading their technology so they can protect the soil and limit emissions. We believe in farmers. We believe in manufacturers. We believe in Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Madam Speaker, after such an eloquent speech from my colleague, the bar is set high. I will try to live up to that standard.

Business of Supply

I am pleased to rise today to speak to our party's motion to axe the carbon tax.

As members can imagine, I am extremely disappointed in this government, not just since last fall, but for the past eight years. In 2015, this government promised to run three small deficits—I will never forget that—and to return to a balanced budget in 2019. Instead, since 2015, it has run eight consecutive deficits, totalling more than \$600 billion, which could force us into a recession. I am not the one saying this. Many experts are saying that we are already in a recession. We need only look at the number of companies that are currently laying off a significant number of employees.

Despite all the red lights it is facing, the government continues to do as it pleases. It plans to not only add another \$60 billion to the deficit this year, but also add possibly \$12 billion in additional permanent spending for a national pharmacare system, in order to satisfy its dance partner, the NDP. It is just doing this to stay in power. It is already planning to run more deficits this year.

The worst thing is that in the fall of 2022, the Minister of Finance said that we needed to stop pouring fuel on the inflationary fire and that we absolutely needed to return to a balanced budget. That was in November 2022. In March 2023, the budget was tabled, but there was no mention of returning to a balanced budget, not a word. It was gone. It vanished.

Under this government, the deficits continue to grow year after year. Now, with its dance partner, the NDP, the government wants to pile on another \$12 billion for a pharmacare system. By the way, the Canadian provinces, including Quebec, already have very good systems in place. The government wants to pile even more on top of the things that have been brought in over the past few years. This \$12 billion is in addition to the government's recurring deficits.

The Prime Minister said that it made more sense for the government to go into debt instead of Canadians because interest rates were low and were going to stay low. Everyone remembers him saying that during the pandemic. Now it is 2024. About three and a half years ago, he said that the government would take on that debt and that he was not going to let people go into debt, because interest rates were low and would stay low. However, three and a half years after that statement, interest rates jumped from 0.5% to 5%. As a result, our debt servicing costs have ballooned to nearly \$75 billion a year.

Members will recall that all of the provincial premiers met and asked for an additional \$25 billion to be distributed across Canada for health care. The government gave them a pittance, and that is what they currently have to make do with. Today, because of this government's ongoing deficits, we are paying tens of billions of dollars more to service the debt. It therefore stands to reason that the government, whose Prime Minister said that the budget would balance itself, does not have a clue, is doing nothing to balance the budget and has no intention of doing so.

Our common-sense demands have been ignored for years. This is not complicated. We have been repeating what we want for the past week, ever since we got back on Sunday. We want to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. Those are our

top four priorities for making this a country that we recognize again, because it is totally unrecognizable right now.

• (1700)

These are simple things that could generate productivity, innovation and greater government revenues and make our streets safer.

When the Prime Minister answers our leader here in the House of Commons, he engages in deliberate disinformation on the assumption that our leader, once elected Prime Minister, would stop funding the programs that this coalition government has introduced in recent years. Obviously, these statements are completely untrue and aim to frighten the public. The member opposite added insult to injury earlier by comparing us to the Americans, among others. Obviously, this is Canada, and we are completely independent of the United States. This is not the first false statement that this Prime Minister has made.

I want to circle back to our proposals, which would make our country more vibrant and, more importantly, less divided. One of the most important of the four proposals I outlined earlier is to lower taxes for Canadians. It is important to do this given the current crises in housing, inflation and interest rates, which are making it difficult for people to afford food, shelter, clothing and home heating in particular. We have to bring back common sense. I cannot say it often enough.

We need to axe this carbon tax. The Bloc Québécois will tell us that the tax does not apply to Quebecers. Of course the Bloc fully supports the government on this. The reality is that in a country like Canada, which Quebec is still part of, the carbon tax applies in the provinces where it applies. This means that when Quebec imports products from other provinces, this tax inevitably applies indirectly to Quebec as well. That is a fact. There is no denying it.

I think it is important to axe this tax as soon as possible to help all Canadians. As my colleague said earlier, the impact will be huge: It will reduce inflation by 22%. That will leave people with a little more money in their pockets. All of the policies we want to implement are geared toward reducing taxes to put more money in workers' pockets. Canadian workers work very hard, but, unfortunately, their paycheques are decimated by all the taxes they have to pay.

This carbon tax is supposed to help the environment. That is the measure the government opted to put in place, but the evidence indicates that it has changed absolutely nothing over the past eight years. The government has never met the greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets that it set for itself. There is no getting around the fact that the evidence shows this is not the right approach.

We keep hearing that the Conservatives have no plan for the environment. Of course we have a plan, as our leader has said many times. We want to work on green projects like hydroelectricity. We want to cut through red tape to speed up project approvals and the like. The same goes for nuclear energy, wind energy projects and more. Canada's advanced expertise in green technology is recognized around the world. We want to go even further by funding innovation and wealth creation through these technologies.

• (1705)

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to know what my colleague opposite would say to Equiterre, a highly respected environmental organization, which states that, according to economists, putting a price on pollution is one of the most effective ways of curbing emissions, but that it is being threatened by the Conservatives, with their false promises of putting large sums of money back into taxpayers' pockets.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, I do not think it is false to tell people that cutting taxes will take money away from them. On the contrary, it will give them money back.

Earlier, I heard one of my Liberal colleagues say that the carbon tax does not cost all Canadians. That is interesting, because the Parliamentary Budget Officer said last week that the carbon tax adds half a billion dollars to government coffers. If this half a billion dollars is supposed to be going into the pockets of Quebecers and, more specifically, all Canadians, why is the government raking it in?

• (1710)

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives' idea of cleaning the air is taking CBC/Radio Canada off the airwaves.

They are so determined to try to prove that the federal carbon tax applies in Quebec that their colleague, the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, showed up in the House with a bill and gave false information to parliamentarians. She had with her bill that had to do with the emissions trading system in Quebec. It seems to me as though this member, who was part of the Charest government that implemented that system, should have known she was misleading parliamentarians.

The Conservatives are really desperate to convince Quebecers that they are subject to a tax that does not apply to them. It showed in my colleague's speech. Does he think that it is a good idea to present false information to Parliament to try to lie to Quebecers?

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, anyone who accuses me of spreading misinformation is spreading misinformation. Our

Business of Supply

leader has been very clear: There are no plans to make cuts to Radio-Canada.

Making cuts to CBC is one thing. CBC/Radio-Canada are one and the same. However, within CBC/Radio-Canada, there will be no cuts to Radio-Canada. We are even considering eventually adding money for the Canadian francophone across Canada.

The Bloc Québécois is doing everything it can to make us believe that cutting taxes in Canada will have no effect on Quebecers' wallets. That is absolutely untrue. There is no question that this will put money in the pockets of all Canadians, including Quebecers.

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague pointed out a very important fact that a lot of Canadians do not hear about, and that is the reality that there is GST on the carbon tax.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has clearly stated, as the member pointed out, that over half a billion dollars has been collected on the GST on that carbon tax to date, this year alone. Where does that money go? The government continues to say it is given back, but it is not given back.

We have service clubs for seniors that are paying \$200 to heat their service club, but when they look at the bill, it is actually \$100 of carbon tax. They, too, do not get that tax back. Would the member comment on that?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, my colleague is so right. Plus, he is talking about non-profit organizations. The government keeps telling us that it is sending quarterly cheques to Canadian households. That is nice and all, but it is not just Canadian households that are paying the carbon tax. All organizations are paying the carbon tax. Nobody is exempt.

I think it is important for us to have this debate today. Earlier, my colleague from Mirabel mocked the fact that we want to get rid of the tax on the grounds that it does not apply in Quebec, but the truth is, the carbon tax that applies across the country impacts Quebec, too.

We want to get rid of it and put money in people's pockets, period.

[*English*]

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Madam Speaker, as this is my first to opportunity to rise in the new year on behalf of the people of the Kenora riding and across northwestern Ontario, I just want to take a moment to reiterate my commitment, and our party's commitment, to work to fix what has been broken under the NDP-Liberal government.

Speaker's Ruling

We will work relentlessly throughout this Parliament to build the homes, to fix the budget, to stop the crime and, of course, to axe the tax. That is where we start this week, with this motion to axe the failed NDP-Liberal carbon tax, which is doing nothing for the environment but driving up the cost of living for people in northern Ontario and right across the country.

If the Liberal government will not axe the tax, because it is now clear that the Conservative Party is the only party that would put an end to this carbon tax misery for good, we are calling on the government to, at the very least, pause its increase. Cancel the planned increase that is coming this spring so that it does not make life even more unaffordable for Canadians. It is a simple ask. We are hoping that the NDP will stop propping up the Liberal Party and will vote with us to make life more affordable for Canadians.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 5:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forth with every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

[English]

The question is on the motion.

• (1715)

[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.

[English]

Mr. Gerald Soroka: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the recorded division stands deferred until Monday, February 5, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

* * *

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

REQUIREMENT OF ROYAL RECOMMENDATION FOR BILL C-353— SPEAKER'S RULING

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The Chair is now ready to rule on the point of order raised on October 24, 2023, by the parliamentary secretary to the government House Leader concerning Bill C-353, an act to provide for the imposition of restrictive measures against foreign hostage takers and those who practice arbitrary detention in state-to-state relations and to make related amendments to the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, standing in the name of the member for Thornhill.

[Translation]

In a statement concerning private members' business on October 19, 2023, the Chair invited members to make arguments regarding the need for this bill to be accompanied by a royal recommendation.

[English]

In his intervention, the parliamentary secretary stated that the bill would grant a monetary award to an individual who provides information that assists the Government of Canada to secure the release of Canadian nationals and eligible protected persons who are held hostage or arbitrarily detained in state-to-state relations outside Canada. He therefore concluded that this would constitute a new and distinct charge to the consolidated revenue fund.

[Translation]

The Chair has examined Bill C-353 and has noted certain elements concerning the requirement of a royal recommendation.

Page 835 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, states, “[u]nder the Canadian system of government, the Crown alone initiates all public expenditure and Parliament may authorize only spending which has been recommended by the Governor General.”

[English]

In addition to the pecuniary reward provided for in clause 21, the bill also seeks, in clause 10, to allow a minister to make withdrawals from the proceeds account in order to provide hostages or detained individuals or, if deceased, their estates or successions with financial compensation.

The proposed plans to offer monetary rewards and to provide monetary compensations entail new and distinct charges against the consolidated revenue fund, which would constitute an infringement of the financial initiative of the Crown. Accordingly, Bill C-353 must be accompanied by a royal recommendation.

[Translation]

Consequently, the Chair will decline to put the question at the third reading stage of the bill in its present form unless a royal recommendation is received.

[English]

When this item is next before the House, the debate will continue on the motion for second reading of the bill, and the question will be put to the House at the end of that debate.

I thank all members for their attention.

• (1720)

[Translation]

REQUIREMENT OF ROYAL RECOMMENDATION FOR BILL C-356—
SPEAKER'S RULING

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The Chair is also ready to rule on the point of order raised on October 24, 2023, by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons concerning Bill C-356, An Act respecting payments by Canada and requirements in respect of housing and to amend certain other Acts, standing in the name of the member for Carleton.

On October 19, 2023, the Chair had also raised issues with this bill and invited members to make arguments on its need for it to be accompanied by a royal recommendation.

[English]

In raising his point of order, the parliamentary secretary argued that the bill would infringe on the Crown's financial prerogative by repurposing \$100 million from the housing accelerator fund and by implementing a 100% GST rebate on new residential rental property for which the average rent payable is below the market rate. Page 838 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, states:

A royal recommendation not only fixes the allowable charge, but also its objects, purposes, conditions and qualifications. For this reason, a royal recommendation is required not only in the case where money is being appropriated, but also in the case where the authorization to spend for a specific purpose is significantly altered. Without a royal recommendation, a bill that either increases the amount of an appropriation or extends its objects, purposes, conditions and qualifications is inadmissible on the grounds that it infringes on the Crown's financial initiative.

[Translation]

Following a careful review of Bill C-356, the Chair is preoccupied with some elements that would cause a withdrawal from the public treasury for new and distinct purposes.

The bill seeks, among other considerations, to authorize a minister to disburse up to \$100 million to municipalities that surpass identified housing targets. This amount would be withdrawn directly from the consolidated revenue fund, although the bill requires a minister to table a plan to reallocate funds from the housing accelerator fund program to offset that amount. Moreover, the bill also proposes certain circumstances for which a 100% GST rebate on new residential rental property may be paid out.

[English]

The aforementioned elements would cause new and distinct charges against the consolidated revenue fund, thus constituting an infringement on the financial initiative of the Crown.

Accordingly, Bill C-356 must be accompanied by a royal recommendation, and without one, the Chair will not put the question at the third reading stage of the bill in its present form.

When this item is next before the House, the debate will continue on the motion for second reading of the bill and the question will be put to the House at the end of the debate.

I thank all members for their attention.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I suspect if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to call it 5:30 p.m. at this time so we can begin private members' hour.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

POLISH HERITAGE MONTH

The House resumed from November 3, 2023, consideration of the motion.

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will give a recap because I am sure everyone has probably forgotten what I stated a few weeks ago.

As I said, I, like many other members of Parliament in the House, have a Polish history. My grandparents on my father's side were Ukrainian, but my great-grandparents on my mother's side were Polish.

Jacko and Mary Zatorski came from Poland in 1906. It is quite a few years ago they came to Canada, and the main reason they came was to build a better life for themselves. It was a very challenging time to bring a family of four young adults with them, as well as the baby Mary was carrying. They did prosper in their life here in Canada, which they started on a quarter of land outside of Skaro, Alberta, which is northeast of Edmonton.

My great-grandparents had 13 children, which was quite an accomplishment back then because having so many children with none of them perishing at childbirth was quite spectacular. Life was hard, just like it was for anybody else farming at that stage. There were not nearly the mechanisms at that time that are now available. They had the ability to build a house. It is quite remarkable, but I was able to go to the their original homestead. Now, this was not the only house they built, as they built another house in I believe the thirties. The house was still standing. It was in quite a bit of disrepair, but at least it gave me an idea of what the house looked like, and it was quite interesting to see.

My grandfather, who was born in 1913, Paul Zatorski, decided there was not enough land in that area. He also farmed and purchased a homestead near MacKay, Alberta, which is about an hour and a half west of Edmonton. He started his family life there, where he had four children, with the eldest being Lillian, my mother, and three sons after that: Lloyd, Leonard and Stanley.

Private Members' Business

The life of any farmer was hard because clearing land was not an easy accomplishment, yet they knew life was going to be far better in Canada than it would have been if they stayed in Poland. One of the problems they had over the years in Poland was the amount of wars that were happening in Europe at the time. Possibly, if we look back in history, they might not have even been in Poland at the time because the borders kept changing so much. One might have been in Germany, Galicia or whatever other country at the time because the borders did change. One of the main factors to it not being the most desirable place to raise a family was knowing they could be in upheaval at any time.

I will get back to what I was saying, which is that my grandfather started farming as well. We now had a generation of farmers in the family. At the time, in the early part of the 1900s, I think 92% of Canadians were farmers. It is quite the exact opposite now, where the majority of people live in urban centres and the farming community represents only about 2% or 3% of the population. With mechanization, we know how many more a farmer can feed now with the amount of land they have compared to back then.

With homesteads, almost everybody lived on one quarter of land. As generations grew into the forties, fifties and sixties, people started to expand a lot more and could create a better life. They knew one quarter of land was not enough anymore. Tractors cost more than horses, and tractors could also do a lot more than horses could ever do, and that was one of the reasons farms expanded over the years.

I look at the benefit of the heritage of the Polish community and how much it has contributed to Canada. My family, or part of my family, was very much part of the building foundation of this great country. We all pretty much became part of Canada around the late 1800s or early 1900s when we started to expand the west. Immigrants came earlier in the years, but it was quite the thing for my family to come to this country in 1906.

• (1725)

I actually had the opportunity to visit Pier 21 in Halifax. I wanted to see whether I could find my family heritage and whether my family actually came through Pier 21, which was the other thing.

The first question I was asked was how many years ago it was. If it was not within a set number of years, we actually were not allowed to look up the records, as there had to have been, I think, 50 or 70 years that had passed before we were able to look up people's records. I was quite fortunate as it had been well over 100 years, and I was able to look at the records. I was told not to be too concerned if not all the names are correct, but to make sure the last name is right, make sure the parents' names are very close and, if they had children, make sure those names are right. I was actually able to find that, yes, they did come in April 1906.

The names Jacko and Mary were correct, although their sons' names were not quite right. The names varied a little bit, but still, I thought I had the right people because I do not think there were many Zatorskis coming into Canada at that time. To give members an idea of how much they have flourished, I have yet to find a Zatorski in Canada to whom I am not related. I cannot say the same about my last name, and I have had several people ask me whether

I were related to so and so, but no, they were quite different families.

I thought it was quite interesting that we could look up the records, and they were not as close and precise as they could have been. There was only one page on what they had brought with them, some monetary information, and that was about it. However, when my other grandparents, Joseph and Doris Soroka, came in 1929, there were actually two pages. There was a lot more information, which was a little more appreciated because it gave a better sense of the things they had brought and what areas they came from. It was much more detailed, not near what is available now, but at least it gave a little bit of history of my family.

I think heritage and history are very important, and that is why we are celebrating this. It is to acknowledge Polish history month and what it would contribute. I also want to acknowledge that the members of the Canadian Polish Congress and its president, John Tomczak, do support this motion, which is great. I am not mentioning that they are here in the House, because I know that is not appropriate, so members do not have to worry about that. However, I am sorry if I erred in some way, and I do apologize for that.

As I said, it is very important to honour the heritage of our forefathers and recognize what they endured and how they helped build Canada. I just gave one small example of my family.

• (1730)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to commend the initiative of my colleague from Mississauga East—Cooksville seeking to highlight the importance and richness of the Polish community's contribution to the Quebec nation. It is not every day that we have the opportunity to shine a light on this culture.

I would like to make it clear from the outset that I will be voting in favour of the motion. The Bloc Québécois is delighted to join the mover of the motion in acknowledging the exceptional contribution that Quebeckers of Polish origin have made to our society and culture. I would like to take this opportunity to pay special tribute to Quebeckers of Polish origin living in my riding and in the Lower St. Lawrence region. Some 79,000 Quebeckers identify themselves as being of Polish origin. Of all these people, 23,550 are first-generation immigrants and more than 55,000 are from subsequent generations.

Polish people's contribution over the course of their long and tumultuous history is well established. In science, the first modern thinker to theorize the heliocentric model, in which the Earth revolves around the Sun, not vice versa, was none other than Nicolaus Copernicus, a Polish astronomer. Marie Curie was a Polish woman held up time and time again the world over as a symbol representative of women's significant contribution to science and dedication to a scientific career.

Private Members' Business

I do not have much time left, so I just want to add a few more. What would music be without Frédéric Chopin? What would Romantic painting of the 19th century be without Piotr Michalowski? What would 20th century poetry be without Krzysztof Baczynski? What would television series as a powerful art form be without Krzysztof Kieslowski's paradigmatic *Dekalog*?

Poland has a northern climate. Ice hockey is almost as popular there as it is in Montreal, the city where it was invented. No doubt that is why Quebec has always been a welcoming place for the Polish community. Canada's first Polish immigrant, Dominik Barcz, was a fur trader from Gdansk. In 1752, he settled in New France, specifically in Montreal, before the British conquest. He was later joined by his compatriot Charles Blaskowitz in 1757.

More recently, at the end of the Second World War, Quebec took in Poles scarred and devastated by the horrors they had seen and experienced. Seeking refuge and fleeing the communist regime, they made themselves a new home in our corner of the world. As the years turned into centuries, their culture blended and integrated with ours. Quebec and its Polish community therefore have strong institutions.

One example is the work of Wanda Stachiewicz, who founded the Polish Institute of Arts and Science in Canada in 1943. She arrived in Montreal on a Polish ship from London on July 13, 1940. She was a former member of the Polish resistance against the German invaders, a role she played while protecting her three children. She was instrumental in founding the Association of Polish Women War Refugees, which later became the Society of Poles in Exile.

Another example is the Institut Canadien-Polonais du Bien-Être. It is a health institute whose first centre was inaugurated by René Lévesque in 1966 when he was the health minister. A new centre was opened in 1984 by Dr. Camille Laurin, the father of the Quebec Charter of the French Language, when he was health minister. The institute's ethnolinguistic character, autonomy and special mission for Quebecers of Polish origin were recognized by the National Assembly of Quebec in May 2004.

The fate and life story of Polish immigrants have also influenced Quebec culture and literature. In her famous novel *Ces enfants d'ailleurs*, the great Quebec author, Arlette Cousture, tells the story of Elisabeth, Jan and Jerzy, with their parents Tomasz Pawulski, a history teacher, and Zofia Pawulska, a musician, who fled the war in Europe that was so sad that "even the birds stopped singing". They travelled from Krakow, Poland, in 1939, to here "near a great river, in the colourful and inviting city of Montreal".

It is important to note that Poland has had observer status at the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie since 1985. This interest in our language comes from the close ties between that country and France, both historically, because they have been great allies throughout history, and economically and culturally.

• (1735)

As a result, Poland has a special relationship with Quebec when it comes to language and culture. With nearly a million people who speak our beautiful French language, Poland is promoting the importance of French in the cultural, labour and tourism sectors.

We are therefore pleased to help designate May 3 as Polish constitution day and the month of May as Polish heritage month. Every year, we will celebrate the May 3 national holiday that commemorates the adoption of the Polish constitution on May 3, 1791.

It was on that day that the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth adopted one of Europe's first modern constitutions. Directly inspired by the French Revolution, it introduced free elections. The constitution was shaped by enlightenment and is based on reason, freedom and the rule of law.

By way of comparison, at that same time, in 1792, our ancestors were having their first experience with parliamentary life, with the first election and the meeting of the Parliament of Quebec in what was then known as Lower Canada. Since then, the French Canadian people, later the people of Quebec, have also been in pursuit of their political freedom.

At the time, this constitution was a symbol of hope for the restoration of the country's sovereignty. May 3 has always remained a source of inspiration for the people of Poland in their quest for independence.

It is worth remembering that, as a state, Poland has not had a quiet, peaceful existence. Throughout their long history, Polish men and women have shown unflinching strength and resilience. They fought for their independence for a long time.

Partitioned, occupied, invaded for centuries, then destroyed and ravaged by totalitarian regimes in the 20th century, Poland has been at the heart of conflicts due to its geographical location in Europe. In 1795, it was carved up and annexed by its Austrian, Prussian and Russian neighbours. It was against this backdrop that many of the first Polish migrants arrived in Quebec.

Despite a brief liberation between 1807 and 1815 during Napoleon's conquests, known as the Duchy of Warsaw, when Napoleon fell, the country was annexed once again. It was not until 1918 and the end of the First World War that Poland was again on the world map. However, that was short lived. As we all know, the Poles were the first victims of the Second World War.

When Nazi Germany invaded the country, the inhabitants experienced heavy losses despite their heroism and tenacity. For example, 50 Polish mail carriers defended the post office in the Free City of Danzig against 200 SS and SA troops for hours. The Polish cavalry charged German tanks at Krojanty on horseback. Despite the occupation of their country, Poles fought and resisted. The 1944 Warsaw Uprising is a perfect illustration of that resilience.

By the end of the war in 1945, Poland had experienced very heavy losses. The Nazis had exterminated nearly 90% of the country's Jewish population. Cities like Warsaw were almost entirely destroyed. Resistance was fiercely repressed. Seventeen percent of the pre-war population had been killed. These events led to a wave of pre- and post-war immigration. Refugees fleeing conflicts and anti-Semitism found safe haven in Quebec.

Private Members' Business

The country was then occupied by the Stalin regime, which once again annexed a portion of its original territory and again forced Poland to live as a vassal state under the Communist regime. It was not until 1989 that the regime withdrew, allowing the emergence of the Republic of Poland as we know it today, based on a semi-presidential system like the one in France.

Throughout all those years of occupation under the yoke of another country, the Constitution became an important symbol in the march toward regaining national sovereignty. For Poles, this charter fanned the hope that one day their vanished state would return.

In closing, I would remind members that we, as Quebeckers, are working hard to achieve our own quest for national independence. Our two nations are similar in so many ways: we both lost our independence following a colonial war of conquest, and our two peoples have always resisted the foreign invader.

● (1740)

Every May 3, we celebrate the resilience and commitment of our compatriots of Polish heritage and their fight for independence and sovereignty.

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure and a delight to stand and represent the people of Edmonton Strathcona.

It is a pleasure today, as the foreign affairs critic for the New Democratic Party, to also stand and speak about Motion No. 75, with respect to Polish heritage month. I was in Poland less than a year ago, and it is a country I need to spend more time in. I am delighted to stand here and talk about the contributions Polish Canadians have made to Canadian society, our economy, our politics and our culture.

The Polish community began settling in Canada over 160 years ago. Many of those settlers were in Edmonton, Alberta, where we have a very strong and important Polish community. I remember being present for the unveiling of the strikingly beautiful and impressive monument celebrating the centennial recently. It perfectly captures the strength and determination of the Polish settlers who came to Alberta to build a better life for themselves and to help build a better life for all of us in Canada.

Polish settlers helped build our cities and institutions. Over the past 160 years, Polish immigrants and their descendants, who have been teachers, engineers, doctors, lawyers, architects, business leaders and, yes, even politicians, have made Alberta the vibrant and prosperous place it is today.

Speaking of politicians, I have to think of my friend Thomas Lukaszuk. It is not often in this place that a New Democrat stands and talks about their friend who was a Conservative member of the legislative assembly, but Thomas is a real champion for human rights, something I believe in deeply. I was so proud to know him not only when he worked so hard to get help for Ukraine and helped Ukrainians settle in Edmonton during the illegal war in Ukraine but also as he has stood up for Palestinians and has helped raise funds and support for them now as Gaza is seeing such a terrible humanitarian crisis.

I have to say that there are over 190,000 Canadians who cite Polish as their mother tongue. There are things that I humbly say I am quite good at, but pronouncing Polish words is not one of them. I do not come from a Polish background. My name, as I am sure members can all imagine, is Scottish, so my staff have written out a number of greetings they expected me to bring to the Polish community tonight, but I think my greatest gift to it would be to not say those greetings.

I can say, though, that one of the more selfish things I feel about this opportunity for us to celebrate Polish culture and the Polish Canadian connection is the ability for us to eat Polish food. In Edmonton, that is something we have a great opportunity to do on a regular basis. Therefore, knowing that each May would be designated Polish heritage month feels to me like an excellent opportunity for us to learn more about Polish cuisine, and I am very excited about that. It is one of the very rich and meaningful contributions that the Polish diaspora has made to our country.

However, on a more serious note, today allows us to take an opportunity to recognize the Polish people and the Polish diaspora for their resilience and determination. It was the resilience of the Polish people that got them through wars and occupations, including that by the Third Reich, which led many average Polish people to join the underground resistance. It was the organization of workers striking in the Gdansk shipyards that led to the emergence of the Solidarity trade union, a group that would later participate in talks that led to the fall of communism in Poland.

It is these hardy qualities that Polish Canadians bring to Canada, along with their kindness and their sense of community, things that I think all Canadians should embrace. I wanted to take today as an opportunity to thank the Polish people both here in Canada and in Poland for the kindness and the generosity that they have shown over the past two years.

● (1745)

After Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, millions of Ukrainians sought safety and comfort with their neighbours. I was in Poland, in March both last year and the previous year, and saw immediately after the invasion how Polish people opened their arms and welcomed Ukrainians into their community. We saw welcome centres where displaced Ukrainian women, mothers and children, and the elderly, were welcomed into those communities. We saw the support that was given by the community, how difficult it was for people in Poland to do that, and how they did it anyway.

Canada will always stand with Poland. Poland is our NATO partner. We will continue to fight to make sure that there is an end to Putin's illegal and unjustified war because we know that this is happening on Poland's doorstep.

The Canadian government must do everything possible within its means to continue to press for there to be a withdrawal of all Russian forces. I am also heartened to see the Polish people continue to embrace democracy. It is another reason that May 3 should be designated as Polish constitution day here in Canada. Recently, the Polish people voted in elections to restore political centrism to Poland after years of right-leaning rule and to vote in a government that will work to restore and strengthen Poland's democratic institutions.

New Democrats strongly support the recognition of Polish heritage month every May. We welcome Motion No. 75 and hope to be able to celebrate Polish constitution day and Polish heritage month this year in our ridings. We are calling on all parties to quickly pass this to ensure that this year, Canada will have its first Polish heritage month.

We are calling on the Liberal government to ensure tangible, stable and predictable resources and opportunities for the Polish community across Canada so they are able to share their rich, vibrant and delicious culture with all of us.

I congratulate the member.

• (1750)

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am thrilled to stand in support of my colleague today in seconding Motion No. 75, recognizing the great contribution that Polish Canadians have made in building this country, naming May 3 as Polish constitution day and the month of May every year as Polish heritage month.

First, I want to congratulate and thank my colleague from Mississauga East—Cooksville for this initiative. It has been a long time coming and I am proud to be part of this and I want to applaud him for that. As evidenced by my faux pas at the outset, I am proud of my Irish heritage. I am not Polish but I am hoping that by the time I sit down, people here today will understand why I am proud to have a strong connection to the Polish community not only in Etobicoke—Lakeshore but throughout my entire life.

The ties between our two countries are strong and they run deep. The profound impact of our Polish Canadian community on Canada's social, cultural, political and economic landscape cannot be overstated. Polish immigration to Canada reaches back to as early as 1752, over 100 years before Confederation, when the first documented Polish immigrants set foot on Canadian soil in Montreal.

While it would be naive to think that there were not struggles during the early decades after their arrival, like many immigrant communities who came after them, the Polish people endured and pushed forward to become an important part of the foundation of Canadian society.

Our friendship and companionship have grown over the years. Polish soldiers trained in southern Ontario for the First World War. We fought together at Dieppe.

Canada was the first country to approve Poland joining NATO in 1998 and our military co-operation continues as we work together

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to secure eastern Europe against Russian aggression. Our soldiers train together in Latvia, and we both share a vision for a democratic, unified and independent Ukraine.

We are both adherents of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Together we fight and continue to work against tyranny. Economically, we are strong partners. In 2022, there was over \$4 billion worth of trade between our two countries, up from \$2.85 billion in 2018. The partnership is growing.

The Polish people's dedication and perseverance have left an enduring mark on our nation and continue to do so. Our history books are filled with the names of many people of Polish descent in every occupation.

Since the beginning of our Parliament, Polish Canadians have been in this House. I think of Alexandre-Édouard Kierzkowski, an MP from 1867 to 1870. I think of the Hon. Don Mazankowski, who served with distinction and honour as our deputy prime minister.

There was the Hon. Steven Paproski and my friend Jesse Flis, who also served in this chamber. We have him to thank, in large part, for flag day, which we will be celebrating on February 15. I think, too, of Ted Opitz, who served in this House.

Today, we have a number of Polish MPs or descendants of Polish families in our chamber, including four of my colleagues, one of whom sits just over there, from Windsor—Tecumseh and also the member for Calgary Shepard across the way.

Provincially, I think of Bonnie Crombie who is an effective voice for the Polish community. She, too, served in this chamber. Of course, in my own riding, there is Chris Korwin-Kuczynski, who served municipally in the city of Toronto and proudly calls Etobicoke—Lakeshore home and has worked forward in getting us here today.

Culturally, Polish Canadians have enriched the social and cultural fabric of our country. I think of pianist Janina Fialkowska, whose fingers have danced on piano keys for decades, entertaining people everywhere.

Who did not grow up listening to Peter Gzowski on CBC? However, he was not the only famous Canadian Gzowski. His paternal great-grandfather was Sir Casimir Gzowski, of Polish nobility, who was a prominent engineer in Canada and who worked on the Grand Trunk Railway and the Welland Canal. Sir Casimir Gzowski was knighted by Queen Victoria.

Canadian legend Geddy Lee, and I did not know this until recently, of Rush has been one of the biggest Canadian music influences in history, certainly in my lifetime, and has very strong Polish roots. His parents were Polish Holocaust survivors who emigrated to Canada.

Actress and activist Lisa Ray, who grew up in Etobicoke, has a Polish mother. Media mogul Moses Znaimer's mother, too, was from Poland.

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• (1755)

Olympian Penny Oleksiak, hockey legend Wayne Gretzky and current captain of the Toronto Maple Leafs John Tavares all have Polish roots.

Today, Canada's Polish population is estimated at over 1.1 million people, 2.71% of the population and is concentrated mostly in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia. I would like to thank the Canadian Polish Congress for all it does to promote awareness of and respect for Poland's history and heritage. As my friend across the way indicated, I am pretty sure if I look around, I could see them in Ottawa today. I know the president is here in Ottawa today, and I want to thank him for all he is doing, along with all his colleagues.

I am proud to say the Polish presence and influence in my riding of Etobicoke—Lakeshore is incredibly strong. Etobicoke—Lakeshore is home to the Consul General of the Republic of Poland. I would like to thank Magdalena Pszczółkowska, the Consul General of the Republic of Poland for all she does in Canada and in Etobicoke—Lakeshore.

The faith of Polish Canadians is strong and is an inspiration. I think of St. Mark's Parish, St. Theresa's Parish and the Polish Full Gospel Church, all located in Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

There are many other organizations: the Polish Association of Toronto, the Polish Teachers Association in Canada and the Polish Cultural Centre. There is a Seniors Polish Group that meets at the Stonegate Community Health Centre. We also have the Polish National Union of Canada, Branch 1 in Etobicoke—Lakeshore. I feel so incredibly fortunate to have such a vibrant Polish community at home.

It did not start there. I was born and raised in Thunder Bay, which has a proud Polish community. I spent my youth going to mass at St. Mary Our Lady Queen of Poland Church with my mother, father and my two brothers. I vividly remember going to seven o'clock mass on Sunday nights. I have fond memories of going and buying perogies, and eating that fine Polish food at the Polish hall in Thunder Bay. I sent my brother a text earlier, just before I got up, asking if the Polish hall had a name, and he said that it was just called the Polish hall. I remember it well.

Every year, I look forward to Polish celebrations, including in the neighbouring riding of Parkdale—High Park and the Roncesvalles Polish Festival, which marks its 17th anniversary this year. That is something to be very proud of.

My point is that Polish Canadians continue to, as they always have, make Canada a better place. Motion No. 75 goes far beyond acknowledging the historical bonds connecting Canada and Poland. It celebrates the importance of those contributions. When we look at people in the Polish community, we see how proud they are to be Polish and how proud they are to be Canadians. That cannot be overlooked. That is why this motion is so important.

To designate May 3 as Polish constitution day and dedicate the entire month of May to Polish heritage goes beyond symbolism. It recognizes and captures that importance. I want to thank every Polish Canadian for the contributions they have made to this great

country. I look forward to supporting this motion. I know I do not have to ask, but I am going to do it anyway. I want every member in this House to join us in doing just that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me to speak to Motion No. 75. It is also a great pleasure to see you back in the chair and to see your smiling face again.

It is only right for us to adopt this motion. There is just one question we should be asking ourselves. Given how long the Polish people and Polish culture have been contributing strength and vitality to our societies, and given that they originated many of the institutions that exist in our society, why has this not been done before? It is never too late to do the right thing, so let us get to it. We will vote in favour of the motion to recognize the outstanding contributions the Polish nation has made to the Canadian and Quebec nations.

As members know, a lot of people in Poland speak French, which creates a special bond between Quebecers and the Polish people. It draws us closer together. A total of 79,000 people in Quebec, 55,000 of whom were born there, claim Polish ancestry. That is a lot of people, and we share a history, because they have been here for a long time.

I know that sometimes my colleagues in the House get tired of hearing us talk about the history of Quebec and the important milestones, but we talk about it all the time because we know that, deep down, our colleagues really like hearing it. When we talk about the milestones associated with the Quiet Revolution, the Charter of the French Language, and so on, it should be noted that people of Polish descent were there with us. They have been living in Quebec since 1752.

At that time, in 1752, this land was still New France, not Canada. Dominique Debartzch, a fur trader, arrived in 1752. Charles Blaskowitz followed soon after in 1757. These people began contributing to our collective wealth in the New France era. That is amazing.

My colleague also mentioned one of the most remarkable individuals who founded the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada, an important institution in Quebec, in 1943. I am talking about Wanda Stachiewicz. Before arriving in Quebec, she was a member of the resistance. I would also point out that she was a mother of three. I would like the members present, and anyone else who is tuning in, especially anyone who is a parent, to take a few seconds to imagine what that might be like. Even those who are not parents can still imagine what it must have been like to be a member of the resistance during the Second World War, while at the same time having three children to care for.

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These people left their homeland to come here, not always by choice. We are pleased that they stayed, obviously, but it is important to understand the sacrifice, the burden, and to recognize this value. I do not think I am wrong to say today that the Polish people probably understand the value of independence better than any other people, because they have lost it several times, because it was threatened with violence, with occupation. It takes a lot of resilience to withstand that. I commend them for their strength, their courage and their tenacity. I tip my hat to them and thank them for participating in building a better society here and now.

The people of Poland are such a big part of Quebec culture that they are also part of our literature. I want to mention a famous novel by Arlette Cousture, *Ces enfants d'ailleurs*, which tells the story of a family who flee their homeland to come live here, near a wide river, in the colourful and inviting city of Montreal. Some of that colour is supplied by the Polish community. At the end of the day, it makes for a beautiful mosaic.

I am very happy to contribute to making May 3 “Polish Constitution Day” and the month of May every year “Polish Heritage Month”.

• (1800)

I willingly promise to participate in the celebrations, and I invite everyone to join in. Obviously, they will commemorate May 3, 1791, the date on which the Polish constitution was adopted, some 20 years after the disgraceful partition of the Polish territory by Russia and Germany. The Polish constitution was inspired by the French Revolution and the Enlightenment, which is based on the values of reason, freedom and the rule of law. I mentioned it earlier, but I want to reiterate that these people really know the meaning of independence.

Of course, at the same time, in Quebec, we were following a very different path. Far be it from me to compare Quebecers' experience with that of the Polish people. What we experienced was not as intense, but we share a common pursuit of growing, thriving and becoming independent as a nation. I am sure that when that day comes, we will get there with the help of Quebec's Polish community, which will continue to enrich our history and our lives.

We are going to vote in favour of the motion, but there is one small concern. It is about the wording, which I think has a Canadian slant. It refers to the idea of multiculturalism, as if we are drowning in it. Quebec's vision is not in opposition to that, it is just different. Our vision is interculturalism. We know that the people of Poland have contributed plenty of richness to Quebec, and there are aspects that we need to integrate into our values. They are generous and hard-working. We are happy to live alongside them, and I am very grateful to them.

Our respective societies, as Canadians and Quebecers, who share this Parliament for the time being, are more than happy to celebrate the Polish nation. The Bloc Québécois will be enthusiastically voting in favour of this motion and celebrating the richness of this culture. It is important to recognize other peoples.

Certain members may have been offended by my talk of Quebec's political independence this evening. It bothers some people, but others are used to it. Those of us hoping things might be differ-

ent someday might have to talk to each other. Just today, in fact, a federal commission was struck pursuant to Bill C-40, and there is no requirement for its judges to be bilingual. I do not think that should happen in a country with two official languages, French and English, yet it does. I saw it on my news feed, and I could not help but talk about the words of my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord, who represents the Bloc Québécois at the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights and who spoke out against that.

Anyway, we think celebrating people of Polish origin is absolutely fantastic. We are happy to live with them and grow with them because, now that we live together, we have shared lives, shared experiences. That is how we build a just and equitable society. I also want to comment on their recognition of the principle of independence, which we believe in, too, of course, and we hope for that same experience in a sovereign Quebec.

With the bit of time I have left, I am going to take a risk. I hope, if people can hear me, that they will excuse my accent. *Dobry wieczór, pozdrawiam i dziękuję.*

I will translate what I just said to make sure it was understood. I just said, “Good evening, best regards and thank you”.

• (1805)

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise here to speak to Motion No. 75, Polish heritage month. I am going to read the motion, so that we have it in the record. This is important not only for the Polish community, but also for the country of Canada and the multiculturalism that we have. We also have a country that is being built by people coming here and contributing in many different ways, not only in terms of a heritage aspect but also in terms of the economy and civil society. That has been the experience of the Polish community in Windsor, which has done so much for so many years. This also reflects one of the reasons that we have heritage months and the recognition of different weeks. In Ontario, there is already a Polish Heritage Month.

The motion moves that:

(a) the House recognize the significant contributions Polish Canadians have made to Canadian society, economy, politics and culture, and the importance of educating Canadians of all ages about the core values that Polish Canadians have imparted to the strength and diversity of Canada; and

(b) in the opinion of the House, the government should reflect upon Polish heritage for future generations and designate May 3 of every year as Polish Constitution Day, and the month of May, every year, as Polish Heritage Month.

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That is important not only for the Polish community but also for other communities. It means that we embrace multiculturalism and the participation of citizens who come to build a new life here, who bring some of their culture and experiences with them and get a chance to shape our democracy, our communities and our society. This is the experience I had with the Polish community before politics, when I worked at the Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County, which also has a Polish carousel as part of the Carousel of the Nations, as well as when I became a city councillor.

I want to recognize just one person of many. He is Jerzy Barycki of our Polish community and the Canadian Business and Professional Association of Windsor. It is very important to recognize the contributions one can make. Jerzy has been recognized with the Cross of Merit in Poland, the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland, the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal and many other different things. I got to know him as just a citizen sitting on our panel at the race and ethnic relations committee of Windsor and Essex County, when I was chair of that committee. He brought forth the idea to have the city of Windsor twin with Lublin, Poland, and have our city expand its horizons.

I saw a situation evolving that took from the streets of Windsor and Essex County and continued to grow that relationship with Lublin, making sure that we had civic engagement by all. We looked at the settlements of Polish citizens from the 1800s to the forefront of businesses, contributing and being part of our Armed Forces, our citizens who do work at home, our auto industry, manufacturing and a number of different avenues from very professional to blue collar. Delegations went over on several trips, and this convinced me that there is no doubt we can achieve just about anything.

When I came here as a member of Parliament in 2002, I was fortunate to meet Joe Comartin, the former member of Parliament for Windsor—Tecumseh. Back in 2007, we started to press for a waiving of the visitor visa for Polish citizens. We knew that was a big issue with regard to getting some justice on that file, but we had a government at that time that we were not sure was going to do the right thing. Eventually, it did. I want to give credit to then minister Jason Kenney, who actually worked hard on this and deserves a note in this chamber for the hard work of making sure a change took place. That was one that was adopted by all the corners of the House, and it shows that, when we put ourselves to the test, at different times, we can find more in common than not. It does not always seem that this place is conducive to that, but the reality is that we can get some good work done.

One thing I want to note with regard to this heritage month is that we have other ones that are emerging as well. With respect to the Polish heritage month, I hope the government allocates some resources to making sure that we actually have information and supports for programs and services. It may not be official in this motion, because that cannot be appropriate at this point in time. However, it should set a standard for places such as the Dom Polski in Windsor, where we have events and heritage months for Ontario. Now, hopefully, for this and other types of cultural engagement, there would be adequate supports and programs. That has happened at different points and different times over the years.

• (1810)

Windsor and Essex county have seen this heritage play itself out with a lot of pride. I mentioned some World War II veterans who were in our contingent of support for the Canadian Armed Forces. Some of them came to my community. They were some of the hardest workers, who contributed to developing not only the Polish community but also the sectors we have in our country.

Polish Canadians started immigrating to Canada in 1858, which is when recording began. I am sure others came before then. It is important that this chamber, not just Ontario, recognizes a heritage month because it is from coast to coast to coast. We reflect individually, which happens quite a bit, as we have heard other members, including me, talk about the experiences they have had in local communities. As we travel in this job across Canada and to other places, including the United States, where I have been many times, I have noticed that, in the many different communities in Canada, there is a special flavour and element that comes with the pride of having cultural celebrations that include other communities.

Across the river from Windsor, two miles to the north, there is Detroit and the United States, and they do things differently than we do. It is not that they do not have those cultural connections, but there is a special element to Canada that is rather unique. With the opportunities I have, I find these motions are very important, but, at the same time, I hope they are going to continue to encourage the government to make sure that heritage and other types of budgetary expenses, which may be seen as soft to some members in this chamber who might see budgetary expenditures as a loss in supporting cultural celebrations, will create engagement with other countries, groups and organizations. In my community, Lublin, with the city of Windsor, citizens stepped up to help out. They create opportunities for economic development and diversity.

I was one of the individuals put on the initial list of people who were banned in Russia. I did not mind. When I got the notification, my response was that I had hoped I could put myself higher on the list. It is because of some of the work I have done on this issue, among other things, and the importance we have as a country right now to support so many of the brothers and sisters in the Polish community within overlapping societies. The motion is symbolic in many respects. It is not legislation, but it would create an opportunity and a path forward. At the same time, I know it reflects the important grounding that is necessary.

When we celebrate Polish Heritage Month in the province Ontario, it is a very special event, where there are professional discussions, celebrations, food and many different things. We have seen displays and other things that Jerzy and the rest of the group put together that have educated new people about Polish contributions, whether they are in arts, culture, the economy, or many different things. Those things lead to economic development. The delegations over the years have strengthened the relationship and economic opportunity.

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To wrap up, I am grateful I have had the opportunity to speak. This is very important for the Polish community, but it is also reflective of a country that accepts and wants the civic engagement of other cultures in the very fabric of how we do things on a daily basis. It is most important to recognize them through special relationships. Polish heritage month is well timed. It is due, and I thank the mover of the motion.

• (1815)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Mississauga East—Cooksville for his right of reply.

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, *witam i dziękuję*. I am delighted to wrap up this beautiful discussion that we have had here on my private member's motion, Motion No. 75. The diverse voices of my colleagues, spanning various political affiliations and regions of our country, have resonated with unwavering support, declaring May as Polish heritage month and designating May 3 as Polish constitution day in Canada.

The unanimous backing from members across the spectrum is a testament to the profound contributions of our Polish-Canadian communities.

I want to thank my colleagues, the members of Parliament who have spoken today, the members for Yellowhead, Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, Edmonton Strathcona, Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Berthier—Maskinongé and Windsor West, the member we just heard from. I want to thank all those who participated as well in the first hour of debate for their thoughtful expression.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to the Polonia in Canada, whose roots trace back to the arrival of the first Polish immigrant in 1752. Over 272 years, this community has evolved into its present-day Polish diaspora of 1.1 million. Nicolaus Copernicus, the eminent Polish mathematician, doctor of medicine, theologian and astronomer, once said, "To know that we know what we know, and to know that we do not know what we do not know, that is true knowledge."

What we do know is true is the profound impact of the Polish-Canadian community on Canada's social, economic and political landscape. Its contribution in arts, music, entrepreneurship and academia have enriched our society immeasurably.

This motion owes its existence to the dedicated leaders within the Polish community who have tirelessly supported me and fellow members here in sharing their stories of Canadians of Polish descent. I extend my appreciation to those watching. We know some are with us here in the chamber today, whether in person or through our parliamentary channel.

While I cannot name everyone, I want to express a big thanks to His Excellency, Ambassador Witold Dzielski and his officials; to the Canadian Polish Congress and its president, John Tomczak, and vice-president, Dominik Roszak; as well as to the entire executive team of the Canadian Polish Congress.

I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of the various Polish Congress branch presidents and their boards, our Canada-Poland parliamentary friendship group and our chair, who was born in Poland and represents his community of Windsor—Tecumseh in the House. I know he will be working hard for our first flag raising here, when we get to commemorate May as Polish heritage month.

I had the privilege of joining my Polish community friends this past weekend at the Polish combatants' hall for the annual new year *oplatek*, or wafer reception. It was a moment to break bread, reflect on the past year and celebrate the achievements of the Polonia in Canada. This year marks the 90th anniversary of the Canadian Polish Congress, and we took the opportunity to express our gratitude to Canadian-Polish veterans who bravely fought for the peace, freedoms and democracy that we enjoy today.

I feel like I have been adopted by the Polish community. Like the Speaker, we come from Portuguese descent. That is maybe like John Tavares, with Portuguese and Polish coming together, but it has been a true honour. At that function, I received the Ignacy Jan Paderewski Polish medal of recognition. It is with pride that I wear it here today. I am very thankful for this recognition.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to Polish Canadians for Poland's steadfast support for Ukraine during these challenging times, my wife being of Ukrainian descent. The Polish spirit, determination and tireless efforts exemplify their commitment to enriching Canada with Polish culture, a strong work ethic, deep faith and unparalleled resilience.

• (1820)

When we think about what we are recognizing today, we are celebrating Polish heritage month and May 3 constitution day, from coast to coast to coast. I look forward to raising that Polish flag here on this Hill in Parliament, along with the Canadian flag.

Dziękuję bardzo. Niech żyje Polska. Niech żyje Kanada.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It being 6:23 p.m., the time provided for debate has expired. Accordingly, 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.

• (1825)

Mr. Peter Fonseca: Madam Speaker, I will ask for a recorded vote.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, February 7, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[*Translation*]

It being 6:24 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(7), the House will now proceed to the consideration of Bill C-365, an act respecting the implementation of a consumer-led banking system for Canadians, under Private Members' Business.

Private Members' Business

[English]

CONSUMER-LED BANKING ACT

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC) moved that Bill C-365, an act respecting the implementation of a consumer-led banking system for Canadians, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, when I was a young boy, growing up, like many Canadians, I fondly remember playing the game Monopoly. I loved owning all the utilities, collecting Park Place and Boardwalk, then putting hotels on them and bankrupting all my brothers, sisters and family members. It was really great.

The game, of course, was developed in the early 1900s by Lizzie Magie. She wanted it to be an educational tool. It was meant to show the negative aspect of property held in the hands of a very few. One hundred years later, Canadians see that Canada has a monopoly problem. Canadians pay the highest cellphone bills on the whole planet. When it comes to groceries, we only have three Canadian grocery chains and two American chains that are driving prices up. When it comes to a lot of industries, like the Internet, we have a monopoly in the sky overhead. We have satellite, which is the only accessible Internet a lot of our six million rural Canadians can get from Elon Musk's Starlink.

Then we look at the main one, which is banking. We only have five Canadian banks that control 87% of all the mortgages. Excuse me, but it was five. Two weeks ago, the finance minister approved the merger of HSBC and RBC. The number one bank bought the number seven bank, which means that five banks now control 90% of all the mortgages in Canada.

Talking about how bad it is with monopolies, we can go back to 1776. Adam Smith talked about monopolies in *The Wealth of Nations*. He talked about the invisible hand and the many buyers and sellers who negotiate and dictate prices. If we remove that invisible hand, and if we take away sellers and keep it to a very few, then prices go up and wages go down. We are seeing that across Canada. Canada is the country that has the most monopolies per industry sector.

Oligopoly was a word created in 1930, and it means “few sellers”. It actually comes from the word “oligarch”. When we talk about an oligopoly, that is what we are talking about in the banking sector. When we have few sellers, prices go up, services go down, wages go down, start-ups go down and innovation goes down.

We only have a month to look back at what happened, with RBC announcing it was going to buy HSBC, and to see exactly what happened from that. Before the announcement, HSBC had interest rates of 6.4% versus RBC at 7.15%. After the announcement, those rates went up 6.55%. That meant if someone had a mortgage of \$500,000 in Vancouver, they just paid \$750 more a year. Monopolies benefit only the very few. The shareholders and the owners are the only ones who benefit, while Canadians lose. We certainly have that problem.

When it comes to the banking sector, we do have major problems because of this oligopoly. One-third of Canadians are upset with their financial institutions. Canadians pay some of the highest banking fees in the world. Because of economic conditions, J.D. Power

stated that 50% of banking customers are “financially vulnerable or stressed”. That is an increase of 6% from only a year ago.

The banks will not share people's financial information. If people want the freedom to deal with another bank or institution, the banks feel that they own that information and will not share it with whom people want it shared. Canadians are nickel-and-dimed by the big banks for basic financial services, which Brits, Australians and Americans get for free.

The answer to our monopoly and oligopoly problem is right in front of us. A robust, open banking framework or consumer-led banking would allow the industry to overhaul its outdated systems and to modernize payment infrastructure, and would allow a platform for fintechs to fill the gaps left by Canada's oligopoly with one simple method. The banks would have to share one's financial data with one's consent.

Consumer-led banking makes the banks have to use an API, application program interface, so that companies could bank with people, and Canadians would get financial freedom. It is just common sense. It is freedom to decide who to bank with, which apps people want to use, how long their data is going to be used for and for what purposes.

● (1830)

It would mean that hundreds of financial institution applications and even new banks would be able to ply for Canadians' business, and Canadians would have the freedom of choice to decide who gets their banking business.

However, consumer-led banking, open banking, has already been delayed by this Liberal government for six years. My bill, Bill C-365, would end this six-year delay, and there is not a moment to lose. Other countries get it. South Korea implemented this in 2019, India in 2011, Australia in 2020, Japan in 2017, New Zealand in 2018 and the U.K. in 2018. Through consumer-led banking, we have seen countries other than Canada empower their consumers by allowing them, through security access, to share their own financial data. Other countries have reaped the rewards that Canada has lost out on.

In the U.K., with consumer-led banking implemented, with only 14% market share, consumers pay zero dollars for monthly transactional fees or for overdraft fees. Consumers in the U.K. pay zero dollars to their bank in general. The savings per year for the people in the U.K. is 12 billion pounds, and for small businesses, it is eight billion pounds. There have been over 250 companies created and over 4,000 jobs.

The reality, much like the industrial policy that Canada has lost out on, is that the most competitive and forward-looking leaders are based in other countries. Canada has some really great financial tech companies ready to lead the world, but if this is not implemented, they are going to leave Canada. This government has stalled, and the industry is losing patience, but let us walk through what has happened with this.

The government announced in 2018 that consumer-led and open banking would be in place by 2023. It is way past 2023.

The government hired an expert panel. Does that sound familiar? It hired an expert panel to weigh in back in the summer of 2021, which had a comprehensive recommendation of how to set up the system, including an 18-month implementation schedule.

The government hired a new expert to then come up with the framework in 2021. The expert reported back to the government in early 2023, but the report was never made public. In fact, it sits on the finance minister's desk. The minister sat on this report for six months and stalled this legislation, and now promises that it will be implemented. Strangely enough, after my private member's bill, Bill C-365, to get the government to implement consumer-led banking, it was tabled. However, this patient fintech industry is losing its patience, and we risk losing these companies, potentially worth hundreds of billions of dollars to this economy, at time when we need it the most.

For Canadians out there who are asking what “fintech” is, it stands for financial technology companies, and more Canadians have used a fintech app than they might even know. If a person cannot qualify for a loan because they do not have a Canadian credit history, they can share their monthly rent payments information with Borrowell's Rent Advantage to build their credit score. QuickBooks uses a person's transaction data to automate their bookkeeping, and there are one million small businesses using this app. Wealthica tracks a person's investment accounts at different banks while Wealthsimple is a Canadian online investment management service. Shakepay allows people to pay friends, buy Bitcoin and send money. KOHO is a no-fee spending and savings account with the perks of a credit card. Wise allows people to send cross-border currency quickly and efficiently.

The fintech industry in Canada is worth \$9.4 billion with 169 investments in 2021 worth \$1.75 billion, but it is despite this government, not because of it. Companies exist, but is almost in a black market.

Nine million Canadians have been simply giving away their online banking usernames and passwords, or what we call “screen scraping”, because the banks will not pass that information on. Screen scraping is illegal in most countries. Can members imagine having to share their safe word with another company because the banks just will not share their information? It is incredibly dangerous. As part of the U.K.'s open-banking reforms, the U.K. scrapped it, banned it and made it so that it could not happen. However, for nine million Canadians, it is happening each and every day.

• (1835)

Consumers need laws that force the banks to allow them to, on request, transfer their data from a bank to a financial tech organiza-

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tion, or to move it from bank to bank in order to give them financial freedom. It defines how the consent should be obtained, as well as the cybersecurity requirements that banks and apps must meet. Perhaps most importantly, open banking also helps customers hold their banks or fintechs liable if and when they are unreliable with their data.

Canada's reluctance to embrace open banking has recklessly allowed Canadians' private data to be at risk or compromised. Competition would help fix fraud. It makes companies sharper and makes them invest in better technologies. Currently, with fraud increasing, there has been a decrease in satisfaction with how banks handle fraud-related problem resolution. With competition, we would solve that.

The financial institutions that rank the highest in J.D. Power are those that effectively communicate about fees, fraud and savings; provide tools and information about budgeting and debt reduction; and address security and fraud problems in a timely manner. Members can imagine that competition would also fix fraud. It is the lack of competition that is making Canadians have to put their data at risk, and this is compromising Canadians and Canadian businesses.

Let us be clear. Canadians want this. It is not just the cost savings, but the service. When we look at what Canadians want out of their banks, they want to be able to have the tools they want, when they want them. They want a bank that looks after their needs, and one that gets back to them. A lot of these fintechs are open during the weekends. We have seen other industries explode when they have competition. We see the service go up. We see wages go up. We make sure that we create good jobs that stay in Canada at a time when we need them.

Here are some comments we received when I put this bill forward. We have had a lot of good, positive feedback from fintechs that are desperately trying to get this legislation through. They have been asking for it for six years.

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We have Sherri-Lee Mathers, an automation-obsessed accounting technologist, which are her words, in craft brewing technology. She writes, “Open Banking will bring improved Data-driven insights, and cashflow planning so desperately needed by Canadian Small Businesses. Especially, as they weather the challenges in the financial climate especially those industries that are still trying to recover from the pandemic!...I SAY YES to OPEN BANKING!”

Tanya Hilts is a CPB whose business name is Rev Up Your Business with Tanya: The Cloud-Savvy Bookkeeper & Efficiency Evangelist! These are great names. They are obviously entrepreneurs. Tanya writes, “Thank you...for your support...This is a game-changer for Canadian businesses, offering unparalleled transparency and control over financial data.”

Almost everyone I have met with supports this initiative and wants to make sure we get this right, get it through and get it going.

The other part right now is that start-ups in Canada are at a 20-year low. We have 100,000 fewer start-ups from entrepreneurs in Canada than we did 20 years ago, and this is at a time when we are seeing massive layoffs in the Canadian economy. We had announcements even in the last couple of weeks of thousands of jobs that are coming to an end and workers being laid off. We need this industry to grow. We need it to prosper. We certainly need it to excel with the right framework from the government, but we need that to happen right now.

The solution to Canada's monopoly problem is a Canadian consumer-led banking initiative and legislation that we want before the House within six months of this bill passing. In the United Kingdom, consumer-led banking has saved individuals 12 billion pounds per year and businesses over 6 billion pounds per year, with improved access to financial services, lower fees and greater control of their financial data.

Canadians know what a monopoly is, but they hardly know what a free market is. I talked about the board game Monopoly, and there is another board game called Anti-Monopoly, which is supposed to talk about the free-market system. It was supposed to teach our kids and families about a free market and what it is.

After 100 years of monopolies in Canada, it is time we open the free market. Today, Bill C-365 is calling for the government to reaffirm a promise to enact consumer-led banking and introduce legislation within six months so Canadians can have a free market in the banking sector and, with it, financial freedom and better prices, because Canadians and the Canadian fintech industry deserve more.

As the Conservative Party, we want to bring home savings and freedom to consumers. Let us bring home open banking to Canadians and the Canadian public.

● (1840)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I am sure the member is aware, in the fall economic statement, which is the debate that was going on, but Conservatives do not want to pass the legislation and are filibustering it, it talks about setting and establishing the framework for a lot of the things, and I would suggest possibly more, that he is talking about now. It talks about how the budget 2024 legislation will incorporate it.

I wonder if the member would make a commitment to not only support it, but also encourage his colleagues across the way to try to get it passed relatively quickly.

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, this is so simple, and I think I speak on behalf of all Canadians. I have five words: We do not believe them. They have had six years since they promised to implement this legislation. They said it would be done by 2023; it is 2024. All these companies have been promised one thing, but they did not get the answers.

A report for this exact open-banking legislation is sitting on the desk of the finance minister. It was after the fact that this private member's bill hit the floor that the government even mentioned in the fall economic statement. It is time to get this implemented. Let us get it done.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, first of all, I thank my colleague for Bill C-365, which is very interesting. I look forward to talking about it in my speech.

Many of these fintech companies are provincially regulated tech start-ups. In fact, the largest financial institution in Quebec, Desjardins, is a co-operative operating under the provincial jurisdiction of the Government of Quebec and is not subject to federal legislation.

I would like to know whether my colleague has considered the need to align with Quebec's wish to consult and legislate in this area, and whether he is open to the idea of amending Bill C-365 to prevent a situation where some banks are regulated under an open banking system and Desjardins, in Quebec, remains unregulated or not yet regulated. I wonder whether my colleague has thought about that aspect.

[*English*]

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, the member is a new addition to our industry committee; I look forward to working with him.

We see this across a lot of different spectra right now. This bill is asking for legislation. The legislation has to come forward. It is much the same as we are seeing with Bill C-27, and we have a much better privacy bill in Quebec, so I will agree with that. It is much the same as we saw today when we were talking about the problems with Manulife and Loblaw, and the fact that some of the legislation is provincial that is allowing Manulife to sole-source pharmaceuticals.

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Yes, I agree with the member. We always need to look at the provinces, and we are looking at that with some of that legislation. However, let us get the legislation forward and passed, so we can all talk about it in the House of Commons and then get it passed for Quebec and all Canadians.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, can the member give a clear indication of how much consultation he did within the industry before tabling the legislation?

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, I probably did a lot more than the government, because we have not seen a report; it is sitting on a desk. We do not even know what it has done for consultation.

I am just going to reiterate what the government has done, how long it has taken and why we are trying to get this through. The government announced, in 2018, that this would be in place by 2023. It hired an expert panel to weigh in, which reported back in the summer of 2021. The government then hired a new expert to come up with a framework in 2021, and the expert reported back. He was still being paid by the government, on the payroll, in early 2023. The report is sitting on a desk, and nothing has happened.

I have probably talked to just as many people in six months as the government did during its consultation, but I can say that all of them, every one of them, wants this legislation. Let us get this legislation in front of Parliament, and let us get it through.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think, in terms of a secure and stable financial sector, that is what Canadians want to see. It was not that long ago when Stephen Harper was the prime minister and we had a banking industry that came out of the 90s that was fairly healthy because of decisions that Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin put into place to protect our banking industry.

I say that because it is important for us to recognize that, as a party, we have gone the extra mile, whether it is consultations or ensuring that the best interests of Canadians were put first in protecting a vital industry that has to be there, healthy and strong and pushing for consumer protections and choice first and foremost.

Remember the first few years of Stephen Harper? We had banks that were going bankrupt around the world. The world was looking at Canada, asking how it is that Canada was doing so well in terms of not having banks going bankrupt. It was being attributed to the work that Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin did during the 90s.

In order to be able to do the things that we did back then, it required a great deal of effort and work. That is what we have seen since we were elected back in 2015. We have very much seen a proactive government taking a look at how to build and continue to strengthen Canada's middle class. That means we have to take into consideration what is happening in our financial industry.

The banks play a critical role. That is why we have seen budgetary measures dealing with the banking industry. Canadians should not be surprised. The member himself makes reference to the fact that we have been talking about it from 2016.

That does not surprise me. Of course we are going to be talking about many different aspects of the banking industry because we

understand the importance of it, even when the pandemic hit Canada. It was a worldwide pandemic. We took a look at how we could pressure the banking industry, the financial industry, to ensure that small businesses and Canadians' interests were going to be best served.

We used tax dollars and government policy to ensure that small businesses and families were going to be protected during that pandemic, ultimately, I would suggest, saving many businesses from going bankrupt and ensuring that families had the disposable income when it came time to pay mortgages or even put food on the table.

What has the government done with respect to this specific issue that the member has raised?

It was not that long ago that we had the fall economic statement.

Because of the efforts of the Department of Finance and other departments, we were able to deal with the many different stakeholders. The member made reference to one area in particular but what about the consumer? What about the average Canadian? What about small businesses? What about the larger corporations or the family farms? I think we had a responsibility to do a thorough consultation. The idea is great, but it takes a lot of work to put it together.

It was coming together quite well. I was glad that many Canadians, our banking industry and consumer groups were very pleased with the fall economic statement. That is the statement they are voting against, I will remind the member. Some of my colleagues are a little more optimistic than I am but I suspect that they are going to vote against it.

● (1845)

However, within that statement is that commitment, based on the discussions, the consultations and the work with the many different stakeholders, including consumers. It is coming together, because at the end of the day we recognize that we need to modernize. That is not an option. It is one thing to have the idea today. We have had that idea for years, and we have been working on it.

When I opened up my first bank account, it would have been in the late seventies, and at that time one just walked into a bank. Mine was the Bank of Nova Scotia on Albert Street. It did not take too much to be able to open up a chequing account back then. People would be quite surprised to see how easy it was back then. Today, when we try to open up a bank account, there are many challenges. Many challenges that my constituents have are because of issues like ID and so forth. One has to have a bank account.

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E-transfers are something that is relatively new. We have to look at ways of ensuring that privacy issues are dealt with. These data-banks and the amount of information that our financial institutions have on the average Canadian are extreme. If we put in an application for a loan or even if we put in an application for a bank account, we can imagine the type of information that is gathered from banks or credit unions, and we will find that they likely know a lot more about us than we might think they do.

As a government, we have to ensure that the right to protect that information is also in place. We have to ensure that those financial transactions are not leading to financial exploitation of consumers. We are very much concerned with that. That is actually one of the motivating factors for the government to take action in terms of the budget that is going to be coming up in 2024, just a couple of months away, possibly.

I look forward to seeing that budget and the budget implementation bill that will follow it. I think, at the end of the day, that Canadians can feel confident, because it is not only traditionally that other prime ministers, whether it is Paul Martin or Jean Chrétien, have been there to protect our financial industry, along with consumers. We have seen that this government has not only continued that tradition but is now looking at a way we can assist by having what I call, though others would call it different things, “consumer-friendly” legislation that is going to ensure that Canadians are not being financially exploited because of fees for services and so forth.

The member talked a lot about banks. I think we underestimate just how important our credit unions are. Our credit unions are a lifeline to so many and provide such a wonderful service, including providing competition, and we need to look at ways we can enhance and support these credit unions in whatever way we can. I would like to give a shout-out to all those individuals who are involved at grassroots credit unions for the fine work they do in ensuring that we have even more competition in our financial institutions.

Yes, they do deserve a round of applause.

• (1850)

I can tell members that I believe that, as a governing political party, we have been there in the past, and that has been demonstrated. Other governments around the world were envious of Canada and the work we did during the nineties to protect the banking industry and to protect Canadians by doing that. We are carrying that tradition on today by ensuring that we continue to modernize, protect consumers and protect the industry.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will start by thanking the member for Bay of Quinte for introducing the bill. It is a very interesting bill.

As surprising as it may be, this is the first time we have the opportunity to debate open finance in the House. Even the Standing Committee on Finance has never addressed this issue. So far, the discussion has been largely left to the experts and industry representatives. The Department of Finance, the Office of Superintendent of Financial Institutions, the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada, all those fine people, are currently

examining the issue. As I said earlier, the same goes for the *Autorité des marchés financiers*, or the AMF, and Quebec's department of finance. In fact, back home in Quebec, we have Desjardins and other co-operatives.

It is also important to remember that the technology companies that would interface with customers in an open financial system are not banks. Essentially, they do not fall under federal jurisdiction, just as not all financial institutions fall under federal jurisdiction.

I have been closely following the work of the Advisory Committee on Open Banking, which is referenced extensively in the preamble of the bill. This work is very enlightening. The committee heard from a wide range of stakeholders, including banks, credit unions, insurance companies, trusts, brokers, technology companies, and the list goes on. My colleague talked about that. However, no consumer advocacy groups, privacy advocates or provincial regulators, such as Quebec's AMF, were consulted. It was therefore time to broaden the conversation. For that reason alone, the bill makes a huge contribution to the debate, and I thank my colleague once again for introducing it.

Implementing an open financial system constitutes a huge change with many implications. In the long term, we can envisage a system in which financial institutions would essentially be able to manufacture financial products. Customer relations would be handled by technology companies that would not offer the financial products themselves but would act as intermediaries and data aggregators. That is quite a change. The bill's preamble lists the benefits of such an open financial system. I will not repeat them here, as I think they have been clearly outlined. I would even say that it is inevitable that we will move toward an open system. It is going to happen.

Since this is the first time we are discussing this subject, I will use my time today to broaden the debate a bit, because there are also challenges and risks. It is our job as legislators to talk about all that, since we are working toward the common good.

Our financial system's greatest asset is its stability and the confidence that comes with that stability. It is stable because it is subject to very strict legal obligations. Ultimately, if something goes wrong, for example if there is fraud, data theft, failure to report a suspicious transaction that would enable the tracking of money laundering, and so on, then the financial institution is the one that is legally and financially responsible. These financial institutions are subject to strict prudential obligations so as to ensure they have the means of dealing with the risks in question.

Since the financial institutions are ultimately responsible, they currently guard their members' and customers' personal, financial or banking information very jealously. Again, the financial system's greatest asset is its stability. However, this is also where it becomes a weakness, because it can lead to compartmentalization and a lack of flexibility. The world has changed with all the new financial products online. The development of information technologies has given rise to the data economy, which requires the data to circulate more freely in order to grow. It is unclear whether our financial architecture is currently adapted to this new environment. That is the purpose of the bill.

A financial institution cannot be asked to be responsible for the use of data it no longer has custody of. Regulations and prudential standards will have to be adapted. It is far from certain that a technology company, on the other hand, has the wherewithal to take on the financial risks I mentioned earlier. For example, a financial start-up can be born and die in no time at all. That has been the case with several cryptocurrency companies. Caution is needed. That does not mean we should stand idle and fail to move towards a more open banking system.

People want the flexibility this kind of system offers. People want aggregators that put all their information in one place, facilitate transactions and give individuals an accurate picture of their financial situation. When money is tight at the end of the month, these applications and services are valuable, and there is demand for them.

● (1855)

People do not understand why they are not being allowed to do this with the technology available today. After all, our personal information belongs to us.

That is why fintech companies have already started coming on line despite the legal limbo. They are responding to an obvious demand. At this point, because they are not officially part of a financial system that makes sense, they exist in a grey area and find alternative ways to evolve.

Users currently provide their personal information themselves. When the app gets into an account, it extracts data from the screen and stores personal and confidential information. Financial institutions' secure networks get regular visits from actors outside the financial sector, and that makes them vulnerable. The more advanced these strategies get, the greater the risk to our banking system.

I was saying that the status quo is not sustainable. It would be pointless for legislators to bury their heads in the sand as though it were 1990.

In some cases, it must be said, the risks are minimal. An aggregator that scans public data to show us mortgage rates in one click is convenient and low risk. However, an aggregator that collects our personal data to give us a detailed picture of our financial situation is also convenient but riskier. Financial information is very sensitive, so it is vital to protect it. Furthermore, if the app can be used to perform transactions, which implies that it places orders, that opens up a whole new level of risk, the risk of fraud.

What about the principle of needing to know the customer? That principle is the foundation of our anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing laws. How can a financial institution apply this principle when it is communicating via an app?

Lastly, an important part of risk is the financial capacity to take on risk. Without that, the consumer could lose everything. Fintechs currently operate in a grey area, which is a problem. A clear framework is needed, with clear obligations and responsibilities, as well as oversight mechanisms and institutions to enforce compliance.

The advisory committee recognized all of these difficulties, but it felt that it was important to move quickly so that Canada would not be lagging behind and so as not to hamper the sector's develop-

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ment, a bit like what my Conservative colleague mentioned earlier. He also said that the companies continue to operate in a grey area, which is what is happening right now and is not serving anyone well. That is why the advisory committee recommended giving clear direction.

However, the committee also recommended minimal regulations so that things can move faster. Then, industry stakeholders can determine for themselves how to operationalize and resolve technical issues. In short, the committee is recommending a sort of self-regulation.

It recognized that the financial strength of technology companies is an issue, but it did not propose any institutional mechanism for dealing with it. There will not be any equivalent for deposit insurance, at least not in the beginning, when the new legislation comes into force, as the committee suggests. At best, the committee mentions that people should get their own insurance.

The committee also recognized the constitutional issue, but it proposed circumventing it. It proposes integrating the federal financial institutions. As for the others, for example, the large credit unions, they can join if they want to, but as second-class institutions, which is something we do not want to happen. As Quebecers, whose main financial institution is a co-operative and not a bank, we understand that a two-tier financial system leaves much to be desired. Barring a constitutional amendment, the federal government cannot regulate these other institutions. Also, in order for the financial system to truly be open, the governments will have to coordinate.

I like Bill C-365. It requires the government to introduce legislation in a timely manner. However, I am not so sure about the second clause. Setting a deadline for introducing legislation without ensuring that we are ready and that any potential problems have been resolved seems a bit hasty and rash to me.

In implementing such an open system, I would like us to follow the example of Emperor Augustus who said to make haste slowly. Let us get to work right away, because the status quo is no longer tenable, but let us take the time to get it right, because the risks are high. Specifically, let us do it right by properly consulting the Quebec government when it comes to regulating co-operatives.

● (1900)

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am, as always, proud to rise on behalf of the amazing people in North Island—Powell River.

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Today, we are here talking about a private member's bill from the member for Bay of Quinte, Bill C-365. This is a very interesting bill. It is about consumer-led banking systems and Canadians. Happily, I have had some constituents come and visit me about this very issue, from the Coastal Community credit union in my riding. They talked about some of the really significant issues, especially for people living in rural and remote communities.

People may not have access to a bank at all in their community, or it may be a long distance to go to a bank. They may also be in a situation in which they have only one banking institution in their community and they want to go to a different one but cannot, because sharing that information can be incredibly complex. This is really key in this issue. It is making sure that people's personal banking information is accessible, so that if they find another bank that is going to meet the needs they have, they will be able to get that information sent in a way that is more transparent for themselves and for the banking system.

This PMB asks the Minister of Finance to table a plan for the implementation of open banking within 30 days of this act's coming into force. I think it is really important for us to all understand that in 2018, which is a while ago, the finance minister did create an advisory committee to look into this. In 2021 it delivered a report that included a plan for implementing consumer-led banking in Canada as early as 2023. Here we are in 2024, and it is still not happening. Again, it really is about making this more accessible.

I have heard from some of my constituents, and this is a particularly concerning area for me, who have apps that allow them to take multiple banks they are using and look at the information in a way that is comparable. The problem with these apps, of course, is that individuals are sharing all their banking information and all of their passwords and hoping that the app does not take that information or get hacked by somebody who might use it in a very negative way. This is very concerning, and it is something my constituents have been very concerned about.

This is the other part of this bill: If the minister cannot produce a bill within the associated timeline, within the first six months of the act's coming into force, the minister must table a report. That is so there is transparency and we understand what the holdup is and what the problem is.

We need to see these things done. When it comes down to it, I think what we have to assess very clearly is that competition is the key here. I have to thank my friend, the member for Windsor West, who has been doing a lot of work on competition. On our cellphones, some of the highest rates on the whole planet are here. Why is that? It is partially because we do not have appropriate competition. It is the same thing that we are seeing in our grocery stores. The gouging that is happening in our grocery stores correlates very clearly with the fact that big, wealthy CEOs are making huge profits and getting huge bonuses, and their shareholders are walking away with a lot of money.

At the same time as that is happening, everyday Canadians are struggling to feed their families. People who work in those grocery stores are often not being paid well enough to afford the food in the store they work in. I think Canadians know instinctively that it is just not a fair system anymore. What we are seeing in our system is

more and more gouging. We are seeing it with the oil and gas industry, which is seeing record profits like it has not seen in years at the same time as people are trying to figure out how they are going to fill up their tanks.

I come from a rural riding. Some of our communities are extremely isolated, and it is not just putting gas into cars. It is putting fuel into boats to get to the places we need to get to for grocery shopping and for the basic necessities of life.

• (1905)

I really appreciate and see a lot more people in my riding buying electric cars. There are plug-ins, and I have seen them working in places like Wasa, which is a very small community but already has a plug-in station. People are using that, which is fantastic, but we still have a long way to go.

When people are suffering, we know that competition is at the very core of the issue. This is something that we actually start to take steps on, moving forward, to address the issue. When I think about competition, I have to think about basic human rights and the fact that some people are unable to afford the basic things. However, I have to say that, at this point, without a cellphone, a person might be able to get away with it if they are retired and in their 80s, but for most people today, it really leaves them unable to access things.

I work with a lot of seniors in my riding who are still figuring out how to use computers, and they are certainly not interested in any way in going to the public library to do their taxes. Therefore, we do things to help and support them. However, young people today know how to use everything. They know that, if they want to sign up for anything, make an appointment with a doctor or any of those basic things, they must have access. If it is too expensive, and if we have less and less competition, then the consumer pays, and that is a big problem in Canada.

Whether it be banking, grocery shopping or buying gas, it is all about the fact that we have let the ultrawealthy, with wealth that most Canadians can never even consider, walk away with lots of cash in their pockets as we are struggling. That is why the NDP continues to do the work that it does to make sure that there is more fairness.

Yesterday, I was left with a lot of fear and anger in my heart. I think that, when things happen to our country, as parliamentarians, we should always stand up in this place and talk about them. What is making me afraid and very angry is the fact that, in Alberta, the premier is now putting forward legislation to say that children who want to identify as who they are in school have to get permission from their parents. I think that is a horrifying reality of attacking the basic human rights of people.

If we look at our system in Canada, there are no things known legally as “parents’ rights”. There are parents’ responsibilities, and there certainly are children’s rights. I hate to see any step in this country that will put children in a place where they are not safe. We know from statistics that children who come from the queer community are not always safe at home. They cannot always be honest with the people they love about who they are. If we do not give them a place where they can identify as they want to identify, we risk their very lives. I think all Canadians have to stand up against this.

In closing, last year, I read a beautiful Canadian book titled *Falling Back in Love with Being Human*, by Kai Cheng Thom. She is an amazing, powerful trans writer who does a beautiful job of articulating the power and fierceness of the trans community, as well as amazing beauty, strength and solidarity. I hope that, as we face this challenge, we remember that not only are these children and young people vulnerable, but they are also powerful and strong, and they are going to be pushing back really hard. As they push back, we must do our duty and make sure that they are not damaged. I hope all people in the House consider the safety of children.

I will conclude by reading Kai Cheng Thom, who wrote: “To build a better future, we need to learn how to transform in response to one another. We can’t build a better world by getting rid of people; we can only build a better world by bringing them in.”

• (1910)

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, let me begin by thanking my good friend, the member for Bay of Quinte, for bringing this private member’s bill forward that is going to help Canadians.

The fast and furious finance minister speeds through the streets of Alberta but is as slow as a snail when it comes to legislation that actually matters. I thank my good friend from the Bay of Quinte for waking up the Liberals and hopefully waking up the finance minister to pass this legislation to help many Canadians and hopefully get our economy back on track.

Canada has a problem. Our country is getting poorer and so are our people. Since September 2022, the GDP per person has been declining. In fact, the real GDP per person was lower in the third quarter of 2023 than it was in the second quarter of 2018. That means five years of Canadians’ wealth has been completely wiped out and the economy is less productive. Why is this important to the debate this evening? Because, fundamentally, getting GDP per person back on track relies on getting Liberal red tape and regulations out of the way and making the economy more competitive.

Philip Cross, the former chief economic analyst of Statistics Canada, has raised concerns about Canada’s lagging productivity growth, pointing out that Canada’s GDP per person growth rate is the worst since the Great Depression. In the past decade, productivity has only grown 4.3%, as opposed to the U.S., which saw a 47.4% growth rate. In fact, according to the OECD, Canada is last among developed countries for GDP per person growth, a statistic that the Liberal government even included in budget 2022.

William Robson, CEO of the C.D. Howe Institute said just this past December that business investment in Canada has not been this

Private Members’ Business

bad since the Great Depression. He pointed out that since 2015, capital per worker has been dropping while our population continues to climb, a situation that will lead to an even less productive and less wealthy economy.

Compared to the U.S., from 2014 to 2021, the Fraser Institute found that business investment per worker in Canada declined by 20%, while in the same period, U.S. investment per worker increased almost 15%. This context is important to this debate because it once again highlights the desperate need Canada has for more competition in all sectors of the economy.

According to the competition commissioner, Canada’s already concentrated industries, such as banking, airlines, railways, telecommunications and groceries are only getting more concentrated. He noted that the barriers to entry are too high and too expensive. The red tape, the gatekeepers and Liberal anti-competition, anti-innovation, anti-modernization policies have shut down companies from around the world coming to Canada and from the private sector restarting growth in the economy.

Ninety-three per cent of all banking assets in Canada are controlled by the six biggest banks: RBC, TD, BMO, Scotiabank, CIBC and National Bank, as well as HSBC, which is being bought out by RBC. This has resulted in cookie-cutter services being offered at virtually the same price at all major financial institutions. Businesses and people want financial services that are tailor-made to their needs and that are accessible, easy to use and affordable.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business recently published a study that shows that overall satisfaction by businesses in banks varies by size. Smaller businesses tend to trust credit unions and smaller financial institutions more as there is better customer services and more connection to their own communities, while medium and bigger businesses rely on larger financial institutions for access to larger amounts of financing. The options that these businesses have in finding the right institutions with the best services are shrinking.

Compared to the U.S., Canada has 34 domestic banks versus roughly 4,844 domestic American banks. That means there are roughly 121,000 Canadians for every bank, compared to just 66,000 Americans for every bank in the U.S.. In the U.S., there are almost 4,800 credit unions, while in Canada there are only 200.

Adjournment Proceedings

● (1915)

Competition in any sector is vital to lowering the cost of the goods we buy and the services we use as consumers. More importantly, it also leads to innovation and modernization that will allow Canada's industries to compete globally. That is why consumer-led banking is key to the success of innovation in Canada's financial sector and for bringing home affordable banking solutions for all Canadians.

There are examples globally of this modernization actually working to bring home lower bank fees, better services and more economic growth. The prime example is the model of the U.K., where since 2017, the growth of consumer-led banking has been exceptional and, in fact, has saved businesses and individuals over 18 billion pounds, thanks to lower or no banking fees whatsoever.

The British government brought in consumer-led banking as a market-based fix for an overly uncompetitive financial sector, and between 2018 and 2023, the number of fintechs in the consumer-led banking space jumped from four to 295. There are more than seven million users of consumer-led banking in the U.K. and, as of 2022, they had made 68.2 million payments using this technology. For those users, banking and transaction fees are zero. This modernization has added billions of pounds to the U.K. economy, created thousands of jobs and created real competition in the financial sector.

Globally, the consumer-led banking market has grown to \$128 billion as the U.K., most of the EU, Norway, India, Australia, South Korea, the Philippines, Brazil and Mexico bring consumer-led banking online. The U.S., Turkey, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, New Zealand, Japan and Taiwan are joining Canada in reviewing or setting up a consumer-led banking system. The success that the U.K. has had with this modernization, and the fact that major economies and trading partners with Canada are bringing consumer-led banking online, should be an indication that Canada needs to get the ball rolling.

However, more importantly than that, we see the benefits that consumer-led banking can have for people and businesses: the savings, the access to financial services and the freedom of choice. Fintechs in Canada are already building up the customer base, the technology and the services that will be important to making a modern banking system work. Questrade, Wealthsimple, Neo Financial, EQ Bank, Borrowell, Intuit and others are already building the components to offer competition, choice, and low-fee, tailor-made banking options to all Canadians.

In fact, credit unions are wanting to partner with fintechs to offer better services and products to their customers, but fintechs and credit unions need the government to get out of the way and let consumer-led banking go ahead. There are more companies that want to come to Canada, like KOHO, which just applied to the Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy to be considered a schedule 1 domestic bank and have access to the Canadian market.

After the Liberal-NDP government rammed through the RBC-*HSBC* merger without actually thinking of the Canadians who would be impacted by the decision, it is good to see that there are still fintechs and financial companies out there that want to do business in Canada. As common-sense Conservatives look to the future

without the Liberal government and the fast and furious finance minister, our side is working with Canadians and businesses to develop real solutions that will bring home competition and productivity growth.

We need to focus on these common-sense solutions for Canadians and all newcomers. It benefits not only the people living here but also the many who will come here looking for a better future. When they come here, they get hit with Liberal-NDP high inflation, high taxes and a high cost of living. At least we can do this for them so they will have the freedom to move around their data and have more competition, which would lead to better products in the future.

It is clear; the common-sense Conservative team is going to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. Let us bring it home.

● (1920)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It being 7:24 p.m., the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise tonight in Adjournment Proceedings to pursue a question that I asked in question period back in October 2023.

On October 6, I asked about the delays on the Trans Mountain pipeline and the decision of our Crown corporation, us, our government and all Canadians to violate a sacred commitment that we had made to the first nations at the Stk'émłúpsēmc te Secwépemc Nation. It often goes by the initials SSN. It is near Kamloops, and the people have a sacred area of their territory that they call "Pípsell". I know this area well because I worked with that first nation when it conducted its own independent environmental assessment of a proposed open mine called the Ajax mine that was to be raised. The reason the first nation turned down the Ajax mine was that it would violate the sacred nature of the Pípsell, and it must be protected.

When that same first nation negotiated with our Crown corporation, Trans Mountain expansion, TMX, about bringing a pipeline through its territory, the members of the first nation agreed but on a strong condition that if, and only if, the Pípsell was protected. TMX operators said they had engineers. They could do microtunnelling. They could drill around the Pípsell. They would not disturb the Pípsell. That was just up until this fall when TMX discovered its engineering was not so good.

TMX operators discovered they could not do microtunnelling. They went back to the Canada Energy Regulator and said that they could not keep their word to the first nation; they would have to drill right through the Pípsell. The first nation went to the Canada Energy Regulator and made the case that it should not be allowed. The Canada Energy Regulator said that it was so sad, but if it did not violate its commitments to the first nation, in other words, if it did not violate the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that free, prior and informed consent means something, then the cost of the pipeline would go up again, and there would be further delays again and that the pipeline must be built. Why? It is now an article of faith for the Liberal government that the pipeline must be built. It does not need evidence, and there is not evidence in favour of building that pipeline. There has never been a cost-benefit analysis on building that pipeline, and I know because I went through the National Energy Board hearings at the initial process.

It gets worse because the Canada Energy Regulator gave TMX permission to proceed. As I pointed out in my question in October 2023, the Canada Energy Regulator did not give reasons for its decision, so the first nation was unable to put together a case to go to court to get an injunction against the construction, and TMX operators decided to start building on the very day that was the statutory holiday in Canada to mark reconciliation: the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

The answer I got from the parliamentary secretary at the time was that the decision was made by an independent regulator. I knew that. I did not ask the Government of Canada why it made the decision to ignore the sacred nature of the commitment. I asked why the government did not tell TMX, which we own, to stop construction until its operators gave the first nation the legal reasons on which they could base an appeal.

It has continued to get bad. Predictably, the pipeline is delayed again. The costs are now \$35 billion. When will we stop the madness, and cancel the pipeline?

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• (1925)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and to the Minister of Official Languages, Lib.): Madam Speaker, reconciliation with indigenous communities is a priority for our government. As part of our commitment to advancing reconciliation with indigenous peoples across Canada, Natural Resources Canada is developing a national benefits-sharing framework to ensure that indigenous communities benefit directly from major resource development projects. All Canadians deserve to share in Canada's economic prosperity.

The opportunity before us for a clean economy offers us new ways to move forward with economic reconciliation. Economic reconciliation, whether in engaging with our indigenous partners, creating good jobs in indigenous communities or ensuring that indigenous communities share in the prosperity of major projects, is a key aspect of the federal government's work to build a strong and sustainable economy.

The Government of Canada is making its contribution. In budget 2022, Natural Resources Canada received \$103.4 million to advance economic reconciliation in the natural resources sector, including \$3.4 million to develop a national benefits-sharing framework. The Government of Canada is committed to renewing its relationship with indigenous peoples based on the recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership.

As we know, the world is facing the impact of climate change and we must invest in solutions to reduce emissions and foster prosperity. That is why we are investing in clean and renewable energy to reduce emissions and create jobs, including with our indigenous partners.

• (1930)

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, to say that was an inadequate response would be a massive understatement.

The parliamentary secretary just told us we have to reduce emissions while defending building a \$35-billion pipeline that will increase emissions. It is a climate disaster. He completely ignored, as the government did before, that the pipeline violating the Pípsell is the equivalent, as I said on October 6, of a decision to destroy the Garden of Eden, if we knew where it was, for people from the Judeo-Christian tradition.

This is the origin story of the peoples of this territory, and there are not enough beads and trinkets to throw into the mix to make up for the violation and the absolute obscenity of doing it on the statutory holiday for reconciliation.

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Mr. Marc Serré: Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada has invested millions of dollars in partnership with first nations, Métis and Inuit communities.

I will give some examples. There is the Old Crow solar project in Yukon with the first nations of Vuntut Gwitchin.

There is also the Burchill Wind Farm in New Brunswick, with the Tobique First Nation.

The Oneida Energy Storage project, with the Six Nations in Ontario, is another example.

There is the Bekevar Wind project and the Awasis Solar Project with the Cowessess First Nation in Saskatchewan.

These are examples of investments we have made with first nations. I could name many more, but these projects are just some of the ways we are partnering with indigenous leaders to deliver energy security, clean power and emissions reductions.

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I believe in Canada. It is nice to stand up here and talk about how I believe that Canada is greater than the sum of its parts.

One of its parts, my home province of Alberta, is such an important part of our Confederation. It provides so much food, not just to Canada but to the world. It provides energy, not just to Canada but to the world. Sometimes I feel like my province is forgotten in some of the discussions we have here.

One of the areas that is very near and dear to my heart but also very near and dear to the economy, not just of Alberta but to the entire country, is water. Right now, Alberta is looking at planning for a period of drought and trying to figure out how we provide that food and energy, contribute to Canada's economy, global food security and global energy security, and also deal with the potential of a very large water shortage.

This should be an important part of Canada's environmental plan, yet the federal government has been not relatively silent but very silent on this very important issue. It is February. This is going to be a problem come summer. The time for the government to have a plan to deal with this and to partner with my province is now. There should not be any partisan politics to this. The federal government should be actively seeking to help my province and come up with a way to support and plan for what is clearly going to be a large problem that affects the entire country.

Now, in February, before we deal with the outcome of this issue, my question to the government is simple. What is it doing to assist the Province of Alberta, farmers, residents and industry in dealing with this drought situation?

• (1935)

Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and to the Minister of Official Languages, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is really a pleasure to take part in the debate here tonight.

Late last fall, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance presented the 2023 fall economic statement. With the fall economic statement, we are taking further action to support the middle class and to build more homes faster. I am proud to say that our economic plan to build a stronger economy is working for everyone, with more great jobs for Canadians that they can count on, and the plan is working. I will give a few facts.

Inflation is 3.4%, down from its peak of 8.1%, and wage growth has outpaced inflation for 11 months in a row. Also, the private sector economists now expect Canada to avoid the recession that many had predicted, and both the IMF and the OECD predict that Canada will have the strongest growth in the G7 in 2025. As well, Canada maintains both the lowest deficit-to-GDP and net debt-to-GDP ratios in the G7. These are some facts.

[Translation]

Nevertheless, rapidly rising interest rates are having an impact everywhere in Canada, including here. Canadians are having a hard time making ends meet.

That is why our government is adopting better targeted measures to stabilize prices, make life more affordable and protect people with mortgages to pay.

[English]

Let me give a few examples. We are moving forward with the new Canadian mortgage charter, which details the relief that Canadians can expect from banks in these difficult times. Also, we see our government is moving forward with meaningful actions to make life in Canada more affordable.

[Translation]

With respect to the environment, we understand that climate change is a threat not only to Canadians' health and safety, but also to financial security and economic well-being. That is why we have to stay the course with the price on pollution, which experts say is one of the best ways to fight climate change.

[English]

However, we understand that it continues to be difficult for some low-income families to make ends meet, and that is why we made the decision to temporarily pause the application of the federal fuel charge on deliveries of heating oil. We do this, not because it is a source of home heating, but because heating oil is the most expensive form of home heating, and because home heating oil is more expensive, it means lower-income Canadians face particular hardship incurring these costs.

It is important to understand that many low-income earners and rural residents are currently trapped in a vicious cycle where they have to pay for the most expensive form of home heating, the cost of which actually prevents them from investing in cleaner, more affordable forms of home heating.

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[*Translation*]

As we confirmed in this fall's economic statement, we are now looking to provide financial assistance to help Canadians switch from heating oil to better heating systems. Heat pumps are a cleaner heating option that offers long-term savings on energy bills. Reducing the use of highly polluting heating sources will help combat climate change, which will particularly benefit women, indigenous peoples and those living in targeted communities.

[*English*]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, I did not get an answer to my question. This is the parliamentary secretary with responsibility for energy. Canadian energy production could be severely impacted by water restrictions and the drought in Alberta, so my colleague opposite should be able to provide some response to this.

It is not just energy, though. Average Albertans may be facing water restrictions several short months from now, and one of the most critical agricultural areas in the country may be facing severe water restrictions, so I will ask my colleague again whether the government is at least willing, as we do not have a lot of runway with only a bit of time, to immediately partner with the provincial government, farmers, energy producers and average Albertans to come up with a plan to help Alberta get through this time successfully. This would be not just for the benefit of Alberta, but for all of Canada.

● (1940)

Mr. Marc Serré: Madam Speaker, the Conservatives are reverse Robin Hoods, as was said earlier today. They are trying to take hundreds of dollars in rebates away from Canadians. While Conservatives debate whether climate change is real or debate fighting pollution, we know that there have been disastrous impacts on Canadians, and this cannot be ignored.

[*Translation*]

That said, as the economic statement makes clear, our government is committed to making life more affordable in this country and helping Canadians make the transition to greener heating.

I would like to thank everyone who participated in today's debate. We will continue to work with farmers across the country, including in Alberta.

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The motion to adjourn the House 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 7:41 p.m.)

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