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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, May 8, 2018

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, May 8, 2018

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages entitled “Growing Up in French in Western Canada: A Review of Federal Support for Early Childhood Education”. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

This report is about early childhood services in minority communities in Canada. That is important, because once children are lost, it is hard to get them back again.

I would like to thank the committee members who contributed to the report, all of the witnesses, the clerk, Christine Holke, and the analyst, Lucie Lecomte. Ms. Lecomte suffered a fall recently. I hope she recovers and comes back to us soon.

* * *

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, the hours of sitting and the order of business of the House on Thursday, May 10, 2018, shall be those of a Wednesday, and that no quorum calls or dilatory motions shall be received by the Chair.

The Speaker: Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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PETITIONS

PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DYING

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present two petitions today. The first relates to conscience protection. It highlights that coercion, intimidation, and other forms of pressure intended to force physicians, health care professionals, or health institutions to be parties to assisted suicide or euthanasia is a violation of their charter rights. The petitioners call on Parliament to enshrine in the Criminal Code of Canada protection for the conscience of physicians, health care professionals, and health institutions to ensure that they would no longer be intimidated.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is in relation to impaired driving. It is from Families for Justice. The petitioners want to have impaired driving causing vehicular death called vehicular manslaughter, and they want mandatory minimum sentencing.

ALGOMA PASSENGER TRAIN

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to table a petition signed by the good people of Blind River, Echo Bay, Iron Bridge, Bruce Mines, Hilton Beach, as well as Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, and Goulais River. The petition is one of many I have tabled in the House for the Algoma passenger train. Since it has been taken off the rails, it has caused a lot of hardship for residents, businesses, communities, and other passengers. Seventy-five per cent of properties in proximity to the rail are inaccessible except by rail service. The few industrial roads are maintained only when and if industries need them, and they are not for public use.

The Missanabie Cree First Nation-led Mask-wa Oo-ta-ban, the bear train, an Ontario first nation train, would contribute to reconciliation through first nation employment and economic opportunities. The passenger train is environmentally responsible transportation, and it is important for regional health care and post-secondary education.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners ask the government to assist in putting that train back on track.

[*Translation*]

TAX HAVENS

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to present more petitions about tax havens. Given that the use of tax havens results in massive revenue losses for the public treasury, the petitioners want the government to take action against tax havens. The petitioners are asking the Government of Canada to take the necessary legislative measures to combat tax havens in order to reduce social inequality in this country.

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the same vein, I would like to present a petition that seeks to draw the attention of the House to the following points: millions of Canadians work hard and pay the full amount of their taxes on time, but wealthy Canadians and corporations can avoid paying what they owe by hiding billions of dollars in tax havens abroad, which robs Canadians from high-quality public services. Instead of cracking down on these abuses, the Liberals are defending these agreements that benefit the rich. The petitioners are calling on the government to adopt concrete measures to crack down on tax havens in order to end the sweetheart deals that help millionaires avoid paying their fair share of taxes.

• (1010)

[*English*]

WILD SALMON

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, petitioners from Saanich—Gulf Islands have asked this House of Commons to pay attention to the increasing science about the threat to wild salmon from salmon pen operations, open-pen fish farms. They note that the Government of Canada's comprehensive federal commission of inquiry, under the leadership of the Hon. Bruce Cohen, was released six years ago. Its recommendations have still not been acted upon. Petitioners ask that this House of Commons act on a precautionary principle and protect our wild salmon.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure I table today a petition signed by many of my constituents, stating that the Canada Health Act provides a framework to ensure Canada would have a world-class health care system based on five fundamental principles. They are calling on the government to recognize the importance of having quality health care and palliative care in all regions of the country, recognizing that health care services go beyond any one level of government.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all members of the House for their understanding and flexibility as we adjust the schedule and voting a little in order to honour our late colleague Gordon Brown.

With that in mind, I would like to ask for unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-374, An Act to amend the Historic Sites and Monuments Act (composition of the Board), standing in the name of the Member for Cloverdale—Langley City, be deemed read a third time and passed; Bill C-377, An Act to change the name of the electoral district of Châteauguay—Lacolle, standing in the name of the member for Châteauguay—Lacolle, be deemed concurred in at the report stage; that any recorded division requested on the motion for second reading of Bill S-218, An Act respecting Latin American Heritage Month, standing in the name of the member for Thornhill, be deferred to Wednesday, May 23, 2018, immediately before the time provided for Private Members' Business; and that the recorded division on the motion for third reading of Bill C-48, An Act respecting the regulation of vessels that transport crude oil or persistent oil to or from ports or marine installations located along British Columbia's north coast, be further deferred until the end of the time provided for Government Orders later this day.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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HISTORIC SITES AND MONUMENTS ACT

(Bill C-374. On the Order: Private Members' Business:)

May 3, 2018—That Bill C-374, An Act to amend the Historic Sites and Monuments Act (composition of the Board), be now read a third time and do pass—Mr. Aldag.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

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AN ACT TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF CHÂTEAUGUAY—LACOLLE

(Bill C-377: On the Order: Private Members' Business:)

May 4, 2018—That Bill C-377, An Act to change the name of the electoral district of Châteauguay—Lacolle, be concurred in at report stage—Mr. Graham.

Business of Supply

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[English]***BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

OPPOSITION MOTION—PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS ON CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC) moved:

That, given the government's carbon tax will impose higher gas prices, and making "better choices", as the Prime Minister suggested, will not help most Canadians heat their homes and buy groceries, the House call on the government to cancel plans for new taxes that would further raise prices on consumers.

He said: Mr. Speaker, when prices rise, the effective salary of average Canadians drops; the distance their dollar will go shortens; and it becomes harder and harder for people to pay the bills. In recent months, we have seen this problem worsen. Inflation has reached its highest level in a very long time, well over the 2% target rate that is set by the Bank of Canada. This means that the goods and services on which people rely actually become more expensive and more difficult for people to afford at their current salary rates.

The hon. member for Calgary Shepard will be commenting on this, as I will be splitting my time with him today.

Furthermore, the cost of servicing the very large debt levels that Canadians shoulder is also on the rise. Just last week, RBC and TD significantly raised their posted rates for five-year fixed mortgages. In the case of RBC, they went up by 45 basis points or almost 10% of the total interest rate charged to the average mortgage borrower, from 5% to roughly 5.69%. This is on top of record gas prices that are afflicting motorists, particularly in British Columbia but starting to affect people right across the country.

One of the root causes of increased costs for consumers is most often forgotten, and that is the cost of government. Government represents over 40% of our entire economy. Thus, when the cost of government rises, the cost of everything else rises with it, and that is the focus of my remarks today. Let me dissect how growing government costs cascade down to consumers at all levels.

Let me start with the proposed Liberal carbon tax. The government has said it will impose a tax on anything that requires fossil fuels to produce or deliver. What does this mean to the average Canadian consumer? The government admits that the carbon tax would increase the cost of gasoline by at least 11¢ a litre at the pump. The Liberals admit that the average households would pay roughly \$200 more per year to heat their homes. That is all they are prepared to admit.

They have not calculated how much this tax would increase the cost of groceries, which of course are transported by truck and rail. Therefore, when the transportation costs go up, the costs are passed on to consumers at the end of the day. The Liberals have not revealed how much costs will increase for other household expenses, such as electricity. In many, if not most, provinces, electricity is produced by some form of fossil fuel, whether natural gas, coal fire, or some other source that would be affected by this carbon tax. Even people taking

transit might end up paying more for their transit passes because so many of our buses continue to run on gas, diesel, or natural gas, all of which will become more expensive once this carbon tax is fully imposed.

Finance Canada has released documents conceding that the cost of the carbon tax would cascade down to consumers through higher prices. I have obtained documents from Finance Canada estimating how much those costs would be for households, depending on their income. The only problem is that the government blacked out all the numbers on those documents. We know from the evidence I have obtained that there will be higher prices for Canadian households; we just do not know how much, because the government is concealing that information.

Before the House now is Bill C-74, the budget bill, which would impose a federal carbon tax of \$50 per tonne of greenhouse gases.

●(1015)

The government is asking our permission, as the House of Commons, which has the exclusive power of the purse, to give the finance minister permission to impose this tax, without telling us what the tax will cost.

The basic principle of the power of the purse is that the government cannot tax what Parliament has not approved. However, Parliament cannot approve what it does know. Right now, we do not know how much this tax will cost average Canadians.

There is a whole series of estimates. Some estimate it will be \$1,000 a household. Some estimate more, some slightly less, but the government will not say, even though it has performed all of the calculations. It knows; it just does not want Canadians to know.

This is a particularly insidious tax because all of its costs are embedded in other products. For example, the price of fresh fruit might become more expensive for a single mother, but she will not know what share of the extra cost of that fruit is the tax. She might assume that it is just that her local grocer has raised prices. In this way, the government is attempting to blame local shopkeepers, grocers, and other small businesses for rising prices that are really imposed by government.

An hon. member: What about people in the north?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: People up north, my colleague rightly points out, will face even greater costs because of the enormous price of heating their homes in -40°C or -45°C weather and the enormous cost of transporting oneself across enormous distances. All of these activities will become exponentially more expensive.

The government says, "Do not worry; it is all revenue neutral." That is another one of these fancy political terms that politicians like to use that cause most eyes to glaze over, including in the case of many of the people who use the terms themselves. I asked the finance minister, "Does revenue neutral mean free?" He could not answer the question.

Business of Supply

I am not sure if he has answered a single question in his two years in Parliament, but he could not answer when on more than a dozen occasions I asked him what this carbon tax would cost. He can not and he will not say.

How can we even know that it is revenue neutral if the government will not tell us what the original cost is? How can we know if the average family is getting back what it puts in, in taxes, if we do not know what it is in the first place? The finance minister was in committee the other day, and he said that he would tell us in September, after he is given permission to impose it.

That would be like someone going to a used car dealer and having the dealer say he will sell the car and put it on a credit card, but the person can only find out the price for the car after the purchase is made—and by the way, there is no money back if the person does not like what he paid. In other words, if we make the deal now and agree to make the payment today, seven or eight months down the road the government will tell us what came out of our bank account.

That is not how business is done in a civilized G8 democracy. Here in Canada, government has the responsibility to tell people what it will cost before people are required to pay. That is why we are going to continue to fight against this carbon tax cover-up.

The carbon tax is only one area where the government is raising the cost of living. Eighty percent of middle-class Canadians are paying higher income tax today than when the Prime Minister took office. That number will rise to 92% of middle-class Canadians, and their average cost within the next three years will be over \$2,000 in new payroll taxes, new income taxes, and other taxes. That is according to the prestigious Fraser Institute, which has conducted this calculation.

Canadians are paying more of all sorts of taxes. They are also paying more for their debt. Their debt levels are being hit with higher interest rates. As I pointed out earlier, major banks are raising the cost of interest on Canadians, and that is partly due to the increased bond yields on government debt. The more the government borrows, the more it makes it expensive for Canadians to borrow, driving up the cost of living.

Let me conclude by saying that on this side of the House, we will always put people before government. We will fight for lower taxes and more affordable consumer prices for all Canadians.

• (1020)

[Translation]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, for 10 years, Canadians were left waiting for Mr. Harper's Conservative government to come up with a plan to combat climate change. We see that things have not really changed since then.

[English]

The member opposite talks about a carbon tax cover-up. There is indeed a carbon tax cover-up. The carbon tax cover-up is the absence for 12 long years of a modicum, a shred, a tiny bit of a plan from his party to fight climate change in this country and to impose a price on carbon pollution. For once and for all, will the member stand in his

place on behalf of his political party and tell us what its plan is to fight climate change?

• (1025)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, over 10 years we reduced taxes and greenhouse gas emissions at the same time. We got the results rather than just the rhetoric. We set targets to continue to reduce them, targets that the member's government has now accepted, admitting that our approach to our targets were the right ones.

I have to congratulate the member on his candour. He said, "There is...a carbon tax cover-up." It is very rare that a speech by a backbench government MP becomes famous or infamous. However, I can tell him that his intervention will be made famous, and we will do everything we can to help.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. Unfortunately, I seem to be listening to an old broken record because we heard the same speech last week.

The Conservatives are trying to scare people by saying that carbon pricing could hurt their pocket books, but that is completely absurd. Quebec has had carbon pricing for 10 years and British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario also have a tax on carbon. As far as I know, these provinces have not had excessive inflation. On the contrary, they are showing leadership by tackling the biggest problem of our generation, climate change.

I would like my Conservative colleague to tell me how much doing nothing about climate change is going to cost families. The national round table on the environment and the economy, which was created by the Conservatives, told us that the cost of natural disasters related to climate change could rise from \$5 billion a year to \$43 billion a year. That is what it will cost Canadian families if we do nothing to tackle climate change.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, the hon. member accuses me of repeating myself and he is right, because the truth does not change. That is why I am repeating myself and will continue to do so in the House of Commons. I will not stop asking the government to put an end to the secrecy and tell us how much the carbon tax is going to cost Canadians.

The hon. member mentioned the carbon taxes in British Columbia, Quebec, and other provinces. What is interesting is that in each of the examples he gave, the governments come out ahead and taxpayers lose. As Canadians are paying more taxes because of these schemes, governments are increasing their revenues. The promise being made by governments like the one before me, namely that these programs are revenue neutral, never comes true in the real world. Even in British Columbia, where the premier at the time promised that the tax would be revenue neutral, the government increased its revenues through the carbon tax and people paid more taxes.

Business of Supply

We are here to protect taxpayers, for that is what the Conservative Party does. We put people before governments.

[English]

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be joining the hon. member for Carleton in kicking off this debate on the carbon tax and its impact on families.

When we talk about affordability, we mean the bottom line for the average taxpaying Canadian: at the end of the day, how much would Canadians be paying just for the basic cost of living? It is going up, and it is not going up because of market forces; it is going up because of government action.

The carbon tax is a big driver of it, but it is not the only one. There are things like minimum wage, payroll taxes, and government decisions on energy regulations, which are making it harder for companies to keep Albertans and Canadians employed. That is having an impact at the end of the day on the budgets of families, especially those in my riding who find themselves on the tail end of a recession, in a recovery that they are hoping will bring back jobs, which they are not seeing. What they are seeing is that at the end of the month, their bills are higher.

They are paying more for heat. Of course they are. Even the federal government said they are going to be paying \$200 more to heat their homes. They are paying more at the pump. If they drive vehicles, they are paying upward of 11¢ more. People in British Columbia and Vancouver are now seeing the direct impact on their bills. Every single month, they are paying more. Life is getting more difficult, not easier.

I know the government will say it supposedly lowered taxes on middle-income Canadians. That is not true. It actually lowered taxes for every single MP in the House, who got the full benefit of that middle-income tax cut. It is like the government does not even know how the tax system works when it makes that claim.

Yesterday I had the privilege of sitting down with students and young people from CJPAC. We had an exchange of ideas and talked about issues of the day in politics. At every single table I went to, they expressed skepticism about the carbon tax. They expressed skepticism about what the government is doing because they recognize it. One young man told me what he thinks about the carbon tax. He said it would be like going to a dealership, picking out a car with his parents, purchasing a vehicle without knowing the price, and being told they will only know the price when they roll it off the lot. That is the only time they will know what the price is. That is how young people feel about the carbon tax.

The other side will say that it is nothing of the sort and that people like the carbon tax because they like doing something for the environment. People do, but this is not the only thing that they can do. There is an entire array of options. The previous Conservative government took advantage of them. Through regulation, it sought to reduce GHG emissions, and we know that GHG emissions went down. They went down.

We know that families are paying more at the pump. They are paying more to heat their homes. They are paying more for basic products.

Transportation has gone up. When we go to the grocery store today, we pay more for our vegetables, fruits, and meats. I notice that. I go to the Superstore in my riding and meet constituents, and everybody is saying that. The number one thing people email me about nowadays is the cost of living and how expensive it has become.

I always tell them I would like to be able to help them and that I would like to be able to tell them how much, on average, it will cost families, but I cannot even tell them that because the government is covering it up. It is covering up the true cost of the carbon tax on the average family.

It is interesting that every single other government program and initiative is costed out. Projections are usually provided on the estimated impacts. We know that the finance department has done this, but those documents have been redacted so that Canadians and Parliament have no way of knowing.

Before the House now is a piece of legislation asking us to approve a rebate program. How can we approve a rebate program when we do not even know the average cost to Canadians? How can we approve a rebate program when we do not even know how much it would cost the average family, those with kids, those without kids, those with higher incomes, those with lower incomes? The government will not give us that information, and as a result Parliament is not able to make a judicious, intelligent decision on it. It wants that information only for itself and not the rest of Canadians.

I have asked Order Paper question 834 many times now. I have also made access to information requests on the Alberta carbon tax rebate. It is a rebate program in Alberta that is actually operated by the Canada Revenue Agency. It would provide more detailed information on the true impact on Albertans, and the government still will not release it to me. It still will not provide me with that information. Finance officials at the finance department are completely unable to answer the simplest of questions: how much will lower-income Canadians pay?

● (1030)

I have moved a motion at committee to compel that information to be produced, so that during the discussions on the budget implementation act we would know the true impact on Canadians, on cost of living increases, and on affordability, so that we can make a judicious decision on whether or not this will work. However, we cannot even do that.

They say that stubbornness is the greatest ill. It is a Yiddish proverb, but it applies. For the life of me, I cannot understand why the government does not want to release the information. I have heard the argument that it is an old memo and we do not need that information now. If it is old, great, but release it and give it to us. If the information is old and that is why the Liberals do not want to release it, then they should update the information and make it public. They made a document public on Monday last week that has been roundly panned in the media. It is basically a showpiece, a sell job by Environment Canada, to try to make the case for their carbon tax, and it is the only thing they are doing on their side.

Business of Supply

We saw that Australia abandoned a carbon tax after two years of trying to impose it on Australians. Australians revolted. They said no, the cost of living has gone up too high, it is unaffordable, and this is not the way to do it. That is where we are today.

When I travel the country with the finance committee, and when I speak to Albertans in my riding, I can see that people are fed up with paying more just for the basics of living. They are not asking to buy a highly rated Tesla and have it subsidized by a provincial government. They just want to buy the minivan, the basics, so they can take their kids to a soccer or hockey game.

In my riding, we have the Erin Woods arena. The moment the carbon tax was introduced, the arena started paying more. Articles started appearing in the *Calgary Herald*, saying how much more arenas were paying for heating and to keep the ice cold. They are not getting a rebate. The people who are paying more are the kids, through their registration fees. It is their parents and the dads playing a pickup game on the weekend who are paying more. They do not get a rebate. This is not revenue neutral. The government gains revenue. This scheme has been exposed in British Columbia; the carbon tax there is not revenue neutral. There was a full-on admission that it is not.

A line we often hear on the government side is that over 80% of Canadians already pay a carbon tax. Let us wait until June in Ontario. Let us wait until May 2019 in Alberta. How will that argument hold up then, when the residents of those provinces revolt against the endless increases in the cost of living imposed by the federal government and by bad provincial governments? That is what is coming.

As I mentioned, the cost of living is going up. This is not just because of the carbon tax, but it is one of the big drivers. The minimum wage increases, payroll increases, and income tax increases on companies all matter, and they all have an impact. It is the aggregate, cumulative effect piling onto businesses and onto workers. They are the ones paying more, and they then pass the cost on to others. There is no such thing as a free lunch.

I just do not understand the stubbornness on the government side of not wanting to reveal the information they have already, so that we can have a comprehensive debate. A member on the Liberal backbench basically confirmed that there is a cover-up. Instead of talking about that, we could actually be debating the issue, the cost to Canadians, and the benefits.

I hear members on the New Democratic side saying that if we do nothing, then there is a cost. There are think tanks, universities, and private consortiums that can calculate projections. They provide their forecasts online. When it comes to the government's information on the cost to the average Canadian, we cannot have that information, but this other public information is freely available to all of us. How can we make a judgment when we only have half the information?

We need the full information, and we need to vote for this motion because it is for the benefit of Canadians. It is bringing their concerns to the House. The cost of living has been going up for two or three years now, because government actions are raising the cost of living for everyday families, with no benefit whatsoever. All it

does is increase the bureaucracy and pay for more civil servants who are doing work in Ottawa but not out in our communities.

Like the member for Carleton said, it is about people, not government. The carbon tax is not about people; it is all about government revenue.

• (1035)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me give a tangible example, as it might help a few of the Conservatives on the other side, who adamantly oppose any idea of doing what is good for the environment.

A number of years ago, when I was in the Manitoba legislature, the province said it wanted to try to get individuals to buy more electric and gas hybrid cars. They came up with a \$2,000 rebate program for individuals who wanted to do that. The carbon pricing or the price on pollution that is being universally applied across Canada is ultimately a demonstration of strong national leadership. As the member himself has pointed out, 80% of the provinces already have it today, so it is up to the provinces that receive the revenue. They receive over 99% of all the revenue generated from that, and they make the determination. Thus, if one province wants to give a rebate to, let us say, a farmer, for fuel, the province is entitled to do that.

Does the member oppose the provinces having the authority to do that? Is he suggesting that Ottawa should not allow the provinces to be able to do that?

• (1040)

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, obviously the member has not read his own budget bill, because he would know that it is going to be imposed on the provinces on January 1, 2019.

The question is not whether one allows a province to do it; it is why one would impose it on the government of a province that does not want it, where the residents are saying they do not want the carbon tax. They have introduced a piece of legislation that will force it down their throats, and the cost of living increases with it. The member should refresh his memory on his own budget bill that he is trying to defend.

There is an imposition also, as there is GST paid on the carbon tax. That part of it is not being returned to the province of the people who are paying it. The excess is being kept. Hundreds of billions of dollars are going straight into the government coffers. This is not revenue neutral in any way.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and his interventions. I am a bit skeptical because I thought that the Conservative Party believed in market forces and was a champion of the free market, of supply and demand and market pressures.

Business of Supply

The carbon tax, or carbon pricing, is a market mechanism for ensuring a transition by exerting pressure on businesses, companies, and consumers. By doing so, the tax will help change habits and approaches in order to reduce pollution and to transition our economy to one less dependent on fossil fuels and more reliant on renewable energy.

I am somewhat surprised to see the Conservative Party refuse to use a market mechanism for the common good.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

We do not have a market system when the government sets a price and says that we have to pay it. In a real market system, there are people who want to buy a product or service, people who want to pay for them, and they negotiate. If the person does not want to pay for the product, he or she does not have to buy it. This case is not a real market. In fact, it is not a market at all. It is the government setting a price. This is a tax imposed by the government.

It is like claiming that the income tax taken from my wages and from those of my constituents works on a market-price system. This is not true. The government imposes the tax, and people are required to pay it. This is nothing like a market system.

I would also like to tell the member that putting a price on carbon may be a nice expression, but he should call it like it is: a tax on carbon and on people.

[*English*]

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, Ind.): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the member for Calgary Shepard about the implications of having the carbon price in Canada, but not in other countries.

A concern is that this discrepancy could prompt carbon-intensive industry to relocate to places with lower environmental standards, which would eliminate Canadian jobs without reducing global emissions. The federal government could solve this problem by extending its carbon price to the carbon content of imports and rebating it on Canadian-made exports.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, the member brought up the issue of carbon leakage and carbon substitution, which is something many academics in Canada have talked about. Thus, he was right to point it out. It is an important issue.

It would be extremely difficult for the federal government to sit down and try to set carbon prices on every single product being imported into Canada, but carbon leakage and carbon substitution are an important public policy issue that we should be worried about.

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to reaffirm the government's commitment to ensuring a healthier environment and a stronger economy for our children and our grandchildren.

Canadians know that climate change is real. Every year thousands of people are impacted by floods, wildfires, and other events. Extreme weather events are occurring more frequently and with increasingly severe consequences, and we are unfortunately seeing this right now in several parts of the country.

The costs of climate change are as evident as the impacts felt by Canadians.

• (1045)

[*Translation*]

From 1983 to 2004, insurance claims as a result of extreme weather events totalled \$400 million a year. This amount has tripled over the past decade to \$1.2 billion a year, because of unspeakable damage done to buildings, businesses, and lives. By 2020, climate change is expected to cost Canada's economy \$5 billion a year. By 2050, it will be \$43 billion a year.

[*English*]

The time for inaction and political procrastination is over. It is time to take the actions required to address climate change and position Canada for the clean growth economy of the future. This is exactly what Canadians elected our government to do, and this is exactly what our government is delivering.

We have a plan to reduce pollution and to meet our climate targets while growing our economy and creating good middle-class jobs. Our approach includes historic investments in public transit, green infrastructure, and clean innovation. It includes phasing out coal, improving energy efficiency, and cutting methane emissions from the oil and gas sector.

As published in December 2017 in Canada's third biennial report to the United Nations, Canada's GHG emissions are projected to be 232 megatonnes lower than expected in the report released in early 2016. This decline in projected emissions is the biggest improvement in Canada's emissions outlook since reporting began, and is directly a product of the pan-Canadian framework.

Moreover, this improvement is widespread across all economic sectors, reflecting the smart, practical outcomes that can be achieved by a thoughtful, comprehensive approach to protecting the environment and growing the economy.

[*Translation*]

Let us consider what our plan has achieved so far. Greenhouse gas emissions are falling. Over 600,000 jobs, most of them full time, have been created since this government was elected. Canada's unemployment rate is at its lowest level in nearly 40 years. Since 2016, Canada has led the G7 in economic growth. Lastly, the federal debt-to-GDP ratio, which is our national debt relative to our economy, is on a downward track and is set to reach its lowest level in nearly 40 years. In short, greenhouse gas emissions in Canada are falling, while the economy is booming.

[*English*]

We know that this approach, investing in growth that strengthens and grows the middle class and helps those working hard to join it, is exactly the right thing for Canadians.

Business of Supply

A core element of our approach to lowering emissions and ensuring a healthier environment is the polluter pays principle. When pollution has a price, polluting less saves money. Individuals and companies make cleaner choices.

Experts around the world, including the vast majority of Canadian economists, agree that carbon pricing is one of the most cost-effective ways to reduce emissions. It provides companies and individuals with the freedom to make their own decisions on how to best cut their emissions.

A price on carbon works because it creates a powerful incentive to cut pollution, encouraging people and businesses to make different choices that save them money, like better insulating their homes or upgrading to more energy-efficient equipment.

There are also long-term financial benefits of transitioning to a cleaner economy, and many benefits that may flow from new technologies and innovations that are driven by carbon pricing. As some of Canada's largest employers have pointed out, putting a price on carbon pollution is just good business. It is already helping to build a clean growth economy and make Canadian businesses more innovative and more competitive.

Canada's five major banks, along with many companies in the consumer goods, energy, and resource development sectors, support putting a price on carbon, as do members of the Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition, which includes 32 national and subnational governments, 150 businesses, and 67 strategic partners working to support and accelerate carbon pricing around the world.

Canada is creating the business environment that will strengthen the growth of a clean economy. Canada already has many success stories of businesses that are innovating. For example, CarbonCure is a business that takes carbon dioxide that would otherwise pollute and adds it to concrete. The result is less climate pollution and stronger, greener concrete. It is a win-win. Solar Vision Inc. is a company based in Quebec that provides solar lighting technologies. Enerkem takes Edmonton non-recyclable waste and turns it into commonly used fuels and chemicals. Agrisoma Biosciences Inc. is a biotech firm based in Gatineau. It is expanding low-carbon options in the biofuel industry by turning seeds into jet fuel. These and other businesses like them see the opportunity for clean growth. They see that technology can be part of the climate solution and will also be profitable and a source of good jobs.

This is an area in which I have a reasonable amount of personal experience. Prior to running for office, I spent 20 years as a chief executive officer and an executive in the clean technology space in British Columbia.

In B.C., climate action that includes a price on pollution has never come at the expense of economic progress. In fact, just the opposite is true. Over the past decade, B.C.'s carbon tax has reduced emissions by between 5% and 15%. Meanwhile, provincial GDP grew by more than 17% in the same period. Further, B.C.'s price on carbon pollution has stimulated a robust, growing clean technology sector that now brings in an estimated \$1.7 billion in annual revenue. The pricing of carbon pollution that was implemented through the leadership of former premier Gordon Campbell has resulted in B.C.

having the largest and most robust clean tech hub in the country, and one of the most robust worldwide.

● (1050)

[Translation]

Similar results are being seen in California, where a cap-and-trade system has been reducing greenhouse gas emissions while fuelling one of the strongest economic growth rates in the United States. Sweden has one of the highest carbon prices in the world, and it is showing strong economic growth and falling emissions.

[English]

In 2017, B.C., Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec, the four provinces with carbon pollution pricing systems in place, were the top four performers in GDP growth across Canada. Obviously, that is the result of a number of factors, but pricing carbon is clearly one of them. Anyone who says carbon pricing hurts economies is not basing his or her argument on the evidence. Pricing pollution has a track record of success in Canada and all over the world. It helped us to tackle problems like acid rain while supporting clean growth and innovation. A price on carbon is already in effect in nearly half the world.

By giving businesses and households an incentive to innovate more and pollute less, we are fulfilling our commitment to invest in growth while respecting and helping to protect our environment. Even some members of the Conservative caucus agree. On B.C.'s price on pollution, the Conservative environment critic stated that British Columbia, "did the right thing". On Manitoba's climate plan, which includes a price on pollution, the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa said, "I think it's a very, very smart plan." The member for Wellington—Halton Hills said, "We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to both lower income taxes and clean up our environment through the pricing of carbon."

Last week, Environment and Climate Change Canada released a report that provided further evidence of the economic and environmental opportunities associated with putting a price on carbon. The study found that carbon pricing would reduce carbon pollution by up to 90 million tonnes across Canada in 2022. That is like shutting down more than 20 coal-fired power plants. Carbon pricing will make a substantial contribution to Canada's 2030 target.

Business of Supply

Carbon pricing alone will not get us there, and that is why our climate plan was designed to include a variety of other measures that work together with carbon pricing to reduce pollution. Our forecasts show that taken together, these policies are putting us on the right track. The report also found that GDP growth would remain strong with a nationwide price on carbon pollution. Canada's GDP is expected to grow by approximately 2% a year between now and 2022, with or without carbon pricing, and this finding does not include the huge economic opportunity associated with clean innovation.

Carbon pricing will help Canadian companies compete successfully in the global shift to cleaner growth, an opportunity the World Bank estimates to be worth \$23 trillion globally between now and 2030. Canadian companies that develop new technologies or approaches will be able to tap into that massive opportunity.

When it costs more to pollute, fuel switching, energy efficiency, and clean technologies become more desirable and more valuable. Putting a price on carbon tells investors in Canada that getting serious about climate change is about getting serious about the transition toward a clean growth economy.

[Translation]

Given the challenge that climate change presents and the opportunities that pollution pricing creates, we are pleased to see that nearly every province has adopted carbon pricing systems.

We recognize that circumstances vary between provinces and territories. That is why the pan-Canadian framework gives the provinces and territories the flexibility to choose the pollution pricing system that works best for them. They can adopt a carbon pricing system like British Columbia and Alberta or a cap-and-trade system like Ontario.

To ensure that a national pollution pricing system can be implemented across the country, the government promised to set a regulated federal floor price on carbon. This system will apply to any province or territory that requests it or that does not create its own pollution pricing system that meets federal criteria.

• (1055)

[English]

Provinces and territories have until September 1, 2018, to confirm their carbon pricing approach. Wherever the federal carbon pricing system applies, the Government of Canada will return all direct revenue from the carbon price to the jurisdiction of origin.

More than 80% of Canadians already live in jurisdictions with carbon pricing in place. Our approach recognizes the actions already taken by B.C., Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec. These provinces use the revenues in a variety of ways. They can return money directly to households and businesses, cut taxes, or fund programs that reduce the costs of clean technology. It is no coincidence that those provinces had the strongest economic growth in the country last year.

Addressing climate change is the critical issue of our age. It is an environmental imperative from the perspective of ensuring the long-term health and strength of our natural ecosystems. It is an economic imperative from the perspective of creating an economy that can

thrive and generate economic prosperity for Canadians as the world transitions to a lower carbon future. It is a moral imperative for all of us from the perspective of leaving a planet and a country in which our children and grandchildren can and will thrive.

[Translation]

With some good will, hard work, and co-operation, together we can ensure a safe and prosperous future for our children and grandchildren.

[English]

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Madam Speaker, my riding is Kootenay—Columbia, which is located in British Columbia. We have had a carbon tax in place there for many years.

What we have been hearing today from our friends in the Conservative Party is that somehow this carbon tax is going to drive people into poverty. I wonder if the hon. member could talk about what the impacts of the federal carbon tax might be on British Columbians, and whether it is going to drive up prices everywhere and drive everyone into poverty.

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, the member's question is an important one. It gives me an opportunity to speak directly to one of the myths the Conservative Party seems to be trying to put out there, which is there is no federal price on carbon pollution that will be in place in any jurisdiction that puts in place its own pricing system, such as British Columbia did.

British Columbia, through the leadership of Premier Gordon Campbell, put in place a price on carbon pollution in 2008. That price has escalated over time. He did that in a manner that redistributed the income through tax cuts and rebates to return the monies that were raised through the carbon tax. He not only used the carbon tax to incent people to make appropriate choices with respect to efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but also to incent the development and the drive for innovative technologies that would do that.

As somebody who lived in the British Columbia clean tech sector for 20 years, I can say that it had an enormous impact on generating economic opportunity, in driving the development of a clean tech sector. It is the largest clean tech hub in Canada and employs many Canadians and many British Columbians in high-paying jobs, and is helping B.C. to actually make that transition toward a clean growth economy. It has done so in a manner that was sensitive to the needs of lower-income Canadians. It has done so in a manner that has led the world, and continues to be an important leader in Canada on this important issue.

Business of Supply

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member and his government have said that British Columbians and Canadians should be applauding these high gas prices, but he knows very well, if he is listening to constituents, that British Columbians are groaning with these high gasoline prices. It has been 162.9 and there is talk about it going to \$2, \$3, and \$4 a litre. The higher it goes, the more they applaud. How high would the member support the price of gasoline going for the purpose of forcing behavioural change? They have said numerous times that they want to force Canadians out of their cars. How high does the member want the price of gasoline to go to force people out of their cars?

• (1100)

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, with all due respect to the hon. colleague, sometimes comments are made that just have no basis in fact. I would encourage the member to dig into what is happening with respect to gas prices in British Columbia if he has not done so. The increase in the price on carbon pollution that came in with the new government in British Columbia was 1¢ on a litre. The increase in gas prices that we have seen in the Lower Mainland, and I live in the Lower Mainland, had much more to do with the maintenance associated with a refinery shutdown. The member should make sure he gets his facts straight.

If we look at the record of the price on carbon pollution in B.C., which led the country, emissions between 2008 and 2015 were reduced directly as a result of a price on carbon pollution by 5% to 15% while the GDP of British Columbia grew by 17%. The record is clear. A price on carbon pollution does reduce emissions and it actually stimulates economic growth.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary is extremely passionate about this particular file. One of the things we have seen time and again from the Conservatives is their insistence on talking about a price on carbon as though it is a price on consumption rather than what it really is, which is a price on pollution.

I wonder if the parliamentary secretary could comment on that and what he really sees as the end goal here, and what the objective of having a price on pollution really is.

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, the focus of the pricing of carbon pollution is to actually incent choices that drive people toward more efficient use of hydrocarbon resources so that we will reduce our GHG emissions over time. It is an important piece of a broader approach to addressing climate change and to achieving our Paris targets. Carbon pricing, as members would have seen in the document that we released last week, would reduce GHG emissions by 2030 by between 80 and 90 megatonnes. That is out of approximately a 250 megatonne reduction that we need to meet in order to achieve our Paris targets. It is therefore a very important metric and is part of actually getting there, in addition to the phase-out of coal, methane regulations, low-carbon fuel standards, and building efficiency, etc.

If the Conservatives reject the market mechanism, which is carbon pricing, as part of an overall approach to this, and there are big emissions reductions associated with this, in the absence of doing this, how the heck are they going to achieve the Paris targets which they say they are committed to?

[*Translation*]

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

Obviously, the NDP is in favour of the carbon tax and putting a price on pollution. This could be a very effective way of changing people's behaviour and our means of production. However, the Liberal government is not being consistent. The Liberals are saying that we need to put a price on pollution, but they are still giving oil and gas companies \$1.6 billion a year in subsidies, even though they promised to put an end to that.

How can the government do both of these things at the same time?

[*English*]

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, I am aware that the New Democratic Party has been a long and consistent supporter of the pricing of carbon pollution and an active advocate of Canada actually making a significant contribution to this issue on the international stage.

With respect to fossil fuel subsidies, Canada has committed as part of the G20 to phase out direct fossil fuel subsidies. There were a number of measures that were taken in the last two budgets to do that. I would be more than happy to sit with my hon. colleague to talk about exactly his definition of fossil fuel subsidies. Certainly for direct fossil fuel subsidies that are specific to the oil and gas sector, whether they are tax related or non-tax related, there is a commitment on our part as well as on the part of all the G20 to phase those out.

• (1105)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. colleague said that the carbon tax was one tool to incent Canadians to make better decisions and choices. There are over 300 off-grid communities in Canada. We have colleagues here from the north. I spent a period of time in Yukon where we were paying anywhere from \$8 to \$11 for a jug of milk. These costs are incremental.

Communities and groups have the opportunity to make those decisions, but a large portion of those 300 communities that live off-grid is indigenous communities. They have no other choice. They have to use diesel for power and to heat their homes. I do not see anything in this carbon price that combats this.

What about those in areas who do not have the opportunity to pick and choose what they do? I would like to hear the hon. colleague's comment that.

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, we are cognizant particularly of some of the challenges in the north. Members would see in the pan-Canadian framework and in statements since that time that we are working with the territories to try to ensure the pricing of carbon pollution is done in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of the north and some of the issues that the member specifically talked about.

Business of Supply

With respect to many of the indigenous communities that are primarily based on diesel at this point, a significant investment was made both in 2017 and in 2018 to ensure that over time we would move all of those communities off diesel.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleagues, and I am sure they cannot wait to hear what I have to say. Let me begin by saying how very pleased I am to be sharing my time with my outstanding colleague from Vancouver East.

I am pleased to rise in the House once again to talk about a subject that means so much to me and is so crucial to those who will follow, as filmmaker Michel Brault would have said. Nothing is more important than figuring out what kind of environment, what kind of planet we will leave to future generations and our children.

The alarm was sounded years ago. Climate change is such a key issue that I have no doubt future generations will judge us as politicians on the basis of whether we do or do not rise to this challenge. It is a big one. The outcome could be disastrous. I know we do not want to engage in fearmongering or be unnecessarily alarmist, but all the projections, including those by scientists with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC, say that if we cannot prevent the earth's temperature from rising more than 2°C over the 1990 base year, the number of natural disasters will multiply. We will have massive flooding and drought, and people will become climate refugees. We are already talking about the asylum seekers knocking on our door. I think that is nothing compared to what could happen around the world if global warming becomes unstoppable and leads to climate extremes. In recent years, we have already seen the effects in Quebec, in Canada, and around the world.

If we do nothing, the situation will only get worse, and quickly. This is why, as New Democrats, as progressives, as environmentalists, we are in favour of putting a price on pollution. We support taxing carbon, which already happens in the majority of Canadian provinces. This is nothing new, and it is being done all over the world. Many experts have deemed the carbon tax an effective tool for changing the habits of businesses, corporations, individuals, and consumers. The goal is to transition from an economy that is dependent on fossil fuels to an economy that creates jobs in new sectors. Such sectors include renewable energies, green jobs, and more responsible energies that take the climate and the future of our planet into account.

We therefore heartily support the Liberal government's initiative to finally, after two and a half years, implement a carbon tax, as has been done in British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec, and Ontario with carbon exchanges. This is absolutely nothing revolutionary or new. This is not about upsetting people or causing prices for consumers to rise unduly; this is a tool. It is much like a mechanism for us to exert pressure, change habits, and move towards something that is greener and more responsible.

Personally, I think the Liberal government's initiative does not go far enough, and I am not the only one saying this. The price per tonne on greenhouse gas emissions is not high enough to change behaviours and reach our targets. Speaking of our targets, they are

not nearly ambitious enough. I would remind the House that the Liberal government adopted the same targets as the previous Conservative government, and we think these do not go far enough. Despite such weak targets, I still do not think they will be met, even if we go ahead with this carbon pricing. I am not the only one saying so. The OECD and the UN agree, and both are very concerned about the Canadian plan in that regard. The commissioner of the environment right here in Canada thinks so too. She believes that the Liberal government is going to miss its 2020 and 2030 targets, and we see that as completely irresponsible.

Another thing that is irresponsible is the fearmongering the Conservatives are engaging in here with this motion, which would have us do absolutely nothing.

• (1110)

I would like to remind the House again today, as I did last week, that doing nothing has a cost as well. Doing nothing to combat climate change will cost individuals, families, and our society as a whole.

On that point, the national round table on the environment and the economy, a body created by the Conservative government, indicated in 2011 that the costs associated with natural disasters would increase from \$5 billion a year to \$43 billion a year by 2050. That is huge. That is a lot more than the extra penny or two we will pay here and there for goods and consumer products as individuals.

I think we have to be cognizant of the fact that there are costs associated with doing nothing. In recent years, we have seen an increase in extreme weather events. We could call them natural disasters, but I prefer to call them extreme weather events, because we will be told that we have always had natural disasters, that it changes nothing, and that the climate has always changed. Very well, but at present, things are happening much more quickly and what we call extreme weather events or natural disasters are occurring increasingly more often. The average number of natural disasters in Canada has doubled over the past 30 years, and there is a cost associated with that.

From 1983 to 2004, insured losses due to natural disasters cost on average \$373 million a year. However, in the decade from 2005 to 2015, the average annual losses more than tripled to \$1.2 billion a year. We, the taxpayers, pay for that.

The federal government helps the provinces and territories recover from disasters, such as the Fort McMurray fire a few years ago, because there is a financial assistance agreement in place for catastrophes. The federal government paid out an average of \$54 million in 1970. From 1995 to 2004, it paid out \$291 million a year, and from 2005 to 2014, it paid out \$410 million a year. We went from \$50 million a year to \$400 million a year just in costs covered by the federal government to help the provinces and territories affected by extreme climate or natural disasters.

Business of Supply

Therefore, saying that we can continue to do nothing is not only irresponsible towards our children and future generations, but is also irresponsible in terms of taxes and the economy if we want to control public spending.

The federal fund that I mentioned earlier has paid out more over the past six years than it did in the previous 40 years. The increase in the cost of this fund over the past 20 years can be attributed directly to the increase in the number and intensity of natural disasters. Yes, there have always been floods, forest fires, and similar natural phenomena, but they are becoming more frequent and more severe.

I am going to quote from a document published by Équiterre, a Quebec environmentalist group that does a lot of work in this area and provides some fascinating information. Here is what it has to say:

We often hear that fighting climate change is expensive. However, many studies carried out by major economic players regularly prove the opposite. One after another, insurance companies, the World Bank, the International Energy Agency, TD Bank, and other organizations have demonstrated that fighting climate change is not only necessary and urgent, but also makes good economic sense.

What are the consequences of climate change? There will be more extreme weather events, and they will have an impact on public health spending, agricultural productivity, financial coverage and risk, wear and tear on infrastructure, and general energy costs for heating and cooling.

Since it is 2018, I think we absolutely need to take action and take this issue seriously. We need to study the phenomenon as a whole in order to determine our responsibility as lawmakers, so that we can take the best possible measures to ensure that Canada and Quebec pull their weight in the global fight against climate change. The future of our planet depends on it, and so do our economy, our jobs, our deficits, and our public funds. We absolutely need to take action, and I urge the Liberal government to go even further.

• (1115)

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I always enjoy listening the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie. I want to assure the hon. member and everyone watching us that the Conservatives are in favour of protecting the environment. The Conservatives recognize that greenhouse gas emissions are a problem and that we have to combat climate change. We recognize so well that for 10 years under the Conservative government, and the member will agree on this, greenhouse gas emissions went down by 2.2% and that was without a Liberal carbon tax.

My colleague concluded his speech by saying that the Liberal government lacked ambition because it is using the same targets that the Conservative government did.

Does the hon. member agree that it is not just the current Prime Minister's Liberal government that recognizes our targets, but also former President Barack Obama and the entire world, since the Paris agreement used the targets set by the Canadian Conservative government to the decimal point?

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. Here again, the member's passion for this issue is clear, but he seems to have misunderstood who should get the credit. He is giving the previous Conservative government credit

for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, but that was essentially the provinces' doing. Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia did the work while the previous government did absolutely nothing on this file. My colleague should be fair and not take credit for the work of others.

In our view, the Liberal government's game plan is woefully inadequate. We are going to miss the 2030 Paris Agreement targets even though we could be creating jobs and stimulating the economy.

According to an article in this morning's *Journal de Montréal*, there are 10 million jobs in renewable energy worldwide and 500,000 new jobs were created last year. We are missing the boat, and that is why we are pushing the Liberal government to do more.

[*English*]

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague, in his speech, talked a lot about the commitment to fighting climate change, which I and this side of the House applaud. The pan-Canadian framework includes a whole range of initiatives: the phase-out of coal, methane reductions from the oil and gas base, green infrastructure, the low-carbon fuel standard, building efficiency, the electrification of transportation, and major investments in clean technology, particularly in commercialization. The hon. member says that it is not sufficient, that the target should be more aggressive and that there should be more in the way of initiatives.

I wonder if the member could elaborate a bit on what exactly he thinks the target should be and what additional specific measures he and his party would propose.

• (1120)

[*Translation*]

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

Not surprisingly, I will reiterate that the first thing we should do is stop encouraging the oil and gas industry, which is largely responsible for our greenhouse gas emissions. Canadian taxpayers are paying as much as \$1.6 billion a year to big oil and gas companies, which pollute and are going in exactly the opposite direction of where we should be headed.

Speaking of that direction, we need to do more, particularly when it comes to carbon pricing, but also with regard to federal government initiatives to encourage companies that invest in renewable energy. We need to be doing more with solar, wind, and geothermal energy, and it will be hugely profitable to do so.

Business of Supply

In 2014, the World Bank calculated the economic impact of low-carbon economy policies and found that they could be worth between \$1.8 trillion and \$2.6 trillion per year by 2030. I realize these are astronomical numbers that are hard for us as citizens to even grasp, but all that to say, even the World Bank is telling us that it pays off and that is what we need to be doing. It is the way of the future. It will stimulate the economy and create good jobs.

[English]

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to enter the debate. Climate change, as we know, is one of the most important and biggest issues, if not the biggest, Canada and the world are facing. The failure to show leadership and to take real action will have serious impacts on every aspect of our lives. We cannot afford to sit back and wait to see just how serious the impact is. There is a real urgency to act, and to act now.

Studies have shown that climate is becoming an increasingly larger driver of human migration, and this trend will only increase as climate change impacts become more significant. According to *The Guardian*, in 2017, senior U.S. military and security experts informed the Environmental Justice Foundation that climate change would bring about human migration of 10 million to 20 million people seeking refuge in the coming decades if nothing is done. This figure represents people expected to be driven out of Africa and does not include people driven out of other parts of the globe. That is just one global impact we can expect to see from inaction.

At home, thankfully, it was reported today that the unprecedented flooding in New Brunswick is starting to subside. Water levels have dropped from eight metres to 7.75 metres in Fredericton as of this morning. These record floods will impact every aspect of New Brunswickers' lives for years to come as they clean up, rebuild, and put their lives back together. My thoughts are with them, and I hope that all levels of government step up and help immediately to reduce the burden on these families.

While we cannot point to a single event and say that climate change did this, we are seeing a trend of higher temperatures and more extreme events, such as flooding and forest fires in Canada. The cost of these events on lives, productivity, and the economy is immense, and it needs to be taken seriously. An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure.

To have a productive debate on what Canada can do to mitigate the impact of climate change on our economy and to make our economy greener and more sustainable, we need to set aside the grandstanding being done by both the Conservatives and the Liberals on this issue.

The Liberal government promised real change, and the truth of the matter is that we have not seen that. The Prime Minister stood on the global stage and said, "Canada is back." Really, are we? The Liberals have continued to give away \$1.6 billion a year, every year, in subsidies to fossil fuel companies. The Liberals kept the Harper government's greenhouse gas emissions targets. The Liberals promised in 2015 that they would "make environmental assessments credible again", yet they did not. The failure of leadership on this file instead led to Canadians, and especially British Columbians, feeling betrayed that the Kinder Morgan pipeline was approved under the

regulatory regime the government campaigned on as lacking credibility and public trust.

In a first-of-its-kind collaboration, auditors general in nine provinces and the federal environment commissioner recently estimated that on its current trajectory, Canada is on pace to overshoot its emissions targets for 2020 by almost 20%. The report found that at this rate, even if all greenhouse gas reduction actions in the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change are implemented in a timely manner, Canada will still be short of our 2030 Paris Agreement targets. The Liberals' grandstanding would have us believe otherwise, and that should not be acceptable to anyone.

The Liberals' approach, through the implementation of a carbon price, further demonstrates their lack of leadership and the difficulty of bringing the provinces together toward a common goal. The policy remains incoherent as they continue subsidizing the fossil fuel industry while claiming to be environmental champions.

The fight must be waged on all fronts.

● (1125)

It is ironic that the Conservatives are criticizing the Liberals on this front, because after all, the Liberals are using their climate targets. The Liberals approved pipelines under the credibility-lacking assessment regime, and they continue to give billions in subsidies to the fossil fuel industry.

The Conservatives did absolutely nothing on this file while they were in power for 11 years. In their fight against a carbon tax, the Conservatives are ignoring the real cost of not putting a price on carbon, all in an effort to grandstand. The Conservatives simply have no plan for seriously combatting climate change, and we saw that for a decade.

Perhaps in the minds of Conservatives, climate change can be dealt with later. Maybe it is an issue, like some of their failed economic policies, the Conservatives believe should be left for Stephen Harper's grandchildren to solve. Fortunately for Canadians and our future generations, New Democrats do not share that view. Many Canadians do not share that view, particularly younger Canadians, who are very in tune with and aware of the issues, who are taking this issue up, and who are rallying Canadians from coast to coast to stand up and fight for climate action.

We welcomed the announcement of a carbon tax in Canada. The experience of B.C. and Quebec shows that carbon taxes have a positive impact on the environment and do not harm the economy. We see in B.C. and Alberta that there are ways to help low-income households handle any undue cost increases.

Business of Supply

However, a carbon tax on its own is not enough. If this measure is not combined with other actions, Canada will not be able to meet its international commitments to the Paris accord. The government must ensure that revenue generated from a carbon tax is used to fund initiatives to make our country greener, more sustainable, and less reliant on fossil fuels. It certainly cannot just be set aside and used to continue funding subsidies to the fossil fuel industry. We need real leadership on this file to ensure that Canada can meet its 2020 and 2030 climate targets.

In September 2015, Canada and 192 other UN member states adopted the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. The 2030 agenda is a 15-year global framework centred on an ambitious set of 17 sustainable development goals, 169 targets, and over 230 indicators.

The BC Council for International Cooperation, BCCIC, held a press conference this morning in response to the Auditor General's report, "Canada's Preparedness to Implement the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals". What was reported, in short, was that the Auditor General concluded that Canada is not prepared to meet the targets. This comes from a completely independent source on the evaluation.

The five government departments identified to lead the implementation of the sustainable development goals agenda are Employment and Social Development Canada; Environment and Climate Change Canada; Global Affairs Canada; Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada; Status of Women Canada; and the Privy Council Office.

The conclusion in the Auditor General's report states:

Overall, we found that the Government of Canada had not developed a formal approach to implement the 2030 Agenda and the sustainable development goals. The five federal organizations identified to lead the 2030 Agenda preparations worked together with the Privy Council Office after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda to begin preparing a national approach. However, despite some specific action at the departmental level, there was still no federal governance structure based on clearly articulated departmental roles and responsibilities by November 2017. We found no communication plan and no engagement strategy on how to include other levels of government and Canadians in a national dialogue on the 2030 Agenda. We also found no implementation plan or system to measure, monitor, and report on the progress in achieving the goals.

In short, we have no plan, we have no strategy, and now we are falling short. The failure of that impact, sadly, would be for Canadians to bear, so let us quit the grandstanding. Let us get on with it. Let us address this issue locally and globally.

• (1130)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the NDP professes to have a real concern for those who live in poverty. However, a carbon tax seems to me to be a so-called "incentive structure" that really targets people who do not have an ability to make alternative choices. Some people cannot afford to buy a more expensive car that might have certain features which are less impactful to the environment. People might not be able to afford, for example, alternative options, especially if they live in a rural community. They may not be able to afford to move. They may not have public transit available to them.

A carbon tax is a punitive approach that hurts those who cannot make different choices the most. It is not an approach like the one

pursued by the previous government of binding sector-by-sector regulations that impacted major emitters, and offering things like home renovation tax credits to allow people to make more environmentally friendly choices while ensuring they had the resources and the benefits to do that.

With an eye to those who are struggling economically, rather than taking a punitive approach, should we not be taking a supportive approach to helping people be involved in meeting our environmental commitments?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, with respect to the carbon tax that the Conservatives are complaining about, the Government of British Columbia has put in place a program to provide a return back to lower income residents. More important, the carbon tax amounts to a 1¢ increase at the gas pumps. I want to be clear on that.

If the Conservatives really want to do something in addressing the individuals who are low income, who are struggling, and who are vulnerable in our communities because of poverty, then they would have supported the NDP's proposal for a national strategy to reduce poverty. They would have supported, for example, the call for action in a national strategy for housing to make that a basic human right, but they did not. They would have supported, for example, the NDP's call for a national pharmacare program, to begin that discussion with provinces and territories. They did not support that because they said that we could not afford it. However, according to the Conservatives, we can continue to subsidize fossil fuel companies.

How does that square up? The Conservatives cannot talk out of both sides of their mouths and pretend they really cares about low-income people.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to respond to that and pose a follow-up question.

It is interesting that the NDP approach to addressing poverty is always more government. We need more government studies, more government strategies, more government involvement. The Conservatives care about poverty, but we have a more sophisticated and aligned approach that says we should give more resources back to people who are struggling. We should give them more control over their own lives and their own resources.

Under the Conservatives, we cut taxes but we targeted tax cuts to those who needed them the most. We brought in the biggest personal exemption. We lowered the lowest income tax bracket. Unlike the Liberals who touched the middle tax bracket, we lowered the lowest income tax bracket. We lowered the GST. We provided all sorts of supports to people, through tax cuts, who needed that support the most.

Why does the NDP think that the way to help people who are struggling is to take more of their money away and add more bureaucracy?

Business of Supply

•(1135)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, my questions to the Conservatives are these.

Why do the Conservatives think that allowing fossil fuel companies to get subsidies from Canadian tax dollars is somehow okay?

Why do the Conservative think, for example, it is all right to allow tax havens for the ultra rich, taking money out of Canada, putting it into offshore accounts, and not paying their fair share of taxes so Canadians can benefit from those tax dollars being put in programs that are necessary for all Canadians?

Why do the Conservatives think it is okay for the big companies to walk away from their responsibilities in that context? That is their model of how they think they can resolve the poverty question. The poverty question is not about giving tax giveaways to the wealthy and the top 1%.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a real honour to speak on this important issue. I will be splitting my time with the amazing member for Durham.

It is important we have this debate, and I will read the motion before the House:

That, given the government's carbon tax will impose higher gas prices, and making "better choices", as the Prime Minister suggested, will not help most Canadians heat their homes and buy groceries, the House call on the government to cancel plans for new taxes that would further raise prices on consumers.

The focus of the motion today is that Canadians are complaining about the high taxes that have been imposed by the Liberal government, and part of that is a carbon tax.

The introduction of carbon tax and new taxes that the government has imposed on Canadians have been carefully crafted and wordsmithed to make them sound good for Canadians. It is like a snake oil salesman saying that what is being offered will heal all our ills.

I carefully have made note of how the government and the NDP today are presenting putting a price on carbon. They say that it is important to have a market mechanism that will improve the environment, that will help business, that will build a new economy, that will be revenue neutral. It is going to do none of that, but that is what they are saying it will do.

Before I elaborate on that, I will reflect on past years.

I have have been honoured to represent Langley—Aldergrove in the House for the last 14 years. Before that, I was a councillor for 14 years. Every year, we would have our balanced budget. We were required by law to balance our budgets. Often there were opportunities to provide tax exempt status for different community groups. As this was discussed with the community, we would ask if a particular group should be tax exempt. Of course, everybody would say, yes, that it was a good group, that we should give it tax exempt status. The next question would be whether people would then support their taxes being raised a little, because that \$30,000 or \$10,000 collected in tax from that group would now be exempt, and the money had to come from somewhere. Canadians, British Columbians, constituents, would say that they supported the tax

exempt status, but they were already paying enough taxes. If it meant their taxes would go up, then they would not support it.

From that paradigm, this is where we find ourselves now. If we ask Canadians if they support providing a good, clean environment for our children, our grandchildren, etc., then, absolutely, Canadians are willing to pay their fair share of taxes and do what is good for the environment. We all do, but how do we get there? Will putting a price on carbon achieve that?

What is putting a price on carbon? What does that mean? It means increase the price of energy fuel, such as gas to refill our cars, and make it more expensive to the point where a behavioural change is forced. It is also known as social engineering, when we force behavioural change. Changing to what? To a new energy-efficient economy.

The previous government made it a priority to create energy efficiency, and it did a lot in that way. The standards for motor vehicles were greatly improved. As of 2011, all vehicles came under totally new standards. Fridges, stoves, other appliances, and homes were improved. Home improvement grants were provided. The amount of energy that we used as Canadians was greatly reduced because we invested in Canadians to do a better job and use our energy more efficiently. However, a carbon tax would not do that.

•(1140)

A carbon tax will put the price of natural gas to heat our homes way higher, so people will use electricity instead of natural gas. That is a possibility, but it is a different challenge. In British Columbia, we create hydroelectric. Those calling for a transformation to new economies would then oppose hydroelectric. However, we need to create that new electricity in a new economy. We cannot have it both ways. It is ironic that those who say we need to have a new economy also oppose electricity. Hydroelectricity is a blessing to British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, and other provinces.

If we put a price on carbon, how high does it have to go to force a change of behaviour? When we ask Canadians how high would they support gasoline prices going, they say prices are high enough now. When we ask them how much they would they pay to heat their home, they say they are high enough now. That is not what the government is supporting. That is not what the NDP is supporting. They want the energy prices to continue to rise until people stop using oil and gas.

The Liberals are using the taxes they collect from Canadians to fund protesters to oppose pipelines to move energy within Canada. They are wordsmithing when they say carbon pricing will improve the environment. It is not true. They say that carbon pricing will help new business. That is not true. It actually makes Canadian business less competitive when it costs more to manufacture in Canada. That is why, unfortunately, we see some of our jobs in Canada move to the United States where there is no carbon pricing.

Business of Supply

The Liberals have said that carbon pricing will build a new economy. That takes time. Technological change in Canada and the world is good. Doing things more efficiently is good, but forcing the change through disruptive ways of enforcement and not letting it happen as it should is not. Again, Liberals have misled Canadians.

Carbon pricing being revenue neutral is not true. The government knows very well that it will be making billions of dollars of new taxes on the backs of Canadians.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment, which I had the honour of being, is given talking points, but sadly, the talking points are misleading. The carbon tax is not revenue neutral. The government is charging a tax on a tax, which Canadians have told me is very unfair. They asked me to introduce a bill, which I did, that would give the government an opportunity to truly make the carbon tax revenue neutral. The government voted against that.

What the government says and what it does are very different. There is proverb "A tree is known by its fruit". We are known by what we do as parliamentarians, not by what we say. We can wordsmith and say things that are misleading, but we will be known for our actions. The previous government made a commitment for efficiency and we achieved that. We made promises and we kept those promises.

As we did in previous Parliaments, we took action on the environment, providing a trajectory of moving forward to a clean environment. We set the targets which the Liberal government adopted as the Paris targets for 2030. We were on target. And when we form government in 2019, we will be back on target, keeping our promises and improving the economy for future generations.

• (1145)

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, with all due respect, this is another example of a member being deliberately misleading. For provinces that have shown the leadership to put in place a price on carbon pollution, such as British Columbia, where the member is from, did, and a price that has been in place since 2008, the federal approach with respect to carbon pricing will have zero impact. Provinces can choose, as British Columbia did many years ago, to put its own price on carbon pollution in place.

Given that the price of carbon pollution will actually drive 80 to 90 megatonnes of a 250 megatonne required reduction to achieve the Paris targets, to which the member's party has committed, and given that he now says the Conservatives will not move forward with a price on carbon pollution, what is their plan to achieve the Paris targets?

Mr. Mark Warawa: Madam Speaker, I am glad he has acknowledged he did not support the bill that would have required the government to be revenue neutral on the carbon tax. He acknowledged there are hundreds of millions of dollars coming out of British Columbia alone. It is not fair for the federal government to be making money on its federally mandated carbon tax off the provinces. It is not fair, nor is it what the government said it would do, and it has misled Canadians.

I am not sure what the government is going to do about that, but it was wrong. It should have kept its promises, it should be revenue neutral, and it should not be forcing the provinces, including Saskatchewan, to accept a carbon tax when it will hurt a province.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. However, I have to admit that this morning it feels like we are going back in time and debating a matter that already has broad public support.

Quebec, for example, already participates in the carbon market and has already established the green fund. In seven years, I have never heard a single constituent complain that putting a price on carbon was a bad idea. On the contrary, people might be more ahead of the times than our institutions. I believe there is a very broad consensus among the vast majority of Canadians about what we have to do collectively to fight climate change.

I have to admit that I find it difficult to follow the Conservative logic this morning. Canadians understand and are on board with concrete measures to fight greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

[English]

Mr. Mark Warawa: Madam Speaker, I agree with the member that the public is on the side of protecting the environment and moving forward on good environmental practices. What the public does not support is the carbon tax cover-up, with prices going up to heat our homes and drive our cars. It is hurting fixed-income and low-income Canadians, particular seniors. That is what is happening.

I am hearing from my constituents that a gasoline price approaching two dollars a litre, which is what is being discussed, is not what they want. They want a carbon tax to be effective but they do not want an increase in what it costs to heat their homes and drive their cars. If the government's intent is to force people out of their cars, which is what we heard over the last week, and to force behavioural change, that is not what Canadians want or support. They want fair taxation.

Canadians are already paying way higher taxes than they should. Under the Liberal government, Canadians are groaning. They do not support what the government is doing.

• (1150)

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to rise in debate today to talk about the carbon tax and its impact on Canadians. Going further, I want to talk about how I am troubled by debate in Canada where it appears that the government, and some commentators, believe it is a truism that only the carbon tax can lead to GHG reductions. In fact, we hear this idea regularly, including from the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, who said she is so done with Canadians who do not agree with her on this approach.

Business of Supply

There is nothing inherent in a carbon tax that actually lowers greenhouse gas emissions. The hope by many economists and by many people like the members of the government is that it will cause people to make “better choices” with respect to their daily lives.

However, I want to show how backward this approach is and how it reflects the fact that, with the exception of perhaps the Minister of Finance, we have a government front bench that is devoid of any serious experience in the private sector economy. The carbon tax is not only unfair to a family struggling with affordability in Ontario and British Columbia, but it is also extremely unfair to fixed-income, single seniors living in Atlantic Canada, where most homes are heated with home heating oil. They are on fixed incomes. They are seeing property taxes and a range of other things going up, and they cannot afford to spend hundreds of dollars more on home heating oil. They cannot afford hundreds of dollars more in higher costs on all the goods and services they purchase. They cannot afford \$1.60 gasoline.

What is fundamentally troubling and flawed in the logic on the carbon tax is that so many people working at universities or in the benches of government have virtually zero contact with private sector small and medium-sized businesses in Ontario. They do not realize it is making us uncompetitive. Not only are we going to see job losses; we are also seeing a lack of affordability.

The Ecofiscal Commission suggests that the \$50 per tonne price on carbon, which will be fully in place by 2022, will raise \$30 billion in tax revenues, basically taking that money out of the economy, out of investment by business, out of households, and away from seniors. These same people are advising the government to go to \$200 per tonne before people will make “better choices”, to use the words of our Prime Minister. That would take \$100 billion out of our economy, out of the pockets of Canadians, and away from our competitiveness, at a time when the United States is putting more capital and liquidity into its economy by lowering taxes and by making less regulatory intervention in the economy.

As noted economist and public thinker Terence Corcoran said about the carbon tax, “[It is] not a mere a tax grab, it is a multibillion-dollar tax bulldozer rolling through the economy...”

Canadians should already be aware that roughly 40¢ to 60¢ of the price at the pump right now is already tax, yet we are still driving, I have noticed, especially in the 416-905 GTA or in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. Can someone who lives in Bowmanville, in my riding, who has to commute to his job in Mississauga across the entire GTA to provide for his family, make better choices? There is no transit available. Moms and dads juggle so many things. They have to get back to pick up the kids for soccer. These are the people I represent. They have to work for their families. “Better choices” from the person living in the ivory tower of the Prime Minister's vantage point shows a radical disconnect.

Also, what if the employer he might work for in Mississauga is an auto parts manufacturer? That auto parts manufacturer in southern Ontario or in Kingston, where my friend is listening from now, competes against suppliers in Michigan, where there is no carbon input price to their competitiveness, where they are lowering taxes. This government has been raising taxes, with payroll taxes and carbon taxes.

●(1155)

Every bank economist has talked about our affordability and our competitiveness with a government that is devoid of a connection with the real world, the real needs of families, the real needs of single seniors. I am going to show why the Liberals' false debate, their creation of the truism that only the carbon tax can help our economy, is a failure of public policy leadership. Instead of standing up and citing her platitudes time and time again, the minister should meet with people in the real economy. I will use an example.

Statistics from the Liberal government for 2016, which was the latest year for which I could get these statistics, say that we have 704 megatonnes of greenhouse gas emissions in our country, 37% of which comes from 596 facilities across the country that are already reporting. Let us compare that.

We have reports for 596 facilities that produce over a third of Canada's total emissions. We could have a targeted regulatory approach to help them step down their emissions without laying people off and without reducing production. We could do that by a targeted sector-by-sector enhanced approach—and I will speak later about how we could do that specifically—or we could do what the Liberal government is doing, which is by regulating the 13,320,610 households in Canada. That is what the Liberals are doing with the carbon tax. That represents 32.8 million people in those households.

A single senior in Kingston is who the government is targeting for its GHG program. Seniors will pay more for home heating, for fuel, for all the goods in their house at a time when property taxes are going up and affordability is going up.

Perhaps when the member was mayor, he lowered property taxes. I do not know, but seniors are not the problem. The government's own documents show us that fewer than 600 facilities account for over a third of the GHG emissions. What is even more striking is that 50% of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions come from two sectors: the oil and gas sector and the transportation sector.

I can tell the House right now about a program that is far better than every ridiculous time I hear the minister say the environment and the economy go together. She should understand the economy. She is detached from the real world, calling people who have a different plan for greenhouse gas emissions “climate change deniers”. I have been working on climate change and the environment likely longer than she has, but I have also been in the real economy and I know how we have to tackle these things.

Business of Supply

Fifty per cent of our emissions as a country, over 350 megatonnes, are addressed in these two sectors. With the oil and gas sector, we can have two public policy goals to lower emissions. First is capital cost allowance acceleration for any investment that goes to a resource company or a company in the oil sands, one of our largest single contributors to the gross domestic product of Canada. Let us incentivize them to lower their emissions by using the tax system and writing off investments. I said during my leadership run that this approach could actually be extended to water usage too. We could allow any investments they make to depreciate at a faster rate.

Then we could work with those emitters. There are 596 of them. We know where the large emissions are coming from. We could lower their tax rate over a 10-, 15-, 20-year timeline if their emissions are reduced.

In the case of the transportation sector—remember that almost 50% comes from transport and oil and gas—the government has not lobbied for cabotage with our NAFTA modernization. As a result, right now if we make something in Oshawa, Ontario, and ship it to a state in the United States, such as California, because of trucking regulations, that truck has to come back empty. Just think of the wasted efficiency and the wasted GHG emissions. If we are modernizing NAFTA, we should work with President Trump in the U.S. and eliminate this archaic system whereby we have empty transports. In fact, there are hundreds of megatonnes coming from wasted inefficiencies in transport.

David Emerson, a former Liberal cabinet minister, agreed with me at the transportation committee that cabotage would be the single largest move to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions as a country. We need cabotage for the transportation sector and a targeted, tailor-made approach using our tax system for the oil and gas and resource sector.

• (1200)

This is about using our tax system as a carrot to incentivize better choices, in the words of the Prime Minister, as opposed to a stick punishing the single seniors, punishing the families, and punishing the small businesses trying to compete. It is about time we had fresh thinking from the government.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for bringing up my hometown of Kingston and when I was mayor. Speaking of that, when I was mayor of Kingston, we had the opportunity to do some pretty creative things in terms of leading in climate change and protecting our economy. We built LEED buildings. We installed solar panels on rooftops throughout the city. We installed LED lighting throughout the city. To the member's point when he talked about taxes in Kingston, all the while we were able to keep the taxes below the rate of inflation. That is because we chose to make decisions that would impact us both environmentally and economically in a positive way.

At the same time that the Conservatives are talking about pollution and how they believe there is a solution out there, they refuse to put forward an actual plan. What is their plan?

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member. I hope after the next election he returns to his municipal level of government where he can continue his good work on LEED buildings.

Just this morning I met with Adam Melnick from Bowmanville on behalf of Mechanical Insulators Canada. He reminded me of the fact that the federal government, much like Kingston but on a larger scale, has 38,000 buildings. The association has estimated through studies that better insulation and better efficiencies of boilers and pipes would account for a 30% GHG reduction for federal government facilities. Where is the leadership on that? The government is going after the single seniors and working families, and is not taking care of its own.

I remind the member that I provided a plan. There are 596 reporting facilities right now that account for well over a third of Canada's emissions. The oil and gas and transportation sectors are 50% of our national emissions. Let us have a smart, targeted plan using the tax system as I described. That is a real plan that understands the economy, not the rhetoric and the platitudes of the minister and Prime Minister.

[Translation]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague whether he agrees with the findings of the national round table on the environment and the economy that was set up by the Conservatives themselves. It published a report in 2011 that said that the government's inaction on climate change could have catastrophic results. If Canada does not adapt to climate change, the impacts could cost the country \$5 billion a year by 2020 and between \$21 billion and \$43 billion by 2050. We therefore need to take action. Many scientists worked together at the behest of the Conservative government, who in the end, eliminated that round table.

Gérald Fillion, a Radio-Canada economist, also said, "In principle, carbon pricing should generate extra revenue for the government, create changes in consumer behaviour, and encourage smart investments to promote sustainable development."

I think that the message we need to be sending to the government is that it needs to take action to combat climate change. That is the top priority for our own generation and future generations.

Business of Supply

•(1205)

[English]

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the work done by the national round table, other groups, and economists. I just worry about this growing sense that it is a truism the carbon tax is the only solution. It is not. It is a solution that does not recognize we have an integrated economy in North America. If we do something, it will harm our economy if we do not have our integrated partner alongside. The Prime Minister, in his bromance with President Obama, could not get Mr. Obama to agree to a North American carbon tax.

The smarter approach is one where the largest emitters, which account for well over 50% of our economy, have a reduction plan, not driving away jobs and taxing people who are not the problem. The carbon tax is lazy public policy.

As the member said in her remarks, everyone knows the Liberals want this to be a revenue source. The government's own estimates show that between \$30 billion and \$100 billion, if its plan is implemented, is going to flow into government. Not a single dollar of that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The false logic is the Liberals hope that by taxing it, they will change behaviour. Unless commuters going to work in the greater Montreal area and the greater Toronto area have transit now, they cannot make better choices. This is a tax grab.

Let us concentrate on the large emitters. Let us have a realistic long-term plan to get their emissions down without large-scale unemployment and without reduced productivity. That is a real plan, not the fallacy of the carbon tax.

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

I thank the hon. member for Carleton for bringing forward his motion. I welcome this opportunity to speak to an issue that is a key part of our government's plan to make Canada a leader in the clean growth economy.

Listening to the Conservatives talk about pricing carbon reminds me of those old Maytag commercials where some poor Maytag repairman would be sitting, looking bored, and waiting for the phone to ring. He was lonely; nobody was calling him. The world was marching on without him, and he could not seem to figure out what to do.

The world is moving on, and it is time for the Conservatives to catch up, take their heads out of the sand, and recognize that acting as they did for 10 years under the previous government is simply not good enough. It is time to realize that, one, scare tactics are wrong; two, climate change is real; three, the science is settled; and, four, around the globe countries are taking important steps to address it.

An appeal to fear is a fallacy that underpins the entire motion before us today. In fact, the Conservatives find themselves on an increasingly shrinking island of denial. While they spend their days yelling "The sky is falling" over carbon pricing, the world is moving decisively and optimistically toward action. Indeed, in 2017, there were 42 countries and 25 subnational jurisdictions pricing carbon. In fact, the number of carbon pricing initiatives implemented or scheduled has almost doubled over just the past five years.

Among those pricing or planning on pricing carbon are the European Union, China, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Colombia, and California. Of course Canada's four largest provinces, British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec, representing more than 80% of our country's population, have all adopted carbon pricing.

I mentioned that China is one of the countries pricing carbon. It has already tested a cap and trade system in nine of its provinces, seven since 2014 and two more added in the past two years. The plan will soon go national there, effectively doubling the world's priced carbon. When that happens, fully one-quarter of the world's carbon pollution will be priced at one level or another, one quarter.

Why is that? The leaders of those jurisdictions care about jobs. They read the debates on both sides. They know how devastating business as usual would be. They are taking market-based approaches to effect meaningful change. Governments around the world understand something that the Conservative do not seem to grasp: basic economics.

Let me explain for the benefit of my friends in Her Majesty's loyal opposition. In economics, the law of supply and demand dictates the relationship between supply, price, and demand. To encourage a certain type of activity, a financial incentive could be provided for doing so. To discourage a certain type of activity, such as polluting, a financial disincentive could be created. It is really not that hard.

That is how free markets work. It is good public policy and it takes economics into account. By sending clear market signals, the genius of the private sector is unleashed to find creative and innovative ways to meet market needs for things like home heating and groceries at the lowest price, while at the same time pricing pollution. Unless we price pollution, the laws of demand cannot be unleashed to reduce it.

That is exactly what our government is doing with carbon pricing. We are harnessing the power of market forces to tackle greenhouse gas emissions. This will spur innovation and improve our competitiveness. It encourages companies to look for better ways of doing things, including using different sources of energy, using less energy overall, or converting the pollution into useful or sequestered forms.

Using less energy overall is critical. According to the International Energy Agency, we could get halfway to our Paris commitment just by using energy more efficiently. That is why, together with most provinces and territories, as well as indigenous groups, we adopted the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change, which includes carbon pricing.

Business of Supply

Those in the private sector understand the benefits of pricing carbon. In fact, they have been asking governments to put a price on carbon for years because they want certainty about the ground rules. They want to know what will be expected of them. They want a level playing field during the transition to a low-carbon economy.

• (1210)

We also know that carbon pricing is the best, most efficient way of achieving the desired public policy objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and saving our planet. That is why companies themselves are adopting carbon pricing. In fact, as of November 2017, 1,389 companies had disclosed that they were planning to implement internal carbon pricing to the Climate Disclosure Project. This 1,389 is up from just 150 four years ago. Therefore, the Conservatives had better add multinational corporations to the list of folks who just will not get behind their politics of fear.

Quite simply, global momentum for carbon pricing is building in national governments, states and provinces, and the private sector, and Canada will move with them. We are also seeing it in international organizations, such as the United Nations. The UN Global Compact calls on companies to set internal pricing, a minimum of \$100 per metric tonne over time, and invites companies to become carbon-pricing champions by aligning with the business leadership criteria on carbon pricing. That criteria is designed to “inspire companies to reach the next level of climate performance and to advocate for a price on carbon as a necessary and effective measure to tackle the climate change challenge.” Under this initiative, companies set an internal carbon price, advocate for responsible policy, and report on their progress.

There is yet another group calling for carbon pricing, the Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition, which has joined with the World Bank to bring together leaders from across government, the private sector, and civil society to share experiences working with carbon pricing and to expand the evidence base.

We can see that the opposition finds itself increasingly out of step, increasingly out of touch, and increasingly alone. The fact is that when Canadians give climate change serious thought, it is obvious to them that pricing carbon has to be part of the solution. That consensus has been in place for quite a while. Our government is part of that consensus. We know that pricing carbon sends the right signals to the markets. Companies respond by becoming more innovative and energy efficient, and by doing both, they become more competitive.

It was the French novelist Victor Hugo who wrote, “You can resist an invading army; you cannot resist an idea whose time has come.” The time for carbon pricing has come. It is time for the Conservatives to help Canadians join the international effort to fight climate change.

Her Majesty’s loyal opposition undoubtedly has constructive suggestions. I wait for those members to pull their heads out of the sand and share them with us. On this point I will say that carbon pricing is only one part of the solution. The government has to take a varied approach and come at this problem from different angles.

We are not proposing that the entire reduction in CO₂ emissions will come from a carbon price and the market effect of that price. We

are proposing things like a greening government solution and efforts to reduce methane gas emissions from the oil sands. We are working with the provinces to improve infrastructure that will drive the green economy. We are investing in innovation across the country in different superclusters and whatnot to ensure that there is an opportunity for Canadian companies to generate the technology, the patents, and the know-how to engage in the clean climate future.

It is not merely about defending the status quo. It is about moving forward and being part of a global solution to tackle a global problem. Canada has the intelligence, the ability, and the infrastructure. There are smart, young, driven people who want to be part of positive change and part of the solution.

I appreciate members opposite, in previous remarks, who said that we cannot move without the United States. In fact, the United States is moving. The 1,389 companies I mentioned include American companies, and Americans are taking steps to reduce their overall carbon demand, with companies such as Tesla, SolarCity, and others making their patents freely available to the world so that the world can reduce its carbon footprint.

This does not happen alone, and the Government of Canada is not suggesting that it does. We are suggesting that if we are going to make change, we should do it right. We should do it in a way that includes market forces. We should not just leave it to the 50% of top emitters, as the previous member mentioned, but include all Canadians by adopting a price on carbon.

• (1215)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of being in St. John's quite recently, and it was great to see strong opposition to the carbon tax, despite the member's best efforts to sell the policy. With all due respect, his speech was embedded with this sort of bad metaphor and presumption that an idea's time has come, and therefore it has come. Of course, there are many instances in history we could point to when people may have thought an idea's time had come and it turned out to be not such a good idea and there was a better idea in the offing.

Business of Supply

My friend, as well as the member for Saint John—Rothesay, have spoken about issues of poverty that exist within their communities, and indeed, they certainly exist across the country. When it comes to the carbon tax, why is the government intent on using the stick instead of the carrot when it comes to responding to climate change? Why does it want to hit people with the stick of higher taxes who, in many cases, cannot afford to make different kinds of choices? They are simply not able to go through the process of replacement or substitution. Why does it not instead do things like we did, such as the home renovation tax credit and policies we undertook, such as regulatory changes affecting heavy emitters? We can do this a different way that does not hurt struggling people in his riding and elsewhere. Is he not open to alternatives to the “all stick, no carrot” approach?

Mr. Nick Whalen: Mr. Speaker, in fact, the member actually highlights the very issue here. We are using carrots. We are taking a multi-faceted approach, and one of those facets must be a price on carbon. Most Canadians understand the tragedy of the commons. They have seen *The Lorax* movie. They understand that if there is a common resource without a price or cost, it will be exploited to no end by the population without fear of the consequences.

However, when we put a price on pollution, the very thing we are trying to reduce, the law of demand dictates that as the price of that entity goes up, the demand for it will go down. In people's daily lives, in their shopping choices, in their decisions on where and how to drive, in the types of technology they use, in the amount of insulation they use in their homes, whether they use a heat pump or an oil furnace, and whether they encourage their government to adopt clean energy initiatives or coal-fired power plants, adopting the price will drive societal change toward a reduction in carbon. It cannot happen without a price. That is the tragedy of the commons. I am sure the hon. member knows that. He also knows that there are many carrots, because we have put billions of dollars into innovation.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

However, I think that the issue is important. According to a number of environmental reports, including those published by the OECD, the environment commissioner, and Environment Canada, we are not on track to meeting our targets. Not only that, but we do not even have an adaptation plan or any oversight measures to assess Canada's progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

How can the government say that it is going to meet its targets when it does not have a plan, does not have any adaptation measures in place, and is granting oil companies \$1.6 billion in subsidies? The government needs a plan for public transit and green infrastructure. Both of those things are lacking. We are definitely not going to meet our targets without a plan and without any measures to assess our progress.

• (1220)

Mr. Nick Whalen: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question.

Firstly, we have a plan. We negotiated with the provinces, territories, and indigenous governments to develop a climate change action plan. I encourage my colleague to read it.

As I explained in my speech, the actual price is not high enough to allow us to take on the entire task at hand. We need other options, other criteria, and other investments for meeting our greenhouse gas reduction targets by 2030. Our plan to raise the carbon price goes only until 2022. At that time we could adjust the price to ensure that we are able to achieve our objectives. It is a good plan.

[*English*]

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to Canada's economy and the environment, our government has been clear. We believe that the two go hand in hand. Canadians understand that pollution is not free, and they understand, as we do, that the most effective way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is to put a price on carbon pollution. That is why we introduced the greenhouse gas pollution pricing act, part of the budget implementation act, otherwise known as Bill C-74, currently before the House.

By giving businesses and households an incentive to innovate more and pollute less, we are fulfilling our commitment to invest in growth while respecting and helping to protect our shared environment. This approach, investing in growth that strengthens and grows the middle class and helps people who are working hard to join it, is already paying off.

Let me take a moment to list the economic achievements we have reached in just two years in government. Since this government was elected, more than 600,000 new jobs have been created, most of them full time. Canada's unemployment rate is at the lowest level we have seen in more than 40 years. Since 2016, Canada has led the G7 in economic growth. The federal debt-to-GDP ratio, which is our debt relative to our economy, is not only on a downward track but is nearly at its lowest level in 40 years.

We know that investing in our communities and in our people is the best way to grow a modern economy. We have also taken steps to ensure a good business climate so that our businesses can succeed, grow, and hire. Canada is the best place in the world to invest and to do business, and we want to make sure that it stays as such.

This past week, A.T. Kearney came out with its best places to invest, or foreign direct investment index, as we economists like to call it. Canada ranked number two in the world and has moved up three places, just slightly behind the United States of America. This is important to note, because this report, which was put out by a non-partisan institute, incorporated the fact that 85% of the population of Canada is covered by a carbon-pricing mechanism.

Business of Supply

We know that low and competitive tax rates allow Canada's entrepreneurs to invest in their businesses and create even more good, well-paying middle-class jobs. That is why we cut the small business tax rate to 10% this past January. It will fall even further next January to 9%. By this time next year, the combined federal, provincial, territorial average income tax rate for small business will be 12.2%, the lowest in the G7 and the third lowest among members of the OECD. This means that enterprises in my riding will see up to \$7,500 in lower federal corporate income tax per year. This will help Canadian entrepreneurs and innovators do what they do best, which is create jobs. I note that 600,000 of them have been created over the last two and a half years. That is good news for Canadian businesses and great news for the hard-working people in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge and across this country.

There is more work to be done. That is why in budget 2018, we proposed the Canada workers benefit, a strengthened version of the working income tax benefit, something I long advocated for before I became a candidate for the Liberal Party and a member of Parliament in this government.

The new CWB will allow low-income workers to take home more money while they work. It is important to note that it will also encourage more folks to enter the labour force. To someone nearing retirement or who is retired and wants to go back to work and make some extra money, this will be a top-up. To students going to university who want to make some extra money on the side to help pay for their studies, this will be a little bit of a top-up. That is so important in the face of the demographic challenges Canada and many of the western countries are facing these days. For example, low-income workers earning \$15,000 could receive up to \$500 more from the CWB in 2019 than they would have received this year under the current system.

With automatic enrolment, literally hundreds of thousands of individuals across Canada, low-income, hard-working Canadians, will receive the benefit. It is estimated that 70,000 more Canadians will be lifted out of poverty by 2020.

•(1225)

Since 2016, the government has also been providing additional support to Canadian families through the Canada child benefit. Compared to the old system of child benefits which sent cheques to millionaires, the CCB gives low- and middle-income parents more money each month, tax-free, to help with the high costs of raising kids. I know this for a fact. I have two very precocious young daughters, who are the loves of my life, but it takes a few bucks to put them into some of their activities.

The CCB is simpler, more generous, and better targeted to give more help to people who need it most. Since its introduction in 2016, the CCB has lifted literally hundreds of thousands of kids out of poverty. That is something we need to applaud. It is a proud achievement of our government. In my riding, \$59 million of Canada child benefit was distributed to residents. This helped out literally 15,000 or 16,000 young children. I know that every single one of those residents is grateful for this program and for the opportunity to receive something that helps them so much at home.

These investments and others our government is making in infrastructure, science, innovation, and skills and training, are all

designed to achieve one goal: to ensure the benefits of a growing economy are felt by more and more people with good well-paying middle-class jobs, and people working very hard to join the "*classe moyenne*".

We want Canadians to feel confident about the future, and be better prepared for what lies ahead. Part of achieving this entails making investments, and taking action to protect Canada's air, water, and natural areas for our children and grandchildren, while creating a world-leading clean economy. That is not just aspirational; it is happening today. There are literally hundreds of companies all over the world that are utilizing and testing technology for producing a cleaner environment.

Yesterday at the finance committee, I referenced how companies in Germany, for example, Daimler, are already turning trucks away from diesel and putting electric vehicles on the road. That is something that is very important. We must grasp these opportunities. That is why our government has put a focus on innovation, and research and development, so that the "*supergrappes*", as they are called in French, the five clusters that we have identified, can ensure that Canadian companies are able to utilize or incentivize to create those world-leading technologies right here in Canada. That is something we need to do, and we are doing it.

Climate change is one of the most pressing challenges of our time. Unlike the party opposite, which in 10 years did not do anything, we have known from the beginning that inaction is not an option. That is why our government has worked for over two years to implement smart, practical measures to reduce emissions and protect the environment, while taking important steps to support literally tens of thousands of middle-class Canadians, 108,000 of whom live in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge, grow the economy and create good jobs.

Canadians know that addressing climate change and protecting the environment are important parts of ensuring a more prosperous and competitive economy for Canadians. This is exactly what the plan of "*notre gouvernement*" is delivering. We will put a price on what we do not want, pollution, in order to support things we need, including emissions reductions, clean innovations, and clean jobs, which are good middle-class jobs, for Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Through investments in greener infrastructure, cleaner transportation, energy efficiency, and emerging technologies, we will continue to help make our communities stronger, healthier, and more resilient. We believe this is the best way to support strong economic growth and secure a clean environment today and for many generations to come. That is what Canadians sent us here to do, and we are proud to do it.

Business of Supply

We are doing the work that we spoke about during the election campaign. To use a hockey analogy, we are not ragging the puck; we are going to where the puck is, and we are going to make sure we score for Canadians. Whether it is through clean technologies producing those great jobs or leading innovations that will be adopted throughout the world, we will make sure our exporters and businesses stay competitive throughout this whole process. Frankly, 600,000 new jobs over the last two and a half years is not too bad at all.

Let me repeat that a clean environment and a strong economy go firmly hand in hand. We can have it no other way. This benefits all Canadians *aujourd'hui, demain*, and for all future generations.

• (1230)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I look at Bill C-74 and its implications for something like mining initiatives in Nunavut, the way they have calculated things, there will be an extraordinary impact. It is estimated that will be \$20 million a year. There has been no accommodation for mining projects in the north. I think people in the north are very concerned about the Liberal government moving forward. Quite frankly, capital will simply flow as they cannot be competitive with that \$20-million increase and will go where their money is welcome.

What does the member have to say to those people in Nunavut when an employer, who is employing probably half of that population's workforce, is very concerned, and the Liberal government has done nothing to even consider the unique circumstances of the north?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, what I will say is if I look back over the last week and at where A.T. Kearney ranked Canada for foreign direct investment, which is number two in the world, it is a very attractive place to invest. I know that in the north there have been many mining projects. Actually, a few of them have been recently approved. While on a flight, I remember having a discussion with one of the government relations folks from a large mine about a project that is going forward. We approved that and it is going forward, which is great.

Last year, I was able to visit Yellowknife with the finance committee and talk about the unique circumstances that the north has. We are listening and we are ensuring that the north's competitive environment for attracting investments, whether it is Alberta's industrial heartland, which I visited in January, or whether it is in the interior of British Columbia, remains strong and robust. Those companies are investing funds in our country. It is paying off by the number of jobs that are being created from coast to coast to coast.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that the federal government is finally going to put a price on carbon and pollution. It was high time.

Two and a half years ago, the Liberals promised something else in their election platform, namely to cut subsidies. They said, and I quote: “[We will] phase out subsidies for the fossil fuel industry”. They made that promise two and a half years ago, but there is nothing but crumbs in the most recent budget.

When will they make good on that promise?

[*English*]

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, we need to have balance between supporting the environment and doing the right thing for the environment by ensuring there is a pan-Canadian framework for the pricing of carbon, which we are doing.

We also need to grow the economy. We need to ensure that policies are in place where we can have robust capital investments, as my colleague from Kamloops alluded to. We have approved pipelines. We are supporting middle-class workers. Those middle-class workers may be construction workers in my riding or they could be oil rig workers in Alberta, British Columbia, or Saskatchewan.

We need to make sure we have balance. Our government is striking that balance. We are putting forward a pan-Canadian framework for the pricing of carbon. Eighty-five per cent of Canada is actually covered by a system for pricing carbon. For those areas that are not, we will put the back stop in and ensure at the same time that companies are able to invest, grow, and prosper in this great country we live in.

• (1235)

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge was a banker by profession prior to politics, so I am going to put to him two economic statistics. According to the World Bank, 67 jurisdictions representing about half of the global economy and more than a quarter of global GHG emissions are putting a price on carbon, and the four provinces that have a price on carbon, B.C., Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec, had the highest GDP growth and created the most jobs in Canada in 2017.

In the opinion of the member, why does that make this an appealing case for why a price on pollution should be put in place nationally?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, we should look at British Columbia. I grew up on the northwest coast. B.C. has had a price on carbon for over a decade. The economy has done phenomenally well. We use the expression “broken the back”, but we have broken the curve on emissions in B.C. and people have prospered. There is a robust farming community in the interior, in Abbotsford, Chilliwack, and so forth. They are doing well. There is a robust real estate industry. It is attracting investment. It is a great environment for people to live in and raise their families.

If members just look at the province of British Columbia, it is also, in my view, very important that it has a revenue neutral carbon tax. When it was brought in by then premier Gordon Campbell, I fully supported a carbon price where funds that are collected are given back in personal and corporate tax reductions.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis.

Business of Supply

It has been suggested that an effective response to climate change needs to be scientifically sound, environmentally sustainable, financially realistic, as well as global, comprehensive, and holistic. That may be a little optimistic in that we would not get all of the components in a planned approach in response to climate change, but I would suggest that the Liberals are failing on probably each and every one of these measures as they approach their climate change plan. They are really failing to meet most of these criteria.

As people in the House are aware, the government has introduced Bill C-74, which includes the greenhouse gas pollution pricing act, and talks about it being designed to impact behavioural change. My remarks are going to focus not only on how the specific issues I mentioned earlier would be ineffective but also how many people with the least options are going to be unduly penalized.

First, all Canadians should be very concerned and offended by the lack of transparency on this particular initiative. The Conservative shadow minister for finance has regularly pointed out the carbon tax cover-up. The finance department knows the numbers. The finance department has calculated the numbers in terms of the cost for individuals and families. When it was asked for that information, the government released it, but blacked out all of the information. It really is quite offensive that a government would impose a tax on Canadians and not be transparent about what that tax will actually cost.

I harken back to the election commitments the Liberals made, saying they would be a transparent government by default. On this and many other issues, whether it be the deficit or democratic reform, they are absolutely failing to live up to the commitments they made to Canadians in 2015. I suggest that for any credibility, they should be releasing those numbers and not waiting until months down the road, after they have imposed the tax. This, quite frankly, is wrong.

At the start of my speech, I talked about something that was scientifically sound. What have the Liberals done? They have set a pricing level that would start at \$30 and move its way up to \$50. The minimum calculation that any scientist makes in terms of being effective is \$100, and I have seen some that go as high as \$300, as what needs to be the price on carbon to create the behavioural changes the Liberals want to create. They are creating a cost for consumers, but it is not going to have the impact this tax needs to have.

It is important to note that it is being done in isolation from our continental partners. If we recall, China, India, and the U.S. are the major emitters and Canada is less than 2%. We need to be global in our approach. That is in the definition, "global approach". Here we are, going down a path in which, quite frankly, the Liberals are pricing in a way that would hurt Canadians and not create the desired effect, and they are essentially doing it in isolation from the global major emitters.

The government and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change love to talk about British Columbia, so I will as well. That is the province I am from. They hold it up as a really great model. They have consistently said that. It was introduced in 2008 as a revenue neutral carbon tax, but let me explain what has been happening over the years. In actual fact, I was not upset or concerned when the

British Columbia government introduced this revenue neutral carbon tax. It explained it appropriately. I was fortunate that it was not going to create a huge affordability issue for me and my family. The B.C. government was trying its best to offset impacts on those who could not afford it.

● (1240)

The Liberals hold it up as great example because, they say, it brought emissions down. Well, emissions went down across the world in 2008. They went down because we had a global recession. The analysis was that the carbon tax brought emissions down and then the economy recovered, absolutely. If we take a baseline from before, when the economy was ticking along quite nicely in 2007 and 2008, and then we had a global recession, we would have a significant drop in emissions. Ultimately Canada had a good recovery.

The Liberals also like to say that emissions dropped and the GDP did well. They love to compare it to Ontario, but Ontario was suffering the highest electricity prices and manufacturing was fleeing. They never actually compare it to provinces that had a similar type of economy, such as Saskatchewan and Alberta, and if we look at the economic growth in those two provinces, it was significantly more than British Columbia's economic growth. We cannot take gross measures and hope to be precise in what the impact of the actual carbon tax was, because there were so many things that were happening throughout that time period.

What was a revenue-neutral carbon tax started to drift. There was a solid commitment to the citizens of British Columbia that every penny the government took in carbon taxes would be returned to them. What happened in 2013-14 was that the Auditor General started to review and saw that what was initially revenue neutral was turning into other things. The B.C. government started to include many things that really were inappropriately included to suggest it was revenue neutral, but in actual fact it was drifting quite significantly from revenue neutrality.

I have to talk about the NDP in British Columbia, because it campaigned on "axe the tax". It said it would axe the tax, that it would be gone. The NDP finally became government in 2017, and the first thing it did was to take away the revenue neutrality from the carbon tax. It actually legislated away revenue neutrality and then increased the tax. What was a well-designed, reasonable approach quickly became a cash grab under the control of the NDP government. It was general revenue for the government to use for whatever it wanted.

As a result, members will forgive me for being a little cynical about anyone who lauds the British Columbia tax as a great revenue-neutral model. I know the same thing could happen across the country in all the other provinces as they implement this imposed federal tax. It demonstrates how a commitment to revenue neutrality can quickly be reneged on, and there is nothing that will stop the federal government from doing the same thing.

Business of Supply

The north is going to be the area most impacted by these changes. It has very limited density. In many cases, people rely on diesel fuel, and the north has extra costs associated with its mining. It is going to be significantly impacted.

The northern premiers signed on in good faith, with the understanding that the government would look at their particular and unique circumstances. What has happened? What does the bill the government has introduced do for the north? It has done nothing. The Liberals looked at a baseline for mining emissions and actually based it on a southern model, so what is going to happen is that mines in the north will be more significantly impacted than any others.

What we see here is that the government has introduced a measure that is going to be ineffective in meeting its goal. It has provided no accommodation for people who live in the north and in rural communities. It is really important that the Liberal government gets into its own areas of jurisdiction. It has policy levers it can use to meet reduction targets and meet its Paris targets. However, quite simply, what the government is doing is going to be a failure on way too many measures.

• (1245)

Hon. Kent Hehr (Calgary Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the hon. member's comments. In particular, she stated in her speech that when the Conservatives were in power, they were worried about high competitiveness continent-wide and wanted to match up a carbon pricing scheme with the Americans, yet I note that over 67 jurisdictions around the world are now implementing carbon pricing, not even including China. Noting that the world is heading to this place, is it not imperative that we get ahead of the curve, match our economies, and that this will provide some efficiencies and some effectiveness as well as get us on track to doing our part to reduce emissions?

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I have always found it very interesting that we talk about carbon emissions but we actually never talk about the whole carbon sink issue.

One of the things that Canada needs to look at and be very proud of is that some people calculate that we are actually a net carbon sink. As we look at how we are going to impact carbon across the world and we look at these highly populated, high-density countries that do not have any farmland and have minimal numbers of trees, we need to also say that by having a northern type community we have a carbon sink but we also have more challenges with our emissions per capita. We need to look at that big picture and not forget about the whole carbon sink side of the issue, where Canada certainly plays a very significant role.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind our hon. Conservative colleagues that the national round table on the environment and the economy, the only organization that brought the environment and the economy together to track progress, was axed in 2011 by the incoming majority Conservative government.

This organization demonstrated that the cost of inaction was much greater than the cost of action. If we put a price on carbon, there are

some minor consequences, but they are much more positive than negative.

If we fail to take action on climate change, it is projected that the extreme weather caused by climate change will be costing the economy \$21 billion to \$43 billion a year by 2050.

What does my colleague have to say about that?

• (1250)

[*English*]

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, one thing we have to recognize is that what the government is doing will not create the change it wants to create. It has been estimated that it would have to move from \$30 per tonne to anywhere from \$100 to \$300 per tonne. The impact on people in this country would be significant. The Liberals are not at an effective level, but to do it in isolation, without everyone taking part, does not make any sense. We would not create the outcome that we want to create, and we are certainly right now not pricing it in a way that would effect change.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand that last week Environment and Climate Change Canada produced a report indicating that by pricing pollution we would reduce emissions by up to 90 million tonnes, a huge part of meeting our Paris commitments. In a puzzling interview last week, the Leader of the Opposition claimed he knows how to meet our Paris targets without putting a price on pollution and without putting forward anything resembling a plan to tackle climate change.

Which is it? Does the party of the member opposite not understand what real action on climate change looks like, or do the Conservatives just not care about climate action?

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, from what I gather, there are certainly a lot of very significant flaws in the report that was tabled, but we will be delightedly waiting for the campaign of 2019, when we are going to present a plan to Canadians that will do just what we have said it will do and present a good, positive alternative in how we will move forward on this important issue.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on this opposition day to speak to a motion that makes a lot of sense.

The Liberals have lost control of the public debt, taxes, and now greenhouse gas emissions. What is their solution? A tax. This time, it is being called the carbon tax. It is a tax nonetheless, because a tax is a tax is a tax. This particular tax is costly and ineffective, as I will be demonstrating over the next few minutes. It will be very easy. This will be a snap for me.

As my colleague from British Columbia just said, that province's carbon tax is not working. Greenhouse gas emissions keep going up, and the whole business ended up being a cash grab against taxpayers.

Business of Supply

This time, however, the Liberals found a way to exploit Canadians' desire to effectively combat climate change. When we ask the Liberals how much their tax will cost Canadian taxpayers, they respond that they do not know. When we ask them by how much their tax will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the Liberals have nothing to say. No answer. We do not know how much the tax will cost, nor do we know how much greenhouse gases would be reduced. The Liberals are asking us for a blank check. This government has lost control.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer said that the next two deficits would exceed estimates by \$4 billion.

In the latest report entitled "Economic and Fiscal Outlook", Jean-Denis Fr chet te's team estimated that Ottawa would post a \$22.1-billion deficit at the end of the current fiscal year, which is \$4 billion more than what the government projected in its budget in February.

This is recent. We are talking about April 2018. Two months after revising their budget to reflect a \$22.1-billion deficit, they have already gone over. The Liberals have overspent on their over-spending, and they are in over their heads. This is quite surprising, considering that the Prime Minister said that this government would run "modest deficits".

We now see that government spending is out of control. It might not be so bad if people could say that the government is going into debt but they are paying less in taxes, but I am sorry to say this afternoon that over 80% of middle-class families are paying more taxes. The Fraser Institute is an independent and non-partisan organization that studies public policies. It has said that, on average, middle-class families will have to pay \$840 more in taxes. That article was published some time ago in September 2017. Unfortunately, families have to pay even more taxes, and it is only getting worse. Canada's debt is growing and people have to pay more taxes.

Another point that I would like to make is that Canada is failing to meet its greenhouse gas reduction targets. This government is really having a hard time governing. It is raising taxes, causing the deficit to skyrocket, and losing control of greenhouse gas emissions.

This same government just asked us for *carte blanche* today to impose even more taxes on taxpayers, without any idea of what the outcome will be. The fact that climate change exists is reason enough for the Liberals to tax Canadians without really knowing what the impact of that tax will be.

It will have an impact. The Parliamentary Budget Officer published a new report showing that the carbon tax will reduce our GDP by \$10 billion by 2022, possibly even \$35 billion a year by some estimates. Who will pay for that? It is workers, families, and parents who drive their children to activities. Summer is coming, a time when, after work, people go home and have a quick supper and then drive their children to their activities, often soccer. They try to do that before it gets dark. The price of gas will continue to rise even though it is already heavily taxed.

•(1255)

We are already paying a significant tax on carbon, and now we will be paying even more, without knowing how this tax will affect the environment. However, we know that it will have an effect on the economy.

Yesterday, I was at a committee meeting where we were discussing how to help young Canadians, particularly indigenous youth, integrate into the job market. The committee heard from a representative from an organization representing agencies that help indigenous youth train for careers. We need welders, mechanics, and plumbers. These youth must leave the reserve and sometimes travel long distances to get to a training centre, and they pay a lot for gas. This indigenous representative said that this was another barrier preventing young Canadians from accessing the job market.

We would like to be able to say that things are going well with this government, but the truth is that things are not great. Debt is going up, along with taxes and greenhouse gas emissions. It is an interesting contrast, because we have an alternative to offer to those people who are tuning in, and we have been through it before. Sometimes, the solution is to look back. In a news release in February 2007, a certain organization welcomed an announcement made one morning in Sherbrooke by prime minister Stephen Harper and premier Jean Charest that the Quebec government would be getting \$350 million from the federal government for its plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. That same organization was delighted that this \$1.5-billion program applied to all the provinces. I was lucky enough to be part of that government, and the organization that was praising Stephen Harper's Conservative government was Greenpeace.

There are then two approaches. First, there is the approach of a government that cut taxes. Members will recall the GST being lowered from 7% to 5% and the general tax cuts for all Canadians. Such a thing had not been seen in decades, despite the economic crisis. When we handed the car keys to the government across the aisle, Canada had a balanced budget. We had also reduced Canada's greenhouse gas emissions by 2.2%, increased our gross domestic product, grown the economy by more than 15%, and, of course, created hundreds of thousands of jobs, on the heels of a recession, no less.

Second, there is the approach of a government that says it is going to make us pay for a new tax, the carbon tax, and that we will have to pay more taxes and get deeper into debt. Of course, it cannot offer us any guaranteed results, because the commissioner of the environment, Julie Gelfand, says that if nothing is done about greenhouse gas emissions, the federal government will not meet the targets set by the previous Conservative government. Not only do the Liberals boast about being environmentalists, but they are copying our targets and cannot even meet them.

I see that my time is almost up, but that was the gist of my presentation. The saddest thing is that we are in a time of obfuscation and secrecy. The numbers are being kept from us. What impact will the carbon tax have on reducing greenhouse gas emissions? No answer. What impact will it have on Canadian families? We know from the Parliamentary Budget Officer that it will cost at least \$10 billion.

Business of Supply

In closing, I would like to quote a Quebec business reporter who commented on the carbon tax saying that the government is abusing Canadians' generosity: "If you still have not realized that the government is quietly shoving a hidden tax down our throats, then I cannot help you." He then added, "The average taxpayer is overtaxed and concerned about the environment." Contrary to what the government across the way would have us believe, all Canadians, regardless of their political stripe, want Canada to be a leader, but they also expect the country to balance the needs of the economy and of the environment. Finally, the quote ends with, "If we stopped taking taxpayers for fools, they would be more motivated to do their share."

• (1300)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week the Leader of the Opposition said that he had a plan to address greenhouse gas emissions, but would not say what that plan was. We continue to hear that today from the opposition. Meanwhile, the opposition spent a decade failing to do anything.

The Conservatives try to take credit, as they have this morning, for a lot that was done by the provinces during that time, but why should we trust them now? They spent a decade doing nothing. The Leader of the Opposition says he has a plan but will not say what it is. Why should we suddenly decide they are right and we will take their word for it? Why should the Canadian public do that?

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. He asked why we would take the hon. member at his word and why we would trust him. I think that I clearly explained that we have no reason to trust the current government, which misled the public about the deficit, the out-of-control greenhouse gas emissions, and the taxes that rose along with the deficit.

The hon. member has an opportunity to answer the opposition's questions today. I am asking the hon. member, as well as the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, what impact the carbon tax will have on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I always enjoy listening to him because he uses colourful expressions. At the beginning of his speech, he spoke about the Liberal government's out-of-control spending. We could probably talk about that for a long time. I rather agree with him, but that is not what we are debating today.

However, I beg to differ with him on the Liberal government's out-of-control greenhouse gas emissions. In my opinion, the Liberals never had greenhouse gas emissions under control. Unfortunately, I have to say that this is also true of the Conservatives. In his speech, the member clearly let it be known that he was taking credit for the success stories of provinces such as Quebec.

My question is very simple. Where is the Conservative greenhouse gas reduction plan?

• (1305)

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I thank my NPD colleague for his question.

I recall that his former leader was the Quebec environment minister at the time and was arguing with the Liberals even then. It did not work. When we took office, we sat down with the provinces and we invested \$1.5 billion in their green plans. That is why the previous Conservative government can take credit for the measures that were put in place by the provincial governments. That is what the previous Conservative government did, rather than arguing like the Liberals and the NDP. I would say to the hon. member that the important thing about any plan is that it contain effective measures. That is not what we have here today. We have a tax and we see the impact that it is having in other areas.

I agree with my colleague that the government members have no control over greenhouse gas emissions. They are trying to ease their consciences by taking money from taxpayers' pockets. That will not do anything to help the environment.

[English]

Hon. Kent Hehr (Calgary Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out for the member that our party actually reduced taxes on nine million middle-class Canadians and raised taxes on the top 1%, which is his party rejected. He referenced a Fraser Institute study. That study did not reference our Canada child benefit, which benefits nine out of 10 families. It therefore is out of date.

The member states that the carbon tax is inefficient. The vast majority of economists, even Preston Manning himself, know that if we want to do something about climate change, the most efficient means is through a carbon price. Given this evidence, why does he not accept that this is the best way to deal with emissions?

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I would like to correct him on something. When the Fraser Institute said that families are paying more taxes, it took into account the tax credit for families. This government gave with one hand and took away with the other. I am talking about the public transit tax credit, the fitness and arts tax credit, and income splitting.

What is worse, the wealthiest Canadians are paying less taxes than before. My colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent clearly proved it by quoting a Department of Finance study showing that the rich are paying less taxes because they have managed to find tax loopholes. That means that the middle class is paying more taxes and the wealthy are paying less. That is the Liberal track record.

[English]

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to once again reaffirm our commitment to tackling climate change. I will be splitting my time with the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South.

Business of Supply

Canadians understand climate change is real, and they know governments at home and around the world must urgently address this challenge. It is the right thing to do for our children and grandchildren.

As we speak here today, Canadians and people around the world are being impacted by climate change, from severe storms and droughts, to sea level rise, to devastating floods. Sadly, as climate change accelerates, these impacts will not only worsen, they will bring crushing costs.

From 1983 to 2004, insurance claims in Canada from severe weather events were almost \$400 million a year. In the past decade, that amount tripled to \$1.2 billion a year. By 2020, climate change is expected to cost Canada's economy \$5 billion a year, and as much as \$43 billion a year by 2050.

[*Translation*]

If we do not act now, we will pass these growing costs on to future generations. That is exactly what the previous government did. By setting emissions targets without having a concrete plan to meet them, it jeopardized both the environment and the economy. We must not make the same mistake.

• (1310)

[*English*]

By making smart, sensible, and practical changes, we will avert the dangers of climate change and grasp the enormous economic opportunities of taking action, opportunities worth trillions of dollars around the world and good jobs at home.

Unlike the opposition party that voted to support the Paris agreement, but again and again refuse to tell Canadians what its climate plan is, we have a practical, cost-effective plan that will reduce emissions, create good-paying, middle-class jobs, and spur our clean growth economy.

A major component of our made-in-Canada climate plan is reducing costs for homes and businesses through energy efficiency. Reducing energy and saving Canadians money is a win-win for our environment and our economy. We know that families that invest in energy efficiency can cut their home heating bills in half, and we know that energy efficient homes and buildings have higher resale values.

[*Translation*]

Of course, these changes need not be overly complicated. Small investments can yield huge results. For instance, by using a programmable thermostat, people can save up to \$150 a year. By putting energy-efficient light bulbs in the five light fixtures they use most frequently, people can save more than \$65 a year.

[*English*]

One company in Alberta, Landmark Homes, makes net zero homes through better insulation, heating, and lighting, and many produce more energy than they consume. Today, we see homes like this being built across the country. In Edmonton, where Landmark Homes is based, the city has the highest number of net zero homes in the country.

Now, for provinces that have signed onto our climate plan, we are making it easier for people to reduce their energy use and save money through our low-carbon economy leadership fund. A few weeks ago I announced our government was investing \$100 million to help the people of Ontario make energy efficient retrofits to their businesses and homes, including apartments, townhouses, and low-income housing.

By teaming up with the provincial government, the GreenOn rebates will help property owners make energy efficient changes like installing better insulation, high-efficiency ventilation systems, and other devices to save energy and reduce costs. We are launching programs like this across the country.

Last year, through the green municipal fund, we also invested \$72 million to support energy efficiency projects in 48 communities.

[*Translation*]

The municipality of Saint-Ubalde, in Quebec, received some of that funding to install a district heating system for several buildings. The project, which creates energy by transforming residual forest biomass, will help the municipality cut its emissions by 218 tonnes and reduce long-term heating costs by 40% in the buildings using that system.

[*English*]

Investing in energy efficiency also creates good-paying middle-class jobs: jobs in construction, services, research, and manufacturing. That is why we are investing \$21.9 billion in green infrastructure to build energy-efficient homes and offices, helping families save money on their energy bills and creating new jobs for Canadians.

In fact, over 100,000 Canadians were employed in energy efficiency jobs in 2013. A report just last year found that shifting to net zero emissions buildings could create just short of two million jobs over 33 years through construction from retrofitting and building new, green buildings.

We know that every dollar spent on energy efficiency programs generates between \$4 and \$8 of GDP. In other words, this is about reducing energy and saving money. It is equally about creating good jobs for Canadians across the country.

The opposition party wants Canadians to think that tackling climate change is a cost, but by failing to take action we see huge economic costs, and Canadians miss out on good jobs and major economic opportunities.

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According to the World Bank, the Paris Agreement will help open up nearly \$23 trillion in new opportunities for climate-smart investments in emerging markets around the world between now and 2030. Combined, this will spark incredible job creation, and that is why Canada is leading to take advantage of the opportunities.

• (1315)

[Translation]

We are investing \$20.1 billion to support urban public transit to help reduce commute times in our cities, increase the use of clean transportation, and allow people to spend more time with their families and less time in traffic.

[English]

With a \$2.2-billion investment, we are fostering clean tech research and development, production, and export. We are accelerating the growth of this industry to capture an increasing share of the global market.

Last year, I was in China on a trade mission and saw the rapid shift toward clean energy that country is making. As the world's largest producer of wind and solar electricity, China is expected to increase its power storage capacity tenfold by 2020. China now has the largest number of electric vehicles on the road, overtaking, for the first time, the number of electric vehicles in the United States.

While visiting the country, I met with representatives from Ballard Power Systems, a Canadian company from Burnaby, B.C. that makes fuel cells used in zero-emission vehicles. There, in Shanghai, I saw electric city buses using Ballard's technology. Ballard is commercializing and exporting clean energy solutions that are in demand in China and around the globe, and this is just one example of a Canadian company that is innovating, creating jobs, and selling its clean technologies.

To spur the kind of innovation and job creation I described, we also need to put a price on carbon pollution. Canadians know that polluting is not free. It has real costs. In fact, it is essentially a tax that we are passing on to the next generations.

Our climate plan includes a price on pollution, because it works. It is one of the lowest-cost tools to fight climate change and drive clean innovation. Just last week, we published a study that found that, by 2022, a nationwide price on carbon pollution that meets the federal standard would eliminate the emissions equivalent of taking between 23 million and 26 million cars off the road for a year, or closing 20 coal-fired plants. Already, over 80% of Canadians live in a province that has a price on carbon pollution: Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia. Last year, these provinces led the country in economic growth.

The time for politics is over. Taking action on climate change should not be a partisan issue, but, sadly, that is what the Conservatives are making it. Through our made-in-Canada climate plan, we are pricing carbon pollution, phasing out coal-fired electricity, and investing in public transit, green infrastructure, and clean technologies. In doing so, we are sending a strong signal to investors and to the world. Canada will create good-paying middle-class jobs, drive clean innovation, and be a leader in the clean growth century. That is what Canadians expect us to do, and that is what we are doing.

Our government will continue acting in the interest of our environment and our economy, because we owe it to our kids and our grandkids.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we have often asked how much a carbon tax would cost Canadians in terms of the impact of the reduction of emissions on their families. However, we continue to get no answers.

One of the lunacies of the argument that the Minister of Environment makes, and she made it last week in the House during question period, is that somehow a carbon tax, people paying a tax on carbon, is going to avoid natural disasters. However, as we saw last year, for example, B.C. had raging wildfires, despite the fact that the British Columbia government has had a carbon tax for almost 10 years.

I want to know how the minister can come up with the conclusion that natural disasters will be avoided by imposing a carbon tax on Canadians, when the examples are clear in B.C.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Mr. Speaker, I do not know how to start to answer this question. We are seeing the real impacts of climate change. It is true. We need to see real action. That is why we are taking action, such as putting a price on pollution, making investments in clean innovation, and making investments in companies that are going to export the solutions that the world greatly needs.

We need to take action on climate change, but the problem is that the party opposite does not understand it. Climate change is real. It has real impacts. It has real costs, and we have a plan to tackle it. I really wish the other party would show us their plan.

• (1320)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for her speech.

I just cannot get over the fact that the Liberals criticized the Conservatives for not doing enough, but once they were in power, they just copied the Conservatives' plan and their targets. Now it is the Liberal government's plan.

That is not even the worst of it. We are concerned because it looks like even those pathetic targets will not be met. That is not coming from me. It is coming from the OECD, the United Nations, and the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development.

Business of Supply

How can the Minister of Environment and Climate Change say she wants to tackle climate change when the targets will not be met and her government is subsidizing oil and gas companies to the tune of \$1 billion per year?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

We certainly do have a plan to tackle climate change. We said that we must do our part and that we must have a plan to meet our targets, and that is exactly what we have. We said that there would be a price on pollution across the country. We are making unprecedented investments in public transit and green infrastructure, and we are helping companies with clean solutions that eliminate greenhouse gas emissions. We will keep doing what we are doing.

On one side, we have a party that does not realize we must take action on the environment, and on the other, we have a party that does not understand we need to pay attention to the economy. We know that we can do both at the same time, and that is what we are doing.

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the minister, she seems to see incredulity as a replacement for substantive argument. I have a very specific question for the minister. If she thinks that the government's policy is a good one, a defensible one, and that she can make that case to Canadians, then why can Canadians not see the numbers? If, as she seems to believe, the truth of her position is self-evident, then why can she not remove the blackouts on the carbon tax information and what we have called the carbon tax cover-up? Why can she not show people the evidence that she finds so compelling? Why does she need to resort to incredulity and pejoratives instead of simply showing the information and making the argument?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Mr. Speaker, we released a report last week that was very clear. Putting a price on pollution works. It reduces emissions at low cost. It also does that while still growing the economy. We can see that provinces like British Columbia, which have a price on pollution, have been able to reduce emissions and also grow their economy. That is exactly what we want to do.

Just yesterday in the finance committee, every single presenter, except for a former minister under the Harper government, actually understood that carbon pricing is the most effective tool to reduce emissions. That is why we are moving forward. We are going to continue taking action to tackle climate change, and we are going to continue taking action to create good jobs.

The incredulity I have is that the party opposite does not understand that climate change is real, and that it is having a real impact. We need a serious plan, because that is what Canadians expect and that is what we owe to our kids and grandkids.

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Carleton for his motion. Unfortunately, this motion is another example of never missing an opportunity to miss an opportunity.

After years of denying climate change, after years of being singled out for fossil fuel awards at international climate meetings, after

years of feet-dragging, one would hope that perhaps, just perhaps, a light would shine through to inform motions like this.

Sadly, that appears not to be the case. Rather than embrace, as so much of the world has done, that climate change is real and that action is needed, this motion reflects the same old tune, the tune of denial, division, and opposing any action that would treat climate change as the challenge it is.

Actually, it is not so much about singing the same old tune as it is about whistling past the same old graveyard. It reflects the perspective that if we just whistle loudly enough and close our eyes tightly enough, climate change will simply go away and the world will revert back to the way things used to be before climate change became a scientifically established fact, before the world came together in Paris, and before the impacts of climate change became obvious to anyone with the wit and the will to see them.

That is what this motion represents, a long-past nostalgic time when sea levels were not rising, when more extreme weather was not happening, when greenhouse gas emissions were not a concern. It is a lovely place, but it is not planet Earth.

In reality, climate change is having profound effects on our world, and countries are alive to both the challenges and the opportunities it presents. This is perhaps where the motion most misses the point, in realizing that we are now in the clean growth century and that those nations that provide the innovation, ideas, and ingenuity to address climate change will be the ones that prosper.

The transition to clean energy is a perfect case in point. As the world embraces renewable energy and cleaner ways to extract traditional energy, Canada is ideally positioned to provide those answers.

Our clean technology sector ranks fourth in the world, and first in the G20. That is according to the 2017 Cleantech Innovation Index. Canada has now leapfrogged ahead of the United States, Israel, and the United Kingdom. That is a jump from seventh in 2014. Canada also ranks third in the general drivers index, a set of indicators related to starting a business, clean tech or otherwise.

My friend will also be proud that the authors of the 2017 Cleantech Innovation Index praise Canada for its "leadership in national regulatory quality and government effectiveness, signaling the ability of [its government] to formulate and implement policies that promote the development of the private sector."

That is what happens when a government makes generational investments in clean technology and clean infrastructure. It is what happens when a government takes climate change seriously by signing the Paris accord; accelerating the phase-out of coal; creating a low-carbon fuel standard; regulating methane emissions; making unprecedented investments in foundational science; developing, together with our provincial and territorial colleagues, a national plan for combatting climate change; and, yes, putting a price on carbon, as 42 countries and 25 subnational jurisdictions have also done.

As is clear from this motion, the hon. member does not want Canada to be part of this global shift. He does not want to tax carbon, presumably because he does not believe that carbon is contributing to climate change. This is simply a false premise on which to build an argument.

If we want to combat climate change, we need to reduce the amount of carbon and other polluting gases we are putting into the atmosphere, and the best way to do that is to make it more costly to pollute. That is what economists tell us. That is what corporations tell us. That is what indigenous groups tell us.

Making Canada a leader in clean tech and clean energy is what Canadians tell us they expect of their leaders and their country. That is the message that came through loud and clear in Generation Energy, the largest national conversation about energy in our country's history.

● (1325)

We invited Canadians to imagine their energy future. How do they expect the world to look when their kids and grandkids are grown? What should we be doing now to get there? Canadians responded in an unprecedented way, with numbers that are eye-opening. There were more than 380,000 participants, with 31,000 hits on social media, 63 engagement sessions in every part of the country, and more 650 people at the two-day Generation Energy Forum in Winnipeg last fall.

What emerged from Generation Energy was a remarkable, inspiring vision of how Canadians see their energy future. They told us that they want a thriving zero-carbon economy. They want us to be a leader in clean technology. They want an energy system that provides equal opportunities to Canadians without harming the environment. They want indigenous peoples to be part of the decision-making and to benefit from those opportunities.

Canadians are looking for smart cities with integrated energy systems, increased energy efficiency, and low-carbon transportation. They want rural and remote communities to have better options than diesel for generating electricity and heating their homes.

To keep the momentum, the Minister of Natural Resources has created a 14-member Generation Energy Council to provide recommendations on how best to move forward. That council is due to report this summer and will help define Canada's energy future, both here at home and through our international engagements, including at the G7, the G20, and the Clean Energy Ministerial.

This is the forward-looking clean energy future that Canadians seek, and they know that if we are serious about getting there, we need to begin today. Pricing carbon is an important part of that by

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sending the right signals, encouraging clean energy, discouraging pollution, spurring innovation, and creating new jobs.

The motion before us goes in the opposite direction. It looks to the past, not the future—to things as they were, not things as they are. It appeals to Canadians' worst fears, not their best hope. That is not the way forward for Canada. It is not the way to create the future. It is not the path our government will take.

● (1330)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if we really wanted to protect the environment, we should have started a long time ago. Canada is missing the boat.

I am quite happy that we are putting a price on carbon, but why are we not trying to take a much more responsible approach to reducing greenhouse gases?

The current Liberal government kept the same targets as the previous Conservative government, and that is not nearly enough. Why then does the government not do more than just introduce a carbon tax? Why does it not impose targets that would really help keep our planet healthy for our children and grandchildren?

[*English*]

Ms. Kim Rudd: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague that we should have started a long time ago, but we did not. We were not in government a long time ago. In 10 years of government, the former government chose not to do anything about not just pricing carbon but about our commitments to climate change.

The member asked what other things we can do or are doing. One is the elimination of coal. As we know, it is one of the elements of our energy system that produces significant emissions and one of the things that we have committed as a government to phase out. It is part of the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change and is a significant way to address our clean energy.

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the member said that for a long time no one has done anything. I would like to remind her that under the Chrétien government, the Liberals made the promise of reducing greenhouse gases. In fact, GHG emissions went up 25%. Our government formed, and those 10 years were the only time that greenhouse gas emissions dropped and the economy went up without a carbon tax. We gave incentives to businesses that did not penalize them but gave them opportunities.

I am wondering if the member would tell us what the cost of a carbon tax is going to be to Canadians. She has the report and she blacked it out so that Canadians cannot see it. Would the member finally tell us what the cost to Canadians will be?

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Ms. Kim Rudd: Mr. Speaker, I am glad the hon. member brought up what happened a few years ago when emissions went down. It amazes me that the member opposite and his party are trying to take credit for something that happened in Ontario with the phase-out of coal-fired plants. Nuclear power represents over 60% of the electricity generation in Ontario.

The elimination of the coal-fired plants has seen a reduction of visits of children with asthma at Ontario hospitals. It has seen respiratory problems go down. There are a number of benefits to the path that we are on and none to the path that the member opposite is suggesting.

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the government member about the challenge of applying a carbon price in Canada while no such price on emissions exists in many other countries. A concern is that this discrepancy could prompt carbon-intensive industries to simply relocate to jurisdictions with weaker environmental standards. That would eliminate Canadian jobs without doing anything to reduce global emissions. On the contrary, about five times as much carbon is emitted to produce a tonne of steel in China and ship it here than is emitted to produce it at the EVRAZ plant in Regina. The federal government could level this playing field by extending the carbon price to imports and rebating it on Canadian-made exports.

• (1335)

Ms. Kim Rudd: Mr. Speaker, competitiveness is one of the issues that our price on carbon would address. As I mentioned in my remarks, there are over 46 countries and over 26 subnational governments that have put a price on carbon pollution. As Canada, we are seen as the leader, and we want to be the leader. We certainly do not want to be the laggard.

I would also remind the member opposite that the revenue that comes from the price on carbon goes back to the provinces and territories, where they can choose to do what they wish with it, whether it is lowering taxes for citizens, giving companies additional money to help innovate and reduce taxes, or building hospitals and schools. Provinces do different things with the money as they see fit, but all of those revenues are going back to the provinces and territories.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and join the debate today. I will be sharing my time with the excellent member of Parliament for Red Deer—Lacombe. I look forward to his speech greatly.

I am from British Columbia, where we have had Canada's first true carbon tax in use for a decade. At the time, the B.C. carbon tax was proposed to be revenue neutral. Taxes raised from the carbon tax would be used to lower other taxes, such as B.C.'s personal, small business, and corporate tax rates. Indeed, for much of the last decade, B.C. has, as a result, had some of the lowest personal income tax rates in most income brackets in Canada. However, that was then and this is now, because now there is a B.C. NDP government, and it has changed the rules, so to speak, so that the revenue-neutral carbon tax has instead become an NDP tax grab.

More importantly, we are now seeing the obvious. Let me quote a headline from *The Vancouver Sun* from earlier this year: "Latest figures show B.C.'s carbon emissions continue to increase". The

article goes on to point out that the latest data shows B.C.'s carbon emissions at 63.3 million tonnes of carbon equivalent, an increase of 1.6% over the previous year. To be clear, that is an increase, not a decrease.

That is not the only place where the carbon tax is not working. Right next door is Washington State. As we all know, the United States had no national carbon tax. In 2016, Washington State looked at a carbon tax, but it was voted down.

What happens when one of your largest trading partners, who is also one of your biggest competitors, or where most of your biggest competitors are located, does not have a carbon tax? Let us look at the example of the British Columbia cement industry as an example. In 2008, at the time the B.C. carbon tax was introduced, basically 100% of all cement used in British Columbia was manufactured in British Columbia, and why not? Concrete is not exactly a lightweight, inexpensive product to import and then transport from other jurisdictions.

What happened when B.C.-produced concrete started to become subject to a carbon tax in 2008? That is a great question. It became more expensive. By 2014, B.C.-produced concrete only accounted for roughly 65% of all concrete used in B.C., because cheaper concrete was being imported from jurisdictions with no carbon tax. That is a 35% loss of market share within its own market.

As result, the B.C. government is now providing financial subsidies to the B.C. concrete industry. They actually have a term for this now, and it is called "carbon leakage".

Here is how "carbon leakage" is defined in the B.C. NDP's 2018 budget document: "Industries that compete with industry in countries that may have low or no carbon price: If Industry loses market share to more polluting competitors, known as carbon leakage, it affects our economy and does not reduce global greenhouse gas emissions."

This is a flat out admission that a carbon tax is not all that it is made out to be, because it creates carbon leakage. I say that carbon leakage is found in this budget document, because subsidies and exemptions cost everyday taxpayers money. For the average hard-working Canadian family, there is no carbon tax exemption or relief for them. Costs for everyday items will skyrocket, taxes will rise, and life will simply become unaffordable for everyday Canadians. Instead, when the Prime Minister is confronted with the fact that carbon taxes have helped to create some of the highest gasoline and diesel prices in North America, he said that this is "exactly what we want."

Is it really? I can tell my colleagues that is not what my constituents are saying back in Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola when they fuel up at local gas stations. In fact, they are saying quite the opposite.

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I have places in my riding that are not accessible by public transport. Even private transport providers like Greyhound are abandoning some rural communities. Many of these same communities do not have access to renewable energy or even cleaner-burning non-renewables like liquefied natural gas. These people get hit the hardest by a carbon tax.

One gentleman actually showed me his natural gas bill from last month. If my colleagues can believe it, with the latest carbon tax increase, he actually paid more in carbon taxes than he did for the natural gas he used last month.

• (1340)

Let us think about that, paying more in a tax on a commodity than what the commodity actually costs. The current Prime Minister has said that is exactly what he wants.

What is more insulting is that the Liberal government has an environment minister who likes to say “pollution isn’t free”. On this side of the House, we say, “Ok, tell us what it will cost Canadians.” The transparent Liberal government refuses to say. The information is redacted. It is being hidden from Canadians who deserve to know.

Basically the Liberal government demands that they pay this Liberal carbon tax but refuses to tell them how much they will have to pay. I am hopeful that the Office of the Information Commissioner, which has now launched an investigation to determine why the data about financial costs of a carbon tax per household is not being released to Canadians, will find out the reason why.

Last week, I asked my constituents why they thought the Liberal government was refusing to release this carbon tax information. The reason they shared with me does not inspire confidence in the Liberal government.

We have a carbon tax that after 10 years in B.C. has still failed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We have a carbon tax that has helped create the most expensive gasoline prices in North America, and living costs continue to rise. We have two problems here.

First, the carbon tax has proven that many industries cannot compete with countries that do not have a carbon tax. Despite the Prime Minister’s insistence on his “progressive trade” agenda, it has been a total failure.

How often do we hear about carbon leakage? We do not, because those who promote carbon taxes refuse to talk about carbon leakage. It is an acknowledgement that carbon taxes can harm our economy without reducing pollution. There is no mystery why investment in Canada has declined every year since the Liberal government was elected. Each year it has been in power, it has enacted policies that have increased costs and have made us less competitive as a country. Irresponsible governments sitting on massive amounts of carbon tax revenue love to throw that money around, picking winners and losers.

I should add that the B.C. greenhouse growers have also secured B.C. carbon tax exemptions, not unlike some of Ontario’s worst industrial polluters that have also received extensions and exclusions from the Ontario cap-and-trade way of taxing carbon. We all know the more carbon tax increases, the list of greenhouse gas emitters getting carbon leakage subsidies and relief will also continue to rise.

That leads to my second point. We will have a carbon tax that penalizes hard-working Canadian families because they never get exemptions from paying the carbon tax. We all know who pays for those subsidies and handouts. It is those hard-working families that are increasingly struggling to get by because the Liberal government keeps downloading costs onto them.

Environment Canada expects the carbon tax to go even higher. The Liberals are refusing to tell Canadians what it will cost. However, they are completely hiding that they will not stop there. They will continue to increase carbon taxes on Canadians. When either the Prime Minister or the environment minister are asked how much greenhouse gas emissions would be taken out of the environment by a Liberal carbon tax, we all know they will not answer. We should remember that in B.C., after a decade of a carbon tax, greenhouse gas emissions went up and not down.

The price of gasoline, the price to heat our homes, the price to buy groceries and provide food for our families, and the price of everyday goods that Canadians rely on will all go up under this Liberal carbon tax. We must stop increasing costs on Canadians with a failed carbon tax that we have already established is not working. That is why I will be voting in favour of the motion. We need to start addressing the cost of living for Canadians, not making the country unaffordable for them to live here.

• (1345)

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I, too, come from British Columbia, and I have a bit of a different story. When the carbon tax was introduced in B.C., I altered my travel patterns. I use transit a lot more in metro Vancouver, which we could do. I ended up ahead of the game.

When the Conservatives ask what it will cost the average Canadian, and I may not be average, I have ended up with more money in my pocket because I have taken advantage of the regime. Acknowledging that this may have changed, it is still an issue that the money is there for purposes of British Columbia. The agriculture sector was exempted in B.C. because it did not drive up the price of food.

The member quoted a figure that the emissions had gone up by one point something percent over the 10 years the carbon tax was in place. How can the member explain that next to the fact that the B.C. economy, just in the last five years, has gone up 3.3%, 3.7%, 2.7%, and 2.5%?

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to simply share with my fellow British Columbian that what I had said about the 1.6% increase in emissions was year over year from 2014. Again, that information is publicly available.

Business of Supply

The member highlights his personal example. Again, we live in different parts of the province. Many of the people who live in Cawston, in Olalla, and in Hedley are seniors. They moved there specifically to keep their bills down. I get phone calls from those people, asking questions about how they will be able to keep up with the costs that continue to rise or how they will get to the Penticton Regional Hospital for the services they need when it has become more and more expensive to either pay their bill or to pay for the carbon tax.

That man may know his own story, but he should really try to relate to the stories of thousands of people in my riding who have a much different experience with the carbon tax.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify something that has been bandied around in the House quite a bit lately, and that is about the high price of gasoline in Vancouver. This has no relation whatsoever to either pipeline accessibility or to carbon taxes. The only refinery in the Lower Mainland used to be owned by Chevron and was recently purchased by Parkland. For the first quarter of this year, and I am sure the member is aware of this, it was doing massive upgrades and renovations, so there was less locally refined gas available and more was purchased from the U.S. That is the only reason Vancouver now has such high gas prices. It is not related to the B.C. carbon tax.

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the member's views regarding her constituents. I know she does a lot of town halls, as I do.

However, let us get serious. On April 1, we saw gas prices go up in B.C. specifically because the B.C. NDP raised the carbon tax from \$30 a tonne of greenhouse gas emissions to \$35 a tonne. Under the Liberal-imposed regime, it will go up to \$50 a tonne by 2022.

Gas prices went up in April. It was specifically because of this. In fact, the premier tried to ask the federal government for some tax relief for gasoline in British Columbia. What hypocrisy. Both of these governments have agreed to a schedule that will cost the people in British Columbia more and more.

• (1350)

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that according to the World Bank, 67 jurisdictions and counting around the planet now have a price on carbon.

Why are the Conservatives so keen to miss out on where the global economy is headed with respect to clean growth? Are they out of touch or will they simply get on the right side of history in about a decade, the same way it took them about a decade after the Supreme Court decision on same sex marriage to change their official definition of marriage at a party convention?

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, so much is going on in that question that it makes it laughable. It is not laughable to people in British Columbia who are facing higher costs of living.

We are part of an integrated economy. The member knows that NAFTA is up right now for renegotiation. We are integrated with the Americans. The Americans do not have a price on carbon. Again, as I said, even the B.C. NDP government has said that carbon leakage is a growing concern. Why? Paper and pulp mills will become less

competitive at \$50 a tonne, and the NDP is starting to set the stage for increased subsidies.

Jean Tirole, a Nobel Prize economist, has said that carbon leakage exists and it can have the worst of both worlds, where we have high carbon tax in one jurisdiction that forces a lower price of gas that gets consumed in the other.

That is a real possibility for North America, and that member is out of touch if he thinks this will not be a part of it.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is truly a privilege for me to stand in the House and represent the fine folks in the constituency of Red Deer—Lacombe, some of the hardest working people we will ever find, many of them out of work or underemployed now as a direct result of policies, both provincially and federally, when it comes to the energy sector. People only need to take a drive through my constituency past the pipeline companies and the Edgar Industrial Park in Red Deer. If there is not a for sale or for lease sign on some of these buildings, they will see that all the iron is either still parked in the yard or gone. Where has it gone? It has gone to the United States. We are selling rigs at the pace of one a week out of Canada and into the United States.

This is all about the carbon tax cover-up. The Liberal government will not reveal the documents that finance officials and others have, underlining the cost to Canadians. This is because bad news is not good news for the government, so it will not release that information. It knows it will be a damning set of information that will likely haunt it into the next election.

However, we will not let up on this side of the House. We appreciate clean air, water, and land, and we will make the responsible choices that allow us to get there.

Notwithstanding all the graphics certain organizations and interests like to produce and show around the world, Alberta is one of the most clean place we will ever find. There are beautiful mountains and crystal clear blue rivers flowing out of our Rockies, pristine wilderness in our national and provincial parks, as well as in our forested areas all over northern and central Alberta. It is one of the most beautiful places on the planet. Anybody who says otherwise obviously has not been there.

Statements by Members

The Liberals will not say how much the cost of this carbon tax is. In fact, when we ask for the documents, we are given these massive documents and every page is virtually blacked out, otherwise known as “redacted”, which means the information in there is too sensitive for the government to give us. It leads us to having an opposition day where we have to ask the government to reveal this information, which is known as the carbon tax cover-up.

If we are not going to know what the cost of the actual carbon tax is going to be, then we should know what the cost is to Canadians. I will talk about the boots on the ground.

As I alluded to earlier, over 100,000 jobs in the energy sector alone, many of jobs in my constituency of Red Deer—Lacombe, are not entry level salary jobs. These are some of the best paying jobs we will find in Alberta. In fact, these jobs are so desirable and so high paying that the taxes that have come from Alberta over the last series of decades have left Alberta in a situation where it contributes approximately \$20 billion more a year to the coffers and revenues of the Government of Canada than the province of Alberta gets back in transfer payments for health, education, and so on. This means it is a \$20-billion a year sector. This is just for the people who live and work in Alberta. It does not even include the thousands of people across the country who used to travel all the time to Alberta.

I mentioned this in a speech last week. I have been a member of Parliament here for 12 years. I get on a flight Thursdays to go back to Alberta, which is the best part of my job. These flights would originate out of either Montreal or Halifax. When I would get on that airplane in Ottawa, it would be filled with oil sands workers coming from either Atlantic Canada, the Maritimes, or Quebec. These folks were all wearing their Firebag and Kearl project jackets, they had their workboots on, and they were ready to go all the way to Alberta. These jobs were so well-paying it was cost-effective enough for them to book a flight, go work in the oil sands for several weeks at a time, and then go back to their families. That paycheque would improve the quality of life of these Canadians. People from all over the world would come to Alberta.

Over 4,000 businesses in Canada alone have a direct line to the oil sands because they provide goods, services, or products to the oil sands development. These are millions and millions of dollars of revenue.

• (1355)

The cost is 100,000 pairs of boots on the ground that are no longer working in some of the highest-paying jobs, and paying the highest tax rate, by the way, providing government coffers with more wealth than virtually any other sector of the economy.

What has this cost been to families? When someone does not have a job it causes stress. It causes strife. It causes suicides. These are things that do not get talked about a lot, but as the member of Parliament for Red Deer—Lacombe, I can say this is one of the most egregious factors undermining the ability of those in an otherwise well-paid portion of our economy who have lost their jobs to be able to provide for their families. What I mean by that is places where houses are relatively expensive and the cost of living is fairly high because the amount of wealth that is generated there is generally fairly high. This creates all kinds of problems for the constituents in my riding.

These costs are very high. There is a cost for mothers wanting to take their kids to baseball or to hockey. When one lives in Rimbey—

Mr. Speaker, I see you want me to stop here. I will pause and resume where I left off with the fine folks in Rimbey.

The Deputy Speaker: Indeed, the hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe will have four minutes remaining for his remarks when the House returns to the question that is before it, as well as the usual five minutes for questions and comments.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

TRANS MOUNTAIN PIPELINE

Mr. Darshan Singh Kang (Calgary Skyview, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, as we all know, the government has approved the Trans Mountain pipeline, but we find ourselves in a difficult situation. In an era of economic uncertainty, the pipeline represents both job creation and crucial trade opportunities for Canada. It is expected not only to inject billions of dollars into Canada's economy through project spending and exports but also to generate thousands of jobs. Yes, the pipeline brings concerns of environmental damage, but the merits of this project are clear: the pipeline is the safest, most cost-effective way of transporting oil.

My constituents have expressed concerns over the ongoing delays in building the pipeline. Many of them rely on the jobs that it will create in the province of Alberta. It is clear there are many passionate people on both sides of this issue. The Trans Mountain pipeline is greater than one or two individuals; it is about Canada's domestic and international growth. Instead of bickering, fighting, and placing blame, we should be truly listening to each other and communicate a strategy that finds us on common ground.

Let us be Canadians first and let cooler heads prevail.

* * *

RECOGNITION OF LIFETIME OF SERVICE

Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour and congratulate Chesley W. Patten, who was born and raised in Grand Bank in my riding. He enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force during the Second World War and served as a flight sergeant navigator flying coastal patrol on the east coast of Canada for the duration of the war.

After the war, he enrolled as a student at Dalhousie University and graduated as a chartered accountant. He was hired by Ontario Hydro, where he worked his entire working life. In 1943, while on leave from the military, he joined the Masonic lodge. Today, Chesley is celebrating 75 years as a Mason. At 97 years old, he is currently the last chaplain at the Joseph Hearn Lodge in Mississauga.

Statements by Members

On behalf of all of the residents of Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, I would like to thank Chesley Patten for his lifetime of service to our country and his community.

* * *

● (1400)

[Translation]

MAPLE SYRUP TECHNOLOGY

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, who would have ever thought that we could get syrup from a maple tree? From the first settlers, who learned to boil sap from indigenous populations, to modern facilities using state-of-the-art technology, there have been a number of innovations over the course of many sugaring seasons. Réjean Bilodeau, a maple enthusiast from Bellechasse, tells this fascinating story in his beautiful 776-page book.

With pioneers like François Goulet, Clément Métivier, and Jean-Marie Chabot, he explains that countless innovations in maple syrup technology were in fact developed in Bellechasse, including the renowned vacuum system in 1973.

In March 2016, Mr. Bilodeau was diagnosed with bone marrow cancer, but this has not slowed him down in the least, for this Saturday he will be launching his second book on this captivating topic. That is why, thanks to his determination and tenacity, I am proud to stand in the House and join our municipality in declaring Bellechasse the birthplace of maple syrup technology.

* * *

SPEECH AND HEARING MONTH

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, May is Speech and Hearing Month. As the father of a future speech therapist, I am proud to acknowledge the exceptional work of speech therapists and audiologists.

[English]

Throughout the month of May, Speech-Language & Audiology Canada's more than 6,400 members will be highlighting the importance of early detection and intervention of speech, language, swallowing, hearing, and balance disorders.

[Translation]

From birth, newborns begin communicating and building their future. This is vital for the social and professional development of any individual.

[English]

Many Canadians suffer from hearing and speech disorders. People should visit their local Canadian Hearing Society.

I ask all members to join me in recognizing Speech and Hearing Month in Canada and to stand in support of the work of speech pathologists and audiologists across the country.

Meegwetch.

[Translation]

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR HOCHELAGA'S SENIORS

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in Hochelaga and elsewhere, our seniors are at greater risk of being poor and isolated. Our inadequate public pensions and the government's failure to provide automatic enrolment in the guaranteed income supplement have done nothing to help lift seniors out of poverty. The growing tendency to provide our public services only online really complicates their lives.

Fortunately, several groups in my riding are stepping up to the plate and helping to break the isolation of seniors. Carrefour Montrose and Loisirs Notre-Dame des Victoires are two organizations that provide seniors with recreational activities to keep them from becoming isolated and to help them stay active. Remarkably, Carrefour has been doing this for 30 years and Loisirs for 65 years.

I invite all my colleagues to join me in thanking these two groups and wishing them an excellent anniversary.

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[English]

OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALLIST

Mr. Gordie Hogg (South Surrey—White Rock, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, White Rock citizen Christine Girard is the first Canadian woman ever to win an Olympic medal in weightlifting. In London, in 2012, she initially won the bronze medal and has recently been awarded the gold medal as the two athletes who finished before her were disqualified for doping.

Christine is a proud mother of three children, and she is married to her coach, Walter Bailey. She is a wonderful role model who has supported young athletes through her coaching and her support of KidSport. She has chronicled her experiences in a recent book entitled "*From Defeat to Victory*".

She is a humble, proud Canadian, and she has described her gold medal as a victory for her sport and for our country, believing that it reflects the Canadian values of fair play and competitiveness.

On behalf of all Canadians, we thank Christine for her inspiration both as an athlete and as a citizen.

* * *

● (1405)

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to recognize the month of May as Asian Heritage Month. It is a time to celebrate and reflect on the contributions that Canadians of Asian heritage have made to Canada.

I proudly represent the riding of Markham—Unionville, which is home to a large and thriving Asian community. Canadians of Asian heritage in Markham and across Canada are active members of our communities and contribute to our national life.

Statements by Members

Canadians from all backgrounds stand together to honour the legacy of Canadians of Asian heritage who, throughout our history, have played a major role in moulding Canada into the culturally diverse, energetic, and prosperous nation we know today.

* * *

CANADA'S BEST MANAGED COMPANIES

Mr. Gagan Sikand (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a member of Parliament, I have had the distinct honour to engage with business owners in my riding who not only provide vital jobs for local people, but truly put Mississauga on the map as a hub for innovation and creativity.

A list of Canada's best managed companies for 2018 has been published. Recently, I had the pleasure of meeting with two of the companies. Lakeside Process Controls Limited has been providing innovative automation solutions since 1952. M&M Food Market, which is headquartered in my riding, continues to be a market leader and recognizable brand in Canada. To demonstrate this, M&M Food Market was named a platinum winner.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Lakeside Process Controls and M&M Food Market in being a credit to the Canadian business community and showing leadership as employers.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday at the finance committee, we heard from experts across the country about pricing pollution. We heard that it is a cost-effective solution to climate change that cuts pollution and spurs clean growth. We heard that it is the foundation of any serious climate plan for Canada.

Unfortunately, we also heard from Jason Kenney. The members opposite flew in a Harper Conservative to talk about what he is not doing to tackle climate change, and he is not even sure how much of a role humans play in causing it. He has no plan for climate action. As one of our experts said yesterday, with that track record, it is hard to say we share a common concern for this problem.

Our party has a real plan to cut pollution, grow the economy, and support Canadians. Serious climate action is the right choice for our kids and grandkids, and it should not be a partisan issue.

* * *

MENTAL HEALTH

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the tremendous work of one of my constituents, Kristin Legault-Donkers.

Kristin is in her third year of university and is pursuing a career in clinical psychology. When she was 13, she was diagnosed with anxiety and depression, and was later diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Undeterred by illness, Kristin used the opportunity to advocate for better mental health services. In 2016, she wrote and published a series of children's books on depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and ADHD. She then teamed up with a local teacher and created a comprehensive education package for use in classrooms.

For her work, Kristin is being honoured by the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health during its annual Champions of Mental Health Awards on May 8. There, she will be presented with the Sharon Johnston Champion of Mental Health Award for Youth.

It is essential that we recognize and support mental health champions like Kristin. The work she has done has been a tremendous support for one in five Canadians who suffers from a mental disorder.

* * *

[Translation]

ANDRÉ BOURBEAU

Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, André Bourbeau, a music lover, philanthropist, and resident of Brome—Missisquoi, passed away on March 25, 2018, at the age of 81.

André loved music. For 18 years, he chaired the Jeunesses Musicales Canada Foundation, where he was able to share his passion. He was also very involved in politics, serving as senior adviser and mayor of Saint-Lambert, chair of the Conseil des maires, and commissioner for the Commission de transport de la Rive-Sud de Montréal. In his time at the Quebec National Assembly, André Bourbeau served as minister of municipal affairs; minister of labour, security and revenue; and minister of finance, in Robert Bourassa's government.

He was the recipient of many honours, including the Chevalier de l'Ordre national du Québec in 2009 and the arts-business award from the Conseil des arts de Montréal and the Chambre de commerce du Montréal métropolitain in 2015.

André was a kind man who contributed greatly to developing the music scene, and he passed his passion on to the next generation. I was saddened to learn of this huge loss. I offer my condolences to the family and loved ones of André Bourbeau.

* * *

●(1410)

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S AWARDS

Mrs. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Status of Women Canada is now accepting nominations for the 2018 Governor General's Awards in Commemoration of the Persons Case.

These awards recognize Canadians who have made outstanding contributions to advancing gender equality in Canada, in the spirit of women who fought for their identity.

*Statements by Members**[English]*

In a year when global women's marches and the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements have forced us to confront just how much work remains to be done, it is especially important to recognize and honour the legacy of feminist leaders on which we continue to build. We all know of trailblazers, advocates, or community organizers who have made outstanding contributions to gender equality in Canada and could be nominated for the 2018 awards. Let us spread the word about the Governor General's Awards in Commemoration of the Persons Case so that the achievements of exceptional individuals who are advancing gender equality may inspire others to make a difference too.

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HUMBOLDT BRONCOS

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a month ago, our entire country grieved when tragedy struck the Humboldt Broncos. Among the injured was 19-year-old Ryan Straschnitzki, from Airdrie. Ryan was left paralyzed and faces a long recovery, but his determination never wavered. After the accident, Ryan stated that he had a commitment to play for Canada on the Olympic sledge hockey team.

Through the darkness, there is always light, and this light came from our community rallying around Ryan. Cody Thompson, friend and trainer of Ryan's, supported by the Airdrie Dads Facebook group, helped start the #strazstrong committee and sold hats to help with medical costs. Operation Airdrie Random Acts of City Kindness hosted a bake sale, led by brothers Aiden and Nolan Pole. Phil Dell, dad of local NHL goalie Aaron Dell, and many others offered their time as tradesmen to help refit Ryan's home. Mackenzie Murphy set up a vigil to support Ryan and to commemorate the Broncos.

These are just a few examples of how our community was able to shine some light on a tragedy. Our entire country is behind Ryan.

* * *

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, two years ago, I rose in the House for the very first time to recognize 30 years of significant contributions by Toyota to my constituents. I took great pleasure this past Friday when the Prime Minister, Premier Wynne, and Fred Volf, president of Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada, at the Hespeler plant, in my riding, announced that Toyota will be making a \$1.4 billion investment and that the Governments of Canada and Ontario each would be investing \$110 million.

These investments will support more than 8,000 jobs in south-western Ontario and will create 450 new jobs as well as 1,000 co-op placements. They will help maintain and create well-paying jobs for the middle class and promote economic growth and prosperity for the Region of Waterloo and for our strong automotive sector right here in Canada.

KEETHAN LOBSTER, MATTHEW MOORE-SPENCE, AND TERRENCE SPENCE

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to celebrate the lives of Keethan Lobster, Matthew Moore-Spence, and Terrence Spence. These beautiful, bright 13- and 11-year-old boys from Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation died on April 28, and like so many kids, they were cycling, enjoying the first warm days, when they were struck by a drunk driver.

Unlike so many other kids, they faced challenges all too common on first nations, not just the gravel road with no lighting. Keethan's mom committed suicide a year ago. His granny had raised him since then in a trailer that was home to 18 people.

Keethan had a dream. His last words to his Uncle Curtis Lobster were, "I am going to graduate from college like you, Uncle."

In Canada, one of the wealthiest countries in the world, in 2018, we have to ask ourselves why. We need to work with first nations to build communities that kids can be safe in, from bike paths, to roads, to lights.

We will not forget Keethan, Matthew, and Terrence, and we will work to build safer communities for kids like them.

*[Member spoke in Cree as follows:]**Ekosi.**[English]*

* * *

● (1415)

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the integrity of our elections is something most Canadians take for granted, but as Wendell Phillips said in 1852, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

Vigilance and a commitment to the integrity of our elections requires us to confront the Liberals' disastrous proposals in Bill C-76, proposals that will bring the integrity of our electoral process into question and weaken our democracy.

To have confidence in the results of an election, Canadians expect three simple things: that voters prove who they are; that voters prove where they live; and that our elections are free of foreign interference. Bill C-76 would weaken all three of these. It would eliminate ID requirements, ID requirements that are already among the most generous in the world. It would allow Canadians living abroad to choose which riding to vote in, whether or not they demonstrate any plausible connection to that riding. It would introduce no meaningful safeguards on foreign interference at a time when more and more foreign actors want to manipulate our politics.

The bill is a clear and present threat to the integrity of Canadian elections. We will fight it every step of the way.

NATIONAL NURSING WEEK

Ms. Kamal Khera (Brampton West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a registered nurse, it is my privilege to recognize National Nursing Week, a celebration of the tireless dedication of our nation's nurses. This weekend, I visited Brampton Civic Hospital. I saw the commitment, compassion, and care our nurses exhibit every single day.

This year the theme of National Nursing Week is “Yes, this is Nursing”, highlighting the dynamic role nurses play in our evolving health care system. Beyond the front lines of health care, nurses are leaders, educators, advocates, and innovators.

Nurse Next Door, in Brampton West, is an innovative health care service redefining what health care looks like through our home care model. Our government is proud to support Nurse Next Door through our investments in home care and palliative care, helping more Canadians continue to live in their homes into their golden years.

I thank all the nurses across Canada and around the world for all their contributions in keeping us healthy and safe.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the New Brunswick *Telegraph-Journal* reported that a majority of Atlantic Canadians have not received a wage increase in the last few years. It is reported that families have significantly less money to spend, and households are actually worse off now than they were during the great recession. Damaging policies like the carbon tax will only make things worse by increasing the price of nearly everything Canadians pay for.

Will the government show some compassion for Atlantic Canadians and vote with us today and say no to the carbon tax?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the party opposite would show compassion for all Canadians and for the world by taking serious action on climate change.

The costs of climate change and the impacts we are seeing on Canadians from floods, from forest fires, and from droughts have gone from \$400 million a year to over \$1 billion a year. We are projected to hit maybe \$40 billion a year by 2030. There is a huge impact from climate change, and Canadians are feeling it right now.

I just wonder if the party opposite would actually tell us if it has a plan and show it to Canadians.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister speaks of costs, and costs are really on our minds as well, specifically because the Prime Minister has indicated that high fuel costs are going to make Canadians make better choices.

This is what I want to know. I do not have a choice when I am taking my kids to basketball and football. I do not have a choice to

Oral Questions

walk when I am taking my husband to his specialist appointment 70 kilometres away. Choices cannot be made that easily.

Do the Liberals understand the impact these costs have on Canadians?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I look up at the gallery and I see young people here, I think the question they are asking is whether the party opposite understands that climate change is real, that it is having a real impact. Young people, and older people, and people around the world want to see clear action on climate change, because we only have one planet.

On behalf of everyone who wants to see action on climate change, I would like to ask the party opposite: what is your plan?

• (1420)

The Speaker: Order. I remind the hon. Minister of Environment to direct her comments through the Chair. To say “you”, you are talking about the Speaker. I do not think she was asking me a question.

The hon. member for Milton.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I greatly respect that we have wonderful students watching today, but I bet they want to know another thing too, which is how much it is going to cost them. That is what they want to know.

This is more than just a matter of choice. As the Prime Minister almost said in his remarks, it is a behaviour the government wants to correct. The Prime Minister cannot dictate how Canadians behave, but he is going to try to make sure he suffocates them with taxes before they comply.

Will the Prime Minister support our motion and commit in the House today to no new taxes for these young people?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, young people and Canadians already know that they are paying for the cost of inaction by the previous government. They are paying the cost, because we are seeing the impact of climate change. We are seeing forest fires. We are seeing droughts. We are seeing floods. Also, we know that there is a huge economic opportunity, a \$23-trillion opportunity, from clean growth.

I am really proud of what our party has been able to do in terms of the fastest growing economy in the G7 and 400,000 jobs created.

We are going to continue taking action to tackle climate change, grow our economy, and—

The Speaker: Order. It is important that we have debates on things, not that we all talk at once. I would ask members to listen when others are speaking, whether they are asking a question or giving an answer, whether they like what they are hearing or not.

The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eliminating the children's sports and culture tax credits, after eliminating the public transit tax credit, and after raising taxes for 80% of Canadian families, the Prime Minister's new scheme to get more money out of taxpayers' pockets is to charge a new tax on carbon, which will take \$10 billion out of our economy.

I have a simple question for the Prime Minister. Will he make a reasoned decision and simply cancel this carbon tax?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that climate change is real, that we must do something about it, and that we can grow a clean economy. That is what we are doing. We have a plan.

On behalf of all Canadians, I ask the following question. What is the plan of the party across the way?

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, only the Liberals would think that a tax will solve environmental problems.

The facts are clear. The Liberals are unable to explain how this new tax will help the environment. The Liberals simply do not want to tell Canadians how much this tax is going to cost them and, in the meantime, the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who is neutral, says that it will cost our economy \$10 billion.

My question is simple. When will our Prime Minister cancel this regressive tax?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the facts are clear. Climate change is already costing Canadians. We are seeing floods and forest fires across the country. We have a duty to leave a planet for our children and our grandchildren. We have a plan, but what is the Conservative Party's plan?

* * *

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Chief Electoral Officer position has been vacant for 18 months.

On April 3, we were told that a nominee had been put forward to head up Elections Canada. On April 27, out of nowhere, a new letter arrived telling us that the first nomination was cancelled and a new person was up for the job.

In the space of three weeks, without any consultation or explanation, the government changed its mind about the nominee, and now it is giving us just seven business days to analyze the appointment. Let's keep in mind that the next general election is just 18 months away.

Are we destined to go through the next election with no Chief Electoral Officer?

[English]

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are in the midst of a rigorous recruitment process to choose the next Chief Electoral Officer. It is very important to recognize that as we move forward, and I expect we will be moving

very soon, we respect the privacy of Canadians who participate in these selection processes. I certainly wish the NDP would respect that same principle of respecting the privacy of people who participate in these selection processes.

• (1425)

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are the ones who are talking about an open and transparent process.

The government is taking the stewardship of our democracy as seriously as it did electoral reform. The lack of urgency on its part is alarming. After inexplicably waiting for 18 months to appoint a Chief Electoral Officer, the government sent two letters in the space of three weeks, with two different candidates.

With only 18 months left until the next election, time is running out. Canadians expect free and fair elections. They deserve answers. What is happening, and when will the Elections Canada CEO be on the job?

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would urge the hon. member to wait, because we will be coming forward very soon with a successful candidate in the rigorous selection process for the next Chief Electoral Officer. Choosing the Chief Electoral Officer, who will help us preserve the integrity of our electoral system and at the same time encourage more Canadians to vote, has been a very important process.

It is important that we respect the privacy of all Canadians who participate in these processes. I wish the NDP would demonstrate that same level of respect.

* * *

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government finally released its report on the use of Canadian arms in Saudi Arabia. It says that there is no evidence the arms were used to violate human rights. The UN and human rights advocacy groups say that the use of force was neither reasonable nor necessary, but the government chose to draw conclusions based on information from Saudi military and diplomatic sources.

Does the government seriously expect Canadians to accept this report?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

Our government recently announced its support for a stronger and more rigorous arms export control system. We will integrate the Arms Trade Treaty criteria into Canadian law, including provisions on human rights, peace and security, and gender-based violence. This also entails a new legal obligation for this government and all future governments of Canada.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is a deeply flawed bill that does not respect the spirit or the letter of the treaty.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

The standard for Canadian arms exports is not conclusive evidence of the use of arms in human rights violations. It is reasonable risk. Clearly, with Saudi Arabia, there is a reasonable risk that Canadian arms have been and will be used to commit human rights violations in Saudi Arabia or Yemen. This is an embarrassment. The current government's approach to arms export control is shameful.

When will the government do the right thing and suspend arms exports to Saudi Arabia?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring Canada's export control system is robust and transparent. We are proud to have put forward Bill C-47, which would allow Canada to accede to the Arms Trade Treaty.

I would like to thank all my colleagues in the House for the constructive work that has been done in committee. We have made significant steps toward creating a new and higher standard for arms exports. This is in line with what Canadians expect. This is what we are doing.

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

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Federal Court has ordered the government to review the refugee claim of a person who, until recently, lived in the United States for 13 years. That person never claimed asylum during that time but is now shopping for a spot in Canada. This individual is decidedly making a mockery of Canada.

Does the government also believe that the United States is not a safe country for refugee claimants, or will it do what needs to be done and appeal that decision?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a Canadian, I am proud of Canada's refugee policy. We can all be proud of this policy, which welcomes those fleeing persecution. We do have rules and they must be followed. We will see to it that these rules are followed to ensure the integrity of our immigration system, Canadians' safety, and respect for national and international rules.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let's talk about measures. Yesterday, the minister told us he had nothing new to offer in terms of how to deal with the thousands of illegal migrants. The minister is going to take care of illegal migrants under the guise of compassion, but the problem is that his compassion does not extend to the real refugees in UN camps. The minister's hypocrisy is clear to the thousands of real refugees he never mentions in his speeches.

Once again, will the government show some real leadership and put the issue of illegal asylum seekers on the agenda for the G7 summit?

• (1430)

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find these remarks rather extraordinary coming from the

same Harper Conservatives who did not want to let the Syrians into our country. We, on the other hand, have a different policy. We are going to make sure we show compassion toward refugees fleeing persecution who have every right to come here. At the same time, we are going to make sure the rules are being followed here in Canada. A person who comes to Canada does not automatically have the right to stay unless they meet the criteria for refugee status.

[English]

Hon. Alice Wong (Richmond Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every day the wait gets longer for those fleeing war and genuine persecution, as the government uses its resources for those who jump the queue. The Liberals have reassigned 80 agents from processing legitimate immigration applications that have long wait times. These agents are now dealing with queue jumpers instead of real applicants. How is that fair and compassionate?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, only the Harper Conservatives would talk about border security after they cut almost \$400 million from border security operations.

Only the Harper Conservatives would pretend to care about compassionate treatment of refugees after they cut refugee health care to the most vulnerable people, pregnant women, and victims of torture.

Only the Harper Conservatives would pretend to care about immigration processing and people stuck in backlogs after we inherited those backlogs from them and are working hard to clear them and improve processing times.

We have no lessons to take from the Conservatives on this issue.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, another day has gone by, but refugees who are waiting in camps all over the world to come to Canada are no closer to arriving than they were yesterday or the day before. The Minister of Immigration preaches compassion but is making the world's most vulnerable people wait while prioritizing people who are crossing illegally from the U.S.

Why does the minister not stop with the PMO talking points and tell us how this is fair?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what makes it difficult for refugees is when health care is cut for refugees. What makes it difficult for refugees is when the generosity of Canadians is limited to only 4,500 spots in the privately sponsored refugee program.

Oral Questions

We have more than quadrupled those spots, to 18,000, so that more Canadians can sponsor refugees. We have doubled the number of resettled refugees who come to Canada. We have invested more money in the Immigration and Refugee Board, so that genuine refugees can get their claims heard faster. The Conservatives have no clue about compassion for refugees.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has moved over 80 full-time employees from processing applications of people who are trying to legally emigrate to Canada, to process work permits for people entering Canada illegally from the United States, yet we know that LGBTQI+ refugees in UN camps wait for years to come to Canada under the government.

How is it compassionate to send resources to prioritize the applications of illegal border crossers from the United States of America, while persecuted LGBTQI+ refugees have to wait?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, promoting the rights and dignity of LGBTQ2 people at home and abroad has been a priority for this government. What was the Conservatives' record when they were in government? They were forced by the opposition to put LGBTQ2 rights back into the citizenship guide after they removed those rights and any mention of those rights under the Citizenship Act.

We have quadrupled the number of privately sponsored refugees so that we can identify the most vulnerable refugees in the world, including LGBTQ2 communities. We have funded the Rainbow Refugee Society so that more LGBTQ2 refugees can be brought to Canada.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have served under a government that was the first to include LGBTQI rights in Canada's citizenship guide.

There is one line of immigration that this government has managed to reduce to zero days for wait time. That is for people who are illegally crossing the border from the safe country that is the United States. Meanwhile, it takes 30 months for someone to immigrate to Canada legally on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

Why has the minister redirected 80 staff from processing the applications of legal border crossers to processing those of people illegally entering the country from the United States?

● (1435)

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us compare our records. Under the former Conservative government, spouses had to wait 26 months to reunite with their family members. We have brought that down to 12 months. Not only that, but we were able to remove 20,000 spouses from the backlog they left us.

Live-in caregivers who provided services to Canadian families, under that party, under the Harper Conservatives, had to wait five to seven years to sponsor their family members. We have cut that down to 12 months. We will take no lessons from the Harper Conservatives.

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to stand with Marie-Hélène Dubé and the Canadian Union of Public Employees today. Together they represent over a million Canadians who are calling on the government to enhance the employment insurance sickness benefits.

The Prime Minister and the minister both promised to do just that, but the sick are still waiting. They should not have to deal with financial problems. They should be focusing on getting well.

When will the government keep its promises?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

I met with Ms. Dubé this morning. I had the pleasure of talking with her about the importance of the employment insurance program and how it must take into account the needs and circumstances of struggling families.

We agreed that the employment insurance program has improved over the past two years thanks to the new family caregiver benefit, which will help 24,000 families, and the easing of the rules governing EI sickness benefits, which will help many families and individuals who are struggling. We will continue to work hard to ensure that the EI system—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski.

[English]

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians fighting for their lives can no longer wait. We have asked the same question over and over, and we are seeing the same Liberal game. When the Liberals were in opposition they cared about this, but now that they are in government they have forgotten what they promised.

Enough is enough. We need action. Why have the Liberals forgotten Marie-Hélène Dubé and the half a million Canadians who want to see EI sickness benefits extended? When will we finally see the Liberals stand up for Canadian workers and for those struggling with serious illness, and when will we see them fulfill their promise to extend EI sickness benefits?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we all know in this House, the EI system has a very important responsibility of addressing the needs and circumstances of families that are struggling with unemployment, with health care, and with family circumstances.

We are very conscious of the potential and the already positive impacts of the changes made to the EI system over the last two years. We have introduced a new parental sharing benefit, for instance, which is going to benefit 100,000 families. We have enhanced accessibility for sickness benefits.

Oral Questions

We look forward to more of these changes.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every Canadian knows that the Liberal carbon tax will have a direct impact on their wallets. The government knows it, the government did the calculations, but the government is hiding it from Canadians. That is rather cowardly.

The question is simple: how will this tax directly impact middle-class families, those who work hard, and those who want something to show for their money? What will the Liberal carbon tax cost Canadians?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. opposition member should be familiar with how pollution pricing works because he lives in Quebec. What happened in Quebec? It has one of the fastest-growing economies in the country.

We have an opportunity not only to fight climate change, but also to create jobs and businesses. In Quebec and in France, I have seen many businesses that offer clean solutions and create jobs. I see that all across Canada.

We are going to move forward with our plan to fight climate change.

• (1440)

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the Liberal carbon tax will cost Canadian families, but the government is refusing to tell them how much. How much will the Liberal carbon tax cost moms who have to take their kids to day care, get groceries, and go to work, but who, like many people, do not have access to public transit?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about how much we have done for moms. We have invested in public transit and created the Canada child benefit. We have done more for moms in the past two years than the party opposite ever did.

Moms also want to know what we are going to do to save the planet for their kids. That is what we are going to do, and we have a plan.

On behalf of moms, may I ask how you intend to tackle climate change?

The Speaker: I would remind the hon. minister to direct her comments to the Chair.

The hon. member for Carleton.

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government likes to claim that its carbon tax will be “revenue neutral”.

We already knew that they were going to collect GST on the carbon tax, but today Environment Canada officials testified at the finance committee that the government will not return the proceeds of GST collected on the carbon tax to the provinces from which it was originally collected.

Is that not yet more proof that this tax has nothing to do with the environment, and that it is just another tax grab on Canadians?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I always find it strange that the member opposite does not understand how a price on pollution works.

He was at committee yesterday, where every single expert said that a price on pollution is the most efficient way to reduce emissions while growing a clean economy. Maybe the member opposite would like to go through the records from the committee. I am happy to produce them for him so that he can see what people say about how a price on pollution works, that we need to tackle climate change, and that this is one of the most effective tools we have to grow a clean economy, to foster innovation, and to ensure a future for our kids.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was the Liberal government that claimed that the tax would be “revenue neutral”.

Today, further testimony from Environment Canada disproved that claim. Officials said that the budget bill will not even allow the government to reduce other taxes with the proceeds of the carbon tax. In other words, this is going to make the government a winner and taxpayers the losers.

How much will this tax increase cost the average Canadian family?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, climate change is real. We need a plan to tackle climate change.

We have a plan to tackle climate change. We have a plan to grow our economy. We understand the \$2-trillion opportunity of clean growth—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I would ask the hon. member for Edmonton Manning and others to listen and not interrupt someone who is answering.

I would also ask the member for Cape Breton—Canso to assist by also listening and not interrupting when I am trying to keep things quiet around here.

The hon. Minister of Environment.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue to implement a plan on climate change that is going to reduce emissions, that is going to grow a clean economy, that is going to ensure a sustainable planet for our kids.

Oral Questions

Once again, I am going to ask the party opposite this question: what is your plan to tackle climate change to take advantage of the—

The Speaker: I think this is the third time I have had to remind the hon. Minister of Environment about saying “you” and “your”. When she says “your plan”, she is asking the Speaker, and that is not my role, so I would ask her not to do that.

Now everybody wants to know what my plan is. It is not fair to me. Talk to me later.

Well, I got to see the House in a good mood, anyway.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

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• (1445)

TAXATION

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, *La Presse* has just announced that it will become a non-profit entity because Ottawa is still refusing to support our national media.

This morning, the newspaper's president said that the newspaper could no longer compete in an environment where more than 80% of digital advertising dollars in Canada go to Google and Facebook, which do not have to pay taxes but get tax credits. Why on earth is the Minister of Finance favouring the web giants? First *La Presse*. What's next?

Will our media have to start hiring hordes of lobbyists to finally get the government's attention?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as members know, Canadians are increasingly turning to the Internet to get the news. Meanwhile, media companies are innovating to adapt to this change.

At the request of the industry, we announced in budget 2018 that the government would examine new models to enable the media to accept donations. We firmly believe that *La Presse* plays an important role as a reliable and professional source of local news in Quebec. We will, of course, continue to work with *La Presse* and other media organizations to ensure that we follow up on our budget commitments.

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[English]

ETHICS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, around the globe, U.S. data oligarchies are facing calls for regulation, but with the Liberal government it is a case of who you know in the PMO. Liberal operative Kevin Chan did not even bother to register as a lobbyist because he could just call up his friends, the ministers, and Google did one step better, moving Leslie Church from the Liberal Party to Google public affairs to the senior position in the Minister of Canadian Heritage's office. Talk about letting Dracula have the keys to the blood bank.

Why is the Minister of Canadian Heritage putting the interests of Liberal insiders ahead of the interests of Canadian citizens?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all know that the way Canadians consume content has changed, and this is a reality that is impacting many sectors. The reality is that benefits associated with the shift toward digital are not shared equally between web giants and our artists, creators, and journalists.

Our government wants to ensure that there is a better balance. This is why we have committed to modernizing our policy to better address the realities of the digital era, including the review of the Broadcasting Act.

We believe in the importance of protecting Canadian culture, industries, and artists, and in promoting access to content on all platforms.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's national parks play a critical role in shaping our national identity, protecting wildlife, and preserving national heritage. Last year a record number of Canadians visited parks and heritage places across the country, including the Rouge National Urban Park in Scarborough.

In 2017, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change held the most comprehensive consultation ever to be undertaken. Could the minister tell us what she heard and what her vision is for Canada's parks?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Scarborough—Guildwood for his important work on Rouge National Urban Park.

For the first time ever, we welcomed the views of all Canadians. Over 13,000 Canadians shared their perspectives, and yesterday I was able to share the practical steps that we are taking in response to this feedback. The top priority is protecting the ecological integrity of our parks and making sure that more Canadians have access to our parks, because we know when Canadians connect with nature, they understand the importance of that connection.

I am extremely proud that starting in 2018, national parks are free to—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Lévis—Lotbinière.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after watching the Liberals' pals get pot permits to grow a small fortune, now we are seeing the Liberals' fishing buddies get a free pass, once again making a laughingstock of the principle of ethics.

Oral Questions

If court documents confirm interference on the part of the Minister of Fisheries regarding a highly valued shellfish, the Liberals will once again have cheated in an allocation process, this time at the expense of first nations.

Why is the minister granting millions of dollars' worth of quotas to his Liberal buddies at the expense of a fair process and the much-desired reconciliation?

[*English*]

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fact that there is a new participant in the surf clam fishery should be no surprise to the Conservative government. In fact, it started a very similar process three years ago to accomplish the very same thing. The difference is that unlike the previous government, our robust process included indigenous communities. We are proud that the best proposal was selected. The greatest number of Atlantic Canadians will benefit, including indigenous people from five provinces, those being four Atlantic provinces and Quebec.

• (1450)

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fisheries minister has defended his decision to reward Liberal Party insiders with a quota worth millions of dollars, claiming his patronage was a step in reconciliation. The bidding process was a sham and an insult to reconciliation. It is pitting one first nation against the other and the crown.

Why is the minister putting Liberal insiders ahead of the families in Grand Bank and ahead of reconciliation with indigenous people?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our decision to increase indigenous participation in fishing is consistent with our government's commitment to developing a renewed relationship between Canada and indigenous people. Enhancing access to the Arctic surf clam fishery broadens the distribution of benefits from this public resource and is a powerful step toward reconciliation. When the previous government went through a very similar public proposal process to access this fishery, it forget to include indigenous people. However, we did not.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister was aware of the glaring weaknesses in the Five Nations proposal, yet he ordered his officials to give them the licence anyways. Despite the departmental analysis pointing out the flaws in their application, he still awarded it to Liberal family and friends at the expense of the community of Grand Bank.

Just so we are all clear, the minister awarded a contract worth millions of dollars to a Liberal MP's brother and a former Liberal MP, whose bid was incomplete and flawed. If this is not a conflict of interest, what is?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just so we are clear, the fact that there is a new participant coming into this fishery is not a surprise, or should not be a surprise, to the former government. It had a very similar process, but excluded first nations people as part of that process. We had a robust process and we are proud of the fact that we picked the best proposal. It is

going to benefit the highest number of Atlantic Canadians, including indigenous people from five separate provinces.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if “robust” means checking down to see if they have given to the Liberal Party, well, they have accomplished that robust application.

I spent last week in Grand Bank. From the dock to Sharon's to Foodland to Jenny's, the concern over the future is very real. I spoke again with Edgar, who works at the plant, and his son also works at the plant and is at risk of being among the very first to lose his job. If this happens, Edgar is worried he may lose his son to the mainland.

Edgar has one question for the seven MPs from the Rock: when will they start standing up for them?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I always happy to stand up and talk about just how proud I am of the good work of every member of Parliament from Newfoundland and Labrador, especially the member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, who has been in constant contact with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

In addition to that, we are also proud of the robust process we carried out that ensured the maximum number of Atlantic Canadians were going to benefit from this decision, including indigenous people, a group of people that government forgot about when it was going through a similar process.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Phoenix pay system has been a disaster right from the beginning. At Parks Canada, the problems have been rampant, and many people have not been paid properly for months or even years.

My riding is the proud home to four national parks—Kootenay, Yoho, Revelstoke, and Glacier—and my offices have dealt with a large number of Phoenix cases from Parks Canada employees. There have been so many problems that many struggle to even keep track of the status of their own case. These good people deserve better.

When will the government scrap the Phoenix pay system and compensate those affected by this fiasco?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this remains, and will remain, my top priority until the Phoenix pay system is stabilized. In parallel, the President of the Treasury Board is looking at a new system for the future. However, we have to pay 300,000 people every two weeks, and we will do just that. Last Friday, I was in Miramichi, and I met and talked to the people who are going to solve this for us.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

SHIPPING

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last year, a number of residents of Yamachiche, particularly people who live on Louis-Gatineau Road, were affected by devastating waves that caused considerable damage to their property.

Since then, the Liberal government has been hiding the full report on the incident and refuses to bear the cost of the damage. The victims still have not received any financial compensation and have really been left to fend for themselves, without any help from the federal government. I have two simple questions.

Will the Minister of Transport publish the entire report?

Will he compensate the victims in Yamachiche, yes or no?

• (1455)

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we certainly took note of the incident that occurred last spring when the Yamachiche region was flooded because a ship was going too fast. The pilot was penalized after being found guilty of travelling at excessive speed near Yamachiche.

As for financial compensation, as everyone knows, many other houses were flooded because of last spring's torrential rains, and financial compensation will come from the province at the same time.

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DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's election laws have always worked well, but now, just 18 months before the next election, the Liberals continue to look for trouble and have decided to create mass confusion among voters.

Across the country, Canadians must show at least one piece of official ID to vote, and this applies to everyone, no exceptions.

Why are the Liberals trying to undermine the integrity of our electoral system, which is fine as is?

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the biggest challenge for our electoral democracy is not voter fraud, it is voter turnout. Bill C-76 will bring back voter ID cards and vouching, and we are also giving Elections Canada the mandate to promote turnout.

[English]

In the last Parliament, it was a Conservative MP who had to rise to apologize for falsifying stories about electoral fraud. I would urge the Conservatives to move on and recognize that what we should be doing is encouraging people—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Banff—Airdrie.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are 39 accepted forms of ID to vote in a federal election. A label on a prescription bottle, a personal cheque, a utility bill, a library card, those are all acceptable, and the list goes on. It is hard to conceive of a scenario where a voter would have none of these but would have a correct voter information card. However, the Liberals want to have

almost a million incorrect cards used as proof. Why are the Liberals making it possible for people to vote without the correct ID?

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the recommendations of Elections Canada was to restore the voter information cards and vouching to the process. That is one of the reasons why we are doing it. Stats Canada tells us that in the last election 170,000 Canadians did not have the opportunity to vote because of the Conservatives' decision to put an end to vouching and to get rid of the voter information cards. We want more Canadians to vote because we believe that voter participation strengthens our democratic system.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the statistic the minister just used is completely incorrect. In the last election, having a photo ID was a requirement, and the voter turnout was the highest it had been in two decades. Clearly, proving who a person is did not make it harder to vote. Why do the Liberals think it should not be necessary for voters to prove who they are and where they live in order to vote?

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised to hear the Conservatives attacking Stats Canada. They were the ones who gutted Stats Canada and got rid of the long-form census. The reality is that there are reasons why a lot of Canadians did want to vote in the last election. They were very motivated to get rid of the Harper Conservatives in that election. That has nothing to do with Stats Canada. It is because Canadians are a wise people.

* * *

[Translation]

SENIORS

Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the new horizons for seniors program is one of Canada's greatest policy successes.

Since its creation in 2004 by a previous Liberal government, the new horizons for seniors program has supported more than 21,000 projects across the country, and it enriches the lives of a quarter of a million seniors every year.

Can the minister tell the House when communities will be able to apply for funding from the 2018 new horizons for seniors program?

• (1500)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate and thank my colleague from Marc-Aurèle-Fortin for his excellent work on behalf of seniors.

The new horizons for seniors program helps seniors participate in their communities. I am pleased to announce that the call for proposals for the new version of the new horizons for seniors program was launched yesterday. I urge all members of the House to share this excellent news and to encourage organizations in their ridings to submit projects.

*Oral Questions**[English]***NATURAL RESOURCES**

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a Global News reporter said he was threatened with violence and told not to film while visiting a protest camp against Trans Mountain on public property. The Prime Minister claims he will legislate to ensure that the pipeline gets built. Kinder Morgan still faces roadblocks. It is getting worse, and time is running out. The Liberals have had over a year, but there are only 12 days left to introduce and pass a law, a process that usually takes months.

Here is a really easy question: Where is the legislation on the Trans Mountain expansion?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we agree with the hon. member, and have agreed for some time, that we want the Trans Mountain expansion pipeline to be built, because of the jobs it would create and because of the expansion of our export markets. We believe in the combination of unprecedented investments in an oceans protection plan, looking at ways in which the world can benefit from the terrific resources in Alberta and across our country, and the co-development with indigenous peoples along the line. These are the three pillars for a successful energy policy, and we are very glad that the member agrees with us.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, astoundingly, at the public safety committee yesterday, a Liberal member asked the incoming and first female RCMP commissioner, “How will a lady tell the guys to behave?” Such language, directed at the commissioner tasked with tackling harassment, sexual harassment, and bullying in the RCMP, is unquestionably sexist and undermining her leadership. Does the public safety minister feel that the question was appropriate? If not, what is he going to do about it?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of Brenda Lucki as the 24th commissioner of the RCMP. She has 32 years of distinguished service in the force, all across Canada and indeed around the world. She will be an exceptional leader for the RCMP. She is the best person for the job, and she just happens to be a woman.

* * *

PENSIONS

Ms. Jennifer O’Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members of the Standing Committee on Finance have been working with the Minister of Finance and urging him to work with his provincial and territorial counterparts to ensure that persons with disabilities and women who take time out of the workforce to raise children are able to receive the full benefits of our government’s transformational Canada pension plan enhancement. Can the parliamentary secretary update the House on the results of those discussions?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we made a commitment to

Canadians to help them realize their goal of a strong, secure, and stable retirement. Every three years, the finance ministers review the Canada pension plan to ensure that we are continuing to respond to the needs of Canadians, and henceforth to build on the historic agreement signed in 2016 to enhance the CPP. At their most recent meeting, the finance ministers agreed to strengthen the CPP to provide greater benefits to parents whose income drops after the birth or adoption of a first child, to persons with disabilities, to spouses who are widowed at a young age, and to the estates of lower-income contributors.

We are happy to move on with these changes. I want to thank the member for Pickering—Uxbridge for her hard work on the finance committee.

* * *

HOUSING

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we learned last week that the government is rushing to build 520 housing units for illegal border crossers. These will be heated and ventilated, and they will have easy access to showers, drinking water, and toilets. Canadian northerners are desperate for this kind of housing, which has been postponed until post-2022. Many are calling my offices, and they have a simple question: Why are the Liberals responding with such urgency to illegal border crossers and ignoring the plight of the north?

● (1505)

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the facility that is being constructed at Lacolle is to ensure the proper handling of people who need that kind of protection, according to Canadian law. However, the needs of Canadians are extremely important to this government, wherever they may be across the country, including in northern Canada.

Our job as members of Parliament is to make sure that every Canadian shares in the wealth and prosperity of this country, including those in the north.

* * *

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

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, GPQ): Mr. Speaker, a year later, it is clear that the government is really just winging its response to the migrant crisis.

There is a backlog of 53,000 applications. It will take two and a half years to process them all, assuming that no further applications are submitted after today. The government’s solution is to fly to Nigeria and tell people that 90% of claimants will be turned away. What a clever idea.

Is that the new magic solution for fixing the migrant crisis?

Business of Supply

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is certainly one of the initiatives we have taken, given that the majority of asylum seekers come from Nigeria.

I must also remind my colleague that we invested \$174 million in budget 2018, including \$74 million to hire more Immigration and Refugee Board members so that refugee claims can be processed more quickly. We are taking action.

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, GPQ): Mr. Speaker, on January 28, 2017, the Prime Minister was taking action too. He sent out a tweet that said, “To those fleeing persecution, terror & war, Canadians will welcome you, regardless of your faith.” Since then, Quebec has had its hands full.

Could the Prime Minister at least edit his tweet to say “To those fleeing persecution, terror & war, be aware that 90% of you will be denied asylum”?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as members know, here in Canada, we welcome refugees who are fleeing persecution and who fear for their lives if they go back to their home country.

We are the second largest country in the world, and our values motivate us to welcome those fleeing persecution. At the same time, we are making sure the rules are being followed. People who do not follow the rules will be sent back to their homeland. We are very clear on this.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Mohamed Aujar, Minister of Justice of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[*English*]

The Speaker: I would also like to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the European Parliament’s Delegation for Relations with Canada, led by Mr. Bernd Kölmel.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to seek unanimous consent of the House to table two documents.

The first is the Parliamentary Budget Officer’s economic and fiscal outlook from April 2018 and the second is the OECD economic outlook and interim economic outlook, which will show, contrary to the Minister of Environment’s claim that we have the fastest-growing environment, that we are not even second or third. In fact, this year Canada has the fourth-fastest-growing environment in the G7.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

CERTIFICATES OF NOMINATION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 111.1, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a certificate of nomination with the biographical notes for the proposed appointment of Stéphane Perrault as the Chief Electoral Officer.

[*English*]

I request that the certificate of nomination and biographical notes be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1510)

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**OPPOSITION MOTION—PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS ON CARBON PRICING**

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe has four minutes remaining in his speech.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will resume where I left off just before question period. I was talking about the fine folks in Rimbey. This was in response for one of my Liberal colleagues across the way who, during a question to one of my colleagues, said that everything was fine for him now that he made the switch to public transportation. That is fine for people who live in a community where they can get everything they need within a 10-block radius, but that does not work for the fine folks in Rimbey.

If a mother in Rimbey who is looking after the kids, while her spouse has hopefully maintained a job in the energy sector, which is not always the case, wants to take them to play hockey or soccer, it is not a community where they can take public transit down to the hockey arena. In fact, there are not enough kids in the community or the surrounding area to even have a house league. If people want to take their kids to hockey in Rimbey, Alberta that means they will be playing teams in Blackfalds, which is 45 minutes away. They are going to be playing teams in Sylvan Lake, which is 35 or 40 minutes away. They are going to be playing kids in Lacombe, which is another 45 minutes away. Drayton Valley is an hour away. Rocky Mountain House is an hour away. Ponoka is 45 minutes away. There are no options for these folks. The carbon tax is going to disproportionately affect these families and their kids because the cost of living in rural Alberta, and any other rural community in Canada, is so high.

Business of Supply

I would point out that everything we have that is good in our homes, whether we live our entire lives in that 10-block radius in a downtown urban area, is brought to us from a rural community at some point in time. Chances are that the food we eat is not raised or grown within 10 minutes of our house. Chances are that most of it is not even raised within 10 miles of our house. The input costs are the fertilizers that are energy based, the production, whether it is fuel, harvesting, all of it is there. Transportation to the marketplace and the processing, if we are lucky enough to have the processing done in Canada, are all energy intensive. Most of the good things we have in our lives, most of the wealth, and our ability to prosper and pursue careers in whatever we want to do are brought to us by the fact that we have cheap or affordable energy, or at least we had cheap or affordable energy in our lives.

Our quality of life is going to go down in our country because of the cost of heating our homes and putting fuel in our cars for transportation. It will affect every aspect of our lives. We only have to sit in a room and look around. If we were to take everything out of the room that was either made in part from or brought to us in part by fossil fuels, we would virtually have nothing left in the room. In fact, we likely would not even be able to count the walls of the room, because all of that material was brought to us by fossil fuels as well. This is the cost of a carbon tax. It is going to increase the cost of living for every person.

That is the cost to families. Here is the cost to investment. Investors are crying foul right now because they know almost \$90 billion have fled capital markets in our country. We have projects in Alberta that have been waiting for four years for provincial approval for an oil sands expansion project. We have over 7,000 kilometres of tidewater pipelines that have been cancelled or killed by the current Liberal government. That is driving up the cost and creating uncertainty. The regulatory environment is changing.

Alberta shares about \$20 billion of its wealth every year with the rest of Canada in the form of equalization payments. Tax is collected from Alberta, it goes to the Government of Canada, and it is redistributed. The money that is being redistributed across Canada affects quality of life and services, medicine, hospitals, and education for everyone.

The cost of the carbon tax for Canadian families, businesses, and workers is far too high. I do not know why the Liberal government will not tell us what it will cost.

● (1515)

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Madam Speaker, I would like to table, in both official languages, a charter statement on Bill C-76, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other Acts and to make certain consequential amendments.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have been listening to the remarks made by members opposite. We have been discussing this issue at finance committee for some time. That member's remarks go beyond the pale with respect to energy costs.

What state in the United States has had carbon pricing for the longest time? It is the state of California. Yesterday, it became the fifth largest economy in the world, and it has had carbon pricing in place for a long time.

We have to find the middle ground. I support pipelines, but if pipeline supporters continue to oppose doing the right thing with respect to climate change, we are not going to get them. If environmentalists continue to fight pipelines, then we will never get the carbon policy we need.

For members opposite, let us trump to some common sense and find the middle ground, accept carbon pricing, and push for the need for pipelines to get our resources to market.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague across the way comes from a province that has benefited a bit from equalization payments over the years. He ought to be a bit more appreciative of the fact that Alberta is contributing to that.

He has brought up social licence, notwithstanding the fact that he is not talking about the tent cities that are popping up all over California because people cannot afford housing or cannot afford to live there. The Liberal government has said, in concert with the province of Alberta, that it needs social licence in order to get projects approved. How many projects have been approved by the government? Absolutely zero have gone forward. Seven thousand kilometres of pipeline have been cancelled. The Pacific LNG project is gone. Nothing is actually going forward.

There is no leadership from the government other than taxing more Canadians, telling them it is good for them, and sticking it to them. We have had enough.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am astonished that the member for Red Deer—Lacombe is apparently unaware of the reason why Petronas, a state-owned company from Malaysia, cancelled its LNG project on Lelu Island and why Trans Canada cancelled its energy east project. It had to do with market conditions and a lack of profitability.

We have now had two full days of debate on a carbon tax. I have not heard a thing from the Conservative caucus about whether it is concerned that we are facing a galloping climate crisis. We are facing the kinds of changes that will put our children's future at risk.

I would really like to hear something from those members about the costs of inaction when facing the climate crisis, not just political partisan potshots at the weak Liberal plan that we now see.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Oh my goodness, Madam Speaker. I do not even know where to begin.

Business of Supply

It is the uncertainty of the regulatory environment, upstream and downstream emissions being counted in on the energy east pipeline. Even Saudi oil does not have to face that test. No company in its right mind would pursue a project when the government puts such onerous regulations in its path. The companies had to protect their investors, and a lot of those investors invested several billion dollars in the BC government pension fund and in Kinder Morgan. That is a bit of irony.

I am worried about the galloping debt the country and the provinces are accumulating. All of that will be passed on to future generations, and that is unacceptable.

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to continue along the line of questioning that my hon. colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands started.

Does my hon. colleague across the way not think that Canadians are currently paying for the inaction of the previous government for the past 10 years? Does he not think that people in New Brunswick are currently paying for inaction? There have been ice storms in Whitby in Durham region. Does he not think that Canadians are currently paying for inaction on climate change?

• (1520)

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Madam Speaker, if my hon. colleague wants to table a document which shows how many forest fires will be reduced as a result of a carbon tax and exactly at what point that carbon tax will prevent any future forest fires or any future ice storms, I would be happy to see that document. If she has it, she should table it.

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Ottawa—Vanier.

Canadians understand that polluting the air we breathe or polluting the earth and the oceans that feed us has a cost. Simply put, pollution is not free. If we are to reduce the greenhouse gases that threaten our planet and future generations, polluters must pay.

It is also critical that the price be fair and effective. If we did not fairly and effectively price pollution, we would be negligent in our duty as federal lawmakers and it would be a betrayal of our children, grandchildren, and generations of Canadians to come. Putting a price on carbon pollution is central to our government's plan to fight climate change while at the same time growing our economy and building a bright future for all Canadians.

Our shared quality of life and our present and future prosperity are inextricably linked to a healthy environment. That is why our government is taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by introducing the greenhouse gas pollution pricing act. Pricing carbon pollution is the most effective way to reduce emissions because it creates incentives for businesses and households to innovate, and to pollute less. Putting a price on carbon respects and reflects the commitments we made to Canadians in 2015.

When our government took office more than two years ago, our promise to Canadians was clear: We would invest in economic growth while respecting our shared environment. We also committed to respectful consultation as we worked toward achieving this goal.

Let me emphasize that this legislation has not been developed in isolation. It has been developed through collaboration. We worked with our provincial, territorial, and indigenous partners to adopt the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change in December 2016.

The framework includes a pan-Canadian approach to pricing carbon pollution with the aim of having carbon pollution pricing in place in all provinces and territories this year. The plan provides the provinces and territories with the flexibility to choose between systems, an explicit price-based system or a cap and trade system.

Thanks to the efforts and the hard work of our partners, a price on carbon pollution is now in place in four provinces, Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, and Alberta, covering more than 80% of the Canadian population. Those who suggest that a price on carbon pollution is somehow negatively impacting the financial health of Canadians should know that these provinces, Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, and Alberta, are presently leading Canada in job creation and economic growth.

In addition, all other provinces have committed to adopting some form of carbon pollution pricing and we are confident that they too will reap the benefits that we know go hand in hand with carbon pricing: cleaner air and water and a better quality of life for everyone.

To further support implementation of a price on carbon pollution across Canada, the government is taking steps to ensure that a legal framework is in place for the proposed federal carbon pollution pricing system. In jurisdictions that do not have a carbon pollution pricing system that meets the federal standard, or in those jurisdictions that opt to go with the federal system, the federal carbon pollution pricing system would apply on January 1, 2019, starting at a price of \$20 per tonne of emissions.

The direct revenue from the carbon charges on pollution under the federal system would go back to the province or territory of origin. In combination with other measures under Canada's clean growth and climate action plan, putting a price on carbon pollution will put Canada on course to meet our 2030 emissions target.

Obviously, greenhouse gases know no national boundaries, but that is not, and should not be, a reason to delay action. By putting a price on carbon pollution, Canada is joining 67 other jurisdictions that have already taken this important step to curb greenhouse gas pollution. Together, those overseas jurisdictions represent about half of the global economy and more than a quarter of global greenhouse gas emissions.

With the greenhouse gas pollution pricing act, we are not only meeting our commitment to Canada, we are meeting our commitment to the global community.

Business of Supply

• (1525)

Climate change is one of the most pressing challenges of our time. We have no choice but to take action. In Canada and abroad, the effects are clear: coastal erosion, thawing permafrost, and dramatic and unpredictable changes in weather patterns, including heat waves, droughts, and flooding. Even in my riding over the last several years we have experienced record flooding in communities like Bancroft, Tweed, Thurlow, and all along Lake Ontario, including the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, while in 2016 we experienced the most severe drought on record since records have been kept in the late 1880s. We cannot just sit idly by when these 100-year weather events are occurring every few years.

Canadians understand that a clean environment and a strong economy go together and that their quality of life today and the quality of life of future generations depend on the decisions that we make today. Protecting Canada's air, water, and magnificent natural areas while creating a world-leading clean economy is key to our overall goal.

Our government believes that carbon pricing will harness the power of the market to drive decisions that will protect our environment and grow our economy. I have great examples in my own riding, like the plan in Marmora to turn an abandoned mine into a 400-megawatt pump storage battery, or a business in Napanee called FireRein, which is innovating with an environmentally friendly fire suppressant that has helped fight forest fires in B.C. Both of these help the environment, and both of them create good well-paying jobs.

We know that climate action is an enormous economic opportunity for Canada. We intend to seize that opportunity because it makes environmental and economic sense, and because it will ensure Canadians have access to the opportunities they and their families need to succeed. The idea is simple. We are putting a price on what we do not want, carbon pollution, and taking steps to encourage more of what we do want, clean innovation and reduced emissions. The government's approach to growing the economy while protecting the environment is working. We have introduced bold measures to help small businesses and have introduced incentives for our innovators and entrepreneurs.

In response to these and other measures, over the last two years, hard-working Canadians have created more than 600,000 new jobs, most of them full time. Unemployment rates are near their lowest levels we have seen in more than 40 years. We are delivering on our promise to strengthen and grow the middle class and offer real help to everyone working hard to join it.

At the same time, we know that economic indicators only tell part of the story. Our shared quality of life and our present and future prosperity are closely linked to a healthy environment. That is why our government is forging ahead with determination and ambition to create a cleaner environment and a more prosperous future for all Canadians.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, the premise of today's debate is about taxes, in particular, carbon taxes. I know the Liberals like to use the term "carbon pricing".

Several times in this House, either in question period or at committee, the hon. member for Carleton has taken the lead in asking the government just how much a tax on carbon is going to cost Canadians. Every time the government is asked, it refuses to answer, in spite of the fact that we believe the government knows what that answer is.

Again, the member for Carleton asked Finance Canada officials, and he received a document that was redacted. The fact is that the information that is in that document is known. The government knows how much it will cost Canadians, but the Liberal Party refuses to release that information. Why?

• (1530)

Mr. Mike Bossio: Madam Speaker, it really is unfortunate that the other side chooses to play political games with Canadians' lives and with Canada's future. The Conservatives know very well that our government is proposing a price on pollution that is going to be revenue neutral because we are going to return those funds to the province of origin where the revenues were generated. It really is a shame that they do not recognize that not only is there a cost to climate change, but climate change is real, and it needs to be dealt with. There needs to be a plan.

We have a plan on our side, unlike the previous government which had no plan. Unfortunately, the members on the other side have no plan whatsoever to deal with this. It is not just dealing with a price on carbon, but it is also investing in public transit, infrastructure around water and waste water, and increasing emission controls. There are so many different avenues that we are utilizing in order to deal with climate change and our commitments to achieving our Paris targets.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Madam Speaker, you can immediately eliminate a policy on the electrification of transportation in Canada from that long list of great concrete measures, because there is no such policy. You did not mention it, and that was wise. It is quite unfortunate because the provinces are taking the lead.

One year ago, the Minister of Transport went to Montreal to announce that the government would create a committee to establish a transportation electrification strategy. That is not happening.

In general, the Liberals' biggest problem is that they have portrayed themselves as heroes. They have all the answers. In this case, what I can tell you is that your biggest problem is also that you do not keep any of your promises. In your platform—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert that he must address his comments to the Chair, not to the member.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Madam Speaker, their biggest problem is that they do not keep their campaign promises. Their platform reads as follows:

Business of Supply

We will fulfill our G20 commitment and phase out subsidies for the fossil fuel industry over the medium-term.

When will those people stop subsidizing the fossil fuel industry?

[English]

Mr. Mike Bossio: Madam Speaker, once again, it is about having an actual plan to deal with climate change and meeting our Paris targets which our government has put together that is going to achieve those targets in 2030.

As I already indicated, putting a price on pollution is one part of that plan, as is investing in public transit. The provinces and others will choose how to use that investment to minimize the impact of climate change.

The fact of the matter is we are putting the commitment forward to actually have a plan, to invest in public transit, to invest in water and waste water, to invest in innovation. That innovation is taking many different paths, whether it is through green energy or through creating jobs for the future of Canadians as we evolve from one form of an economy today to the future economy of digital technology through innovation.

In dealing with our Paris targets, we also need to pay attention to the 17 sustainable development goals. That is what we have done as a government in everything that we do.

[Translation]

Mrs. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the government takes the difficulties caused by climate change and the opportunities for clean growth very seriously. We have already announced unprecedented investments in public transit, green infrastructure, and clean innovation, as well as our plan to price carbon pollution across the country.

[English]

Canadians know that pollution is not free. In recent years, Canadians have encountered more frequent and extreme weather events, such as forest fires and floods. Disasters have caused billions of dollars in damages for taxpayers. As the climate changes, this will only get worse. Many people have lost homes and businesses.

For the last decade, the party opposite refused to act on climate change, and some outright denied it is even real. In failing to implement a credible plan, the Conservatives have put our environment and our economy in jeopardy. Today, we can no longer drag our feet. We need to act. That is exactly what we are doing.

• (1535)

[Translation]

The cornerstone of our plan is pricing pollution, which is largely recognized as one of the most effective means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, it encourages individuals and companies to save by making cleaner choices when it comes to insulating their home or by purchasing more efficient equipment. Consequently, carbon pricing is the cornerstone of Canada's action plan on clean growth and climate change.

Pricing pollution has proven itself around the world, including in Canada, where it has helped us solve problems such as acid rain

while supporting clean growth and innovation. Carbon pricing has been introduced into almost half the world's economy.

A recent analysis published by Environment and Climate Change Canada confirms that carbon pricing across the country will considerably reduce carbon pollution while maintaining strong economic growth. According to the study, carbon pricing could reduce carbon pollution across Canada by 90 million tonnes by 2022, the equivalent of taking 26 million cars off the road for a year or closing more than 20 coal-fired power plants.

Carbon pricing will go a long way toward achieving Canada's target for 2030. However, this is not the only thing we are doing to reduce emissions. Canada's climate change action plan includes many other measures which, in conjunction with carbon pricing, will help reduce pollution.

[English]

The study also found that GDP growth would remain strong with a nationwide price on carbon pollution. Canada's GDP is expected to grow by approximately 2% a year between now and 2022, with or without carbon pricing. This does not include the huge opportunity of clean innovation. Carbon pricing will help Canadian companies create jobs and compete successfully in the global shift to cleaner growth, an opportunity the World Bank estimates will be worth \$23 trillion globally between now and 2030.

More than 80% of Canadians already live in jurisdictions with carbon pricing in place. Our approach recognizes the actions already taken by B.C., Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec. Those provinces had the strongest economic growth in the country last year. The pan-Canadian approach builds on the leadership taken by these jurisdictions and provides all provinces and territories with the flexibility to implement the type of system that suits their circumstances. It also sets some common criteria to ensure the price on pollution is fair and effective across the country.

To ensure that a price on carbon pollution is in place across Canada, the government committed to develop and implement a federal carbon pricing system in any province or territory that requests it or that does not have a carbon pricing system that meets the federal standard. Our federal carbon pricing system has two components: a charge on fossil fuels that would generally be paid by fuel producers or distributors, and a performance-based system for industrial facilities, called the output-based pricing system.

[Translation]

All revenue from the federal system will be transferred to the jurisdiction of origin. The funds may be used in different ways, including helping homeowners and companies and investing more heavily in programs or technology aimed at reducing carbon pollution.

Business of Supply

The main objective of the measure is not to generate revenue for the government but to change how we use carbon-based energy resources and create incentives that will help Canada gain a competitive advantage in the emerging low-carbon economy.

To date, the governments of British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec, and Ontario have implemented carbon pricing and are using the revenue generated in various ways. They can give the money directly to homeowners and companies, cut taxes, or finance programs aimed at reducing the cost of clean technology.

• (1540)

[English]

Provinces and territories have until September 1 to confirm their carbon pricing approach. Direct revenue from the application of the federal carbon pricing backstop will remain in the jurisdiction of origin.

In 2017, the four provinces with carbon pricing systems in place were also the top four performers in GDP growth across Canada. That is the result of a long list of factors, but anyone who says that carbon pricing hurts economies is not basing their arguments on the evidence.

Since 2007, B.C.'s carbon tax has reduced emissions by 5% to 15%. Meanwhile, provincial real GDP grew more than 17% from 2007 to 2015 and per capita gasoline demand dropped 15% over that period. B.C.'s growing clean technology sector now brings an estimated \$1.7 billion in annual revenue. We see the same results in other countries. In Sweden, which has the world's highest carbon tax at 137 euros per tonne, GDP and industry have grown while emissions have dropped.

In addition to estimating the costs, it is important to consider the benefits of reducing carbon pollution. This includes the avoided costs of climate change, the long-term financial benefits of transitioning to a cleaner economy, and the benefits that may flow from innovations driven by carbon pricing.

Pollution from coal power plants results in health issues that cost the health care system over \$800 million annually, according to a study performed by the Pembina Institute in 2014. Canadian businesses already know carbon pricing makes good sense and will help ensure they remain competitive in the emerging low-carbon economy.

[Translation]

Carbon pollution pricing helps Canadian companies create jobs and gain a competitive edge in the worldwide shift toward cleaner growth. According to the World Bank, this opportunity represents \$23 billion dollars between now and 2030. Approximately 85% of the Canadian economy is already subject to a carbon pricing system, and every province has undertaken to adopt some form of carbon pricing.

Canada is creating a business culture that will strengthen the growth of a clean economy. Here are some examples of success stories: CarbonCure, a company that retrofits existing concrete plants so that they can recycle waste carbon dioxide during production to make stronger and more environmentally friendly concrete; Solar Vision, a Quebec company that supplies solar lighting technologies;

Enerkem, a company that converts Edmonton's non-recyclable garbage into fuel and common chemicals; and Agrisoma Biosciences, a biotechnology firm in Gatineau that provides a number of low-carbon options for the biofuel industry.

Making sure that carbon pricing is implemented across the country is a matter of fairness for all Canadians. For 10 years, the Harper government did nothing about climate change. Canadians deserve a plan that will stimulate innovation and create well-paying jobs for the middle class. This is it.

[English]

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to correct my hon. colleague. She should be very careful when stating statistics.

To begin with, I am a member of Parliament for the province of British Columbia and I have done a lot of work in this area. There are a number of great documents that attribute much of the lower emissions to the global recession that started in 2008, which coincidentally was the year that our provincial carbon tax was implemented, and the increase in cross-border spending is contributing as well.

I want to ask my hon. colleague something. We have had a number of colleagues stand up and say that this somehow is going to be a magic wand with which we are going to be able to solve natural disasters. My province of British Columbia and my riding of Cariboo—Prince George have gone through one of the most unprecedented wildfire seasons in our province's history. We are also seeing unprecedented flooding. We have had a carbon tax in place for 10 years, and it has not helped us in those areas.

How is it that the government can say that this measure is going to end all the natural disasters?

• (1545)

[Translation]

Mrs. Mona Fortier: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague, who shares our concerns about the environment. We need to do something about climate change, find solutions, and work together so that the planet remains viable for our children and grandchildren. We must put a price on pollution in order to fight climate change, and we have a plan for doing just that.

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, some future generation, if there is one, will watch the debates here in the House and weep at the tragedy of the Conservatives denying that there is any reason to bring in a carbon tax, at the Liberals patting themselves on the back as if bringing in a carbon price will solve the problem, and at my hon. friend for Cariboo—Prince George, who thinks that British Columbia's carbon tax by itself was supposed to arrest a global problem.

Business of Supply

I put it to my friend for Ottawa—Vanier that we have a carbon budget. The scientists have told us that we can afford to put no more than 590 billions tonnes of carbon in the atmosphere to stay below two degrees, which is the Paris target. Last year we emitted 50 billion tonnes, which means we now only have a budget of 540 billion tonnes.

Canada's plan should be tied to a carbon budget. It should work backwards toward what we need to do to do our fair share to ensure not that we avoid extreme weather events—we cannot—but that we hang on to something that looks like human civilization so that our children have a livable world.

Where is that plan broken down, greenhouse gas tonne by greenhouse gas tonne, into actions taken by a government? That plan is only in our imaginations and does not yet exist, but we must see it soon.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Mona Fortier: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for saying that we all want a future for our children, our grandchildren, and our great-grandchildren.

I truly believe that we must move forward with our plan to price carbon. It is one of the least expensive means of reducing pollution and, at the same time, it fosters clean innovation. A price on pollution will encourage individuals to save money by taking public transit, buying a fuel-efficient vehicle, lowering the thermostat, or better insulating their homes. We must encourage Canadians to work with us to reduce pollution in Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, I respect the member, my Liberal colleague to my right. We are on the same committee.

She heard yesterday at committee that the carbon tax is really hurting our aboriginal children and their ability to go to school. What we heard was that it will actually restrict them from going to school. My question to her is this: How else is this hurting the average Canadian family? What will this carbon tax cost the average Canadian family?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Mona Fortier: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his question.

We do have a problem, and we need to work together to fight climate change. We have a plan in which every community can participate, especially indigenous communities, which also have ways of making sure that their homes and community spaces are safe and secure.

[*English*]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will begin by saying that I will be splitting my time with the member for York—Simcoe.

I want to thank my hon. colleague for Carleton for bringing this issue to light. As we get late in the day and late in the debate, it is important that we remind the House of the motion. Somehow we veer off. I have found myself fascinated today by the fact that the Liberals are spinning themselves around in such a tight web trying to

convince everyone that taxing the Canadian population is the right way to go and that it is going to solve all the evils with respect to climate, climate change, floods, famine, fire, and feast, whatever the case is.

The motion says:

That, given the government's carbon tax will impose higher gas prices, and making “better choices”, as the Prime Minister suggested, will not help most Canadians heat their homes and buy groceries, the House call on the government to cancel plans for new taxes that would further raise prices on consumers.

As I was preparing for my talk this afternoon, I read an article. John Robson, of the *National Post*, wrote a really fascinating article. I would encourage anyone who is watching at home to Google the article. The headline is “What do the Liberals know about carbon tax that they won't tell us?” He says:

It's a signature policy they insist will work. But they are exploiting a hard-won reputation for cluelessness on key promises from electoral reform to marijuana legalization to convince us they have no idea how this one would function either.

I thought, “Boy, did John Robson nail that.”

The member for Carleton, shortly after the last election, asked the government just how much a carbon tax will cost Canadians and how much the impact will be on emissions. He got the answer back from finance department officials, and the answer was redacted, which effectively means that it was blacked out.

The government knows. It knows full well what the impact of this carbon tax is going to be, but it continues to refuse to release that information, in spite of the fact that the opposition has asked numerous times. I would suggest that we have asked this question up to 60 to 70 times in committee and in the House of Commons, through debates like this and through question period. Each time, the government has skirted the answer and said that climate change is real and has given these talking points without directly answering the question for Canadians.

One of the other interesting things Robson said in this *National Post* article was this:

if they think we won't find out before the next election, they'd better get marijuana legalized fast because sobriety is doing nothing for their judgment.

That is clearly what this is about. This is why, again, we are spending the day trying to convince the government not to raise any more taxes if it wants to impose a carbon tax.

Excuse me for being cynical. Excuse all of us for being cynical. Excuse Canadians for being cynical, but we have seen the story play out in the past. In the last election, the Liberals made several promises. One was on the issue of electoral reform. How is that working out, hon. members? It is not quite working out, because the Liberals backtracked on that. They also made a promise of no more prorogation or omnibus bills. How is that working out, hon. members? It is not working out too well.

Business of Supply

The Liberals also talked about veterans' pensions. They said that they were going to restore lifelong pensions to veterans. Members could go across this country, as I did, and talk to as many veterans as I have. They, rightly, know that the government failed on the issue of veterans' pensions. In fact, the Liberals also said that they would never take veterans to court, and we found out through an Order Paper question that the government has spent \$37 million fighting veterans in court since 2016. How did that work out?

There was the middle-class tax cut, the signature policy of the government. The Prime Minister stood with his hand over his heart and said that the government was going to raise taxes on the top 1% and lower taxes for middle-class and lower-income Canadians. The most important thing he said was that it was going to be revenue neutral. We are hearing that about the carbon tax. This is going to be revenue neutral, and somehow it is not going to cost Canadians.

As a matter of fact, on this issue, on the issue of the middle-class tax cut, as reported by the PBO independently, it was not revenue neutral, and it is going to cost Canadians \$8.9 billion over a period of six years. Who pays for that? Of course, it is middle-class and lower-income Canadians.

• (1550)

One of the things the Liberals said as well is that they were going to raise taxes on the top one per cent. We found out through further study that higher-income Canadians benefited from that middle-class tax cut to the tune of \$800, while lower-middle-class Canadians gained only about \$50.

When they say that this is going to be revenue neutral, excuse us again for being cynical and not believing the government. That is the basis of the argument we are talking about today. It is one of sheer trust. The government has said things in the past, and it has failed to follow through on them. The same thing will happen here.

The GST is a perfect example. The member for Carleton asked finance officials today at committee about the GST and the collection of the GST. They said that it is not going to be passed on to Canadians. It is actually going to be collected by the government. This is nothing but a tax grab by the Liberal government, and it is a tax grab to support its insatiable appetite to spend money.

The government does not have a revenue problem; it has a spending problem. That spending problem is not for the priorities of Canadians. I would suggest that it is to meet the Liberals' obligations to their globalist pet projects. That is why we are seeing a lot of money leave this country. That is what is upsetting Canadians.

The disproportionate effect this is going to have will be in my riding, particularly with Barrie—Innisfil household incomes. The median household income in 2015, according to Statistics Canada, was \$77,904 in Barrie. In Innisfil, it was \$83,516, and in Simcoe County, it was \$76,489. These are communities of individuals and families that are already struggling with debt. We know that the average Canadian family has \$1.70 in debt for every dollar it takes in. By stretching them even more and imposing carbon taxes on those families for heating their homes, for driving around, and for doing the things they do day in and day out, it is going to have a negative effect on those families I represent in Barrie—Innisfil.

It is not going to be the Prime Minister who is going to pay disproportionately. It is not going to be the finance minister, and it is not going to be the Minister of Environment. They are going to be well taken care of. They have great salaries. They get cars and are chauffeured around. They fly all over the place, and it is questionable whether they even pay for their meals, because they get a per diem. The cost of all this stuff that is going to happen is going to increase for these families that are not making what the Prime Minister is making. Nor do they have trust funds. That is the reality of this.

This is why we are saying that if they are going to impose a carbon tax on Canadians, it will negatively affect them and their pocketbooks and their ability to pay. Things are getting more expensive, such as the cost of groceries and food. Interest rates are increasing. Everything is designed to squeeze these families to a point where they cannot do any more. Why? Again, it is because of the government's insatiable appetite to spend money.

The Liberals already proposed new taxes in the past. They proposed dental benefits taxes and an employee discount tax and a business tax. If it were not for the efforts of the opposition and Canadians who rose up against these things, they would have surely imposed these types of taxes.

Our motion is asking that the government stop the new taxes, because the Liberals are hurting the very Canadian families they are proposing to help. Under this plan, the more people make, the more they will save, while those making less will see less in tax savings. Should those making less not see a greater increase in those tax savings? How does imposing a carbon tax, and every other tax that will come from the government and has come from this government, help those families?

As Conservatives, we stand strongly for those families that are going to be negatively impacted by a carbon tax. Maybe people would agree to a carbon tax, but how are they to know, when the government will not release that information? They should stop the carbon tax, and if they are going to impose a carbon tax, they should stop any further taxes on an already overtaxed Canadian population.

• (1555)

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Insurance Bureau of Canada has indicated that between 1983 and 2004, the insurance losses from catastrophic disasters averaged \$373 million per year. Between 2005 and 2015, that amount tripled to \$1.2 billion per year.

We have a strategy for pricing carbon pollution to ensure that we are taking federal leadership on this file and changing this challenge to an opportunity by not only reducing greenhouse gas emissions but by spurring innovation, with multi-trillions of dollars' worth of innovation and jobs.

I am wondering why the Conservative opposition is so stuck and opposed to these great opportunities for our children and grandchildren.

Business of Supply

• (1600)

Mr. John Brassard: I reject the assertion, Madam Speaker, that imposing a carbon tax on Canadians and their families is going to stop floods and fires. The government has presented no evidence that any proposed carbon tax would stop any of these environmental issues and the issues of weather and climate. I completely reject that assertion, but more importantly, if they are going to suggest that to Canadians, as the Liberal Party is, then they should tell Canadians how much it is going to cost them, in terms of taxes, to mitigate what they are presuming will occur with respect to floods and fires. It is a ridiculous assertion, and I wish Liberals would stop using that argument, because it is disingenuous. They should tell Canadians the truth, and then maybe they will buy into it.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to think that most of us here believe that climate change is real and that it is caused by humans. I know there are some Conservatives who do not. Granted, if we say that it is real, and we have to do something about it, every economist will tell us that the cheapest, most efficient way of bringing down our carbon emissions is through a carbon tax. There are ways of protecting low-income families that are exposed to it. In British Columbia, there is a rebate. In Alberta, there is a rebate. In fact, 40% to 50% of British Columbians and Albertans are better off under the carbon tax, because they get more money back than they have to spend.

I would ask the member what the Conservatives' plan is for bringing down carbon emissions so that we can do our bit for the world.

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, I find it kind of funny that not only the NDP but the Liberals are asking for the Conservatives' plan. We are going to come up with a plan, and our leader has said that the plan will not involve a carbon tax. He has been unambiguous and very clear about the fact that it will not involve a carbon tax, because on this side of the House, we do not believe in taxing people more than they should be in terms of providing those types of government services. However, on the other side, and clearly on the NDP side, they say that a tax is going to solve all the ills of world weather and the effects of floods and fires.

That is not a plan. It is actually a redistribution of wealth. We have seen in Ontario that the wealth has gone to Liberal insiders, and I would not be surprised if that is going to be the case in this case.

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Madam Speaker, last week the Leader of the Opposition said that his party would meet the Paris targets without a price on carbon. He did not tell us what the plan is. I was going to ask what it is, but now we know that they do not have one yet.

Yesterday the Conservatives brought in Jason Kenney, their carbon attack dog. Since my friend likes to refer to the *National Post*, one of the headlines said, "Even Jason Kenney's political language can't hide lack of alternative to carbon tax". The article, by John Ivison, went on to say, "Even Kenney can't finesse that inconvenient truth."

Since the Conservatives do not have a plan, and the member does not like our plan, what is he telling his constituents in Barrie—Innisfil?

Mr. John Brassard: I tell them quite simply, Madam Speaker, that we will have a plan, and that plan will not include taxing them.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): Madam Speaker, there is a point in the life of many governments at which, after campaigning and claiming that they were going to represent their constituents, the members who were elected change. They cease to represent their constituents in Ottawa and begin to represent Ottawa in their constituency.

In this debate we see exactly that phenomenon. I can tell members, having observed that pattern for the close to half a century that I have been closely following politics, that I have always been very careful not to allow that to happen in my case. That is why today I am going to speak from the perspective of my constituents.

Generally speaking, the people in York—Simcoe are hard-working, young families. They are not wealthy. They are not entitled. They are just looking for the freedom to be able to work hard, succeed, and make a brighter future for themselves and their children. They find that tougher and tougher. It is harder to make ends meet. Why? They keep running up against the rules, barriers, and taxes of politicians who think they know better how to run the lives of those individuals than those individuals themselves. They think they can make better decisions about their lives than those families can for their own future.

We saw that in Ontario, where families now struggle under unbelievably high hydro bills and a kind of funny, fancy accounting that means that those costs, which mainly paid off insiders in the name of really good things that smart people thought were better for them, are in fact causing them to make some hard and tough choices. They have to choose what they will give up in their lives altogether to make ends meet, such as their kids playing hockey, a vacation, or the things they used to enjoy once a year maybe, because they cannot meet those costs.

Their children are going to face tougher costs in a province where now, in just the time the Liberals have been in government, the debt has almost tripled. That does not even include the additional debt the Liberals have moved forward on the higher costs of hydro, which are crippling the way those families live.

Those typical families in York—Simcoe do not have a subway. They are not like a prime minister from Montreal, a finance minister from downtown Toronto, or an environment minister from downtown Ottawa who can walk to work. They are not like that. They have to travel to work by automobile. They live in homes that have to be heated in winters that are as cold as this past one was, a winter where the April heating bills were higher than the March heating bills. They are having trouble making those ends meet.

Business of Supply

Therefore, when someone tells them that it is good for them to pay more for all these things, and they are already trying really hard to pay their taxes and make ends meet, something does not ring true. That tells them that the people who are out there making those speeches are no longer speaking for them but for some powerful bureaucrat in Ottawa who has an idea and an ideological agenda.

Then, when they learn that those powerful bureaucrats have written up documents saying what this will cost those individual families, and are then hiding it from those families, and the politicians in the Liberal government have become the wall of silence protecting those smart bureaucrats and hiding that information from Canadians, they know pretty quickly who is on their side of the wall and who is on the other side. They see that those Liberal politicians are busy keeping their constituents in the dark, imposing costs on them without telling them, and then refusing to even tell them what the so-called benefits might be and what reductions will be achieved in this carbon that is so bad.

That is the indication of a government that has ceased to represent the people and is now representing itself and an elite class in the country that thinks it knows best.

We see that in small businesses in Ontario that are regulated to death, with double the regulations of any other province. Small businesses cannot cope. They have trouble making ends meet. They are so busy dealing with inspectors and filling out forms that they do not have time to serve customers and make money anymore. Why? Smart politicians and officials and a provincial Liberal government think they know better how to run their businesses and their lives. However, it is not that way, and this debate we are having is in the exact same vein.

● (1605)

If we want to know what is at the bottom of “the Liberals know better than we do”, it came through very clearly when the Prime Minister was recently asked about these high gas prices. My constituents keep asking me about this and sending me the statistic that the last time gas prices were this high, oil was well over \$100 a barrel. Now the price of oil is around \$60 a barrel, but gas prices are this high. It is not unreasonable of them to ask why. Some think that somebody is doing them a bad turn. To use an inelegant term, some say that someone is screwing them. Some use even more inelegant terms. They do not understand why, but then they see why when the Prime Minister says these high gas prices are “exactly what we want”.

Well, that explains the gap, does it not? If the big oil companies, with the Prime Minister guarding their backs, have the freedom to raise gas prices at will because that is what the government has said it wants, do we not think they will take that chance? Therefore, the carbon tax is not the only cause of this. The government sent a signal, saying, “Go and raise gas prices, go and pick on the little consumers, and do it all you want.” Is it any wonder that is exactly what is happening?

This is what the ordinary mother in Keswick is facing when she wants to take her kids to hockey practice, or the ordinary mother in Holland Landing when the kids have to go to a soccer game and the fields are all the way in Mount Albert. They cannot wait for a bus, because there is no bus. They have to drive. It is the only way to get

there. However, it is a lot more expensive suddenly. The hydro bill has gone up, and dad said they were making a little less this month because he has to comply with another regulation that just came from the provincial government.

It is time people in these positions of leadership here in Ottawa realized who we speak for. I am speaking in particular to the Liberal government members, who have so quickly not only forgotten whom they represent but have then also shown the craven arrogance of refusing to be candid and honest with their own constituents about the decisions they are making, why they are making them, and the policy basis for them. There is no defence in the world for refusing to explain the cost of that carbon tax.

There are analysts who have looked at it. Of course, in its study that is coming from the federal government, the University of Calgary has said that the carbon tax can reasonably be seen in the province of Ontario as ultimately having a cost of \$707 annually. That is hitting electricity, home heating, gasoline, and other indirect costs in every single business.

All those business people running their small businesses, such as roofers, contractors, and plumbers in York Simcoe, have to get everywhere by driving. They have to drive to pick up supplies. They cannot go in a Smart car. They need a pickup truck, and that uses a fair bit of gas. It is the only way they can make their living. However, these taxes are punishing them for trying to make a living so that they can pay other taxes and take care of their families. Less and less is left at the end of every month. They have a tougher time making ends meet, and nobody in the Liberal government seems to care.

There is a smug arrogance. The Liberals are not going to tell us what the real cost is, even when we have analysts tell us there is a very real and significant cost, and a Prime Minister who gives the green light to gas companies to raise prices even higher because that is the policy objective. Higher gas prices are “exactly what we want”. That is what the current Liberal Prime Minister said.

Guess what? We are getting what the Prime Minister wants, but it is not what the people want. They care about their environment passionately, but do not talk to me in York—Simcoe about a Liberal government that cares about the environment. The Liberal government cancelled the Lake Simcoe cleanup fund, which has done unprecedented, positive things for that local environment. Without consultation and without talking to the people, the government just cancelled it out and out. The harm to those people's local environment is done, so they do not believe any of this talk about helping the environment. They look at a carbon tax as only a cash grab, and in all the things that money is used for, they do not see any benefits at all; they do not see anything that helps them.

● (1610)

My time is up, but I am sure I will have an opportunity to say more in answer to questions. However, I will encourage everybody not to forget they are here to represent their constituents and not the Liberal government.

Business of Supply

•(1615)

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this is an incredibly important conversation. It can actually be broken down to a philosophical divide about the responsibility of members of Parliament not only to recognize the needs of Canadians today and what is immediately in front of us, but also to ensure there is a future for our country and the next generation. We have been entrusted with a sacred responsibility, and carbon is definitely something we need to focus on.

This price on pollution ensures we have an incentive to be able to change behaviour in this country. Clearly, the members opposite feel there is another way of doing that. I would be very interested to hear how they plan on incentivizing the change in behaviour for the future.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Madam Speaker, I welcome that question because it reveals exactly the Liberals' attitude that they know best and that Canadians must change their behaviour. Which behaviour should my constituents in York—Simcoe change to make the Liberal member happy? Should they take their kids out of soccer so they do not use the car to go to soccer? Should they shut down their roofing business because they need a truck to do that work? Are they to stop heating their home during the winter and freeze in the dark? Those behaviours are what the hon. member is asking my constituents to change.

Those families feel that there are people in Ottawa, far away, who do not know their lives, saying they are living the wrong way. People in Ottawa are saying their kids should not have the right to play soccer, or maybe that they should not play hockey. Let us think about making ice in a rink in April, when it is warm outside. That is so bad for the environment. Well, guess what? People should be given some freedom. This country is based on freedom. The choices the Liberals are trying to impose on them are choices nobody should be asked to make.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Madam Speaker, I work with my colleague on a regular basis and I hold him in very high esteem. I believe him when he says that he represents the interests of the people in his riding. Obviously, he is a man of experience who knows the rules of governance and the parliamentary process. I am going to ask him a question that he may find somewhat forthright.

I understand that he finds that the Liberals are imposing their will on the country. We are all familiar with their belief in their royal and divine right to hand down laws. It bothers all of us. However, I believe that a carbon tax is appropriate.

I would like to ask my colleague, whom I hold in high regard, how he suggests we fight climate change.

[English]

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Madam Speaker, climate change has been going on for a long time. In geological terms, it was not that long ago that we were under a mile of ice here. Of course, that has all melted. The landscape where I live was all once formed by glaciers. Lake Simcoe, which I talked about earlier, was once a much larger post-glacial lake that has shrunk. The climate has been changing and

continues to change, and there is lots of evidence that there are human impacts on it.

The question is, how do we make a difference? When the Conservative government was in power, our government actually reduced greenhouse gases. Our approach was a regulatory approach, not one that taxed each and every Canadian. We did not tax people like my constituents, who have no choice and have very difficult lives. Instead, we told big emitters to find a way. We said that there was technology out there that they could use to reduce emissions from their manufacturing operations, automobiles, and so on. That regulatory approach was salutary and tremendously successful. It improved the fuel efficiency of automobiles.

Those things were done well, and guess what? They actually benefited families in my constituency. If the automobile they buy is more fuel efficient, that is a good thing for them. However, if they just have to pay more for gasoline, that is a bad thing for them because they do not have that choice. They can make the choice of buying the more fuel-efficient car perhaps, but they do not have a choice about paying for the fuel to go in the car.

•(1620)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Elmwood—Transcona.

Today we are debating the Conservative Party's motion about the carbon tax. The motion claims that the carbon tax will make it difficult for most Canadians to fuel their cars, heat their homes, and buy groceries.

I will say, off the top, that we have to do all we can to fight climate change. Along with the rest of the world, we made commitments in Paris to cut our greenhouse gas emissions. We have to bring our emissions down significantly in the next 12 years, from well over 700 megatonnes to just over 500 megatonnes per year.

Carbon emissions, greenhouse gas emissions, are a form of pollution. We, in the NDP, believe in the concept that polluters must pay for their actions. If I produce pollution by driving my car, I should pay something back to society to reflect the environmental cost that I am putting on other Canadians. A carbon tax is a perfect way to do that.

Carbon pricing, either through a carbon tax or a cap-and-trade system, is also the most cost-effective way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. A properly designed carbon tax can get us well on the way to meeting those targets, and it would do so at the least cost to all Canadians.

Business of Supply

If, as this Conservative motion states, people will have trouble heating their homes, fuelling their cars, and putting groceries on the table after the price of gas has gone up by 10¢ a litre over the next five years, then perhaps the Conservatives should be looking at why it is expensive to buy or rent a home in Canada or why people are living in poverty. If people are so close to poverty that they cannot afford those things when the price of gas goes up a couple of cents, something is clearly wrong. The Conservatives would better fight poverty by joining us, here in the NDP, to stop pension theft, fix the employment insurance system, and get the government to speed up its action on affordable housing.

The April 1 bump-up in the B.C. carbon tax added only two cents a litre to the price of gas. Well after that, in the last couple of weeks, gas prices went up by about 20¢ a litre. It had nothing to do with the carbon tax, or the Kinder Morgan pipeline dispute, for that matter.

The fact is that we have had a carbon tax in British Columbia for the last 10 years or so, and it has worked. It has been effective in reducing per capita fuel consumption, and the B.C. economy has been leading the country all that time.

Lower-income British Columbians, the ones the Conservatives are now so concerned about, actually come out ahead. They receive a rebate, so they actually gain money through the carbon tax. Buying groceries and heating their homes are actually easier for them because of that tax. All British Columbians benefit through lower income taxes made possible by the carbon tax revenues.

The same goes for Alberta. Under the Alberta carbon tax, people making less than \$33,000 per year will be better off with the carbon tax than without it. In fact, in both B.C. and Alberta, 40% to 50% of residents actually benefit financially from the carbon tax.

However, we should not be quibbling over the cost of the carbon tax. The real question before us, the elephant in the room, is the immense cost of inaction. It is the huge cost of climate change itself, global climate change. These are costs that have been hitting individual Canadians, businesses, and all levels of government.

I was home last weekend and toured some of the flooded areas of my riding. We are seeing torrents of water where formerly there were only tiny streams one could step over. There are flooded rural neighbourhoods that have never seen water on the surface before.

The Okanagan Valley is a semi-desert. Many of the small lakes in the south Okanagan do not even have outlets because they usually do not receive enough water to fill up their basins. Now, homes, farms, and vineyards around these lakes and streams are underwater. This is all from low-elevation melt and high water tables left over from last year's flooding. In the surrounding mountains, we have had 150% of the normal snowpack, so when things really warm up in the next couple of weeks, we could have widespread flooding in the valleys.

As I said, this is the second year in a row we have had flooding in my riding. I have not seen a cost estimate for last year's flooding, but it impacted many of my constituents, who had water in their basements for weeks on end, pumping water out as the water table rose to record levels and then stayed there all summer.

I have seen cost estimates from last spring's flooding in Quebec and eastern Ontario. Those floods have been costed at over \$220 million.

● (1625)

Back in B.C. last year, we went straight from floods to fires. Indeed, the main crews working on the flooded areas right now in the Okanagan are forest fire crews. Everyone is worried about what will happen when summer comes. Not only will we have the high-elevation snowmelt to contend with, but the fire crews will be sent elsewhere to do what they are really trained for: fight fires.

Forest fires in B.C. last year cost over \$500 million just to fight. They cost \$127 million in insured damage, and the cost to the forest industry is incalculable. I have not seen even an estimate of that. Two years ago, in 2015, forest fires in B.C. cost \$300 million to fight.

Again, those numbers do not take into account the cost to people who lost their homes and livelihoods or the cost to forest companies that had to close down mills during the fires and then reopened them to a new reality, with millions of hectares of forest burned. The forest industry was already reeling from the loss of half the pine trees in the interior of British Columbia through the mountain pine beetle epidemic, something else that can be attributed directly to climate change.

We had the Fort McMurray fire in 2016. The estimated cost of the overall economic impact was almost \$10 billion for that one fire. The Calgary flood of 2013 was almost \$6 billion in costs.

It is estimated that the financial impact of climate change on the Canadian economy will be over \$40 billion per year by 2030. Canadians are paying for climate change every year. Many are losing their jobs or their homes. Some have even lost their lives during these catastrophes.

While I support the government's carbon tax policy in broad terms, we need to do more to meet our Paris targets. Already it is widely recognized that we cannot possibly meet our 2030 target. Canadians want to do the right thing for the environment, but we have to give them more choices.

Business of Supply

I have heard it brought up by the Conservatives that we do not have a choice. If the government would do things to give us more choices, we would have a better policy. If we gradually make gas more expensive so that Canadians are getting a market signal that they should buy less gas, maybe we should make it easier for them to buy electric vehicles. We have to provide more charging stations. We should provide rebates and incentives in licensing and parking fees. We have to make that shift.

If we make it more expensive to heat our homes with natural gas, we must provide incentives and rebates so that Canadians can renovate their homes to make them more energy-efficient so they would not have to buy more natural gas. The ecoENERGY retrofit program did just that. From 2007 to 2012, it helped hundreds of thousands of Canadians retrofit their homes, lowering their energy bills by 20%, creating thousands of good local jobs, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by three tonnes per year for each house. While the program cost the federal government \$900 million over five years, it leveraged more than \$4 billion in retrofit investments by Canadian families. When homeowners invest in new windows, insulation, and other energy-saving projects, that money circulates through communities across the country.

I will simply say that carbon pricing is the cheapest, most effective way to fight climate change. The Conservatives should be praising its virtues and promoting it across the country. In fighting the carbon tax, the Conservatives are basically saying they do not believe in climate change. They are saying they are willing to play on people's fears to make political points while they damage our efforts to fight climate change.

Climate change is the most serious issue of our time. We have to work together on this. It should not even be up for debate.

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his comments. I must say that, as Minister of Public Safety, I am proud to have contributed to, or should I say invested in, the last Conservative budget by updating the maps of flood-prone areas. It is one of the first steps in being able to tackle the problem and, unfortunately, it had not been done in previous decades. Now that we have up-to-date maps of flood-prone areas, we are in a better position to take action and determine what infrastructure is needed to solve the problems caused by climate change. There were also funds allocated in the infrastructure program.

My question for my colleague is very simple. I am in full agreement with him that climate change has had a serious impact. Now, would he not like the government to tell him what the impact of the carbon tax will be? How will it impact greenhouse gas emissions? Does he not agree that the government, for the sake of transparency and to sell the tax that will be used for who knows what, should let us know how it will help fight climate change?

● (1630)

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, there were a lot of things in that question. I will start by saying that we are very happy to see government investment in flood plain mapping this year in the Okanagan to help us plan for the future.

In terms of getting answers as to how much this would cost, this is all being rolled out provincially, and it will differ province by province. In Alberta, there are estimates of how much it would cost based on people's income. As I said, for people making \$33,000 or less, it would actually be a benefit. For those making \$100,000, it would cost maybe \$300 a year, and twice that for those making \$200,000 a year. We have seen an estimate that our output of carbon emissions will be reduced by 90 megatonnes over the time period we are talking about, if that is the answer the member wants.

What is critical is that every economist would say that this is the most efficient and cost-effective way of bringing down our emissions, so we should embrace that, go with it, and do the other things I mentioned to help Canadians bring their own costs down.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have listened to a great deal of debate on the issue today. One member made a reference to representing constituents. I always thought it was great how the Prime Minister would say that our responsibility as members of Parliament is to bring issues from our constituencies to Ottawa. This is a good, healthy debate, and I will go back to its origin.

The Prime Minister and other stakeholders went to Paris, where an agreement was reached, and then to Vancouver. Countries around the world recognize the value of having a price on pollution. There are provinces across the country saying that this is a positive thing and that we should have a price on carbon. In fact, it is the provinces that would generate the revenues with the price on carbon and, at the end of day, have the opportunity to redistribute the monies being collected.

It seems to me that whether it is countries around the world or provinces from different regions, everyone understands the need for a price on carbon, except for the official opposition. I would ask if the member has any thoughts as to why the official opposition does not want to listen to what Canadians and other countries around the world are doing.

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, it is all political. The Conservatives are doing this because they want to score political points by sowing fear among Canadians that this will really impact them in a terrible way, when in fact that is patently false. British Columbia, as I said, has had a carbon tax for 10 years, and it has worked. It has done what it set out to do. There are programs within it so that low-income families do not suffer the extra cost, and actually benefit from the rebate.

A well-planned carbon tax is the most efficient, cost-effective way to bring down greenhouse gas emissions. If the Conservatives had another plan, we can be sure that it would cost two to four times as much as this one.

Business of Supply

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Consular Affairs; the hon. member for Saskatoon West, Public Transportation; and the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, Pensions.

• (1635)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to the motion today. I had occasion to reflect on it this morning. I had the honour for the third time since being elected to represent the NDP at the national prayer breakfast.

In the prayer for Canada and the nations offered up by the Right Hon. Chief Justice Richard Wagner, we were reminded of a call to people of faith within the Christian community to be good shepherds of the planet and the environment and that our duties extend beyond concern for our own souls and extend to the people we share the planet with and to the planet itself.

Financial implications are an important part of this question and any policy, but it was an important reminder that we had duties that extended beyond our pocketbooks. Our duty to the planet is one of those, but we are also fortunate in that there are a lot of solutions we can implement to do our part to help save the planet and the people on it. There is a lot of evidence that climate change is real, that it is happening, that there are real consequences from a practical point of view with respect to costs, and they are projected to get worse.

One of those policies that we can implement is a price on carbon. We can have a debate about where exactly to put that price. The Conservatives have raised important points that we in the NDP are sensitive about the costs to low-income households. I find it odd that it would be a reason to not do anything when it comes to climate change. Absent in the comments today are real alternatives to take meaningful action on climate change.

NDP governments have shown, and my colleague from B.C. pointed out B.C. and Alberta, that what can accompany carbon pricing is a rebate program, not unlike the way we offer a rebate to low-income families with the GST. We can provide a rebate to help families that are struggling with that additional cost. That allows us to secure the benefit of a carbon tax for the environment, while at the same time responding to legitimate concerns of low-income households, whether they are pensioners on fixed incomes or single-parent families or families with two parents who are trying to hold down more than one job and are having a hard time making ends meet. Sometimes this is because of the cost of child care or the cost of housing or the cost of prescription drugs or the fact that real wages have not been rising to keep pace with the cost of the things for families to have a reasonable standard of life.

It is important for Canadians at home to resist the temptation of the dichotomy Conservatives are presenting today, that somehow it is not really doing anything when it comes to climate change in the face of a large amount of evidence to say that something is happening on the planet that is different. We are seeing some of the consequences of that simply because there are cost pressures on Canadian families.

There are all sorts of ways to try to address those cost pressures directly when we talk about a price on carbon, by having some sort of meaningful rebate system. That is where it would be important for the federal government to work with provinces, where that does not exist, to try to make that happen. It will be unfortunate if the federal government's position continues to be simply that it is just up to each province on its own because it has undertaken to implement this price on carbon.

The Liberals also need to be just as involved with the provinces when it comes to the question of how to ensure fairness for low-income families. There are ways of doing that without sacrificing the very idea of a price on carbon. More broadly, I would welcome Conservatives to the club of people who are concerned about costs for Canadian families.

• (1640)

We do not hear MPs on either side, not in the last election and not since, talk about the fact that the Canadian corporate income tax went from 28% in the year 2000 to just 15% today. People wonder why Canadian families are struggling. That money used to go to help fund programs and initiatives that made life more affordable for Canadians. When that income disappeared, it had a meaningful difference. It was around that time, it started a little earlier in 1995, that the federal government got out of funding new affordable housing. We are starting to see a bit of a return to that, and certainly any kind of federal investment is welcome.

I was listening to the Conservative member for York—Simcoe. He talked about the cost pressures on Canadian families as if it was simply taxes that made it impossible for Canadian families to get ahead. It was caused by a steep reduction in corporate income taxes and the hollowing out of government revenue that would support investments in new affordable housing or to sponsor a new national child care program that would make child care available and affordable to Canadian families that wanted to go to work and support their families.

The EI fund was raided by successive Liberal and Conservative governments. There has been a lack of meaningful reform to the EI program since the new government was elected. There was the lack of leadership from successive Liberal and Conservative governments in establishing a national pharmacare plan. New trade deals have entrenched intellectual property rights of pharmaceutical companies, which are milking Canadians who are beholden to them because of the state of their health, and the Liberals are doing this still in CETA and TPP. All of this has affected affordability for Canadians. Those cost pressures have come at a time when we have seen significant reductions in taxes for Canadian businesses, particularly the largest corporations. We do not hear anything from the government about closing the CEO stock option loophole in order to find ways to make life more affordable for Canadians, or to help fund a rebate on the carbon tax, although that would produce its own revenue, or to invest in child care or in new housing.

Business of Supply

These are all options. We take the point about affordability, but we should not ask Canadians to continue to make do in an economy that has not been good to them, where Canadian household debt is at record levels because people do not make enough money at work to afford the very things they need. We see an ad on television about a Canadian family that is concerned because it has a dentist bill and a car repair. The financial institution suggests the family get a loan. The financial institution says “You’re strapped and your credit cards are maxed out, but don’t worry; we’re here for you. We’ll give you another loan.”

Canadians will not be able to overcome their cost pressures on their own. That is why we need collective solutions. That is why, on our benches, we continue to talk about a collective solution to the cost and availability of child care. That is why we talk about a collective solution to the costs of prescription drugs. That is why we talk about collective solutions to the lack of affordable housing. We know those things will help relieve those real cost pressures on Canadians. To accomplish those things, the largest Canadian corporations will have to pay their fair share, but they do not do that. They pay almost half as much as they did just 15 or 16 years ago.

It is no wonder those cost pressures have been mounting. It is no wonder Canadian households have been going further and further into personal debt in order to cover those costs. That money was in place when we had a fair corporate tax rate in Canada. Canadians are beginning to shoulder the burden of that debt.

We do not have to pit the environment against affordability for Canadians. We can work together to make life more affordable for Canadians, and we can do it while observe our sacred obligation to be good shepherds of the earth.

• (1645)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to the all-of-government approach the NDP shared with us, that fighting climate change is not just putting a price on pollution. It is also how cities are built. It is how we support farmers. It is how we support low-income Canadians. It is how we support people in the north who have different energy consumption patterns than people in the south. We need to do everything we can.

Members opposite referenced Australia, which had a carbon tax. A government very similar to Stephen Harper’s government came along and took it off. I think both prime ministers are good friends. Right now, the price of petrol, as it is called in Australia, is \$1.41 a litre in Sydney. I just checked with my cousin, who works with an oil industry over there. Part of his job is to check the retail price. I asked him what happened to the price of petrol when the carbon tax was taken off it. He said that the price went up, that companies filled the gap. In other words, consumers did not get the difference; the corporations did. The price of gas in Sydney, even without a carbon tax, is higher than it is in Toronto.

Would the member opposite like to comment that?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: There is a lot of truth to that, Madam Speaker. Canadians from their own experiences know that the price of gas fluctuates all the time for all sorts of reasons. It never seems to

fluctuate down quite as much as it fluctuates up and it is usually not clear why it fluctuates up.

That is one of the reasons why I think my colleague from Windsor West had the great idea of establishing a commission and an ombudsman. They would have the responsibility of overseeing gas prices in Canada. They would have some power to get the information needed to understand where gas prices were going and why. They would be able to do something about that so Canadians could be assured of a fair price at the pumps.

The idea that somehow a carbon tax will suddenly make gas pricing unfair in Canada, as if it had not been up to now, is just ridiculous.

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to know what my colleague thinks of this Liberal tax grab. The Liberals have already lost control of the debt. They have increased taxes on Canadians and they have no control on our greenhouse gas emissions. They refuse to tell us what the impact of this tax will be.

Why does my colleague trust the Liberals, if he does, to take more money out of the pockets of Canadians without any real results? I am sure he wants real results for the environment as we do.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I have been very clear on the record that I support a price on carbon. That does not mean we would not be interested in having the information on what the government projects the cost would be to Canadians. The Alberta government website shows a projected cost for Albertans each year. It is part of how the rebate is calculated, which helps low-income Albertans deal with that cost.

I have also said on the record that the Conservatives asking simply for the cost of the tax is only asking half the question. If they were interested in a real and informed debate, they would also be asking what the cost of not doing anything on climate change would be to Canadians. If the Conservatives could please just suggest some real meaningful alternatives on how to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, we could ask for the costing on that too. Then we could have a real and informed debate.

Supporting a price on carbon does not mean supporting the government’s secrecy about this. Alberta has shown that the government can be open and transparent. When the Conservatives ask for just one side of the equation, it feels politically motivated. If they are sincere in their desire to have a meaningful, well-informed debate, it has to include costing the price of doing nothing, as well as other meaningful alternatives for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

• (1650)

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is again a pleasure to rise and speak to this subject, which is now being spoken about all over the provinces due to the government’s carbon tax. Before I begin, I will say that I will be sharing my time with the member for Prince Albert.

Business of Supply

Throughout the day, my colleagues have outlined the dangers of the carbon tax, which is not very well thought out. The government has been saying that it will bring in a carbon tax, but we have a problem when it says that it is revenue neutral and we have found out time after time that it is not revenue neutral. The impact of a carbon tax on the economy is very strong, and we have seen what the PBO has said on the impact it would have on the Canadian economy. The issue here at the end of the day is that we all have an interest in meeting the greenhouse gas emissions targets. We all agree that climate change is happening and we that need to address this issue of climate change.

My colleague from the NDP talked just now about coming up with new solutions and new ideas. The question here is this: Why are we fixated on a carbon tax? Why do the government members think that a carbon tax is the only issue that we need to address to meet the greenhouse gas emissions target that the government signed in Paris? There are other options available in this country that we can look at without putting the burden on Canadian taxpayers.

During the leadership debate, I brought up the issue of recycling nuclear waste as fuel to be used in Canada. I laid down the advantages that this initiative would have. The research done by Professor Peter Ottensmeyer of the University of Toronto has clearly indicated that this is not only cost-effective but is also a carbon-free form of energy. Let me provide some figures.

Nuclear waste fuel could provide up to \$1.5 billion to the Canadian economy, and then turn major industries like the oil sands in my province into a low-carbon-emitting industry, something that everybody is striving to do. This is the right solution from this new idea.

Recycling of nuclear waste fuel is a made-in-Canada solution. If we were to harness and recycle the nuclear waste fuel from existing CANDU nuclear plants in Ontario, we could reduce the emissions from industries that output high amounts of carbon as a result of their electricity needs, as in the example of the oil sands that I just pointed out.

Canadian technology and investment into fast neutron reactors, FNRs, has given us an alternative energy that we could use to help our industries in Canada, and not hurt them, while meeting our global carbon commitment.

Harnessing this fuel and recycling it into an energy source producing a high carbon output would also put more than \$1.5 billion worth of electricity into our economy. Let me point out that right now the plan for this waste fuel is to bury it in the ground. It will be buried there for 1,000 years. We are burying it in the ground. Do members not think that it is common sense that we reuse this fuel?

By reusing the fuel, we would reduce the carbon output of this country without putting a major tax on Canadians. What is even more interesting is that the money that would be going toward this is already under the mandate of the federal Nuclear Fuel Waste Act under subsection 20(2), so there would be no new taxes and no new levies required by any government with this solution. A start-up fund already exists.

• (1655)

The fast neutron reactor employs incredible safety measures, and if this technology had been used in Japan, there would have been very little environmental impact during the Fukushima nuclear reactor meltdown.

From all levels this seems to be the right kind of a solution, and it is Canadian made. We have the nuclear fuel already available, the reused fuel rods that, as I mentioned, are to go into the ground. Recycling them would produce electricity for large users of electricity, reducing their carbon footprint. This could be a solution. The member who spoke before me talked about the Conservative Party coming up with solutions. Here is one of the solutions.

As another example, I had a chance to go to the Bay of Fundy, and I saw the tidal wave. The tidal wave is producing electricity. Although this is in its infancy stage, there is a great potential out there for us to reduce our carbon footprint.

Therefore, there are solutions that would not put a burden on the taxpayer. We keep hearing that the money will be given back to the poorer groups. We have programs to help them, and it is always great to see if we can assist them in any way through our social safety network, but we cannot just turn a blind eye and deny the impact to every sector right across the country from a carbon tax. It would be a major burden on the Canadian taxpayer.

We also have this problem of how high we are going to go with a carbon tax. The government has failed to look at other options or ways we could go. As for a plan to meet the Paris targets, all we hear from the environment minister is shouting and screaming that the world is falling apart or something.

There are solutions that are taking place. Solar energy is something else. Here in Canada, we do have this nuclear reactor technology for reusing our waste fuel. We have that technology, which is very safe, and if we employed it, our carbon footprint would be reduced. That is one of the options.

My colleague, my other leadership contender friend, brought that up during the leadership race. However, jokes aside, the fact of the matter is that we need to address climate change. Our leader has already said that he will be presenting a comprehensive policy that will take all solutions into account.

Therefore, let me again remind members that the NDP members gave the example of carbon tax in British Columbia, but what is the gas price today in British Columbia? It is pretty expensive. We just heard the Liberals talking about the prices in Australia. There are other factors in Australia that will make the price go up. It is not just taking away the carbon tax.

We are in a position in Canada to come up with innovative solutions. I have outlined one, and we can do it. Then everybody will come out here. Let us just say that while the Conservative Party is speaking out against the carbon tax, it is not saying that climate change is not be addressed. It definitely needs to be addressed, but options are there.

Business of Supply

Once more I will say that there are other solutions. I have outlined one of the solutions, the recycling of nuclear waste and nuclear fuel rods. Thank you for this opportunity to discuss it.

• (1700)

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to my colleague's debate. Does he not think a national price on carbon is a better idea than the current patchwork approach whereby some provinces have carbon pricing and others do not? Would a national carbon pricing program not be a better approach to improving the environment and combatting climate change?

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Madam Speaker, we are saying that a carbon tax is a heavy burden on Canadian taxpayers. That is why Conservatives are opposed to a carbon tax. We are not saying we need a national policy. We have already opposed that. What I said in my speech today is that there are alternatives we can use to ensure that we meet our goals. At the Paris conference we addressed solutions to climate change, one of which I have outlined very clearly, and that is to reuse nuclear waste fuel.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member mentioned both nuclear power and tidal power as a way for us to get around a carbon tax and that this would solve our problems.

Ontario Power Generation, OPG, is refurbishing its Darlington plant, one of the big nuclear power plants in Canada. It is going to cost \$13 billion, and I am wondering if he could tell us who is paying for that if it is not taxpayers.

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Madam Speaker, I will gladly answer the question. The member probably did not listen to what I was saying. I am talking about reusing the nuclear waste that already exists and is going to go into the ground for 1,000 years. We are talking about reusing that. We are not talking about building new reactors but about reusing fuel with new technology that we have in Canada, which is very safe. That approach would provide electricity worth \$1.5 billion. What is wrong with coming up with an innovative idea, reusing—let me repeat, instead of putting it in the ground, reusing—this nuclear waste to deal with 50,000 tonnes of highly toxic nuclear waste that is sitting out there?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to compliment the member on the innovative idea he is proposing, which is to reuse old nuclear waste. Of course, new technologies have to be developed, or are in the process of being developed, to do exactly that. Does he not understand that in order for companies to want to look at innovative ways to reuse an older product that is not as easily accessible as new nuclear power, it would require putting a price on using the new sources in order to drive companies to be innovative and to look at new and different approaches such as the one that he mentioned, which is using old nuclear waste and developing new technologies to do exactly that?

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Madam Speaker, I have already said that new technology and investment are available.

To answer his question, the funding would not be based on taxpayers. It is already mandated in the federal Nuclear Fuel Waste Act. It is already there. We are not putting anything new out there. What is wrong with reusing what is already there so that we can carry on with this new idea, for which we do have the technology? I

suggest we look at the paper that has been published by Professor Peter Ottensmeyer of the University of Toronto.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is great to be here to talk about the carbon tax. I come from Saskatchewan where this is a very controversial issue. Of course, everybody in this House is aware of the Saskatchewan government taking the government to court, based on the fact that the federal government has no jurisdiction to impose a tax like a carbon tax on the people of Saskatchewan.

The questions here are very clear, and there is something that has to be defined. Are the Liberals proposing this tax because they really care about reducing greenhouse gases and carbon, or is this tax being proposed just for that reason, that it is a way to tax people to get more money into the government coffers so that the government can spend it as it sees fit? I think the latter is true. The reality is that when we start looking at the carbon tax and on the Liberals' climate strategy to meet our Paris commitments, there is a proposal out of Saskatchewan that would actually meet those emissions targets, that would actually allow us to move forward without having a carbon tax.

There are provinces in Canada that actually meet their targets already. Why are we forcing them to have a carbon tax? Why would we not be embracing them? Why would we not say that is great they are not going to make their families pay all that money, that they actually found a way to meet their targets without doing that? One would think the government would embrace that, if that was truly the goal, to reduce emissions and really reduce carbon. One would think that the government would not want to do harm to the economy, similar to the harm it did in Ontario, and the harm that it wants to transfer to the rest of Canada.

I find it frustrating. The government should be looking at new technologies coming on stream, such as the use of carbon sequestration in Estevan in coal-fired power plants. That technology in those plants uses five times less greenhouse gases than natural gas. The government's reaction to that is to shut down coal. "Shut it down. We do not want it." Why would the government not want it, if it is five times cleaner than natural gas? Is the government saying it is going to shut down the natural gas ones too? Is that the Liberals' goal? What will we do to heat our houses? How are we going to do our manufacturing processes?

Do not be ridiculous. This is not a reasonable solution. The government can embrace new technologies and meet its emission targets. That has been proven in Saskatchewan. However, what did the government do to Saskatchewan? There has been a loss of \$60 million in transfers. The government put \$110 million in the budget for carbon costs, and then the Liberals say it is revenue neutral. How can it be revenue neutral when they are already spending \$110 million in carbon costs? It does not make sense.

Business of Supply

Saskatchewan is an exporting province. We grow food. We have forestry products. We manufacture goods that we ship around the world. We have to be competitive on the global platform. Our prices and our cost structures have to be such that we can compete around the world. We know that if we bring in a carbon tax it takes that competitiveness away.

In the market, for example, selling wheat, I cannot price in a carbon tax. I cannot pass that on. I have to take the world price. Therefore, that is direct cost for me and my operation that my competitors in Australia and the U.S. do not have. In fact, Australia used to have a carbon tax and it was so bad that it got rid of it. Why did the Australians get rid of it? It was killing their economy. It was ruining their competitiveness, and it was not reducing their emissions. It was not getting the effect they thought it would have. Why would we go down the same path and not learn from Australia? Why would we not learn from other jurisdictions that looked at this and said, "No, this is crazy"?

The Liberals think that they know best. They have been telling us that for years. When the Liberals are in government they tell the west, "We know best. You are going to do it our way and, by the way, your ideas are stupid," even though they are way better. That is what we are facing in western Canada and that is what we are facing from the government here. It is really frustrating.

The other thing I find really interesting when we talk to different companies and different committees is that we have companies, steel companies for example, that are meeting the highest regulations and emitting the lowest amounts of pollution, but they are shutting down because of the carbon tax and regulations that the federal government has brought in, and the Liberal provincial government in Ontario has brought in. They are shutting them down. What are they being replaced with? Companies in China, India, and other countries where these types of regulations are not in place and where they could not care two hoots about the environment.

We looked at that. Does it make sense that we have a wonderful facility here in Canada paying Canadians, but we are going to shut it down, force it out of business, so that we can go get our products from somewhere else that does not care about the environment? That is what is happening when we embrace these types of policies.

• (1705)

The biggest concern for every organization from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce to the CME right now with the government in power is competitiveness, their ability to compete around the world on a platform that is equal or level to everywhere else. It is really frustrating when we try to sign trade deals to level the playing field on the tariffs and regulations and our guys come back and say that because of the carbon tax and other taxes imposed on them, which their competitors do not have, it will be tough for them to compete now. The Liberals did that in two years. They should take a step back and look at what they are doing. Who is going to work in Canada?

We had this situation in Saskatchewan under an NDP government. What happened is our best and brightest left. Where did they go? They went to Alberta. I know the guys from Alberta would thank us very much, because a lot of the leaders in Alberta, in the universities and businesses, come from Saskatchewan. What changed that was

embracing the business community in Saskatchewan. It was Brad Wall saying that he wanted them to stay in Saskatchewan, that they could run an operation and be competitive on a global stage in Saskatchewan, and have a great quality of life. We have that. We continued doing that, and we achieved all of our goals when it comes to climate change doing it our way. What did Ottawa respond with? A loss of \$60 million in transfer payments, \$110 million in carbon costs, and a fight in the courts. The disrespect the Liberal government has shown our province is unimaginable. Then the Liberals wonder why people do not love them. It is truly amazing.

I was at the Canadian/American Border Trade Alliance conference. One of the issues that was brought up was the amount of traffic going across the line to the U.S. so people could fill up their gas tanks. The concern it is raising is that right now on a tank of gas, which let us say is 60 litres, one saves about \$24 per tank by leaving Ontario to go across the line to get gas. Once the carbon tax is implemented to the higher levels, it will be \$34. It is a problem because the lanes at the border are filling up with more cars which have to be processed.

Do the Liberals not see what is happening? Can they not understand that? We will become uncompetitive. They have noble goals but have gone about them in the wrong way. By doing that, they will force Canadians out of work. They will kill our business community. Why is that a good thing?

I come back to the question: Are the Liberals doing this because they want to lower emissions or because they want more taxes? If they wanted to lower emissions, they would embrace the plan in Saskatchewan or the plan in New Brunswick, but they are not. What are they doing? They are imposing taxes on them because they need the dollars. They want to decide who gets what. They want to be the kingmakers. That is just wrong.

Let the market decide. The market will decide as long as we give the players a fair and level playing field. If we trust the market, it will take care of us. However, the Liberals do not trust anybody. Because of what they will do to our economy with their ideas, it is truly a sad day. If they listened a little, it would be a lot better.

Business of Supply

• (1710)

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Youth), Lib.): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague mentioned the fact that gas prices are exceptionally high right now, that it is a travesty, and that it is very hard for families to pay for the rise in gas prices. I could feel the concern expressed from across the aisle. However, when the hon. member's government was in power for 11 years, what did he and his government do to help ensure that they empowered Canadians to get themselves off of their dependency on oil and gas to ensure that they would not be in a situation where they were at the will of gas prices going up and down, and putting that pressure on them? What did the Conservatives do, besides cut the subsidies that were available for hybrid and electrical vehicles, which is exactly what their government did?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Madam Speaker, that is a fair question if somebody from eastern Canada said we were going to get rid of all of the oil and gas sector in a minute, which is what the Prime Minister has promised. The member is just saying what the Prime Minister said.

The Saskatchewan government did a study of what the costs of a carbon tax would be per person. It would be \$4.5 billion over the next five years, and \$3,853 per person. I can see why the Liberals are not releasing the numbers now, because during the provincial election the last thing they want to put out there are these types of numbers. That is in Saskatchewan. What do members think it is in Ontario?

• (1715)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 5:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Call in the members.

• (1750)

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

(Division No. 664)

YEAS

Members

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Aboultarif | Albas |
| Albrecht | Anderson |
| Arnold | Benzen |
| Bergen | Bernier |
| Bezan | Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis) |
| Block | Boucher |
| Brassard | Calkins |
| Carrie | Chong |
| Clarke | Clement |
| Deltell | Diotte |
| Doherty | Dreeshen |
| Eglinski | Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster) |
| Falk (Provencher) | Fast |
| Finley | Gallant |
| Généreux | Genuis |
| Gladu | Godin |
| Gourde | Harder |
| Hoback | Kelly |
| Kent | Kitchen |
| Kmiec | Kusie |
| Lake | Liepert |
| Lobb | Lukiwski |
| MacKenzie | Maguire |
| McCauley (Edmonton West) | McColeman |
| McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo) | Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound) |
| Motz | Nater |
| Nicholson | Obhrai |
| O'Toole | Paul-Hus |
| Poillievre | Rayes |
| Reid | Rempel |
| Richards | Saroya |
| Schmale | Shields |
| Shiple | Sopuck |
| Sorenson | Stanton |
| Strahl | Stubbs |
| Sweet | Tilson |
| Trost | Van Kesteren |
| Van Loan | Vecchio |
| Viersen | Wagantall |
| Warawa | Warkentin |
| Waugh | Webber |
| Wong | Yurdiga |
| Zimmer — 85 | |

NAYS

Members

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Aldag | Alghabra |
| Alleslev | Amos |
| Anandasangaree | Angus |
| Arseneault | Arya |
| Ashton | Aubin |
| Ayoub | Badawey |
| Bagnell | Bains |
| Barsalou-Duval | Beaulieu |
| Beech | Bennett |
| Benson | Bittle |
| Blaikie | Blair |
| Blaney (North Island—Powell River) | Boissonnault |
| Bossio | Boulerice |
| Boutin-Sweet | Bratina |
| Brison | Brosseau |
| Caesar-Chavannes | Cannings |
| Caron | Carr |
| Casey (Cumberland—Colchester) | Casey (Charlottetown) |
| Chagger | Champagne |
| Chen | Choquette |
| Cormier | Cullen |
| Cuzner | Dabrusin |
| Damoff | Davies |
| DeCoursey | Dhaliwal |
| Dhillon | Di Iorio |
| Drouin | Dubé |
| Duclos | Duguid |
| Duncan (Etobicoke North) | Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona) |
| Dusseault | Duval |
| Dzerowicz | Easter |

Government Orders

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1755)
[Translation]

OIL TANKER MORATORIUM ACT

The House resumed from May 4 consideration of the motion that Bill C-48, an act respecting the regulation of vessels that transport crude oil or persistent oil to or from ports or marine installations located along British Columbia's north coast, be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made earlier today, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at the third reading stage of Bill C-48.

● (1800)

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

(Division No. 665)

YEAS

Members

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Aldag | Alghabra |
| Alleslev | Amos |
| Anandasangaree | Angus |
| Arseneault | Arya |
| Ashton | Aubin |
| Ayoub | Badawey |
| Bagnell | Bains |
| Beech | Bennett |
| Benson | Bitte |
| Blaikie | Blair |
| Blaney (North Island—Powell River) | Boissonnault |
| Bossio | Boulerice |
| Boutin-Sweet | Bratina |
| Brisson | Brosseau |
| Caesar-Chavannes | Cannings |
| Caron | Carr |
| Casey (Cumberland—Colchester) | Casey (Charlottetown) |
| Chagger | Champagne |
| Chen | Choquette |
| Cormier | Cullen |
| Cuzner | Dabrusin |
| Damoff | Davies |
| DeCoursey | Dhalival |
| Dhillon | Di Iorio |
| Drouin | Dubé |
| Duclos | Duguid |
| Duncan (Etobicoke North) | Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona) |
| Dusseau | Duvall |
| Dzerowicz | Easter |
| Ehsassi | El-Khoury |
| Erskine-Smith | Eyking |
| Eyolfson | Fergus |
| Fillmore | Fisher |
| Fonseca | Fortier |
| Fortin | Fragiskatos |
| Fraser (West Nova) | Fraser (Central Nova) |
| Fry | Fuhr |
| Garneau | Garrison |
| Gerretsen | Goldsmith-Jones |
| Goodale | Graham |
| Grewal | Hajdu |
| Hardcastle | Hardie |
| Harvey | Hébert |
| Hehr | Hogg |
| Holland | Housefather |
| Hughes | Hutchings |
| Iacono | Johns |
| Jolibois | Joly |
| Jones | Jordan |
| Kang | Khalid |
| Khera | Kwan |
| Lambropoulos | Lametti |

| | |
|---|--|
| Ehsassi | El-Khoury |
| Erskine-Smith | Eyking |
| Eyolfson | Fergus |
| Fillmore | Fisher |
| Fonseca | Fortier |
| Fortin | Fragiskatos |
| Fraser (West Nova) | Fraser (Central Nova) |
| Fry | Fuhr |
| Garneau | Garrison |
| Gerretsen | Gill |
| Goldsmith-Jones | Goodale |
| Graham | Grewal |
| Hajdu | Hardcastle |
| Hardie | Harvey |
| Hébert | Hehr |
| Hogg | Holland |
| Housefather | Hughes |
| Hutchings | Iacono |
| Johns | Jolibois |
| Joly | Jones |
| Jordan | Kang |
| Khalid | Khera |
| Kwan | Lambropoulos |
| Lametti | Lamoureux |
| Lapointe | Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation) |
| Laverdière | Lebouthillier |
| Lefebvre | Leslie |
| Lightbound | Lockhart |
| Long | Ludwig |
| MacAulay (Cardigan) | MacKinnon (Gatineau) |
| Malcolmson | Maloney |
| Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia) | |
| Mathysen | |
| May (Cambridge) | May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) |
| McCrimmon | McDonald |
| McGuinty | McKay |
| McKenna | McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam) |
| McLeod (Northwest Territories) | Mendès |
| Mihychuk | Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs) |
| Soeurs) | |
| Monsef | Moore |
| Morrissey | Mulcair |
| Nantel | Nassif |
| Nault | O'Connell |
| Oliphant | Oliver |
| O'Regan | Ouellette |
| Paradis | Paupé |
| Peschisolido | Peterson |
| Petitpas Taylor | Philpott |
| Picard | Plamondon |
| Quach | Qualtrough |
| Ramsey | Rankin |
| Ratansi | Rioux |
| Robillard | Rodriguez |
| Rogers | Romanado |
| Rota | Rudd |
| Rusnak | Saganash |
| Saini | Sajjan |
| Samson | Sangha |
| Sansoucy | Sarai |
| Scarpaleggia | Schieffe |
| Schulte | Serré |
| Sgro | Shanahan |
| Sheehan | Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon) |
| Sidhu (Brampton South) | Sikand |
| Simms | Sohi |
| Sorbara | Spengemann |
| Ste-Marie | Stetski |
| Tabbara | Tan |
| Tassi | Thériault |
| Tootoo | Vandal |
| Vaughan | Virani |
| Weir | Whalen |
| Wilkinson | Wilson-Raybould |
| Wrzesnewskyj | Yip |
| Young — 207 | |

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

Private Members' Business

| | |
|--|---|
| Lamoureux | Lapointe |
| Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation) | Laverdière |
| Lebouthillier | Lefebvre |
| Leslie | Lighthound |
| Lockhart | Long |
| Ludwig | MacAulay (Cardigan) |
| MacKinnon (Gatineau) | Malcolmson |
| Maloney | Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia) |
| Mathysen | May (Cambridge) |
| May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) | McCrimmon |
| McDonald | McGuinity |
| McKay | McKenna |
| McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam) | McLeod (Northwest Territories) |
| Mendès | Mihychuk |
| Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs) | |
| Monsef | |
| Moore | Morrissey |
| Mulcair | Nantel |
| Nassif | Nault |
| O'Connell | Oliphant |
| Oliver | O'Regan |
| Ouellette | Paradis |
| Pauzé | Peschisolido |
| Peterson | Petitpas Taylor |
| Philpott | Picard |
| Plamondon | Quach |
| Qualtrough | Ramsey |
| Rankin | Ratansi |
| Rioux | Robillard |
| Rodriguez | Rogers |
| Romanado | Rota |
| Rudd | Rusnak |
| Saganash | Saini |
| Sajjan | Samson |
| Sangha | Sansoucy |
| Sarai | Scarpaleggia |
| Schiefke | Schulte |
| Serré | Sgro |
| Shanahan | Sheehan |
| Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon) | Sidhu (Brampton South) |
| Sikand | Simms |
| Sohi | Sorbara |
| Spengemann | Ste-Marie |
| Stetski | Tabbara |
| Tan | Tassi |
| Thériault | Tootoo |
| Vandal | Vaughan |
| Virani | Weir |
| Whalen | Wilkinson |
| Wilson-Raybould | Wrzesnewskyj |
| Yip | Young — 204 |

NAYS

Members

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Abouttaif | Albas |
| Albrecht | Anderson |
| Arnold | Benzen |
| Bergen | Bernier |
| Bezan | Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis) |
| Block | Boucher |
| Brassard | Calkins |
| Carrie | Chong |
| Clarke | Clement |
| Deltell | Diotte |
| Doherty | Dreeshen |
| Eglinski | Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster) |
| Falk (Provencher) | Fast |
| Finley | Gallant |
| Généreux | Genuis |
| Gladau | Godin |
| Gourde | Harder |
| Hoback | Kelly |
| Kent | Kitchen |
| Kmiec | Kusie |
| Lake | Liepert |
| Lobb | Lukiwski |
| MacKenzie | Maguire |
| McCauley (Edmonton West) | McColeman |
| McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo) | Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound) |
| Motz | Nater |
| Nicholson | Obhrai |
| O'Toole | Paul-Hus |

| | |
|-------------|--------------|
| Poilievre | Rayes |
| Reid | Rempel |
| Richards | Saroya |
| Schmale | Shields |
| Shiple | Sopuck |
| Sorenson | Stanton |
| Strahl | Stubbs |
| Sweet | Tilson |
| Trost | Van Kesteren |
| Van Loan | Vecchio |
| Viersen | Wagantall |
| Warawa | Warkentin |
| Waugh | Webber |
| Wong | Yurdiga |
| Zimmer — 85 | |

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

[English]

The Speaker: It being 6:03 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

* * *

*[Translation]***MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE**

The Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed the following public bill to which the concurrence of the House is desired: S-234, An Act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act (Parliamentary Artist Laureate).

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1805)

*[English]***LATIN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH ACT**

The House resumed from March 19 consideration of the motion that Bill S-218, An Act respecting Latin American Heritage Month, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):*[Member spoke in Spanish]**[English]*

Mr. Speaker, I certainly have a very strong tie to Latin America, in fact many strong ties to Latin America. That is why I am here to speak in support of Latin American heritage month. I think this is something very important for Canadians, and certainly for Canadians of Latin American descent.

My ties are many. They go back, first of all, to much leisure time spent exploring Latin America with my family. We find that it has a very rich culture. We enjoy the food, the geography, the beaches, the ruins, the churches, and the climate. It is a wonderful place to go, a wonderful place to visit.

Private Members' Business

There is Mexico, for example, but in addition, other places where I have had the opportunity to serve as a diplomat for Canada. First of all was Buenos Aires, Argentina. It is just a gorgeous country, a gorgeous place. I was very fortunate to reside in a lovely community called Recoleta. It was wonderful to spend time there learning the culture and its rich history in terms of culinary experience, fashion, and the many good things it has to offer.

I also had the very good fortune to serve as the chargé d'affaires for the Government of Canada in El Salvador for two years. That was an incredible experience, an incredible opportunity. I really came to love the Salvadoran people, and *pupusas* as well, a delicious treat. It was a wonderful time for me and is another reason I very much love Latin America.

I had the honour and privilege to work for the sponsor of this bill, my colleague, the former minister, and still member of Parliament for Thornhill, while serving as his policy adviser when he served as the minister of state for foreign affairs. I remember very fondly our good times in Latin America. I remember going to Honduras to negotiate, after the coup, with the Organization of American States and the special times we shared together in Latin America. That is another reason I am very proud to speak to this bill and to encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

As I mentioned, I have a history of diplomacy in Latin America. Latin America is very much known for the warmth of its people. I am very pleased, every time I go to Latin American countries, to have the opportunity to meet more people from the region. I developed some very close friendships, in my time in the diplomatic corps, with many Latin Americans, relationships I continue to this day.

I actually very much appreciate the formality of diplomacy in Latin America. This is a place that honours tradition, respects roles, and respects a history of tradition and diplomacy in the region. A fond memory I have is when I received my accreditation in El Salvador as the chargé d'affaires. I remember being whisked through the streets of San Salvador in a motorcade. It was just incredible. I remember ascending the steps of the presidential palace. The president and the first lady were there to greet me with such warmth and such hospitality as the new chargé d'affaires with the ambassador at the time.

Latin America really has a special place in my heart. I always joke that part of me is Latina. I very much love and cherish this region.

Unfortunately, I will say that Latin America is not without its historic challenges, and there are many of them. We certainly know that the decades of the 20th century were filled with oppression by a number of dictators. For example, I think of Pinochet in Chile and the oppressive regime of that time. In Argentina, I cannot help but think of Videla and the oppressive regime created during that time.

There were definitely some challenges within this region. In addition to dictators, I could also mention the oligarchy, which has ruled its people through time.

• (1810)

In addition to these oppressive regimes, there have been the unfortunate circumstances of terrible civil war within Latin America. I think, for example, of Colombia and the FARC, and the disarray

this created within that country, the drugs and murders as a result of this civil war, the instability and, the poverty that these situations brought to a nation, which is very tragic for its people.

I cannot help but mention the civil war in El Salvador that lasted for so many years with the FMLN, which, interestingly enough, went on to govern. When I was there, it was the time of ARENA, which was more right wing, so I was favourable to that. I was very proud to be there for the celebration in El Salvador of the 15-year end of the civil war. This was very monumental and it was very special for me.

If there was something good to come of these unfortunate circumstances, it was that these Latin Americans, in these hard times of oppression and civil war, looked for somewhere else to go, and one of those places was Canada. We were very proud, as a country and as Canadians, to welcome American Latinos with open arms, and we continue to do this.

I cannot describe the respect and love that many Latin Americans have for Canada. When I was the chargée des affaires in El Salvador, I could not get my nails done without someone asking me about a visa in an effort to come to Canada. The people loved Canada so much and they wanted to visit or be part of the country. It is very special.

What a gift these people have been to Canada. My own riding of Calgary Midnapore has welcomed so many engineers, geologists, people who have contributed to our rich natural resources sector. I believe at last count in 2016, almost 500,000 people considered themselves to be of Latin American origin residing in Canada. For me, it is very special to honour these people, their heritage, and all that they bring to Canada in having searched for a better life.

It is with sadness that the effects of these oppressive dictatorships and the civil war have lasted. Throughout the time I was in my colleague's office as a policy adviser, we were still watching ALBA. We were looking for the Bolivarian influences. Since then, there was something much worse and more difficult, and that was the historic Cuban regime, the Castro regime, as well as Venezuela, which continues to be a place of struggle at this time. Not only is it enough that these regimes exist present day in Latin America, but it is with regret that the government across the aisle continues to support these regimes.

In fact, I can only describe the strong words spoken by the Prime Minister at the funeral of Fidel Castro as shameful and very disrespectful to the people who chose to come to Canada and make it their home. In addition, I would encourage the government to continue to stand up for Venezuela and Venezuelans who are suffering as conditions continue to deteriorate.

Private Members' Business

I am proud to be part of a Conservative Party that has always stood for democracy, justice, and prosperity, and under Prime Minister Harper had an appreciation for the Americas. I am proud to be part of the legacy of Jason Kenney and former foreign affairs minister John Baird. For all these reasons, supporting this bill will show support for democracy, prosperity, and justice across Latin America. It will show Canadians of Latin American origin how much we support them. That is why I ask all members of the House to support the bill to have a month of recognition for American Latinos.

[Member spoke in Spanish]

• (1815)

[Translation]

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy and proud to speak today to Bill S-218, introduced by the late Senator Tobias Enverga, who left us much too soon. I also want to talk about his vision for this bill and his desire to acknowledge and highlight the historic contribution that the Latin American community has made to Canada. I am part of this community, since I was born in Argentina. I am Argentinian, Canadian, and Latin American.

I came to Canada with my family many years ago, when I had a bit less grey hair. My father was a lawyer for political prisoners, and he then ran for governor in one of the provinces. During this period, he was imprisoned and tortured many times. Shortly before his exile and our departure from Argentina, two bombs were placed in our home while my parents, my two young sisters, and I slept. We were all injured in the attack. It became very clear at that point that leaving was our only way to survive, and that is what we did.

We arrived in Canada just before the winter. We came from northern Argentina, where it was 45 to 50 degrees in the summer. We came here in late fall, and not long after, there was a snowstorm. It was the first of the year, and it was quite a shock. I did what all immigrants have done or should do: I adapted. I traded my soccer cleats for skates and a hockey stick, and I learned to speak French.

This is a roundabout way of saying that there are thousands of Latin Americans who experienced the same thing during that time and who came to live here in Canada. Those Latin Americans who came here from all over, for political or other reasons, contributed to shaping Canada as we know it. In a way, they added some spice.

How many Canadians learn Spanish today? How many people have danced to Latin music? Who does not know Shakira and Carlos Santana? Who has not danced to *Despacito*? I am sure that my colleague has danced to *Despacito*. How many Canadians ate at a Mexican, Salvadoran, or Honduran restaurant this week? That is what Latin America is about and more. When we celebrate Latin American heritage month, that is more or less what we celebrate together.

I mentioned Carlos Santana, Shakira, and *Despacito*, but I also could have talked about mariachi music, the tango that is danced in the street in Buenos Aires, or the rhythms of La Compagnie Créole, which we know and love back home in Montreal and throughout Quebec.

It is impossible to talk about Latin America without talking about literature. How many Canadians have read the novels of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, such as *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, or *Love in the Time of Cholera*? Let us not forget Mario Vargas Llosa, Jorge Luis Borges, and Pablo Neruda. How many of us have read *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho? Many of us have. This is all part of Latin American culture.

Of course, it is impossible to talk about Latin America without mentioning its contribution to sport and to soccer, which we call *fútbol*. I am thinking of Brazil's five world cups, Uruguay's two, and Argentina's two. I am thinking of great players such as Pelé, Messi, and Maradona. I am thinking of how creatively Chile and Colombia play the game. Here at home, we have Ignacio Piatti, an Argentinian who plays for the Montreal Impact in the city I am honoured to represent.

I could go on and on about so many other things, such as Latin America's influence in the fields of medicine and science. I could talk about the Maya, who grew cacao hundreds of years before it was exported by European conquistadors, or about corn, which was cultivated all across the Americas and, like cacao, is now eaten, enjoyed, and prized around the world.

• (1820)

Latin America is also home to indigenous peoples. I am sure members will agree. Indigenous peoples flourished all across the continent. They created many languages and dialects and built major civilizations. The most famous ones are the Inca people in Peru and the Maya and Aztec peoples in central America and Mexico. Theirs were major civilizations that made significant contributions to the world over the centuries.

I could go on, but I want to spend some time talking about the Latin American community here in Canada. First off, I would say that it is a very varied and diverse community. Its members come from every corner of Latin America. It is also a young community, since 50% of its members are under the age of 25. Furthermore, it is a thriving community. Factoring in both immigrants and the children of immigrants, I would say that about 1 million people are here today because of immigration from Latin America. These people are from all over, and they can be found everywhere. They are artists, doctors, restaurant owners, musicians, teachers, managers, athletes, and sometimes even politicians. There are not many of those, but there are a few. These are the people that this bill honours.

Bill S-218 “recognizes that members of the Latin American community in Canada have made significant contributions to the social, economic and political fabric of the nation”. The objective of the bill is to designate the month of October as Latin American heritage month. Why October? As my colleagues stated, October is an important month for us and for the Latin American community. Many Latin American countries celebrate their independence day in October. It is also a month when Mexico, Brazil, Costa Rica, Uruguay, and Venezuela celebrate many religious or other holidays.

I salute the member for Davenport, who has helped me organize Hispanic Day on the Hill for the past two years. The tradition will continue next year with Senator Rosa Galvez, who is of Peruvian descent and is joining the team in order to organize an even bigger event. All my colleagues in the House are invited, of course.

There are many other things happening. I am thinking of ParlAmericas, which plays an important role in the dialogue between parliamentarians for the Americas. I am also thinking of different parliamentary friendship groups, such as the Canada-Costa Rica, Canada-Argentina, Canada-Mexico, and Canada-Cuba friendship groups.

Bill S-218 highlights all of this. This bill recognizes the contribution of our fellow Canadians of Latin American origin, and now we must promote this contribution.

In closing, I would like to again acknowledge the late Senator Enverga's initiative. May the passage of this bill honour his memory and ensure that his dream becomes a reality. I would also like to thank the member for Thornhill for agreeing to sponsor the bill, thus ensuring that Senator Enverga's dream will become a reality.

I will close by saying long live Latin America and long live Canada.

[Member spoke in Spanish.]

• (1825)

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to stand here today and salute the contribution of Latin Americans, people from Latin American countries, and their presence in Quebec, particularly in my riding of Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to thank the authors of the bill and my colleagues here in the House who are responsible for bringing this bill forward for our consideration today.

The bill before us today invites Parliament to recognize that members of the Latin American community in Canada have made an invaluable contribution to Canada's social, economic, and political fabric. It also suggests that designating a Latin American heritage month will allow Canadians to learn more about this contribution, and ensure that it is never forgotten. We know that Latin American communities from across the country would take advantage of Latin American heritage month to celebrate and share their unique culture and traditions with all Canadians. We also know that October is an especially important month for Latin American communities the world over.

The bill therefore proposes that October be designated Latin American heritage month throughout the country.

The bill mentions the diversity of Latin American communities in Quebec and Canada, since Latin Americans come from various countries and states. It also mentions the important contributions they have made to the broader communities around them, to community spirit, to the economy of our cities and towns, and to the social fabric of our country. The presence of communities with which Quebeckers share a certain affinity, similar values and culture, and where there is mutual recognition, contributes a great deal to our communities, and that is what I want to acknowledge about this bill.

Private Members' Business

Quebec's intercultural project is based on this ability to live together and work together to build a community. This involves recognizing our shared values and the contributions of every individual, which are shaped by his or her personal experience and cultural background.

It is also the reason why this bill proposes that Quebeckers and Canadians learn more about the contributions of Latin American Canadians in order to provide an opportunity to remember and recognize them. That is what designating a Latin American heritage month would do: allow us to learn about the achievements of Latin American Canadians in communities throughout Quebec, particularly in our own neighbourhoods. I do not want to appear biased, but of course everything is better in Longueuil and Saint-Hubert. The same holds true in communities across Canada that have been enriched by the contributions of people from many different backgrounds.

There is a reason why October has been proposed for Latin American heritage month. As mentioned in the bill, October is an important month for Latin Americans. Fall is a time when many Latin American countries, including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Chile, celebrate their independence.

Many of these countries were among the first former colonies to declare independence in the 19th century, and some became models of republican harmony. They projected the idea that racial segregation could be consigned to the dustbin of history, along with colonial institutions and economic exploitation. For that, they deserve to be honoured.

There are other reasons why this bill proposes making October a month for celebrating Latin American communities. October was chosen because of certain traditions and customs. We know that it is a significant month in Latin America and South America, since it is the month when Costa Rica celebrates the Day of Cultures, Venezuela observes the Day of Indigenous Resistance, Argentina marks the Day of Respect for Cultural Diversity, Brazil has its Children's Day, and various Latin American cultures celebrate the Day of the Dead.

We feel that dedicating the 10th month of the year to our Latin American communities would give members of those communities an opportunity to share these cultural traditions with their neighbours, in a spirit of harmony. The bill also notes that this event would bring people together and give them a chance to share and celebrate this rich cultural heritage.

A little while ago, *L'Actualité* published a profile of Quebec's Latin American community that highlighted the strong kinship between Quebeckers and the tens of thousands of members of that community, who refer to themselves as Latino-Quebeckers. According to the article, 90% of Latino immigrants choose to learn French when they arrive in Quebec. The community has a political presence in Quebec too, with people like former minister Joseph Facal and the member for Honoré-Mercier, who is originally from Argentina.

Private Members' Business

Our cities bear witness to the political history of these peoples. The statue of Simón Bolívar located five minutes from here, just off Rideau Street, was a gift to Canada from Venezuela, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru.

● (1830)

We also have Salvador Allende Street in Laval, a tribute to the former Chilean president who was assassinated in a coup d'état. Let us not forget Quebec City's Parc de l'Amérique-Latine, which was established at the mouth of the Saint-Charles river to pay tribute to great figures in Latin American history, such as poet, writer, and Cuban national independence hero José Martí, Haitian independence hero Toussaint Louverture, and military leader Bernardo O'Higgins, a hero who fought for Chilean independence. They are legion, but those who have left the most indelible mark on Quebec are the men and women who made a life here. Thousands of people from various Latin and South American countries now live in Quebec City, Gatineau, Sherbrooke, and the area I am from, Longueuil and Saint-Hubert.

At the Nouvelle Vie church in Longueuil, there are Venezuelan, Peruvian, Cuban, and Quebec musicians. The Sacré-Cœur-de-Jésus church on Brodeur Street, right above our community centre, *Entraide chez nous*, hosts colourful, welcoming celebrations. Since I was elected in 2011, one of the encounters that has stood out for me was with Marco, who has been dedicated to the Table Itinérance Rive-Sud for many years and who, to me, is one of the greatest symbols of community involvement. Although Marco does a lot of work in the community, and everyone back home in Longueuil agrees, I am sure that if you asked him what he is most proud of, he would say his children, whom he teaches about his heritage every day, since the most beautiful language of all is the one spoken by our children.

It is in our best interests to actively create stronger relationships with Latin American countries, to build cultural bridges, and to share our ambitions with trade blocs like Mercosur. The Latin American communities established here, in Quebec and Canada, can help facilitate these joint projects. These communities and their heritage also make unique contributions to our culture and to the spirit of community in Quebec. I am very proud to highlight these contributions today and to support this proposal to designate a Latin American heritage month.

[English]

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): *Gracias, señor presidente. Buenas tardes.*

Mr. Speaker, it is pleasure for me to rise in the House to speak to Bill S-218, an act to designate October as Latin American heritage month.

I want to thank the late Senator Tobias Enverga Jr., who left us way too soon late last year, for his leadership and for sponsoring the bill.

I also want to thank my colleague, the member for Thornhill, who is the sponsor of the bill in this venerable House.

Members may not know this, but my mother is Mexican. She was born in a small town called El Recodo in Mexico. It is internationally known for its band music, and for a band called Banda el Recodo.

Later in life she moved to Mazatlán, which is a beautiful seaside beach resort town, where she met my father. They then moved to Canada. That is why I was born here. Her name is Maria Amparo Lizarraga Zatarain. Although my last name does not reflect it, I am a very proud Mexican Canadian and a very proud Hispanic Canadian.

I am so pleased that in my downtown west riding of Davenport I have a growing Hispanic community that is very diverse. We have a number of people from North America, Central American, and South America. I have Mexicans, Ecuadorians, Chileans, Salvadoreans, Guyanese, Colombians, Peruvians, and so many others from this amazing part of the world.

We also have many celebrations of the Latin American culture in Davenport, including the very popular Salsa on St. Clair. This is a very popular festival that tends to take place the first weekend in July. Thousands of people from right across the city come out to sing in Spanish, to celebrate their different cultures, the different parts of Latin American and Central American cultures, and also to learn how to salsa. We turn St. Clair into a big dance floor, and it is a wonderful celebration.

In my riding of Davenport we also have a number of programs for the Hispanic community, including a very popular seniors program, which is at the Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre. I would like to give a shout-out to Mariela and Lumy for all their work in keeping our Hispanic seniors healthy, active, and engaged. I hope at some point to bring all of them up to the Hispanic Day on the Hill, which my colleague from Honoré-Mercier and I organize with Senator Rosa Galvez.

Bill S-218 is super-important. It sets aside a specific time of the year to celebrate and educate fellow Canadians about the unbelievably talented Hispanic and Latin American communities in Canada. Should the bill pass, October will be the month that is dedicated as the time to honour the contributions of Hispanic Canadians in Canada.

I do not know if members know this, but an annual award is given to the 10 most influential Hispanic Canadians. These awards have been happening for 11 years. They are given out to an amazing pool of Hispanic and Latin American leaders. They are leaders in business, science, art, academics, law, media, and in so many other areas. I want to mention a few of them. I happened to have a chance to meet with them last week.

I want to mention Amanda Martinez, who is a world-renowned musician and artist, a Juno-winning artist, as well as winning international awards. We have Ana Dominguez, who is the president of Campbell Company of Canada. We have Mercedes Rowinsky-Geurts, who is a former dean and professor at Wilfred Laurier University. We have Dr. Alejandro Adem, who is the CEO of Mitacs Inc. As members can hear, there are lots of amazing, talented Hispanic and Latin American Canadians here in Canada. They serve as an inspiration to not only the Hispanic community but all Canadians.

We are doing a number of things in Ottawa to promote the Hispanic and Latin American culture. Earlier, my colleague from Honoré-Mercier mentioned that both he and I organized Hispanic Day on the Hill. We started it two and a half years ago when we first came to office. We recognized that there was no opportunity for us to elevate, at the national level, an event that celebrated the amazing talents and diversity of the culture, as well as the contributions of all of the amazing Hispanic community to Canada.

●(1835)

Last week I had a wonderful opportunity to host a number of leaders. There were 20 top-10 Hispanic leaders of Canada here. They came and met with the Minister of International Trade and the Minister of Science and Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities on issues of great importance to the community. Some of the issues we talked about were how to invigorate Canada's thriving start-up culture, how to create more awareness for Hispanics and Canada's creative class, and how to provide more support for migrant workers. The list goes on, but we had a wonderful discussion with a number of ministers. It was very successful, and I was delighted to be able to host them on the Hill.

Canada has recognized the magic and opportunity of Latin American countries. Indeed, we have engaged quite a bit in trade agreements with our Latin American counterparts. The first one that included a number of Latin American countries is the CPTPP. It includes 11 countries, a lot of which are in Asia, but Mexico and two from South America, Peru and Chile, are also included. We are looking forward to expanding our trade relations through that agreement.

About two months ago, we launched negotiations for Mercosur, which is the South American trading bloc composed of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, with a combined population of 260 million people and a GDP of over \$3 trillion. I am delighted we have one agreement in place. We also have a Canada-Chile trade agreement in place. We are working hard on Mercosur. This will absolutely further cement a deepening trade relationship between Canada and Latin and Central American countries, but it will also deepen our cultural and personal ties with each of these countries.

I want to also mention we have a number of youth mobility agreements, particularly with Chile and Mexico. These agreements allow youth from our respective countries to travel to each other's countries to work or study so we can learn more about each other. Ultimately, this helps strengthen the relationships between our respective countries, and I think it bodes well for our future.

As a final mention, I have been working on a number of very important issues within the Latin American community as a commitment from our government. We have been working a lot in terms of making sure agricultural workers' rights are supported in Canada. Many of these workers come from Mexico, do a wonderful job, and are temporary foreign workers. We have put money in budget 2018 to ensure that their rights are protected and they are treated well here. We have also put some money aside to ensure non-profit groups have the ability to help support these agricultural temporary workers here in Canada. They ensure that they know their rights, and if they have any issues, they can communicate with them in their own language on how to address them.

Private Members' Business

We are putting money into promoting multiculturalism. We have also given some teeth to an ombudsperson, who is able to ensure Canadian companies in the mining industry in different sectors around the world—in particular Mexico, Latin America, and South America—adhere to human and environmental rights. We are doing a lot in terms of taking advantage of the opportunities before us in Latin and Central America, and we are looking forward to building stronger relations.

I know that my time is up. I want to end by saying I am thankful for the opportunity to speak on this very important bill. I encourage all my colleagues in the House to support it. As our Prime Minister always says, Canada is stronger because of our diversity. Indeed, the Hispanic community has enriched our culture, our community, and our lives, and Canada is a better country for it.

●(1840)

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, I invite the hon. member for Thornhill for his right of reply. The hon. member has up to five minutes.

The hon. member for Thornhill.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC):

[Member spoke in Spanish as follows:]

Gracias, señor presidente, y en adelante.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the enthusiastic support for Bill S-218, an act respecting Latin American heritage month, that we have heard again today from all sides of this House.

This legislation recognizes the many significant contributions to Canada's social, economic, and political fabric by Canada's Latin American community. This legislation, conceived and carefully fashioned by our late colleague and former senator, the Honourable Tobias Enverga, will stand, I am sure, as a major element of his political legacy.

As I noted when I tabled Bill S-218 on his behalf here in the House, Senator Enverga Tobias, known to his friends as “Jun”, was the first Canadian of Filipino descent to be appointed to the Senate of Canada. Born in the Philippines, he represented Ontario in the Senate since his appointment in 2012.

When Senator Enverga first spoke to Bill S-218 in the other place, he reminded colleagues that he came to Canada as an immigrant, one of many in the upper chamber today, who was fortunate to be welcomed to Canada. He referred to the spectrum of celebrations held across Canada by communities of various national, ethnic and linguistic origins.

He highlighted the two decades-plus annual celebration, for example, of Black History Month, which was recognized by this House in 1995 and by the Senate 13 years later. He explained that the designation of Black History Month has done much to educate and familiarize Canadians with the stories and important history that is too often absent in school curricula.

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He mentioned as well Asian Heritage Month, which was proclaimed in 2002, and marked annually ever since when non-Asian Canadians learn and experience the sounds, entertainment, and tastes of Asia, and celebrate the contributions Asian Canadians have brought to Canadian society. Those, Senator Enverga argued, are just two wonderful examples of designated heritage months to which, he believed, a Latin American heritage month should be added.

As colleagues have noted many times throughout this debate, Latin America is of our hemisphere. For the purposes of this bill, Senator Enverga envisioned the widest possible interpretation so that Bill S-218 would cover those who identify as Spanish and Portuguese speakers from South and Central America, as well as those whose heritage is of the francophone and Hispanic Caribbean Islands. Using that broad and inclusive measure, members can see that Canadians of Latin American origin can be found far and wide across our great country from coast to coast to coast. In the absence of specific census numbers, we might estimate a possible demographic well above half a million men, women, and children, perhaps as many as 1.2 million Latin Americans living among us.

When Senator Enverga originally approached me to ask that I sponsor his bill in the House, he explained that because I was a former minister of state for the Americas, he thought that I understood and greatly appreciated the wonderful mix and complexity of Canada's communities composed of those among us who originated from Latin America and that I would be able to put a voice to the message that led to the passage of Bill S-218 in this place. I hope that I have communicated the senator's worthy dream.

I, too, believe that declaring the month of October to be Latin American heritage month would offer to all Canadians an opportunity to celebrate yet another dimension of our uniquely Canadian multicultural society. I urge all members of all parties to support Bill S-218.

[Member spoke in Spanish as follows:]

Muchas gracias a todos.

• (1845)

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

CONSULAR AFFAIRS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the last several months, I have been inspired by the Iranian community. Many Iranian Canadians fled here to escape the despotic authoritarian regime. They and those who

are still in Iran fight regularly to oppose and resist the brutality of the government. In Iran, they risk life and limb every time they stand up to oppose the regime. Here, they bring a passion for freedom and democracy that is deeply inspiring to all of us.

Very often, when we speak of the Iranian government, we talk about the important regional and global security issues and how the government is supporting violent militias that are destabilizing the region, provoking humanitarian crises, threatening our allies, particularly Israel, and supporting terrorism further afield. Iran's regime is a present and growing danger to global security.

As we reflect on the Iranian situation, though, it is also critical that we consider the connection between the regime's aggression abroad and its repression at home. The Iranian people are the first victims of this regime, and they are its most vocal opponents. We can see how any regime that is a menace to its own people is also a menace to international peace and security, and vice versa.

The people of Iran have taken to the streets in recent months to seek the overthrow of a government that is not on their side. Certainly economics is part of it. Money being spent promoting terrorism abroad could be spent supporting economic development and addressing poverty issues at home. However, the economic problems are tied to more fundamental political problems. The government of Iran is focused on a revolutionary yet reactionary project, the imposition of its own authoritarian brand of religion on everyone, in defiance of basic norms of human rights.

I salute the Iranian people for their passion and their courage. Because of them, one day, hopefully very soon, a free Iran will be a beacon of hope in the region, a friend to Israel, a friend to Canada, and a champion of the global common good.

While these protests were going on, the Liberal MP for Richmond Hill called the Iranian regime "elected". He tweeted:

it is my sincere hope that the brave nation of #Iran have the opportunity to air their legitimate financial, social and political concerns with the support of their elected government

While the Iranian people were dying in the streets, that Canadian MP was acting as the regime's stooge and providing ideological cover by calling the Ayatollahs elected. That member remains in the Liberal caucus, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs has yet to repudiate his remarks. He remains on two important committees, the committee for operations and the committee for industry. Despite his deplorable stated views on the Iranian regime, the member seems to continue to enjoy the esteem of his government and his Prime Minister.

In the midst of all this, the Iranian regime has murdered another Canadian, academic Kavous Seyed-Emami. The regime claims that this was suicide, which is frankly beyond implausible. It is striking how totalitarian regimes lie without even making a basic effort to be believable.

Incredibly, the government responded to questions about this issue by calling for the Iranian government to conduct a thorough and transparent investigation themselves. On what basis can a political system without any concept of independent rule of law conduct an investigation into its own crimes?

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Why the reluctance on the part of this government to clearly confront the Iranian regime about the lives of Canadians, especially given continuing escalation now, with Mr. Seyed-Emami's widow being denied the opportunity to leave the country? Why is this happening, from a Canadian perspective?

Aside from the attitude of the member for Richmond Hill, we know that the government is vigorously pursuing business opportunities in Iran for Bombardier. The government is financing, subsidizing, by \$100 million Canadian taxpayers' dollars, this aerospace deal, and the Iranian government will not even have to pay the carbon tax when these planes take off. This is a great deal for the regime and for shareholders of Bombardier, but it is a terrible deal for taxpayers, for human rights, and for the people of Iran.

When will the government finally listen, stand up for the Iranian people, and start challenging this regime?

• (1850)

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his passion. I agree with him on one thing. We are all inspired by the determination of the Iranian people and their effort to seek a democratic, freedom-loving state and government. He will understand why I take exception to many of the characterizations in his speech.

I enjoy his passion for the promotion of human rights. I respect his desire to see justice and equality all over the world, but I also remind myself of the partisan jabs that he takes, which sometimes undermine his credibility and his argument.

Let me reiterate. Our government has been extremely clear about our position toward the Iranian regime. Our government continues to lead an annual UN resolution on the situation in Iran and calls for the Iranian government to uphold its obligations, domestically and internationally. This is an annual resolution at the United Nations that our government leads.

We have been very clear with the Iranian government in calling for it to allow people to protest, to call for democratic reforms, and to call for free elections. Our government was one of the first governments in the world to speak in support of freedom of assembly in Iran during the latest protest, which the hon. colleague mentioned.

I know the member was not part of the former government, but when the Conservatives were in charge, they had a lot of posturing but did nothing to help the Iranian people. They were not able to move the needle an inch.

We have spoken with many Canadians who have relations with Iran and interests there. They have been asking us to continue to speak up clearly for human rights, but they are also asking us to make sure that we represent their interests in Iran to the Iranian regime.

We have been very clear and consistent. We want to have the ability to speak directly with the Iranian regime. We have also been clear in condemning it for supporting terrorism and for its destabilization efforts in the region. We have been very clear in

condemning it for supporting the Assad regime and what it has been doing in Syria.

We have loudly condemned the death of a Canadian citizen in Iranian detention. We have called, and will continue to call, for an independent, transparent investigation into the circumstances of his death. Today, we will continue to call for allowing his widow, Maryam Mombeini, to leave Iran and to be reunited with her family here in Canada.

I welcome my hon. colleague's input and feedback, but we have been very clear. We will not compromise the interests of Canadians, and we will not compromise the promotion of human rights in Iran and around the world.

• (1855)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, certainly this is an important exchange. What the member has characterized as partisan jabs are in fact legitimate and important policy criticisms of the government. I am not suggesting that we disagree on every aspect of this issue, but there are some important things that we need to hear from the government that we have not heard.

The parliamentary secretary has not addressed the comments of the member for Richmond Hill. The characterization of the Iranian regime as elected is deeply concerning to the Iranian community and problematic for those who are promoting democracy.

The government has spoken about the right to protest, which is important, but so is endorsing the message of the protesters. It is one thing to endorse the right to protest; it is another thing entirely to say, as I have and as, I believe, some backbench members of the government have, that the message of the protesters is a message that Canada should support.

It is interesting that the member said that nothing was done under the previous government, when in fact he referred to an activity at the United Nations that began under the previous government. There are points of continuity, but there are also clear points of difference.

I wonder if the member could clearly address the comments of the member for Richmond Hill, the message of the protesters, and the broader issue, which is that the government is pursuing closer and closer commercial ties in the midst of these major human rights problems.

Mr. Omar Alghabra: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague wants me to comment on my colleague, who has already addressed his comments in the media. He already has explained his comments so it is not up to me to comment on my hon. colleague. If the member has further questions, he can take it up with my colleague.

It is kind of a contradiction. When I asked my hon. colleague to tell me the accomplishments of the previous government, he raised that the Conservatives have been championing these resolutions that our government continues to champion and that somehow our government has failed in upholding human rights, but their government did so much work for human rights.

Regardless of the message of the protestor, whether I agree with it or not, and whether the member agrees with it or not, we will stand firmly in supporting people's right to protest, free of oppression and free of violence. That will be our consistent position.

Adjournment Proceedings

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in January, I asked a question in the House about the hardship brought on by the closure of the Saskatchewan Transportation Company a year ago this month, and was encouraged when the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development replied:

As the member knows full well, this is an issue that we are working on. We will work with her office to make sure we take the appropriate steps that are required and needed to address the issue in a meaningful way.

Having heard nothing from the minister or anyone else in the government, I sent a follow-up letter to the minister on March 14. Sadly, to this day, I still have heard nothing from the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development nor from any other minister.

The loss of STC is keenly felt by many people in Saskatchewan. If people do not have the means to own a car or they cannot drive, STC was the only affordable means of transportation. Without it, people in Saskatchewan are forced into impractical and sometimes dangerous alternatives. Women seeking to get away from domestic violence or to attend medical procedures are hitchhiking to get support and health care. Further, many families were not able to testify at the only missing and murdered indigenous women and girls hearing in Saskatchewan.

Last June, seven women's organizations from Saskatchewan sent a joint letter to the minister about the lack of public transportation for rural and remote locations in Saskatchewan. They are still waiting for a response. In March, at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women session in New York, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs was asked about the lack of response and promised to look into it. To date, these women's groups have not received a response.

If I may, I will share a story that will illustrate for my hon. colleagues just how important it is to bring back STC. Just last week, a constituent of mine who works at a trade school was contacted by one of her students. He was in Prince Albert with no means to get to Saskatoon in time to start his final year of trade training. He was not able to find a ride, and even if he did, he did not think he would have enough money to pay for someone to drive him. This constituent of mine could not bear to stand by and do nothing while all the hard work that this student had put into his training was wasted should he fail to be present for his final weeks of training. Therefore, she decided to drive to Prince Albert to bring the student back to Saskatoon. This is what people with few means in Saskatchewan are forced to do: rely on the goodwill of others or the kindness of strangers.

Saskatchewan has the second-highest rural population per capita in Canada. Seventy per cent of STC users were low-income earners and 60% of those were women. In Canada, one in five people who use public transportation is living with a disability.

Why is it that we see federal leadership, investment, and willingness to subsidize public transportation only in large urban centres? Public transportation is critical infrastructure in this country. Linking rural and urban centres, it is a sustainable, cost-effective way to connect people to health care, to education, to employment,

and to family. It is a lifeline for indigenous communities and we need the federal government to lead the way.

Why will the government not act on its word and work with me and my colleagues to ensure that there is a safe, affordable, and reliable public transportation system in Saskatchewan?

● (1900)

Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the outset, I would like to thank the hon. member for the advocacy on behalf of her constituents that she displays on a daily basis, particularly with this issue.

As the hon. member well knows, our government is making unprecedented infrastructure investments in communities across the country, totalling more than \$180 billion, through our investing in Canada infrastructure plan. Public transit infrastructure is a top priority for our government. These investments improve commutes, cut air pollution, and help grow our economy.

[Translation]

The public transit infrastructure fund, which we launched as part of phase 1 of our infrastructure plan, focuses on the rehabilitation of public transit systems across the country. It includes investments of more than \$29 million in Saskatchewan.

[English]

Our government has so far invested in 15 projects in Saskatchewan worth more than \$38 million.

[Translation]

This funding supports projects such as fleet renewal in Saskatoon, the replacement of 17 buses and nine paratransit buses in Regina, and public transit fleet upgrades in Prince Albert.

[English]

Projects like these are helping modernize transit fleets across Saskatchewan, making public transit more accessible and reliable while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

As the member well knows, the Saskatchewan Transportation Company was a provincially run service, and the decision to terminate the service was made by the province. It is up to the provinces to decide how to best provide public transit services to their communities within their jurisdictions. It is a tenet that we all well know.

The federal government has infrastructure programming available to support transit services and facilities. The Government of Canada does not actually operate the bus system, but the Government of Canada can invest in the physical assets that are required to support the bus system. There would need to be a proponent in Saskatchewan willing to bring forward that proposition.

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PENSIONS

We are currently working closely with the province of Saskatchewan to finalize the new bilateral agreement for long-term funding under the investing in Canada infrastructure plan. For Saskatchewan residents, this will mean federal investment of just over \$307 million in public transit.

[*Translation*]

The Government of Canada recognizes that local governments are in the best position to know the priorities and needs of their communities. That is why we work closely with them to support priority and transformative investments that will have a positive, concrete impact on communities.

We are committed to supporting the provinces, territories, and indigenous communities while working to improve the infrastructure Canadians need and use every day.

[*English*]

Ms. Sheri Benson: Mr. Speaker, last Friday, I rose in the chamber to ask again what the government was doing, and the reply from the government was:

...we understand that having an efficient and functional transportation system is absolutely critical. We need to work together. We have to work together with the provinces and with the municipalities to make that happen. Those kinds of discussions are under way.

I believe in working together and there is a role for the federal government to help lead the way, with Saskatchewan residents, when it comes to public transportation. That is what I had asked the minister, and it was my understanding that the government was participating in looking at the Saskatchewan Transportation Company, or a public transportation system outside the urban areas.

It has been a year since STC shut down. I really would like to see the government step forward and work with the province to find a way to have a good public transportation system not just for urban people but for everyone in the province of Saskatchewan.

● (1905)

Mr. Marc Miller: Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the member opposite to continue her advocacy on behalf of her constituents. That would include engaging the provincial government on this priority in particular.

As she knows, the Government of Canada has made this public infrastructure a top priority. Through the first phase of our investing in Canada plan, we have committed \$29 million specifically to public transit systems in communities across the province of Saskatchewan.

For the next stage of our long-term plan, we are working closely with Saskatchewan. We hope to finalize a new bilateral agreement, which would commit the aforementioned sum of \$307 million to the province for its transit investment priorities.

[*Translation*]

Public transit is essential to building strong, inclusive, green communities. The Government of Canada is firmly committed to supporting the construction of modern, efficient public transit networks across the country. We are eager to work with Saskatchewan communities to support their public transit plans.

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in January, I rose in the House to ask a question about the Liberal government's broken promise to make the guaranteed income supplement available to all our seniors. Thousands of low-income or very low-income seniors are still struggling to make ends meet, even though they are eligible for the guaranteed income supplement. Why are they not receiving it? Because this government did not make it automatically available to all seniors.

When I talk to my constituents about this, they tell me that this is absurd and unfair, and they are right. Of course, I commend the fact that since January 1, low-income seniors have been getting the guaranteed income supplement when they turn 65. The NDP had been calling for that for a long time and were finally heard. However, the government tripped at the finish line. Instead of making the GIS available to everyone, it is applying this change only to people who turn 65 and not to those who are already over 65. Thousands of seniors are living in a precarious situation. Our seniors who are most in need are being left behind.

Let me make one thing clear: as long as one senior is living in poverty and not receiving the guaranteed income supplement, I will continue to rise in this House. I have said it before, and I will say it again: even one senior living in poverty is one too many. Seniors who are eligible for these benefits must be automatically enrolled for the guaranteed income supplement. This government must keep its promises and ensure that all our seniors can live with dignity and get a decent income. As an aside, I would like to commend the work being done by the Richelieu-Yamaska branch of FADOQ and thank everyone in Saint-Hyacinthe and Acton Vale who is speaking out against this injustice and calling on this government to act now. Their calls echo ours, and they can count on my support and that of the NDP caucus to represent them.

The Prime Minister and the Liberal government love calling themselves progressive. This is a great opportunity for them to prove it for once through concrete action, rather than just empty rhetoric. That is why the NDP has been asking for quite some time now that everyone eligible to receive the guaranteed income supplement be automatically enrolled. The NDP is calling on the government to make the guaranteed income supplement automatic so that all seniors can finally access it. We also call on the government to enhance this measure in order to lift all our seniors out of poverty. We need to act now.

For quite some time now, the NDP has been asking that everyone who is eligible receive the guaranteed income supplement, because we in the NDP believe it is impossible for these individuals to live on less than \$10,000. Does this government think otherwise? Can this government say here in the House that \$10,000 a year is enough?

Adjournment Proceedings

Once again, this government promised to lift hundreds of thousands of seniors out of poverty. I urge this government to fulfill its commitments once and for all and to take action. If the Liberals do not know how to help the thousands of seniors who are still living in precarious situations, the NDP would be happy to give them a very simple solution that they could put in place tomorrow morning: make the guaranteed income supplement automatic for everyone.

• (1910)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, for giving me an opportunity to talk about the Government of Canada's pension benefits.

[English]

Canada's population is aging, and Canadians are living longer and healthier lives than ever before. This extended longevity is a good thing and should be celebrated, because it leads to more knowledge, expertise, and experience present in our communities.

[Translation]

Canada's population is aging, and Canadians are living longer and healthier lives than ever before. This extended longevity is a good thing and should be celebrated, because it leads to more knowledge, expertise, and experience present in our communities.

[English]

This demographic shift creates new possibilities that must be recognized. It also brings about new challenges that we must face.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind my colleague that our government took further action to better meet the needs of seniors just this year.

[Translation]

I would remind my hon. colleague that our government has taken further actions to better meet the needs of seniors.

[English]

We implemented automatic enrolment for the guaranteed income supplement in December. This means that fewer Canadians have to submit a written request to have access to their old age security benefits from the Government of Canada. The first two phases of automatic enrolment for old age security benefits were implemented in 2013 and 2016.

Thanks to this initiative, half of people turning 65 this year no longer have to fill out this type of administrative paperwork. The government sends them a letter when they turn 64 informing them that they do not need to submit an application and that they will receive their pension automatically the month after they turn 65. If they do not receive this notice, they can download the form online, telephone the department, or visit any one of the 320 Service Canada locations across the country.

Members will be pleased to learn that payment of the guaranteed income supplement benefits, which support low-income seniors, will now also be done through automatic enrolment. As a result,

everyone who automatically receives an old age security pension will also automatically be enrolled for the guaranteed income supplement if eligible.

We are well aware that many seniors, including, in particular, many women, depend almost exclusively on old age security and guaranteed income supplement benefits. That is why we are implementing effective measures that help seniors access the benefits to which they are entitled. As well, we have boosted those benefits, lifting close to 90,000 seniors out of poverty in the last year alone.

[Translation]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Mr. Speaker, again, the member is talking about those who are 65. What about those who are 66, 67, 68, 70, 75, 80, or 85? Poverty also goes hand in hand with health problems. Seniors most often end up poor and sick.

It is astounding to hear the same old empty rhetoric. Our seniors need the Liberal government to finally show some real initiative and make the guaranteed income supplement automatic for everyone. It is not normal that in 2018, in a wealthy country like Canada, our seniors are living in poverty after a lifetime of working for this country.

When will the government keep its promises and help all our seniors?

It can and must do so.

• (1915)

[English]

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Mr. Speaker, we are taking concrete measures to help improve living conditions for Canada's seniors. As the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development mentioned in his response to the member's original question the other day, our government is well aware of how important it is for Canadians to have access to all the old age security benefits they are entitled to. That is why we have implemented mechanisms that will help seniors, particularly women, receive these benefits more easily, in fact, automatically. That is also why we have modified and improved access to the guaranteed income supplement for the most vulnerable among them. It is also why the national housing strategy has a specific carve-out for seniors' housing. This government is supporting seniors every way it can and is seeking to improve those supports in every way it can as well.

The member's critique of the program is an honourable one, but it is easier said than done sometimes. We are exploring ways to ensure that existing seniors receive their benefits automatically. In the meantime, we have taken the steps we have to make sure, going forward, that no senior will be left behind as we enact automatic enrolment for both of those benefits.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:16 p.m.)

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