

Business of Supply

la□ le beghai hots'e□n a□nedhé hots'e□ heli□ eyi tth'1 beba dorená a□inedh dene□ la□ lagh ghéhi bets'edi laghe sa k'e eyi t'ahi a hená beba hore□ ba horená nahí bek'esoredhí lu, k'o□t'1 hu, koldhe□n hu, beba dorená, kalu yarolm□ yarolí wasile a, s1 t'asíhdene yah yets'oróni□le a, eyi a□inedh dene tsamba aze seghare□lchuth a hunai□ghé nadalana gha□ naghai ha, k'□a□l□ la□t'e tahu kosí hegal ber naní kuli hori□fti, hotthe□ ne□n ts'e□n nats'edé eyi a horelyu□ basé, a□inedhe base tth'1 tsamba be u□ nef a□ tth'1 hu así dí□fti hu yeh dabets'1□lé, la□ghí□ ts'a□kui Montreal Lake hots'1□ La Ronge nadheri, eyi ko□t'ela, tsamba K'odheri nedhe Saskatchewan hots'1□, tsamba K'odhere ja□ Ottawa hots'1□

yets'eni□lé, la□ kuli yets'eni□lé, wé beni□fmi□ chu efelt'e, t'a□hi tsamba daftsí ghadalaredá, la□ daftsíle la□ daftsí chu, tthi beba dorená la, yeh nolni□ ni□dhe□n dekulí tsamba k'el...tsamba denenalyé kue□ tth'1 tsamba yegha□nolyi ló yarólho, así basí eyi chí□kalé ni□lyé kulé eyi beshe□n yé ni□lyé kuli dí□fti la eyi a t'a hotthe□ nats'edé hotiye t'1 hadórelná s1, Tsamba K'odhere deltht'1 yeni□danare□ni□lé s1 ber naní□ kul tie dí□fti la sekuí ha así hote ha honi□dhe□n lí eyi tth'1 ha tsamba horet'1□ la tsamba dodí de, tie dí□fti hu así ts'e□n nawadé hile horelyu□ ko□t'e dawuni□lé la, dene la□ estúdanet'1□ adalaredá kulí

la hedí□hi ye, kut'a, bela dayi□ noreltht'1 hotthé nats'edé, Tsamba k'odhere nedhé, tie dene ts'erani□ cholé s1□

hotthé ts'e□n nats'edé, s1 t'ok'e hots'1□ ast'1□ Ni□télas tó s1 kolé, t'a nastheré rent nasni□, s1 sekue□lé s1, dene kue□ nasther chu felt'e s1

eyi a kohu□t'e s1 t'a yutthe□n ts'e□n nats'edé begha□ yatí kulé, dene ha horená la

talsé ja□ la□t'e ko□ni□ dedhe□n la, s1 seba honidhe□n la hot'1□ dé, la□, k'odhi... dhí K'olde so□la t'is hogai ne□n ts'e□n k'oldé beba dorená ti doreldzai, yeh basí, Tsamba K'odheri hél da□t'u yeh hega□ ha, da□t'u tsamba ni□lyé dene yoh hega□ hutó, yoh serolyé ha eyi ha kolá, tí horená la hel tth'1, t'a Samba k'oldheri nedhe Saskatchewan ts'1□, eya t'a□t'u s1 k'adé eyi a kuli, dene la□ te□ldel hu bekue□ dodí dareltht'1 Sandy Bay kuli, dla□t'e dene bekue□ te□del bekue□ ts'1□, naradé kulí dodí s1 t'a□ts'e□n naradé k'olya□lí, kuli eyi Tsamba K'odheré nedhe bekue□ natheftsí□, eyi nami yeftsí t'ak'e nadéle du□he□, dene ts'1□no□lé dene ts'eni□ lé s1□ eyi a kohu□t'e s1□ hel tth'1 hówusni□, nehel korúsí□ nesdhe□ni□, t'a□ ba dorená yoh bets'1□ lu, ya bets'1□ chu, beba dorená, elerada chu

ts'edi chu efelt'e, tsamba la□ horet'1□, yeh naní□ chu ni□h naní há Conservatives t'o Tsamba K'odheré daghi□lé, eyi tth'1 dene□ la□ k'eni□t'ath tsamba ni□lyé tth'1 keni□t'ath hi, eyi dodí ha□lá s1□ díri Liberal tsambe k'odheré dene deltht'1 eyi tth'1 ko□t'e s1, hone□na□ ne□ne□ hots'e□n nots' deltht'1 horel i□h, du□ dene ha horená hu, bets'e□n hozel té hó du□ dene ha horená a, bets'e□n nayaiti hu yoh horet'1□ a yawi□ a, dene ts'e□n delni□lé s1 hone□na□ ne□ne□ ha nozel i□h ha, ni□zu□lé ala

eyi a kuhu□t'e sa ediri yoh, nahí la□ t'a naradai so□la t'is ne□ne□ hu, t'ahí hogai k'e nats'edé, dene kue□ hel tu□mi□ a, nahí chu□th arat'1□la, chuth arajá de dene ye a kuli bore□dé hu senalé ko ra tsamba horet'e la eyi ko□t'u, t'a Tsamba K'odheri nedhe

elts'oradí lí ko□t'ile, lahí, d s1 hots'1□, tsamba k'odheri nedhé dene ts'eni□ horel i□h ni□ ye yuwe t'a lahí

samba k'odheri nedhe, nayeftsí□ la, eyi a dene ba darónala edla□t'u yoh senalyalo a? dla□t'u natsí□de walí kó a da□t'u? yoh horí□ a kólí dene, dene godhé huto a□nedhe huto t'a□ lasí yoh nawasdhi s1 xare sekue□ hores i□h a honi□dhe□n ko ha due la□t'ele tsamba horet'1□ hu, tsamba hedí□ de, ni□h naní□le hu tsamba hedí□ de t'ok'e nats'edher tth'1 nawani□le la eyi du□ dzí□ne k'e, s1□ni□ye s1, ja□ nuwehel yawústí yoh basí t'a□t'u hotthé k'e nets'edé huto, so□lá ríth'1s ne□n huto hogai k'enats'e yoh basí, beba yatí ha

noní dek'ath delthlth'1 kólí, eyi ba□ yaítí la eyi a, s1□ni□ s1 ja□ nuxal thí□yi□ ha nuha yastí díri dene a nuhel yastí, nuhel hosni□, yoh basí, hori□cha ts'edi s1□ dene hotthe□ t'a□t'u daghena, so□la ríthl'1s ne□ne□ hu, ta□mi□s ts'e□n beyas dene hu deschogh hotthe□ ts'1□ dene naradé, eyi koret'1□ s1 ba hoba, edí□ni□ t'adani□dhe□n hí k'é eyi ko□t'u de tu k'adhí lí s1, eyi de tsamba k'odhere nedhe dene ts'edel ni□ ha la ko□t'ile dé, beba horená efelt'e i ho ha tsamba k'odhere nedhe dla da□nidhe□n k'e, ko□t'u hetl'e□ horel i□h a

koní□dhe□n de ho□ne□na□ ne□ne□ ts'eq, nozel ih hadé, dene nu□ldé ha la sekuí tth'1, la□ beghai hané halá no□de nodedhíle eyi kot'1 benahedher de heltht'1 k'odhi nedhe dene ts'1□ni□ de, edé k'adhí walí la, honidhe□n, honedhe□n a ja□ huhel yastí s1 dlat'u dene ha, yoh hu□l□ walí ha

[Dene text interpreted as follows:]

Today I rise to support the motion that my friend, the member for Saskatoon West, has put forward to create an immediate and necessary response to the housing crisis in Canada. I am glad to be speaking today as a follow-up to the important call to action that the NDP put forward to the Liberal government to immediately address the crisis in housing in on-reserve and northern homes.

As a northerner, I see the crisis. We need a lot of housing in my community of La Loche. Walking the streets of La Loche, I see people who are struggling without homes and without water and do not know where they are going to get their next meal and where they are going to sleep. When I go to La Ronge, in front of the shelters like Scattered Site in La Ronge, I see people who are trying to get a meal.

It is important to see that the homeless people do not just sit on the streets all day.

I want to say more here about people who do not have houses. They do not have much with them. They do not have clothes or food or shelter or anywhere to sleep. People who are struggling with addictions, with alcohol, need housing too; they do not have housing. Youth and students who are away from their homes to attend school do not have homes when they are attending schools or university. People who are low-income wage earners who make money and single mothers who are often with young children and babies are people who do not have homes, and they are struggling too. Men of all ages are struggling as well. Those people do not have homes, and they are struggling too.

Business of Supply

Elders and seniors across northern Saskatchewan are more likely to be abused, and they are less likely to report the abuse they experience. They will not tell the RCMP, because they feel the RCMP will not help them. The cost of living is higher for seniors and the costs of medication and transportation to see a doctor are increasing. Even food is expensive. Money is scarce, and they do not have much. One elder I know from Montreal Lake is living in a shelter. The federal government and provincial government are ignoring her. She is forgotten by a system where nobody wants to help her.

People with low incomes and people who make lots of money are struggling to buy and maintain homes in the north. To borrow money is hard for them too. The cost of supplies and to transport lumber to the north is expensive. Maintenance costs are only increasing for the average person in the north. The cost of food for everyone is increasing. For those earners who have children, the cost of food, clothes and education is up too.

People who are working are in poverty too. What people in the north want is different from what the government is providing.

• (1600)

In my own community of La Loche, I see homeowners where I am living. I am a renter. I feel like I am living in a homeless place, because there are no places to go.

It is hard to talk about these kinds of things. It is kind of embarrassing too.

People on reserve have a tough time too. They try really hard to talk to the government about how to build houses and how to put money away for housing issues. It is difficult to do that too. In Saskatchewan, sometimes people get evicted and lose their houses. In Sandy Bay, dozens of families are victims of the cost of living. They do not know where to go. The government took the money and could help the people of the north. Furthermore, people who are struggling with housing and also people who have houses, whether working or not, still need a lot of money for housing and property.

The Conservatives, when they were in power, cut off funding for a lot of people, and there is no more money for that. The Liberal government is the same, cutting the funds for housing. It is hard for people in the north to ask for help with funding. They need a lot of money for housing.

People wait quite a bit for housing, at least 10 years. For people living in housing, on reserve and in municipalities, many of the houses are in bad condition with, for example, mould and they get diseases from that. None of the government departments is providing answers or hope.

It is kind of confusing for people, young or old, to find a house, to just try to live. They need funding for housing. They cannot buy property without money. That is why I am proud today to support a motion today that provides a measurable goal that means something to people, because funding formulas are always changing and confusing Canadians' measure of the success of housing. I am happy to be here to talk about this.

Speaking Dene about housing issues is a huge thing for me. People living on reserve, Métis people and far north people need

money for housing and to be supportive of them and the way they think about housing. We need the government to reach out to the people who need housing. When government thinks about the funding, it thinks about what is best for them.

Kids are going to suffer, and when they get older they will not know where to go. To also think about those kinds of things, we need the government to help the Dene people. That is why I am here to talk about housing for the people. That is why I am standing here today asking.

[English]

• (1605)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the most humble way possible, I would like to thank the member for the words delivered in her language. They communicate to us not just the elegance and the beauty of her culture, but also the importance of the issue we are debating today. I am proud to stand in the House and in a country that has moved toward accepting those words with that voice in the House. It makes us all better.

As someone who has clearly not chosen their words in their own native tongue this week very well and who struggles with French, saying *meegwetch* would be just the beginning of the way to say thanks to the member, but it is *chi-meegwetch* in the language of part of the country I represent.

I know the member is a fierce advocate for her people and for her riding because of the question she asked on the floor of the House just before we rose in December. The question was about getting supportive housing and a housing project for women, who were fleeing very difficult circumstances, built, supported and installed. We worked together to get that money. People should not have to ask questions in the House of Commons to get housing or funding. Governments need to provide those dollars systematically, fairly and equitably across the country.

The question I have for the member opposite is a simple one. There is no specific carve out for indigenous housing in the NDP motion. Could we expect a better promise from the NDP than in the last campaign where it only put \$25 million into indigenous infrastructure on an annual basis? Could we expect a comprehensive approach to indigenous housing on and off reserve in remote and urban settings before the next election so we can all understand, from the member's perspective, how we can do better?

Ms. Georgina Jolibois:

[Member spoke in Dene as follows:]

e Churchill River... edınlı t'otı sorıkeré sıttı koç'u ts'en boresker hores ıh dıat'a a ne t'a tı erthı's dathuıtsı hotthé dene deıttı, hotthe nats'edé huto tanıs ts'en beyas dene huto soıa rıhtı's neıen huto yutthé ts'ı dene ha ası thıtsı le lahoı'ı la eyı ha tthı, t'at'u yoh hoıe ha, t'at'u tsamba nııye ha, tthı dodi lahoı'ı la loıa neıe nózet ıh dınlı ne dene esotonet'ınlı la hola

Business of Supply

Again, I am very proud to rise in the House today to debate and support the motion moved by my colleague from Saskatoon West. This motion deals with a very important issue, the housing crisis in Canada. The motion calls on the government to do much more than it is doing right now. We are in a crisis situation. Many people are living on the streets and are forced into homelessness because they cannot afford housing, when that should be a right.

Canada is experiencing an unprecedented housing crisis. We are seeing skyrocketing house prices, rising rents, rental shortages, long waiting lists for social housing, and a rise in homelessness.

An RBC study shows that the average cost of home ownership in major cities amounts to 48% of a household's income. Half of the household income goes to housing. Generally speaking, for housing to be affordable for an individual or a family, they should be investing a maximum of 30% of their after-tax income. The study shows that on average, households spend half their income on housing. That is truly exorbitant. It is very hard to get by. In Vancouver, that number spikes to a whopping 88%. People in Vancouver have a hard time surviving when housing costs nearly 100% of their earnings. It is therefore not surprising that far too often, many graduates and young workers can neither buy a home nor find a decent place to rent.

Paul Kershaw of Generation Squeeze, which is based in British Columbia, conducted a study in 2016. He found that while the cost of housing had doubled across the country since 1976, and tripled in metro Vancouver, incomes had fallen for younger Canadians. After adjusting for inflation, full-time earnings for a typical Canadian aged 25 to 34 had fallen over \$4,000 since 1976. This drop in earnings makes it even harder to buy a home, especially in major urban centres.

In the 40 years between 1976 and 2016, the rate of home ownership among young Canadians dropped 24%. Between 1976 and 1980, it took five years of full-time work for a person aged 25 to 34 to save a 20% down payment for a house. Because wages are down and housing prices are so much higher, it now takes younger Canadians nearly 12 years of work to save a comparable down payment. In short, it is becoming harder and harder for young people to put a roof over their heads, even working full time.

Immediate action is needed to combat Canada's housing crisis. The lack of social and affordable housing is deeply troubling. In a country as rich as ours, it is unacceptable that so many people are desperately searching for social or affordable housing.

I want to remind members that housing is a right and that Canada signed the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, or ICESCR. The first paragraph of article 11 reads as follows:

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right, recognizing to this effect the essential importance of international co-operation based on free consent.

As a signatory to the ICESCR, our country has a duty to take concrete action on this right to housing. This means that the government is required to provide a sufficient number of low-cost

housing units and to guarantee access for the poorest citizens. This is absolutely not the case right now, since 1.7 million families are living in inadequate, unsuitable or unaffordable conditions. The problem with the national housing strategy proposed by the Liberals is that 90% of the money allocated will not be spent until after the next election.

• (1620)

The money was announced two years ago, but 90% of it will not be spent until after the next election. There is no light at the end of the tunnel for people living with stress, anxiety, depression and addiction issues, because the funds are not flowing. The government is handling this crisis as though it is no big deal, as though it is not even a crisis.

Even government members, following the Prime Minister's lead, boast about making housing available to vast numbers of Canadians. The harsh reality is that there may be as few as 15,000 new units and about 100,000 repaired units. All of the money that has been spent had already been earmarked. That is not tackling the crisis; that is just maintaining the existing housing supply.

The member for Spadina—Fort York grudgingly admitted that the Liberals inflate figures to rhetorical advantage. That is absolutely scandalous. We know that families and children are suffering because of the nationwide housing shortage. What should I tell Claude, a constituent of mine who is having a hard time making ends meet while he waits for housing? The Liberals just see housing as something to be used to rhetorical advantage.

I will outline the situation in the biggest city in my riding. There is a desperate lack of social and affordable housing in Salaberry-de-Valleyfield. A family making less than \$21,000 must spend between 40% and 70% of its income on rent and hydro. Thousands of people back home in Salaberry—Suroît are in that situation.

Claude, whom I mentioned a moment ago, is a young man in his 40s living with an illness that has kept him from working for the past two years. He gets some assistance from the provincial government, but nothing from the federal government. His monthly income is a little over \$1,000, which is not very much. Half of his income goes to his rent and hydro. After he pays all his bills, he has only \$80 a week left to buy food and clothing or to get a haircut. He has requested subsidized housing, but since he just moved to Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, he will have to wait for several months before he can even apply. Even once he does apply, he will be on a wait list that is between three and five years long.

In a country as rich as Canada, why do our vulnerable citizens have to wait so long just to get a roof over their heads, when housing is a right?

Business of Supply

This has been going on in Canada for decades. The Conservatives and the Liberals have let the situation deteriorate. No, the right to housing should not be fodder for rhetoric. We are talking about the lives of millions of Canadians, among them thousands of people in my riding. Anyone who does not believe me can talk to people working on the ground, like Christina Girard, the coordinator of the Comité logement Beauharnois, who says that there is an urgent need for new social housing units.

This housing crisis is particularly hard on women, whether they are by themselves or have children. Salaberry-de-Valleyfield has a very high rate of single-parent families, or 32.4%, compared to all of Quebec, with about 25%. Women are strongly affected by not being able to afford rent or the possibility of ending up on the street, which can cause mental health or addiction issues. The most common solution to this instability is to provide single-room housing, in spite of the health risks associated with this type of housing. The bathrooms and kitchens in these buildings are shared and are rarely in good shape.

A study shows that the rising use of single-room housing, where the other rooms are shared, exacerbates women's inequality. The authors of this study observed various types of abuse against women in this type of housing, including lack of security, difficult living conditions, paternalistic rules and even employees demanding sexual favours in exchange for providing access to the women's mail. Abusive acts coupled with women's unstable situations make them more vulnerable to eviction and force them to challenge such abuse.

In 2015, in the Suroît area, 8.6% of families with children between the ages of 0 and 17 lived below the poverty line, after taxes. In Salaberry-de-Valleyfield alone, the average cost of housing is \$678 a month. The Valleyfield housing committee intervened 533 times in 2017. In 2018 there were 366 homeless persons and 1,176 people at risk of becoming homeless in the Suroît area.

• (1625)

The situation is so urgent and alarming that housing issues are part of the social development plan of the Beauharnois-Salaberry RCM. Reeve Maude Laberge invited me and other municipal and provincial elected officials to discuss a strategy and to ensure that housing, among other things, is a priority. When a rural area is not a priority, as is the case with our area, it is difficult to obtain funding for affordable housing, since we are not a major urban centre. All the money is spent in major urban centres, and regions like Salaberry—Suroît are left with the crumbs. We have the data to prove that rural areas have a desperate need for housing, and it is about time that the minister woke up and changed the funding.

[English]

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite talked about generation squeeze, which is an idea that has come from an academic in British Columbia who is particularly focused on the inaccessibility of private housing to first-time buyers on the west coast. The average home price in Vancouver is \$1.6 million. That requires a down payment of \$320,000. To put that in context, that is more expensive than the condo I own, and I live in Toronto. Quite clearly, there is an impediment to first-time buyers getting into the market.

New Democrats have promised to spend \$125 million to subsidize people who have \$320,000 to put on a down payment and can carry mortgages of \$1.3 million, which is beyond any of our salaries. Their priority for homebuyers in their election promises being made in the by-election is to get an extra \$750 into the hands of millionaires as a way of solving the housing crisis.

I am wondering if the member opposite is concerned about generation squeeze. Why would New Democrats spend \$125 million on people who have \$320,000 in their pockets now to get housing, as opposed to using that \$125 million to build housing for people who need it?

[Translation]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach: Mr. Speaker, if I were him, I would not laugh so hard at the NDP's proposals.

The Liberals invested \$4.5 billion in the Trans Mountain pipeline. According to the report we received, they overpaid by \$1 billion for a pipeline that is going to pollute the planet even more and contribute to increasing greenhouse gas emissions instead of reducing them. All those billions of dollars could have been invested in the housing crisis.

We are trying to find solutions to ensure that young people, seniors, indigenous people, vulnerable persons and women can find housing and escape poverty. There are solutions on the table. The government has consulted enough organizations that work on the ground with the homeless and people living in poverty. At some point, the Liberals will have to take a look in the mirror, try to come up with solutions, implement those solutions and invest money where it is needed. We cannot wait another 10 years or until after the next election to invest 90% of the money allocated where it is needed on the ground. I think it should be invested right now. That money should have been invested years ago.

[English]

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member was talking about the pipeline and how it affected the environment and everything else. If it was not going to be built or added on, how does she expect those homes to be heated? How does she expect the material to build those homes to be delivered to them? How does she expect the materials that come from our forest industry to be developed? How does she expect this whole thing to happen without having a pipeline to supply fuel so that those products can be delivered to be built, etc.?

[Translation]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach: Mr. Speaker, we are talking about the housing strategy, and, indeed, a lot of investments are needed. The Conservatives should not really talk either. When they were in power, they cut \$119 million from the housing strategy. They are talking out of both sides of their mouths today.

Business of Supply

A number of experts would be prepared to collaborate with the Conservatives on the development of sustainable energy sources if only the Conservatives believed in climate change, if only they were not climate change deniers, and if they were prepared to find solutions for the transition. According to many experts, Alberta is the ideal location to develop solar energy to heat homes and businesses. I am no expert, but I meet with experts who are able to provide figures, strategies and plans, which the government currently does not have. A number of experts are saying that we are at an impasse, because there are many targets but no way to achieve them, since national departments have no plan.

• (1630)

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Victoria, Veterans Affairs; and the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, the Environment.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Edmonton West.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share my time today with the amazing member of Parliament for Lethbridge.

Notionally, I support the bill. Who would not support better housing for those who cannot afford it? We have a housing affordability issue in Canada. We have an issue regarding too many regulations, which are adding costs to housing and slowing down the development of housing. Local municipalities are limiting the amount of supply. We have higher interest rates, which are pushing people out of the market. We also have an affordability issue, period, in Canada.

We have a Liberal government that sits smugly, day after day, telling us, in the face of all the evidence, that everything is fine, the economy is great and not to worry. It reminds me of the black knight in the movie *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. He has an arm and a leg chopped off, but he is bouncing around on one leg saying that everything is okay and that he is fine. It is the same denial that we hear from the current government.

Meanwhile, we have investment fleeing from our country at record rates and interest rates are on the rise. Just recently we heard that almost 50% of Canadian families are just \$200 a month away from not being able to pay their bills. We are creating fights with our international partners: America, China, Australia and Japan. Despite what the government says, evidently we are not okay.

Let us look at how the government is making things unaffordable.

It is killing jobs. I want to talk about Alberta. The Prime Minister has stated again and again that Alberta needs to phase out the oil sands. The Liberals are doing a great job on it. They killed northern gateway, which would have brought Alberta oil to the northern B.C. coast and then to overseas Asian markets. Let us not be fooled by their claims that this was done by the courts. This was killed by a government order in cabinet.

Despite the member for Edmonton Mill Woods, a senior cabinet minister from Alberta, being at the table, he did not raise a complaint

when the government killed northern gateway. Before he was punted from cabinet, the member for Calgary Centre stated that he would pound on his desk at the cabinet table to make sure a pipeline got built, yet he sat quietly and did not say a thing while northern gateway was killed. Just a couple of weeks ago, the member for Edmonton Centre stood in the old place to say that he was proud of the pipeline-killing Bill C-69. He was proud of the government for banning tankers off the northern B.C. coast only carrying Alberta oil. He was proud of that record.

The Liberals killed energy east. Do not be fooled again by their saying it was a business decision. They killed it with regulatory changes that made us consider upstream and downstream emissions from that pipeline.

Did they make the same requirements for the Saudi oil coming in? No, they did not. This is the same Saudi Arabia that the foreign minister was bashing on Twitter regarding human rights. Nevertheless, the government can bring in the oil no problem without the same regulations as are in Alberta.

What about Venezuelan oil? Were there any issues? Of course there were not. The government is happily bringing in oil from Venezuela without the same regulatory requirements or emissions testing as exist for Alberta oil.

The government put Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain project into a coma and then nationalized it. Members have to ask themselves, who in the world, with such immense oil reserves, has the problems that exist in Canada and has to nationalize oil? It is Venezuela and no one else.

The government nationalized it to the tune of \$4.5 billion, and we just heard from the PBO that it overpaid. It was published in the paper that the Liberals overpaid by \$1 billion. That is \$1 billion if it gets built. If it is blocked, which is what I am sure the Liberals want, the existing pipeline would only be worth \$2 billion.

In response to an earlier question, the finance minister told us to read the report. I would suggest to him that he read the report himself so that he can see how much he overpaid.

The loss of revenue from the pipelines ranges from \$40 million to \$100 million a day. Scotiabank says it is \$40 million. The Government of Alberta says it is \$80 million. GMP FirstEnergy says it is \$100 million. The lowest of those numbers, from Scotiabank, works out to \$15 billion a year in lost revenue, lost wages and lost resources for the government. We have to ask ourselves what we could do for social housing with that \$15 billion.

• (1635)

There are two sides to the housing issue. It is not just a lack of available housing but a lack of good-paying jobs, and the current government is killing those jobs.

Business of Supply

The Liberal government is forcing through a carbon tax. The government's own report shows that it needs to go to \$300 a tonne to be effective. That works out to about \$5,000 a year for a family in Alberta, and it is higher in Saskatchewan. On top of that, the Liberals eliminated the sports credit for children, the arts credit for children and the public transport credit. Here they want more public transport, but they eliminate the credit for low-income people to take advantage of public transport. They eliminated income-splitting for families. They cut the tax credit for text books. Of course, they are hiking the CPP. They like to say that they are providing for the future with the CPP, but we are paying a tax now that will not benefit us for decades. Of course, there is the middle-class tax cut. Those making between \$90,000 and \$170,000 will get tax break of \$2.50 a day. However, people who are low-income, those making less than \$45,000 a year, who are hurt by the lack of affordability will not get penny from the Liberal government's tax cut.

I want to talk further about the carbon tax. We are very blessed in this country. I am very blessed in my riding of Edmonton West. We have a phenomenal number of churches, charities and not-for-profits that deliver services to the needy. We have an incredible food bank with an incredible number of volunteers, but they expect the carbon tax to hit them with between \$25,000 and \$50,000 a year. I am sure people opposite are confused when they see banks raise their rates, but a food bank cannot pass costs on to its clients. The churches cannot pass on the cost of the carbon tax. These are churches that go out and provide help for the food banks and help to the needy.

One of my favourite organizations in my riding is called the Elves Special Needs Society. It looks after Edmonton's most disabled and disadvantaged people from ages one or two up to 55. It cannot afford the added carbon tax. Some of its clients cannot feed themselves, breathe for themselves or care for themselves. Members of the Elves Special Needs Society had to go the food bank and beg and borrow to get adult diapers for some of their clients, as it is so stretched for money, yet the government wants to add a carbon tax on top.

I want to talk about the fast and loose numbers for the Liberals' housing program. The Prime Minister said in this place that the government has already helped one million people find housing. However, here is the truth. The government's own document from the department shows that they have actually helped 7,500, not a million. The government's own document said 7,500 last year, which dropped from the previous year and the year before that.

The Liberals said they have spent \$5 billion this year on housing. A report from the former Parliamentary Budget officer, Kevin Page, says that they have actually only spent \$1.3 billion over the last couple of years. The Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy said:

This all begs the question: Where is the proposed \$40 billion National Housing Strategy funding? By following the funding throughout the years and tracking what is "new" money, we have painted a picture of what the NHS looks like apart from the glossy document that accompanied its announcement. And unfortunately, for now, the NHS is virtually nowhere to be seen in the federal fiscal framework.

Once again, for the government, I give it an A for announcements, but Canadians give it a D for delivery.

We have an affordability crisis in housing and day-to-day living in this country, and the Liberal government is making it worse, as I made it very clear. Heaven forbid the Liberals get re-elected. They

are going to jack up taxes and make it even worse for common, everyday Canadians.

● (1640)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, listening to the Conservatives talk housing policy is like the Monty Python sketch with the parrot. They insist it is a housing policy. No, it is not. They say, "Yes, it is." No, it is not.

If someone says to Conservatives that people are on the street or that people are being de-housed because they have cut subsidies to co-ops, they say, "No, they are not". If we say that they are not building any housing, they say, "Yes, we are." They are not. It is not funny, but that is the Conservatives' approach to housing.

They do not have a housing program, do not think they need one and do not want one. In fact, over the last 10 years, they actually evicted people and grew the number of homeless people on the street. They grew the backlog of repairs in public housing while they refused to co-operate with provinces, municipalities and indigenous governments to deliver housing programs.

I will give credit to the NDP members. When they talk about housing, they are talking about housing. When the Conservatives talk about housing, they are talking about pipelines. On that issue, they also get their numbers wrong. When more than 700,000 Canadians are subsidized and the affordability of their housing is sustained because they may have disabilities, may not be able to work because of mental health or addiction issues, or may have income issues because they are veterans and are on fixed incomes, which they cut, by the way, and the subsidies are not sustained, which are real dollars helping real people, people are evicted, homelessness is created and affordability is taken away. Are the Conservatives not sorry for cutting the operating subsidies for seniors residences in Alberta, which is one of the biggest cuts they made?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, I thank you for giving the opportunity to the hon. member to continue misleading Canadians. It is funny. I offered to table a document in this House showing that since the Liberals came to power, seniors poverty has risen. Just a couple of days ago, they stood in this House, hand over heart, saying how much they have done for seniors. The Library of Parliament has shown that under this government, seniors poverty has increased.

Business of Supply

The Prime Minister said, “We invested in a national housing strategy, which has already helped nearly one million people find housing”. This is the Prime Minister stating that they have helped almost one million people find housing. It was not “assisted”, not “upgraded”, not “helped out with some renovations”. They “helped nearly one million people find housing”.

The following is from the departmental results report from the hon. member's own department. The minister is actually in the room. He probably signed off on it. I am sure he did not read it. It says that the target for the number of people placed in more stable housing through the program was 15,000, and what they achieved last year was 7,145. The government cannot be trusted on anything it says in this House or outside this House.

The Deputy Speaker: A reminder to all hon. members not to invoke either the presence or absence of other hon. members in the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question about housing for indigenous people.

In my opinion, it is clear that the needs are enormous. During question period, the NDP showed several times how concerned it is about this problem.

We are seeing a real housing crisis both on and off reserve. For example, mould is a big problem. That is a serious health concern, particularly for indigenous adults and children and first nations people living on reserve. A national household survey showed that almost 40% of homes in indigenous communities need major repairs, and close to 35% are not suitable for the family's size. In some Inuit communities, the proportion of unsuitable housing exceeds 50%.

Does my colleague agree with me that indigenous people living both on and off reserve are experiencing a real housing crisis and that the government needs to take immediate action to address this very harmful situation?

•(1645)

[*English*]

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, yes, it is an issue that has to be addressed. I would like to point out that two years ago, the budget actually included more money from Canadians for subsidized charging stations for Teslas for wealthy Canadians than money put aside for first nations housing up north. That is the hypocrisy of the Liberal government. It stands again and again and says that nothing is more important than that relationship, but when it comes time to deliver anything, it is nowhere to be seen. The hypocrisy must end. We have to start looking after Canadians, and not just have announcements from the government.

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt about it. All people across this country, from coast to coast, should have the opportunity to have a roof over their heads, food on the table and a warm and comfortable place to call home. People should feel secure in that place and should be proud to live in that place.

The motion before the House has an excellent intent. It highlights the need that exists in our country. We know that there are vulnerable

populations that currently do not have access to housing. We know that there are others who live in housing that is perhaps not to the standard it should be, so the intent of the motion is certainly very good. I would highlight that first and foremost.

There is some excellent work being done by organizations across this country to help those individuals who do not have access to housing. I wish to take a moment to commend them for the incredible work they are doing, whether that is churches or not-for-profit organizations or individuals in our local ridings across this country, because they are doing some phenomenal work with those who need their help.

That said, there is a larger question being asked here, and that is with regard to overall affordability and access to housing. We know that the majority of Canadians wish to own a home. Rent is okay, but home ownership is the ultimate dream for most individuals. We know that with it comes a sense of pride, a sense of accomplishment and a sense of autonomy. It is an honour to own a piece of property, a home or a shelter, a place to build a life.

In my parents' generation, it was common that a couple could purchase a home at approximately age 20 to 25 and perhaps then have children and outgrow that home. They would then be able to purchase a new home after the sale of the smaller one and would continue working their way through the housing market.

Unfortunately, this is not the way things are today. Instead, people in the millennial generation still have the dream of owning a home. They want that sense of pride, that sense of autonomy and that sense of accomplishment. They want that place of security to establish a life for themselves. Sixty-four per cent of young people recently surveyed by Abacus Data said that the federal government should place emphasis on housing affordability. They said that it is a dream of theirs to own a home. That said, it should be highlighted that they face a very different scenario than my parents' generation faced.

For those between the ages of 25 and 34 looking to purchase a home in 2017, the average price of a home was \$510,000. The average salary of an individual in 2017 was just under \$50,000. This equates to a ratio of 10:1. The cost of a house was 10 times annual income. In 1976, the scenario was very different. The average price of a home was about \$213,000 in this country, and the average salary was about \$54,000, so it was a ratio of about 4:1. We can see that in the 1970s, we were dealing with a ratio of 4:1, and as of 2017, we are dealing with a ratio of 10:1, which makes it incredibly difficult for young people to save up and afford a home and realize their dream. As a response to this, then, young people are actually giving up on this dream. There was a recent survey done that highlighted that more than half of Canadians who once dreamed of home ownership have actually put that dream aside.

Interestingly, this just happened in 2017. Why did it happen in 2017? I would like to take this opportunity to explain why that was such a significant year. It was a year after the current government put some very significant changes in place with regard to the mortgage rules. The Liberals are making it very difficult to save for a home to begin with, because a first step is being able to put a little money aside each month after working long hours.

Business of Supply

•(1650)

However, people are having a hard time doing this because they cannot even afford to pay their basic bills. Forty-eight per cent of Canadians are within \$200 a month of not being able to pay for their basic necessities, including food on the table, fuel in their vehicles and a roof over their head, let alone being able to put aside money toward a mortgage. It is here that we have to start: just the basic place of being able to save toward that dream.

The second place we need to look is at the stress test that was implemented by the current government. It is a mortgage change and it makes it incredibly difficult for a young person or anyone who is looking for a first home to purchase. In fact, 20% fewer people are being approved now than before the stress test was implemented.

The rules that have been put in place are now unfairly hindering people from purchasing homes and they are depressing the market at the same time. This means that for those who already own a home, the value of those homes is depreciating, which is discouraging for them because many are looking to their homes to provide for their retirement.

Fewer people being able to qualify for mortgages means many of them are putting the dream aside. However, for some who are fortunate enough to have parents who might be willing to sign off on the mortgage with them, it means this is happening more and more. These parents are signing on the dotted line. For parents who sign their children's mortgages, it impacts their personal financial well-being, security and ability to retire. We can see the detrimental impact of just the stress test.

Individuals who purchase a home not only have to save for the home and then qualify for the home with the application and the stress test, but then they have the ongoing payments to keep that home. To be able to make these payments, life needs to be affordable in general. It is not just the house but there is the fuel in their vehicles, the home heating costs and the food on their tables. All of these things are part of the cost of living.

Growing interest rates make mortgages more difficult to pay, which is a challenge for many Canadians and will continue to be so. Also, there is the simple math of the margin, a person's income versus what a person needs to spend to be able to live. We know that margin is getting slimmer. We are seeing that. We are watching as the current federal government is making life less affordable for everyday Canadians. We are watching as the Liberals are putting policies in place that are punishing Canadians rather than rewarding them for their hard work.

One of the big things that has come up in the House recently is a government document that shows the carbon tax and what it would do to Canadians. The Liberals have said that they are going to implement a carbon tax. That is going to come into effect right away. They have tried to assure Canadians that it is not going to be a big deal. They even like to use the line that Canadians will get more back than they pay. I would love to know how that works, but I do not think I ever will because the Liberals are not able to give a straight answer.

Here is what we do know, because here is what the government documents show. Following the election, which is interesting, the

carbon tax will increase by about 15 times and will cost a family of four about \$5,000 a year. That is a ton of money. It might not be a lot of money for the Prime Minister, who has a trust account, a family fortune to rely on, but for all other Canadians across the country who are dreaming of home ownership and stability and who are working hard to realize their dreams, their future and their desires, \$5,000 a year is a lot of money.

If we want to talk about housing affordability, let us talk about the grand picture that is taking place here, and that is Canada's overall economic well-being: the ability to bring investment into our country; the ability to create jobs; the ability to sustain ourselves as a nation economically on the world stage; and, more important, the ability for everyday hard-working Canadians to make ends meet. This is the grand picture at stake here and it all needs to be considered when we talk about the affordability of housing.

•(1655)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for a very detailed explanation of how the private housing market is moving away from first-time buyers. Government policy has played a role, but inflation and scarcity have played a role. It is a complex issue, but it was a very good dissertation as to what some of the challenges are.

She kind of lost me at the end though when she complained that our government had not made life more affordable for Canadians. She knows that Canadians are \$2,000 a year better off now than they were under the previous government. Things like the child benefit, the changes to EI, the GIS improvements, CPP improvement, as well as the 850,000 jobs that have been created, are all creating a sustainable and prosperous way of life for Canadians.

We know that 85% of Canadians get their housing needs met through the private market. That is a good thing, we support it and we have to ensure that market does not collapse. That is why some of the stress tests are there. However, she failed to mention anything about the 15% of Canadians who cannot. I am curious as to what policies are put in place beyond a suite of tax credits that do not apply to people who do not have the income to get tax credits. How is she proposing to support people who are homeless, who cannot afford to even find a place, let alone dream of home ownership?

Business of Supply

Ms. Rachael Harder: Mr. Speaker, there are so many points to make here. The member opposite would like Canadians to believe that they are somehow better off by about \$2,000 a year. Let us just say for a moment that is true. Then here is what we know. The government is going to put \$2,000 in one pocket and take \$5,000 out of the other pocket. Simple math says that \$5,000 taken out of the pocket, \$2,000 put into the pocket, results in a negative number of \$3,000, which means the member opposite just told the House and the Canadian public that it will actually cost them \$3,000 a year. That is a large amount of money. I thank the member opposite for his omission.

[Translation]

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for explaining that a lot of people are having trouble making ends meet.

She mentioned a recent study showing that 52% of participants were within \$200 of being unable to pay their debts and bills. That is very troubling. Statistics show that one in five Canadians spend over 50% of their income on housing.

Does my colleague therefore think that we should invest in housing immediately instead of waiting until after the election, as the Liberal government is doing?

[English]

Ms. Rachael Harder: Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely correct. The data does show that people are within \$200 a month of not being able to pay those basic bills. This is a huge problem and it has largely been created by the current government and the policies it has put in place.

One of the main responsibilities of the federal government, regardless of the party in power, is to create policies that facilitate an environment of economic prosperity. If the government fails to put those policies in place, then all Canadians suffer with respect to being able to afford life. That is the problem the House is discussing today. It is a problem that needs to be discussed. Therefore, I commend the NDP for bringing the motion forward.

• (1700)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I may regret this, but I would like to try to explain for the hon. member for Lethbridge how carbon pricing works and how average Canadians will likely receive back more than what they have paid in. That is because carbon pricing applies across the economy and our largest polluters are not individual Canadians.

Our largest polluters are large corporations, like the cement industry, power plants and oil and gas. When the money is returned to Canadians, particularly if it is prorated like the Green Party plan of carbon fee and dividend, those who are low income and students who do not drive a great deal in particular will receive more money back than they have put in and the pricing signal will help Canadians, especially industry, reduce their emissions over time.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Mr. Speaker, my answer is short and sweet. There is a huge problem here. The member just said that large corporations were going to pay in a ton of money. Then we would take from that big pool of money and give it out to individual Canadians, so they would be getting more money back.

We have a fundamental problem. The Prime Minister just exempted these large corporations. He just let them off the hook. Those who are actually emitting the greatest amount of carbon, the greatest amount of pollution, are actually not going to pay a dime. They are going to walk away free.

With all due respect, the member should really stop propagating false information.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I believe the direct statement by the member for Lethbridge, that I was propagating false information, is an attack on my integrity and honesty. I ask her to withdraw the comments and urge her to look at the testimony of the five economists who were before the environment committee this week. They explained that the way in which the large final emitter tax was applied was not an exemption. It is an incentive to further reductions. It is a different treatment, not an exemption.

I really find it offensive that I would be attacked in this place for false information when, in fact, I am absolutely honest in everything I say, and I do my research.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her intervention. She is right, of course, with respect to unparliamentary language. Members are certainly, in clear terms, advised not to go down the route of implying that a member has deliberately misled or, in worst cases, has lied to the House or other members. There is a distinction, however. If a member is accused of advancing information that in the opinion of the member speaking is false, then absent is the essential part of a lie, which is to impugn motive.

In this case, while I appreciate the explanation of the point by the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, I did not hear anything that was unparliamentary, even though it essentially raised the fact that in the opinion of the member for Lethbridge that information was false.

[Translation]

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise for my first 10-minute speech in this new House of Commons. I have already had the opportunity to give a few short interventions, but this is my first speech in this new temporary House of Commons, although 10 years is more than temporary.

What an honour it is for me to speak to a subject that is so important to the people in my riding of Drummond and across the country. I am talking about the housing crisis and the importance of access to affordable housing and social and co-operative housing. This is a very important subject, and I thank my colleague from Saskatoon West for moving this motion on housing. She is calling on the Liberal government to create 500,000 units of quality, affordable housing within 10 years and to commit in budget 2019 to completing 250,000 of those units within five years. As we have said, the situation is urgent. We have explained several times during this debate why this is a serious and urgent situation.

Business of Supply

As we have shown, there is a housing crisis right now. Housing prices are skyrocketing, rent is going up, and there is a rental housing shortage. There is a long waiting list for low-income housing in places like Drummond. The Drummond housing corporation needs space, especially for single people and seniors. The need is great right now.

The housing crisis also calls for immediate measures because the lack of social and affordable housing is a social problem we need to tackle without delay. As I believe we have said repeatedly, the Liberal government is not doing enough. It does not hurt to say that again. Families are suffering, but the Liberal government is telling them they just have to wait because 90% of the money earmarked for the national housing strategy will be not be distributed until after the next election. People need that money now. About 1.7 million Canadian families are living in inadequate, unaffordable or unsuitable housing. We cannot wait 10 years to tackle this housing crisis.

As we have said again and again, we in the NDP believe that housing is a right and that it is extremely important in the fight against poverty. First and foremost we must ensure that everyone has a roof over their head. Housing is not just an expenditure, it is an investment in our society. That is why we can no longer wait, as the Liberal government is asking us to do.

As I said earlier in one of my comments, it is important to remember that one in five people in Canada spend more than 50% of their income on housing. It is probably roughly the same percentage in Drummond. An increasing number of people are just one pay cheque away from homelessness. As we heard earlier, in a survey conducted recently, 52% of participants reported they were just \$200 away from not being able to pay their bills and their various debts. It makes no sense for people to live with so much debt and so much financial insecurity. That is why significant investments are needed. As we have pointed out, investing in social housing will go a long way in relieving the stress and anxiety weighing on Canadians.

Since I am on the topic of inequality, I would add that an Oxfam report, which members have probably heard about, has shown the importance of fighting inequality. According to the report, the world's richest 1% get 82% of the wealth.

● (1705)

That is completely unacceptable. I will repeat: 82% of the money generated last year went to the richest 1% of the global population. As for the 3.7 billion poorest people in the world, they did not see any of that wealth or growth.

We need to take action, and the measures we are highlighting are the important ones. Things are difficult in Drummond. According to the latest CMHC data, the vacancy rate in Drummondville is 1.7% or about half the break-even point of 3%. This is a worrisome situation. According to Véronique Laflamme, the spokesperson for the Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain, which works on social housing, the situation must be addressed, or the people of Drummondville will have a housing crisis. We are in a precarious situation that requires concrete measures.

Housing is an extremely important issue for me. The NDP has been interested in social housing for a long time. Jack Layton made

housing one of his top issues. I began working on this file in Drummond in 2011. I helped L'Envolée des mères, a housing organization, by sponsoring a house with my own money and I named it after Jack Layton. There is a house bearing the name of Jack Layton. That was my contribution to Drummond's social housing.

All kinds of investments are being made in housing, and a number of organizations are helping the homeless in Drummond. One example is Maison Habit-Action, which primarily looks after young adults aged 18-30 who are struggling. There is also the Réseau d'aide le Tremplin, which is a support network for people struggling with mental health issues. Another example is Ensoleilvent, a short-term emergency shelter. There are many similar organizations operating in Drummond. I want to acknowledge the excellent work done by all those who work at these organizations, who are members of the boards of directors and who are helping improve the lives of people in Drummond. I am proud and happy to support them. This is another reason why I think this motion is important.

Let us not forget the housing crisis that is affecting indigenous peoples across the country both on reserve and off reserve. There has been much talk about that in the House of Commons, including during question period. It is another issue that is extremely important to us. Just look at the indigenous community of Cat Lake in northwestern Ontario, where a state of emergency was declared because of the disastrous housing conditions, including the presence of mould. Ninety houses, or 75% of the homes, have to be demolished immediately.

The presence of mould in homes on reserve is frequently caused by shoddy construction and overcrowding. That is not the only problem, either. There are broken windows, holes in the roofs, crumbling foundation piles, and so on. Something has to be done. I would add that it is critical that first nations housing be designed by them and for them. They are best placed to fix this situation.

In closing, I am very proud of this motion moved by my colleague from Saskatoon West on social and affordable housing. I hope the government will support it.

Private Members' Business

• (1710)

[English]

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity one last time to remind Canadians that \$5.7 billion has been invested by this government. That includes units that have been constructed to the tune of 14,703. It includes 143,684 households that have had their housing repaired and restored to safety. It includes 783,928 households, including households with children, having their subsidies restored and protected. It also includes direct support for 28,864 people who are homeless and need support to stay in housing or to be housed because of the circumstances they are challenged with. That is close to a million different ways in which this government has invested \$5.7 billion to make sure Canadians get the housing they need.

We are not done yet. Indigenous housing and the national housing strategy of \$40 billion over the next 10 years are additional investments above and beyond what I have just described.

Like with the NDP's plan, there is funding that will come after the next election. We cannot have a 10-year program to accomplish that without its having an impact in that way. I would ask the New Democrats to stop criticizing 10-year plans, when they have a 10-year plan. They should stop criticizing plans that do not come in until after two elections, because half of their money does not come until after two elections. Could they please not recognize—

• (1715)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Drummond.

[Translation]

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the government that it is possible to have long-term plans but, when there is a housing crisis like the one we are currently experiencing, immediate investments are needed.

The problem is that the investments are being made too slowly. The government cannot wait 10 years in the midst of a housing crisis because 90% of the funding will be allocated only near the end of the 10 years. That is too late. The government needs to invest more.

We are calling for an investment to deal with the housing crisis. I explained how many Canadians are \$200 away from insolvency because of all the difficulties they are going through. The government needs to take action and resolve this situation. The housing crisis is extremely serious for indigenous people. The time for talk is over. It is time to take action. The motion is very respectable, honourable and balanced. I hope that the Liberal government will support it.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. It being 5:15 p.m., pursuant to an order made earlier today, all questions necessary to dispose of the opposition motion are deemed put and the recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Tuesday, February 5, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I suspect if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to see the clock at 5:30 p.m. so that we can begin private members' hour.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to see the clock at 5:30 p.m.?

Ms. Elizabeth May: No, Mr. Speaker. May I ask a question first? I cannot agree to going to private members' hour when I did not have notice of a Senate private member's bill—

The Deputy Speaker: I only caught the back half of that. Perhaps what I will do is, as the member wanted to intervene on this particular point, I will let her have the floor momentarily.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, my concern is only that, through inadvertence on the part of the larger parties, I nearly missed Bill S-203 moving to Private Members' Business a few weeks ago because the House saw the clock at 5:30 p.m. at 5:15 p.m. My concern is to make sure the member whose business is on the agenda for today and his or her seconder are present. Then, absolutely, it would be wonderful to see the clock at 5:30 p.m., because as I see it, it looks like 5:30 p.m.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

I will ask the question again. Is it the pleasure of the House to see the clock at 5:30 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

FOREIGN LOBBYIST TRANSPARENCY ACT

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC) moved that Bill C-278, An Act to amend the Lobbying Act (reporting obligations), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour on behalf of the hard-working people of the great riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke to rise in my place and lead off the debate on legislation I have proposed before the House, Bill C-278.

Bill C-278, which would amend the Lobbying Act, would require lobbyists to disclose whether they are funded by a foreign national, a non-resident corporation or a non-resident organization, and whether they use or expect to use grassroots communication to seek to persuade organizations or members of the public to take measures to obstruct, delay or otherwise negatively affect any process that requires the Government of Canada to consult with the public before embarking on a specific course of action in an attempt to place pressure on a public office holder to endorse a particular option.

I was encouraged to propose this legislation by my concern to protect the jobs of my constituents in the working forest. The forestry industry is a significant employer in my riding, as it is in many other parts of Canada.

Private Members' Business

It was brought to my attention that certain organizations were disseminating false information about the forestry industry in Canada. While some of the organizations operate under the pretext of having their anti-forestry activities financially supported by Canadians, careful research that was only possible by examining filings in countries outside Canada confirmed these organizations were being funded by non-Canadians, foreign actors with a hidden agenda.

As it has been noted by Canadian author Robert Lyman in “Dark Green Money: A Glimpse Inside the Big Green Funding Machine”:

Canadians should not have to find out about the funding by foreign foundations of political interest groups in this country as a result of a various citizens researching tax filings to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service....

This problem is not confined to the anti-forestry lobby or those individuals who lobby to support or oppose the building of pipelines, to use a different example, and this challenge to Canadian democracy is not confined to any one country. This challenge, which my legislation would seek to address by requiring funding transparency, cuts across all levels of Canadian activity.

This past weekend in one of Canada's leading national newspapers, the National Post, in a full page article, the following question was asked, “The long arm of influence of China in Canada: Is a shadowy agency shaping opinion here?” The shadowy agency in question is the United Front Work Department, a so-called shadowy offshoot of the Chinese Communist Party. That article proceeded to give specific examples of foreign funding, such as the Confucius Institute, described as a propaganda or espionage arm of the Chinese state, and how it is now operating at three school boards and on nine university and college campuses across Canada.

I quote political scientist Charles Burton from that story about a cultural association he was familiar with:

An organization that once had another purpose has gradually been taken over to serve China's national interest. Where United Front work becomes problematic is when it's engaging persons of Chinese origin who have Canadian citizenship...to serve the interests of the motherland, when in fact the motherland should be Canada.

This is a concern in the Chinese Canadian community. I quote Cheuk Kwan, head of the Toronto Association for Democracy in China:

A lot of people don't think of the long arm of influence of China in Canada, because they're under the influence, to put it mildly.... Outsiders like me, who is a Hong Kong immigrant...we see very clearly that this is a United Front effort, a very subtle, soft-power kind of advance into Canadian society.

While China may be in the news because of Meng Wanzhou and Chinese infotech giant Huawei in the ongoing Canada-China diplomacy crisis, let us not be too smug in Canada to dismiss the Russian meddling controversy playing out south of the border.

The Macdonald-Laurier Institute has prepared a paper entitled “Stemming the Virus: Understanding and responding to the threat of Russian disinformation”.

• (1720)

This document gives examples of Canada being a victim of Russian disinformation, including planted stories about the Minister of National Defence and in the case of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, focusing on her Ukrainian heritage. The stories about the

Minister of Foreign Affairs were planted in order to discredit Canada's position on the illegal occupation of Crimea by Russia.

Another example cited by the article is the Russian foreign policy priority to use misinformation to put pressure on our Parliament to repeal the Magnitsky legislation, which targets human rights abusers with targeted sanctions.

In addition to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, my colleague on the national defence committee, the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, has been targeted by Russian propaganda for his Ukrainian heritage and his championing of international Magnitsky legislation. I also understand the member for Scarborough—Guildwood received a letter attacking his support for the Canadian Magnitsky legislation.

Another Russian foreign policy priority, which I am personally aware of as a veteran member of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association, is the targeting of NATO. NATO has been a pillar of peace and stability since the end of World War II. It is one of the most important world organizations for peace and security, and perhaps the most important one.

While not in the media lately as prominently as China and Russia, another country that is mentioned as being active in Canada is Iran.

When it comes to foreign disinformation, there is one thing in common: Canadian democracy is under attack. The purpose of using the Chinese and Russian examples was not intended in any way to single out members of those communities, the majority of whom are model Canadian citizens. It is as Cheuk Kwan stated: The problem is that many Canadians do not even realize they are under the influence of a disinformation campaign. While Parliament has focused on lobbying once the writ drops, many Canadians have already been influenced by a subtle misinformation campaign paid with foreign money that has been ongoing for years, so it is not good enough to look only at measures to combat election interference; Parliament needs to deal with foreign interference between elections also, which is the intent of Bill C-278, the bill we are debating today.

When members of the public think of lobbying, they think of the so-called public relations companies and the advertising firms that go along with those organizations. It goes far deeper than that. The announcement this week that five environmental non-profit groups are lobbying the Senate environment committee not to consult directly with the Canadian public is an attack on democracy.

While it was reported that one of the environmental groups has received significant taxpayer funding from the federal government, what was not reported were the millions of dollars the other environmental organizations received from foreign sources.

Let us start with the non-governmental organization Ecojustice, formally known as the Sierra Legal Defence Fund, which is the name of its American parent. According to the Canada Revenue Agency, this particular NGO, in the 2000 to 2017 time period, had gross revenues of \$115,319,392.

That is a lot of money.

Private Members' Business

Where did it get all its millions? Ecojustice received eight direct grants from the controversial U.S. Tides Foundation, totalling \$545,380. The U.S. Tides Foundation flows money to its Canadian subsidiary, Tides Canada. CRA records show that Tides Canada gave 10 grants, totalling \$903,845. They even tell us what Tides U.S.A. expected Ecojustice to use the money for: The money was used to attack the Canadian oil sands and the thousands of jobs that go with the oil sands.

The next question that needs to be answered is, who is donating millions of dollars to Tides U.S.A., and what do they expect to get for their money?

• (1725)

Could it be American pipeline interests? Could it be American oil and gas interests? Could it be the owners of American rail who financially benefit when oil is shipped by rail rather than by pipeline? Canadians have a right to the answers to these questions. Bill C-278 would provide those answers. In an era when foreign interests can launch a million emails with the push of a button, we need those answers now more than ever.

In a democracy, a free and independent press is counted on to provide unbiased information and informed opinions that aid public debate, expose corruption and highlight major social issues to enable an informed public to make participatory decisions. Today's reality is far from that ideal. In Canada, media is looking at an almost \$600 million government bailout that their corporate owners claim they need to operate. This creates more opportunities for foreign entities with deep pockets to buy public acceptance for policies that promote their interests.

The role played by foreign governments as well as foreign foundations and campaigns to influence public policy in Canada should be of interest to all concerned about the independence and integrity of Canadian political and governmental processes.

The increasing globalization of corporate, institutional and geopolitical interests would seem to require that Canadian democratic institutions be more vigilant about these possible intrusions. This, in turn, demands that reports on the activities of foundations, other non-profits and charities seeking to influence policy be made more transparent to the public and more useful to parliamentarians who wish to exercise oversight.

Greater transparency afforded in two areas that would benefit greatly from a more open system of reporting and increased oversight are the lobbyist registry and the reporting requirements to the CRA by non-profit and charitable organizations. In addition to the concerns expressed previously about the role of foreign and corporate actors, the transparency of disclosing by lobbyists and charities is being increasingly obscured by the efforts of various interests to mask self-dealing and self-vested interests.

Within the United States, there is a large body of academic studies examining the strategies and practices used by private foundations to influence public policy. Many of these foundations have enormous financial resources, including billions of dollars in assets and hundreds of millions of dollars in annual revenues. Increasingly, U.S. studies have addressed the strategies used by private foundations

and the many other groups they fund, most of which have charity status, which is non-taxable, in influencing policy.

The strategies include broad communication and education programs to influence public perceptions of policy issues and to garner public support for specific actions, the lobbying of governments at all levels, infiltration of the media and concerted, coordinated action to achieve specific objectives.

While there is less information and academic analysis available in Canada, some private researchers have made efforts to follow the money in terms of how foundation and charity funding is used. These efforts are impeded by superficial reporting requirements and the lack of publicly available information from organizations like Canada Revenue Agency, which administers provisions of the Income Tax Act related to charities, and the lobbying registry compiled by the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada.

Researchers such as Vivian Krause, who have endeavoured to find out more about the use of domestic and foreign foundation funding for anti-oil and anti-pipeline campaigns, have learned that they must often rely on the U.S. Internal Revenue Service records, since the information they seek is not available from Canadian sources.

In the United States, a donor-advised fund, DAF, is a charitable giving vehicle administered by a public charity created to manage charitable donations on behalf of organizations, families or individuals. Although DAFs are more developed in the United States, they are increasingly being used in Canada.

To participate in a DAF, a donating individual or organization opens an account in the fund and deposits the cash, securities or other financial instruments. The donor surrenders the ownership of anything put in the fund, but retains advisory privileges over how the account is invested and how it distributes its money to charities. In the charity sector, the increased use of DAFs makes it increasingly difficult to determine the ultimate source and purpose of funding.

• (1730)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her efforts in a private member's bill for greater transparency.

I wonder if the member is disturbed that the Fraser Institute has received \$4.3 million in foreign funding to run campaigns that include ones that defend pipelines, and amounts of money staggeringly larger than the ones that U.S. foundations have given some environmental groups.

Private Members' Business

• (1735)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, obviously, for the member in the back corner, this is disturbing to her, which is why this really should be a non-partisan bill. Transparency should include all parties. It should unite us all. If foreign donations to an organization that is Conservative in nature are of concern, then I hope that she too will lend her support to this bill so that not only Conservative-oriented foundations and institutes declare where they are getting their money from but other foundations and charities as well.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, within the Lobbying Act there is a statutory review of the legislation. My question to the member is related to that aspect of the legislation. Has she looked into the possibility of how she might be able to bring this type of issue up once that act is under review by the House of Commons?

Second, has the member anticipated what the additional costs incurred would be? Surely to goodness if we were to expand in this area, there would be a fairly substantial cost to it. I am sure she is not trying to imply that we would in any way not properly resource the current commissioner in being able to do the fine work that this office currently does.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, once again, I appreciate my greatest fan being here when tabling another piece of legislation. I appreciate his input immensely.

In fact, we are approaching an election and time is of the essence. We know the Liberals are very concerned about foreign interference, because earlier this week they put forth a plan to ensure that there was no interference in the electoral process. However, even before the election starts, we have active campaigns that are trying to influence Canadian policy under way. While a review may happen in another few years, we need this to pass now.

It does not involve a lot of money. It is just doing more reporting, which we are already doing. The reporting should be done on the part of the people lobbying. Therefore, the lobbyists, instead of just putting the list of partner organizations, parent organizations, would have to indicate all the organizations, the ultimate donors, the individuals. If they are going to engage another grassroots organization to influence the opinion of Canadians, they would have to report what that grassroots organization is and the method it is going to use to convince people to go to their way of thinking. Any foreign income coming towards this would have to be reported.

Also, on the part of the grassroots campaigners and non-profit organizations, if they are going to be accepting foreign dollars to influence how Canadians are going to form our own laws, they would have to report it. We are not saying they cannot accept money from foreign entities. We are saying, if they do accept money from foreign entities, they would have to disclose it.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Digital Government, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has achieved remarkable success as a free, open and prosperous democracy. We can be proud of our reputation as one of the best countries in the world to live in. We have world-class cities, and I would be remiss if I did not mention

my own city, Vancouver, which was recently ranked the sixth most livable city in the world out of the top 140.

Many have played a crucial role in the success of our country, including our public service, which was recently ranked as the most effective in the world. That was the finding of the International Civil Service Effectiveness Index, which is a joint project of Oxford University and the U.K. Institute for Government.

The public service operates as part of the executive in a well-functioning system that consists of a number of important components. These include the legislature, the judiciary, civil society actors and lobbyists. In fact, legitimate lobbying has played a key role in ensuring that the government remains responsive to the needs of Canadians.

The public perception of lobbying is often negative, but lobbying is not about influence peddling or bribery. Lobbying is the process through which individuals and groups articulate their interests to parliamentarians and to government in order to inform public policy or decision-making. In fact, I have learned that they also educate, because they are deeply knowledgeable about their subject, and I as a parliamentarian may not be that deeply knowledgeable about so many subjects.

Many interest groups, such as non-governmental organizations and advocacy groups, have government relations staff or consultants who speak with the government on their behalf.

Take the environmental movement. Many of these organizations lobby or hire lobbyists to advocate for a range of causes, such as reducing greenhouse gases, conserving our wildlife and protecting our lakes and rivers. These lobbying efforts help government to develop policy that better reflects the views and interests of Canadians. This is an important aspect of lobbying that is often forgotten.

Clearly, lobbying, when done ethically and transparently, is a legitimate and fundamental part of our democratic system. We cannot ignore the significant contribution from good and ethical cooperation among diverse interests. It can lead to the collaborative development of sound policy that reflects the expectations and needs of Canadians.

• (1740)

[*Translation*]

Furthermore, individuals, organizations and businesses can and should communicate their opinions and ideas to government decision-makers and policy-makers. The challenge for us as lawmakers is establishing clear rules to ensure that lobbying is done openly. That is why the Lobbying Act is so important.

The purpose of the act is ensure transparency in lobbyists' activities without restricting access to government institutions. It requires lobbyists to register and report their lobbying activities every month. That includes communications with designated public office holders. That information is available online in a public registry maintained by the Commissioner of Lobbying.

Private Members' Business

[English]

The bill before us today proposes two changes to the act as it stands now.

The first amendment would require all corporations and organizations that lobby the government to disclose all funds received from foreign nationals, non-resident corporations and non-resident organizations. The act currently requires any entity that lobbies the government, whether domestic or foreign, to register with the office of the Commissioner of Lobbying. The act also currently requires corporations to disclose their parent company and subsidiaries, which may include foreign companies.

Second, Bill CC-278 would also expand the types of activities that lobbyists must report as “grassroots communications”. As it now stands under the act, lobbyists must identify the techniques they use to communicate with public office holders, including whether they use grassroots communication. Under the Act, “grassroots communication” means appealing to the public directly or through mass media to try to persuade them to communicate directly with a public office holder to influence their opinion.

Bill C-278 would expand the definition of grassroots communication to include situations where lobbyists are encouraging the public or organizations to undertake activities that could indirectly influence public office holders.

Any proposal to amend the Lobbying Act should be assessed against the principles of the legislation itself, which state, first, that free and open access to government is an important matter of public interest; second, that lobbying public office holders is a legitimate activity; third, that it is desirable that public office holders and the public be able to know who is engaged in lobbying activities; and fourth, that a system for the registration of paid lobbyists should not impede free and open access to government.

The amendments proposed by Bill C-278 could increase the reporting burden on lobbyists. They could also generate additional costs for the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying to implement the changes to the registry and to monitor compliance. It is important that any amendments to the Lobbying Act respect the principles of the act, which seek to strike a balance between transparency and ensuring that the compliance burden imposed on lobbyists is reasonable and fair.

I welcome consideration of any measures to improve transparency in lobbying. Our government is committed to raising the bar on openness and transparency in government. For example, our government was the first to open the door for Canadians to see cabinet ministers' mandate letters, which under previous governments were kept secret. We publicly report on how far we have come in keeping the promises we made, and government departments track the outcomes of their programs with indicators and then publish the results online for public scrutiny. We have an open data portal, which makes vast amount of government data accessible, and we have taken this data portal from being a pilot project to being a permanent program.

●(1745)

[Translation]

We are also trying to take the idea of open by default to a deeper level through a pilot portal that provides public access to internal working documents. We recently proposed important changes to the Access to Information Act, such as mandatory proactive publication for 240 government institutions as well as ministers' offices.

[English]

Accomplishments like these are what led Canada to being elected chair of the Open Government Partnership Steering Committee for 2018-19. Our track record on openness and transparency speaks for itself.

Make no mistake; we are committed to the continuous improvement of the Lobbying Act, and we welcome this debate on the subject. I encourage all members to look carefully at these proposals with a view to balancing the interests of all stakeholders, the rights of lobbyists to advocate, the rights of those they represent, and the rights of Canadians to know how their government does business.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before we go on to the next speaker, I just want to remind hon. members that these wonderful new chambers are fantastic as far as carrying sound, so if they are having conversations across the hall or even in the back benches, all of us can hear what they are saying, and I am sure they do not want us to know what their private conversations entail.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary Midnapore.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to rise in the House of Commons as shadow minister for democratic institutions to speak to Bill C-278, also known as the foreign lobbyist transparency act. This private member's bill, brought forward by the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, would make crucial adjustments to the Lobbying Act to counteract foreign interference in our free and democratic system. The bill would be an effective and invaluable piece of legislation that would increase transparency of foreign lobbyists and their influences, seen and unseen, on Canadian politics.

Bill C-278 would accomplish this with two primary legislative changes. First, lobbyists who are funded by a foreign national, a non-resident corporation or a non-resident organization would be required to publicly disclose that information. Second, these entities would also have to disclose whether they were using grassroots communication that could negatively impact the government's ability to consult the Canadian public on a specific course of action. Together, these changes would provide Canadians with information necessary to see how foreign lobbyists could be impacting Canadian politics.

Private Members' Business

• (1750)

[Translation]

Currently, the Canadian Registry of Lobbyists gives Canadians important information on the companies and organizations that try to influence government policy. Canadians can know who is lobbying on behalf of these organizations and see which topics are discussed, and even which lobbying activities are taking place.

This change to the Lobbying Act simply adds two new categories to the long list of information already collected by the Officer of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada. It is a small change that will offer some big advantages.

When implemented, this bill will give Canadians a better overview of the lobbying done by foreign entities and a greater awareness of foreign influence over public policy-making.

[English]

Healthy democracies provide their citizens with transparency. Canadians deserve an open government that can assure them that they are not being unknowingly manipulated by foreign entities. We cannot assume that foreign corporations or organizations do not have malicious motivations. Canadians and the government need to know what organizations or corporations are foreign funded so we have a greater understanding of the possible conflicts with the issues that they may be lobbying on behalf of. We cannot have foreign lobbying groups pretending that they have domestic concerns when in reality they represent foreign interests. Canadians should be the only ones determining their domestic policies.

Foreign lobby groups can be especially malicious when using grassroots lobbying strategies. Grassroots lobbying occurs when lobbyists persuade the public on a given issue instead of government officials. Public support of an issue can aid in the persuasion of policy makers. Foreign lobbyists using grassroots strategies can be alarming since the public may not be receiving the bigger picture of the issue and can be manipulated into believing in a policy that is beneficial for these foreign entities, but bad for Canadians.

Grassroots campaigns also have the ability to interfere with government consultation processes. The government and Canadians deserve a fair and accurate consultation. If this is being impeded by groups with foreign interests, Canadians should have the right and ability to know this.

The use of grassroots lobbying is easier than ever. With social media, lobbyists can deliver information to citizens faster than ever before. Individuals are posting and sharing constantly whether the information is real or fake. Canadians deserve to know not only if foreign corporations or organizations are lobbying Canadian officials, but whether they plan to use Canadians to do their bidding. When these groups are internationally funded, their motivations should have the opportunity to be questioned. Canadians deserve transparency and the ability to know when they are being manipulated.

[Translation]

The government needs to start taking foreign interference seriously. The members on that side of the House tried to prevent

foreign interference in Canadian elections with Bill C-76, but they left some significant shortcomings in the bill.

Canadians should be the only ones to determine the outcome of elections in Canada, not foreign entities. The Liberal government is not doing enough to eliminate the possibility of foreign interference. Canadians deserve to know where the money spent on elections is coming from, and it is up to the government to ensure that all third parties are completely transparent. If third parties decide to do any advertising during an election, they must be transparent and tell Canadians where that money is coming from.

The government is not taking foreign interference in third-party campaign financing seriously enough in Bill C-76. Today we are offering an opportunity to at least impede foreign influence exercised through lobbying. The laws currently in place simply do not go far enough. Our democracy is at stake. Canadians, and only Canadians, should have any influence over our democracy. As Conservatives, we believe that every Canadian vote counts, but the government needs to work harder to prevent foreign entities from undermining our democratic institutions.

• (1755)

[English]

We need to continue working on keeping our democratic institutions safe. Foreign influence in elections is a credible and global threat. The Communications Security Establishment has already recognized, as well as the Prime Minister himself, that foreign influence took place in the 2015 election and is expected to increase significantly in 2019 as it has in recent elections around the globe. We cannot have our elections or our domestic policy influenced by foreign entities. Our democratic institutions and government will begin to crumble if we let them succumb to foreign influence.

Canadians deserve a system of government they can trust. This bill put forward by my hon. colleague is a way for Canadians to be confident that Canadian policy is not being unduly manipulated by foreign entities who wish to interfere. It is essential that Canadians maintain trust in their democratic systems for our government to be effective in protecting Canadians and providing them with services. When foreign actors start having an impact on domestic policies behind closed doors, that trust begins to fade.

Canadians should be the only ones making the decisions for Canada. When foreign-funded entities are getting involved with lobbying the government or getting involved in our elections, Canadians have the right to know.

Private Members' Business

My colleague mentioned Vivian Krause, who has been researching the oil sands for nearly a decade, and this touches dearly upon my home in Alberta. She said that her studies have led her to believe that the push against the oil sands is funded by American philanthropists in an effort to landlock Alberta oil so that it cannot reach overseas markets where it would obtain a higher price per barrel. She estimates that about \$90 million over the last 10 years has gone towards various efforts to restrict oil and gas development and exports from Alberta.

Again, Canadians in my home province of Alberta and also across the country have a right to know when their democratic institutions are being compromised.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to address the legislation introduced by the member opposite. It provokes a great deal of thought that collectively, as a House, we should be looking at the broader issues related to lobbying, especially if we take into consideration, for example, technological changes. When I look at social media today and compare it to the day I was first elected back in the late 1980s, there has been a great deal of change. One needs to be aware of the potential influence that lobbyists or even, to a certain degree, individuals can carry nowadays through social media.

I listened to members on all side of the House address the issue and a couple of things came to my mind.

We need to recognize that lobbyists have rights also. We do not want to in any way prevent lobbyists from being able to approach public officials. There needs to be accountability for that. Let me provide a specific example I have really appreciated over the last couple of years.

The constituents I represent are very much in tune with the idea of having a national pharmacare program, in which prescribed medicines are made available to Canadians. This is long overdue. For the first time in decades, we now have a government that seems to be sympathetic to it.

Having said that, I use it as an example because I have been lobbied on this very issue. I was lobbied by unions and different types of health care workers. A few individuals have advocated as to why we should not move in this direction. I have tabled a number of petitions in the House, probably a couple of dozen, on pharmacare. In fact, I tabled one from my constituents earlier this week.

When we think about how policy comes to be, we often need to take into consideration that it is multi-faceted. Everyone has a role to play, even multinationals. For example, a corporation like Pfizer would have a vested interest in not having a national pharmacare program in Canada. I would be very interested in knowing the possible lobbying efforts in that area. Equally, in order to ensure the sense of fairness, we should know when lobbying takes place from different organizations, whatever they may be, that advocate for a national pharmacare program.

I invite and welcome all those interested in this subject matter. I know pharmacare is an important issue for my constituents. I know the government is, and I suspect all members are, following this issue very closely. The critical component is transparency. This is all

about that. We need to know when money flows and when individuals, or corporations or non-profits are engaged in lobbying.

• (1800)

To me, that is very important. I believe we have seen a prime minister and a government demonstrate a great deal of goodwill, and even more than goodwill: We have seen legislation dealing with enhancing transparency for Canadians on issues such as lobbying, and in particular legislation dealing with election financing. That is something that I think is worth noting.

With regard to the question I forward to my colleague across the way, there is a statutory study that is done on the Lobbying Act. I would like to think that the issues she and others have raised this afternoon will come before the committee when it comes time to review the act, with the idea of coming up with some ideas and recommendations that would improve and enhance the position of lobbying commissioner. Part of that discussion also needs to incorporate the potential costs and value.

Hon. Scott Brison: A cost-benefit analysis. You are right.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: A cost-benefit analysis: The former Treasury Board minister knows this stuff like the back of his hand.

When it comes to accountability and transparency and the whole nine yards, I can assure members that this is a government that takes it all very seriously. That is one of the reasons I believe we need to recognize right up front that when we deal with issues of this nature, what we really need to spend a great deal of time talking about is the issue of transparency. Let me give members an example of something tangible that we saw in the last year from the government that dealt with the issue of transparency.

We talk about the engagements that ministers or leaders of political entities conduct. They call them fundraising events. Not that long ago, the Prime Minister indicated that we wanted to open the doors of accountability and transparency so that even during fundraising events, media members would be afforded the opportunity to participate and observe. We have nothing to hide. We want Canadians to know who is financing and lobbying the party once it hits a certain level.

We even went further than that. For people who ultimately want to become a prime minister—for example, the Leader of the Opposition or leaders of other political entities—there should be an obligation. That is why we brought that in through legislation. It was because there was resistance from opposition parties to making sure the public knows who is attending and lobbying our leaders, whether they are ministers or leaders of political parties. Therefore, not only are we a government that talks about the importance of transparency; our record clearly shows that we have acted on it.

Private Members' Business

One of the nice things about the House of Commons is that we have independent offices. The lobbying commissioner has done outstanding work. When we talk about ways we could possibly expand that responsibility, it is important that we go back and reflect on the issue of resources, because at times there may be a need for us to expand, whether in this area of Elections Canada or with other independent offices of the House. We want to make sure that they are properly resourced and that the ideas that ultimately flow into the legislation have been well vetted, not only by parliamentarians but also by our constituents. The constituents of Winnipeg North are very much opinionated when I go out to ask for their thoughts on issues, and the different stakeholder groups themselves have a great deal of input on issues of this nature.

I appreciate the bill coming forward. I look forward to the ongoing debate on the matter.

● (1805)

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour today to rise in this place and contribute to the debate on Bill C-278, an act to amend the Lobbying Act, regarding reporting obligations, proposed by my colleague from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke. The goal of Bill C-278 is to expand the lobbying registry, to make public the sources of funding for all lobbying conducted here in Canada.

Within the United States there is a large body of academic studies examining the strategies and practices used by private foundations to influence public policy, and that is important to understand. Many of these foundations have enormous financial resources, including billions of dollars in assets and hundreds of millions of dollars in annual revenues, and they are influencing federal governments. Maybe that is fine, but the legislation would help us make sure there is transparency and that the public understands it.

Increasingly, U.S. studies have addressed the strategies used by private foundations and the many other groups they fund, most of which have charity status in influencing public policy. The strategies include broad communications and education programs to influence public perceptions of policy issues and to garner public support for specific actions, the lobbying of governments at all levels, the infiltration of the media, and concerted, coordinated action to achieve specific objectives.

While there is less information and academic analysis available here in Canada, some private researchers have made efforts to “follow the money” in terms of how foundation and charity funding is spent. These efforts are impeded by superficial reporting requirements and the lack of publicly available information from organizations like the Canada Revenue Agency, which administers the provisions of the Income Tax Act related to charities, and the lobbying registry, compiled by the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada.

Researchers such as Vivian Krause, who has endeavoured to find out more about the use of domestic and foreign foundation funding for the anti-oil and anti-pipeline campaigns, have found that they must often rely on United States Internal Revenue Service records, as the information they seek here in Canada is not available from Canadian sources. That is a shame.

In my riding, we have seen the first-hand influence these new strategies and practices can have on Canadian industries and jobs.

Vivian Krause has been interviewed throughout Canada, certainly by Global. I saw an interview done by her where she showed how monies went to charities and then went directly to campaigns against Alberta's goal of seeing more pipelines to tidewater and of seeing more of our energy go to new markets around the world. We see people from the United States, as Vivian Krause has pointed out, doing all they can to prevent that goal of Albertans seeing their energy sold around the world, while the world needs new access to our energy. This is very much an issue for my province of Alberta but it certainly is an issue for all of Canada.

In recent years, we have witnessed a real change in how Canadians participate in our democracy. The rise of social media and the ubiquity of mobile devices has dramatically empowered individual Canadians. Many children in junior high have iPads or mobile phones. Each one of us has the ability to access any type of information we want but we also have access to influence a certain issue.

While many, if not most Canadians, might not appreciate the extent of their personal political powers, members of Parliament never forget it, and they better not forget it or they will become former members of Parliament. However, if most Canadians are unaware of the influence they can have over their elected officials, foreign actors have been quick to realize it.

Twenty years ago launching a grassroots movement to affect some policy change required considerable manpower and massive amounts of resources. Today, these campaigns can be launched for the cost of a domain name. In the past, one would have to spend millions of dollars on advertising and direct mail just to reach out and persuade a few thousand people on whatever issue or whatever topic they wanted.

● (1810)

Now, for a few hundred or a few thousand dollars, one can launch a Facebook ad campaign with the potential to reach literally millions of people. It can be targeted to certain areas specifically, but broadly, it can go around the world. This is more and more becoming an issue Canadians are attuned to. They know that a foreign actor can launch a million emails with just the push of one button.

Social media and mobile technology are enabling Canadians to participate more meaningfully in our political and policy debates. If that is true for Canadians, it is also true for non-Canadians. It is true for non-Canadians that most people, when they see their ad, might actually believe that they are Canadians. Foreign actors have access to the same tools and can have the same impact.

Private Members' Business

Just when Canadians are awakening to the opportunities to influence their own laws, they could find those efforts swamped by foreign interests without even realizing where this attack or this campaign was coming from. The role played by foreign governments as well as foreign foundations in campaigns to influence public policy in Canada should be of interest to all concerned about the independence and integrity of the Canadian political and government processes.

The increased globalization of corporate, institutional and geopolitical interests would seem to require that Canadian democratic institutions be more vigilant about these possible intrusions. This, in turn, demands that reports on the activities of foundations and charities seeking to influence policy be made more transparent to the public and more useful to the parliamentarians who wish to exercise oversight.

While the foreign lobbyist transparency act would not block foreign actors from launching fake grassroots campaigns, requiring disclosure of their funding of Canadian organizations to do so would give additional tools to public officeholders in understanding where the latest round of form emails may really be coming from or where they originated. A transparent registry of foreign lobbyists and their campaigns would provide journalists and researchers with a new way to follow the dollar.

I would also add here that when we give to charities in this country, we expect a certain return. We expect that they abide by certain rules. However, many charities in other countries may well not apply those same restrictions and rules, and they may indeed be the ones that start some of these campaigns. Rather than taking an approach that attempts to restrict or regulate the speech of foreign actors, restrictions that would inevitably hamper Canadians' own rights and freedoms, Bill C-278 would simply require disclosure. Foreign entities would need to report when they were funding campaigns to influence federal officeholders and officials.

Truth and transparency are always our best defences in preserving an open and democratic Canada. It is my genuine hope that these are changes that all members of Parliament can support.

One can say that there are Conservative organizations that may be doing it, there are Liberal organizations, there are socialist organizations, and there are Green-backed organizations that may well be doing this. Some of that may be all right, but let Canadians know who they are. Too often, questions about foreign funding of different sides of a policy debate are dismissed as being partisan by one side or the other. We can all play that game. The foreign lobbyist transparency act would cut through the partisan divide by applying equally to all foreign actors, whether they were supporting a cause we hold dear or opposing a policy we would prefer.

This bill would not limit Canadians' ability to solicit foreign financial support for an issue they were pursuing. It would simply require them to disclose to their fellow citizens the ultimate source of those funds. Individual Canadians could then assess for themselves whether the source of funding was material to the issue.

• (1815)

The digital transformation of our democracy is still in its infancy. Who knows what the next year or the next five years will hold for

the digital world? It presents an opportunity to meaningfully increase Canadians' participation in our laws, but only if we have faith in it. By ensuring greater transparency for foreign funding of lobbying and public relations campaigns, we can restore a measure of trust in our democracy. I know we all want to do that.

Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill C-278, an act to amend the Lobbying Act.

Our government is committed to the continuous improvement of the Lobbying Act and welcomes this debate on the subject. Lobbying has been part of getting things done in the country politically from its earliest days. Apparently, even the grants, monopolies and concessions that made possible the early voyages of Cartier, Frobisher, Hudson and others were obtained through lobbying at court.

Today, lobbying refers generally to an effort to communicate with legislators or other public officials against or in favour of a specific cause when carried out for compensation. It is the normal way organizations and interest groups inform and influence the policy-making process. It is vital to the healthy functioning of a government that is open and responsible to the will of the people.

At the same time, lobbying is subject to checks and balances that provide disclosure about who is working to shape government policy. Transparency as a curb on potential corruption of public officials is every bit as important as influencing and ensuring the system works. The purpose of the bill before us is to increase the amount of information lobbyists are required to disclose under the Lobbying Act.

I think we can all agree on the importance of both free and open access to government as well as the need for Canadians to know who is lobbying their government. Both are in the public interest and must be carefully balanced. In fact, the recent history of lobbying legislation in the country is the story of trying to get the balance right.

Until July 2008, lobbying at the federal level in Canada was governed by the Lobbyists Registration Act, which came into force in 1989. The act established a registration system intended to foster the public's right to know and to be informed about who is trying to influence government policy.

• (1820)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity will have eight minutes coming to him so he can complete his elocution when we take up the bill again.

Adjournment Proceedings

[Translation]

The time provided for consideration of private members' business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a question I have been pursuing for a great deal of time concerns the inability of women who marry military people and the inability of Canadians over 60 to get access to their late husband's pension.

In my case, I was first alerted to this issue by Patricia Kidd from my riding of Victoria. I have also had letters from across the country on this issue. She and her late husband Piet were married 33 years ago. They were married for 31 years before he died. They raised two sons. However, Ottawa will not give Patricia a penny of the pension money that other veterans' widows get because of an archaic rule dating back to 1901 that was inserted into the pension legislation before the First World War to prevent young women from marrying aging veterans.

That clause is not unique to the armed forces. It is in other pension plans, such as those pertaining to judges, Mounties and other federal workers. The clause has been the source of enormous injustice, which the government has acknowledged. It acknowledged it by making clear in the 2015 mandate letter of the minister of Veterans Affairs that eliminating the so-called "marriage after 60" clawback clause was a priority.

That was in the 2015 mandate letter. I have spoken with the then minister of veterans affairs, the member for Calgary Centre, and wrote to him on September 13, 2016. He said help was on the way. Then I spoke to and wrote to the minister of veterans affairs, the hon. member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl, to the same effect. I wrote to him September 25, 2017, and again in February 2018. Then I asked a question in question period, and that minister said he had heard about this, that it was very important to many veterans and their families, and said "I can assure the member and the House that we are indeed working diligently on this file".

That is not diligent. I cannot seem to get an answer from the government. It was a commitment made to me and to Canadians in the mandate letter that there would be a change. Patricia Kidd and so many like her are waiting for justice.

I ask the government when we are going to see this Liberal promise kept.

• (1825)

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for raising

this very important issue in the House of Commons and giving it significant national attention.

As previous ministers said in response to the member's questions last October, this issue has been raised in town halls and we continue to work diligently on this file.

The answer remains the same. The provision the hon. member speaks of is part of the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act. Under the power of the Minister of National Defence, the provision indicates that survivors who marry a pensioner under the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act after the veteran turned 60 years of age do not automatically receive a survivor pension. The optional survivor benefit is provided to pensioners who married after age 60 under certain conditions.

[English]

We are well aware that this is an issue affecting a number of Canadians and their spouses. This is why finding a solution to the issue has been part of the mandate of the Minister of Veterans Affairs and why the Minister of Veterans Affairs and the Minister of National Defence are working together to address those provisions in the legislation impacting marriage after age 60. It is not that easy.

[Translation]

The Department of National Defence and Veterans Affairs understand the implications of the marriage after 60 provision and are trying to find the best way to address it. This is part of the efforts being made to ensure that Canadian Armed Forces pensioners receive the appropriate survivors' pension and sickness benefits.

Over the past three years, our government has delivered on its promises and made many improvements to the benefits and services offered to veterans, their spouses and families. We have also improved how they are delivered. We have invested nearly \$10 billion in new funding in benefits and support for veterans and their families.

[English]

We immediately increased the maximum lump sum pain and suffering compensation from \$310,000 to \$360,000 and increased income replacement for veterans in rehabilitation from 75% of their pre-release salary to 90%.

[Translation]

We increased support for survivors and partners by eliminating the one-year time limit to apply for the rehabilitation services and vocational assistance program. This gives families some flexibility so they can access a program when they need it.

Benefits provided to family members include the caregiver recognition benefit, which pays \$1,000 a month, tax-free, directly to the people looking after eligible veterans.

Veterans and their families have access to the veteran family program and the 32 military family resource centres across the country.

Adjournment Proceedings

Common-law spouses of veterans may now be eligible for career counselling, job search training and job search assistance, of course.

We also made a commitment to the well-being of our veterans and their families, and we delivered on our promise for a pension for life. Beginning April 1, this monthly non-taxable benefit for life will provide the option of a monthly benefit giving veterans and their families financial stability and focusing on wellness services such as rehabilitation, education and career training.

For example, a young corporal who served for six years before sustaining serious injuries, mental and physical, would receive nearly \$6,000 a month in—

[*English*]

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

Mr. Murray Rankin: Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary has told us about the money being spent on veterans, for which I am grateful. He has told us about efforts continuing. He has told us that a number of other programs are being expanded, which is terrific.

However, that does absolutely nothing to keep the promise that the government made in 2015 to widows like Patricia Kidd in my riding and so many others I have heard from across this country. The parliamentary secretary has tried to change the subject here tonight. He has done nothing for Patricia Kidd. This is another broken Liberal promise.

I would ask the parliamentary secretary again: Will this promise be kept, the promise made in 2015 in the mandate letter to Canadians? Will it be kept before the election in October of this year?

• (1830)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon: Mr. Speaker, the current government intends to bring the policies and regulations that affect veterans and members of the Canadian Armed Forces into the 21st century.

Our government is determined to honour the service and sacrifices of veterans and their families, as indicated in the mandate letter.

We are working hard to give veterans and their families the care and support they need when and where they need it and to encourage Canadians to remember those who served.

We will continue to listen to veterans and to work with veterans, their families and stakeholders across the country.

Thanks to all the comments we received during our open and frank conversations, we can continue to give priority to what is really important to veterans and their families while continuing to fulfill our mandate.

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to be able to pursue tonight in adjournment proceedings one of the most important questions I have ever asked in this place, which was for the Prime Minister on October 16.

The night before we had held in this place quite an extraordinary emergency debate, thanks to the Speaker's ruling that it was, in fact, qualifying as an emergency. The IPCC, the United Nations agency of the world's best scientists, had just delivered a report that warned humanity that unless we held the global average temperature increase to no more than 1.5°C, we could face unimaginable consequences up to and including the loss of human civilization and potentially our own extinction.

I put it to the Prime Minister that on the eve of the climate negotiations in Poland, now was the time to improve our targets. The IPCC report made it very clear that Canada's targets were wholly, and are wholly, inadequate to the task ahead of us. The good news, and I must stress this, from the IPCC report is that we still have time to avoid those consequences, but we no longer have time for procrastination.

Of course events have taken place since then. The climate negotiations, in which I participated in December in Katowice, Poland, are over. Canada did not step up to improve our targets. I have to say not just lamentably but shamefully that the only countries that improved their targets were Fiji and the Marshall Islands. However, it is very clear that we must take a role of global leadership. Where other countries are not improving their targets, surely Canada, with the weakest targets within the OECD, must do so.

The Prime Minister's response to me was “we are working hard to meet our 2030 targets.” I want to stress that these 2030 targets to which Canada is now committed have not changed since May 2015, when the former government of Stephen Harper placed them with the United Nations. We know from the IPCC report that the targets we put forward are not just inconsistent with the Paris agreement, they are dangerous and reckless.

The Prime Minister went on to say, “We are reversing the Conservatives' reckless changes...” I put it for my friend, the hon. parliamentary secretary, that the most reckless change of the Harper administration was to cancel Kyoto and weaken our targets, not once but three times. We have now embraced, and the Liberal government has now embraced, the weakest of the targets from the three times Stephen Harper changed them. They are clearly inconsistent with the Paris agreement. They clearly do not take us to 1.5°C. In fact, it has been calculated by other scientists that if all countries on earth were pursuing Canada's weak efforts, global average temperature would go to 5.1°C, or well past the danger zone.

Adjournment Proceedings

We now know we have very little time. We know that other levels of jurisdiction within Canada are recognizing this is a climate emergency. Halifax just did, Vancouver has and other cities are considering it. However, in this place, it seems as though the major political party with the most seats in this place thinks we can just pretend, until we get through the next election, that the Harper targets are good enough. If the small efforts being made by the Liberal Party and the government, for which I am grateful they are not as weak as the Conservatives, lead us to extinction, in the end it will not make a difference.

●(1835)

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as always it is a pleasure to engage in a thoughtful debate with my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands. I will take this opportunity to congratulate her, on the record, on her upcoming nuptials.

Canadians know that the impacts of climate change are very real. We see them in our communities every day, and we need to take them very seriously.

We understand the importance of limiting the temperature increase to 1.5°C, as examined in the IPCC report that the hon. member has referred to. That is why we supported the goal of 1.5°C in the Paris Agreement, with significant discussion around targets. The real target that I am most concerned with is 1.5°C. It is going to prevent a catastrophe that could potentially render our planet uninhabitable for future generations.

The Government of Canada knows that growing the economy can be done while we protect the environment. I had the opportunity to take part in a panel with the hon. member this morning, during which we discussed, in fact, the notion that protecting the environment can lead to economic growth.

We have made significant progress in implementing our pan-Canadian framework on climate change. In December of this year, we published our second annual progress report, which details some of the work that has been done so far.

The focus in the short term is on doing the things that will have the maximum impact. I note in particular that we have implemented new regulations to help significantly reduce methane emissions from heavy-duty vehicles, and importantly, we have accelerated the phase-out of coal-fired electricity. I anticipate that by 2030, 90% of our electricity will be generated by renewable resources.

We released a clean fuel standard regulatory design paper for consultation. We made significant investments in clean technology, innovation and green infrastructure, which is going to drive growth while we reduce pollution.

I do not want to just rhyme off a list of accomplishments, but suffice it to say, we are focusing on the things that are going to make the biggest difference.

Of course, the price on pollution that we are introducing is a marquee policy of the government that is going to be the most effective tool we have in the tool kit. Members do not have to take my word for it. They can look at the many endorsements of this approach from groups like the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and

from a number of economists in the United States and Nobel Prize winners, to name a few. Our analysis found that pollution pricing alone in Canada is going to reduce pollution by 50 and 60 megatonnes. This is a policy that will have a significant impact.

We are always going to be looking to see what other policies we can be adopting to go further and to do more to achieve the decarbonization we need to ensure that we do not put our planet's health in the way of irreparable harm.

In certain provinces, of course, there is push-back against the policy that we are trying to implement. However, we will not be stopped just because there is a lack of political will to implement what we know is the most effective policy for reducing our emissions.

We remain committed to meeting our target of 2030. We want to achieve that 1.5°C maximum that we discussed in the Paris Agreement. We are going to work with our partners both across Canada and in the international community to try to get more people and countries on board to ensure that emissions come down so that we all have a safe planet to inhabit not just in this generation but, going forward, for our kids and grandkids as well.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, this has been the government's response on every occasion. It is as though what we are doing now is enough, while at the same time, as the government recognizes, it is not enough. It is an extreme case of cognitive dissonance.

I was so moved by the statements of the young Swedish schoolgirl Greta Thunberg. She recently spoke in Davos at the World Economic Forum, and she said, "Our house is on fire.... I want you to panic."

I will continue with her metaphor. Let us say a house is on fire and there are people on the roof of a four-storey building who need rescuing. If people rush forward with a stepladder, the assembled crowds will not cheer for the stepladder.

Our house is on fire, and the government policies to date are the stepladder. We cannot reach the fourth floor unless we aim for it. We need to improve our target. We need to do it now. As Greta Thunberg said, first we have to panic; then we have to act.

●(1840)

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I am familiar with the speech to which the hon. member refers, and I appreciate the point of view.

In the face of great danger, our preference is not to panic, but to start doing the most that we can as soon as we can. That is why we are advancing some of the policies that I outlined in my initial response.

However, I want to also point out that it is not just government that is going to help us get there. There are opportunities for enormous progress if we look to the private sector. There is an ability to innovate. We can accelerate, with the government's help, the adoption of technologies like electric vehicles. We could look to groups like CarbonCure, which is in my hometown of Dartmouth. It sequesters carbon and turns it into concrete forms. We could look to partner with groups across Canada to help sequestration by transforming our landscape.

Adjournment Proceedings

We will always be open to doing what we can, when we can and as quickly as we can, while working with those who can take us further than we currently stand today.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:41 p.m.)

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