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Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, December 1, 2025

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1100)
[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from October 20 consideration of the motion that Bill C-225, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to briefly emphasize that the government recognizes intimate partner violence as a very serious issue. This is why we have seen a large investment of resources, both financial and legislative initiatives, to deal with the issue.

When we talk about gender-based violence, it impacts far too many people, and the government is literally spending hundreds of millions of dollars in dealing with the issue. Legislation is also a very important component, and we are very much open to ideas on how we can make changes, even to private members' bills. Ultimately, we want to listen to what the survivors are telling us and be responsive in the best way we can.

As I say, it takes two things to do that. One is financial resources, which is something the government has done. The other is legislative change, which, again, is something we are very much interested in and have done in the past.

[*Translation*]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on this beautiful Monday, December 1, it is my honour to start the week by talking about Bill C-225 on the issue of intimate partner violence. This is a major issue for the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, which is continually having to re-examine the issue in the light of new developments. That is unfortunate.

The bill seeks to amend the Criminal Code in order to create specific offences in cases where the victim is an intimate partner. It seeks to prohibit a peace officer from releasing a person who has been convicted of a similar offence within the previous five years. It would increase the detention period of property seized from three

months to one year, with the possibility of an extension of up to two years. It would also implement stiffer punishments for criminal harassment of an intimate partner, threats to an intimate partner, assault, aggravated assault or assault with a weapon.

Coercive and controlling violence is a widespread problem, which is unfortunate. Allow me to provide a definition. It refers to repeated behaviours that aim to isolate, control, monitor or dominate the victim. This includes financial control, psychological manipulation, social isolation, restricting movement, breaking phones and threatening children or animals. Since we are talking about these behaviours, this violence, this coercive control, I want to emphasize the fact that this is one of the priorities I had established after a Quebec report about rebuilding trust was published. I received the request from Sherbrooke MNA Christine Labrie, who had served on the expert committee. We met at a café in Sherbrooke, and she told me that this was something that falls under Quebec's jurisdiction. I seized the opportunity, listening to the member who had worked with her colleagues in a non-partisan manner. The group was made up of people from all political parties. The work that Quebec did was very thorough. As they have requested, coercive control must be criminalized. This is really important.

After that brief digression, I would now like to return to the ultimate purpose of coercive control, which is to take away the victim's autonomy and freedom. Ninety-five per cent of domestic violence crimes involve some degree of coercion or control. That is serious. The Bloc Québécois supports studying the bill given the urgency surrounding the increase in domestic violence. Unfortunately, the numbers confirm that domestic violence has increased and that cases are on the rise. Some municipalities and some locations have even declared domestic violence an epidemic.

The bill seeks to protect the concept of first-degree murder by creating a new, stand-alone paragraph. The Bloc Québécois wants this protection to expressly include children and loved ones and to avoid creating redundant offences if the same offence already exists in the Criminal Code. As I was saying earlier, we want to include coercive violence in the Criminal Code, which, incidentally, was the purpose of a bill introduced in the previous Parliament by a colleague from the New Democratic Party and which made it all the way to the Senate. Unfortunately, that bill died on the Order Paper with the election. It was even the theme of last week's press conference to launch the 12 Days of Action to End Violence Against Women campaign. Finally, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women tabled the report on a study that my colleagues and I proposed on coercive control. Once again, we determined that this is one of the main demands that must follow the tabling of this report.

Private Members' Business

There are problems with the current legislation. Victims have very little trust in institutions, in police forces and in the courts. Violence is massively under-reported. Only 36% of cases of domestic violence and only 5% of sexual assaults are reported. Immigrant women face additional obstacles because they are afraid that reporting will affect their immigration status. It is difficult to prove coercive control under the existing legal framework.

Some people say that coercive control should not be criminalized because it is difficult to find evidence and difficult to prove in court. However, we believe that we need to overcome that obstacle and focus instead on how to better educate people within the system, from police officers to judges. How can we better educate people to ensure that this is properly recognized? We also need to be able to find evidence of coercive control and present it in court.

Existing laws are also not being properly enforced. Charges are reduced to a peace bond under section 810 of the Criminal Code. With the Conservatives' support at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, I proposed a study on the specific issue of section 810 of the Criminal Code and whether it truly meets the needs of victims.

• (1105)

Section 810 is deemed inadequate in cases where the risk of reoffending is high. That is what we have been hearing.

In the parliamentary context, there have been several attempts since 2020 to regulate coercive violence. First there was Bill C-247, Bill C-202, then Bill C-332, which is more recent. In 2023, we passed Bill C-233, which was drafted by the Liberals and was on electronic monitoring and continuing education for judges. A widely publicized increase in femicides has added more political pressure to take action and introduce legislation to try to find solutions to this scourge.

Several committees are currently studying the issue. I mentioned the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, of which I am a member, but I know that the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage and the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights are also studying aspects related to this file. I have had discussions with the members who sit on the same committee that I do, but I have also talked to members of these other committees, including the member for Rivière-du-Nord and the member for Drummond.

Let us talk about what Bill C-225 will actually accomplish. Under this bill, the murder of an intimate partner will automatically be classified as first-degree murder. That is what this bill says. Sexual harassment and threats against an intimate partner would both carry a maximum sentence of 10 years, while threats against a partner's property or pets would carry a maximum sentence of four years. Simple assault against an intimate partner would carry a maximum sentence of 10 years, while armed assault, bodily harm and strangulation would carry a maximum sentence of 12 years, and aggravated assault, 14 years. The bill also makes it mandatory for those accused of such offences to be detained in custody for up to seven days following arrest to undergo a risk-of-reoffending assessment.

Let us now talk about the most recent statistics on domestic violence in Canada. According to the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, in 2024, a woman was killed every

48 hours by an intimate partner. According to a 2023 Statistics Canada report, 76% of victims of domestic violence are women. Over 127,000 incidents of domestic violence were reported to the police in 2022, an increase of about 5% compared to the previous year. That is rather alarming.

Indigenous women are three to four times more likely to be the victims of domestic violence. Young women between the ages of 15 to 24 are most at risk. Four out of 10 victims report coercive control before the situation becomes physically violent. One in three children who is exposed to domestic violence will experience severe psychological distress. Again according to the 2023 Statistics Canada report, in 60% to 70% of cases, children witness violence first-hand.

There is also technology-facilitated coercive control. More than 50% of victims of domestic violence report being subjected to technology-facilitated control through location tracking, forced access to accounts, digital surveillance, or threats to share compromising images online. Data are also available for rural areas. The rate of domestic violence for women living in rural areas is 1.8 times higher than the rate for women in urban areas. Close to 80% of victims of domestic violence never contact police. Nine victims out of 10 say that they do not report the abuse due to fear of retaliation or due to financial dependence.

For cases of domestic femicide and homicide, 75% are committed by a current or former partner. Again according to Statistics Canada, a separation increases the risk of homicide by 500% in the year following the breakup. Domestic homicides account for 34% of all homicides of women in Canada. More than 50% of femicides occur after a lengthy period of coercive control. Domestic violence is on the rise. Between 2014 and 2023, it went up by 30%. In 2022, police recorded an incident of family violence every two minutes. The provinces with the highest rates are Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta.

I could go on in this vein for hours, but I have only a minute left. To wrap up, 60% of victims say that coercive control is more traumatizing than physical violence, and 70% of victims report being under constant surveillance, including digital surveillance. One victim in two reports being subjected to economic violence, which prevents the victim from leaving the relationship. Financial dependence is also a barrier to reporting. The populations at greatest risk include indigenous women, as I mentioned. It is also important to find solutions for the children, as 60% of children exposed to violence develop symptoms of PTSD.

I could also talk about the impacts of separations, technology-facilitated violence, and the economic and social impacts, because the cost of domestic violence in Canada is \$7.4 billion per year, which is huge. What we are also seeing is that 50% of women lose their jobs or have to change jobs because of violence, and over 800,000 women and children use shelters every year.

• (1110)

Given the numbers I just shared, I think that it is even more important to act, but we must do so carefully. We need to analyze this bill in committee and then we will see.

[English]

Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today in support of my colleague and his private member's bill, Bill C-225. He has done an extraordinary amount of work on the bill, demonstrating his sincere and unwavering commitment to standing up for people impacted by intimate partner violence and its devastating effects.

As I looked into the issue more, there was a word that kept on coming up again and again: "epidemic". Universities, experts, provinces, organizations and, most importantly, victims themselves referred to intimate partner violence as an epidemic. When we use this word, we are not speaking in metaphors; rather, we are talking about a real crisis that is widely, rapidly and predictably spreading across our country. It is overwhelming our justice system; it is one of the things that, rapidly and predictably, overwhelm it to the greatest extent. It also puts strain on communities and leaves devastation in its wake.

Lives are being ruined. It is a pattern of harm so pervasive that it cannot be dismissed as an isolated incident. By every measure, intimate partner violence meets the definition of epidemic in Canada today. It seems that, for the last number of years, any time I have picked up my phone and looked at the news, there has been one tragedy after another unfolding: another woman harmed or even killed at the hands of her partner. It has become far too common a story in this nation.

Recently we were shocked by the story of Savannah Kulla-Davies. Savannah was a young mother from Ontario whose life was taken by her ex-partner, Anthony Deschepper. What made her death even more devastating was how many warning signs there were and the fact that those were documented leading up to her death. Sadly, they were ignored, which is why we are talking about this in the House today.

Anthony had a long history of violence and threats toward Savannah. In fact in 2023, he faced firearms-related charges for an attack on her. A court document even stated that he did in fact discharge a firearm while being reckless with the life of Savannah Kulla-Davies. He evaded police for a month before finally being arrested by Waterloo police, yet despite his history, which was well documented, he was released on bail. Once released, he continued his pattern of extreme violence until it became fatal, ultimately resulting in the death of Savannah. Savannah knew the risks she was facing, and she tried to draw attention to them. She told her mother, "If I stay with him, he's going to end up killing me."

Savannah pleaded for protection. She did everything she could, arguably did everything right, but the system that was meant to safeguard her, the system that was meant to protect her and that was meant to be on her side as the victim, did not listen and did not act, which ultimately resulted in Savannah's death. This is not isolated. Again, these cases occur far too often in our country.

Private Members' Business

Madisson Cobb, a 23-year-old from Calgary, Alberta, was murdered in July by her ex-boyfriend. He had been stalking and harassing her for months. Madisson repeatedly sought help, going to authorities and even signing an affidavit. She acquired a restraining order that was meant to protect her until 2026. Her ex-partner was already bound by conditions requiring him to stay away from her home and her workplace and to have no contact with her, but those things did not matter. He had even been charged twice with stalking and harassment; that did not matter either. Madisson put her fear into writing in the handwritten affidavit to the court, saying, "I live in fear every day from him, I want him out of my life."

She describes shaking and having panic attacks when she went out or when her phone rang, in fear that it might be him. Despite all this, the documented history, the active restraining order, the repeated charges and her clear warnings to the people in a system that was meant to protect her, Madisson was killed by her ex-boyfriend in a parking garage near her workplace.

• (1115)

Bailey McCourt is the woman for whom the bill is named. Bailey was a 32-year-old woman in British Columbia, Canada, and a proud mother of two girls. Like Savannah and Madisson, Bailey lived in fear of her ex-husband. She felt frustrated, scared and unsupported, according to her uncle, and she had lost faith in the courts and the system that were supposed to protect her.

This past July, Bailey's ex-husband was convicted of choking and uttering threats to another victim. After a hearing for those charges, he was let out on \$500 bail, despite his history of repeat violence. Three hours after having been let out on \$500 bail, he hunted down Bailey McCourt, took a hammer to her head and ultimately killed her, leaving her dead and leaving her two daughters without a loving mother. This brutal attack shook a community and robbed a family of a dearly loved woman.

By naming the legislation "Bailey's Law", we honour the memory of a mother, a daughter, a sister, a niece and a friend. We make a clear statement that the lives of women matter and that our justice system desperately needs correction. It is incumbent on us, as legislators in this place, to be the bridge between the change that is needed and actually creating that change. Through my colleague's private member's bill, we have that opportunity here today.

Though the women I have spoken about originate from different places in the country and from different backgrounds and ways of life, sadly one thing brings them together, and that is the fact that they were all victims of intimate partner violence. They are proof that intimate partner violence is not a series of isolated tragedies but rather a deadly epidemic spreading across the country. Their stories echo those of countless other women in every corner of this nation, women who are counting on us to make a difference in this place for them.

Private Members' Business

I believe it is incumbent upon us as legislators to honour their memory, their lived reality, their story and of course their living family members by moving forward with the piece of legislation that is before us. We must confront and cure the epidemic that is intimate partner violence.

Bailey's law would take real, concrete steps to save lives. If passed, the bill would do a few things. First, it would treat the murder of a current or former intimate partner as first-degree murder, regardless of whether it was planned or deliberate. Second, it would create specific offences, including assault of an intimate partner and criminal harassment of an intimate partner. Third, it would require that anyone convicted of an intimate partner violence offence within the preceding five years can be released only by a judge, thereby creating greater accountability.

The bill would also empower courts to detain persons accused of intimate partner violence at any time for a risk assessment reviewed by a judge, which is so crucial in terms of protecting a victim from potential harm leading to death. Last, the bill would modernize the detention of seized evidence, which is also needed.

The bill is not just legislation; it is a moral imperative on this place. Given what we know, given the stories that have come to light, it is incumbent upon us to take action. By passing the bill, we could honour the memories of individuals whose lives have been taken. It would not simply be legal reform; it would be a commitment to protect lives, to prevent violence and to restore justice. It is to make things work for victims rather than putting the perpetrator first, which is so important.

We know that the issue is not a partisan one but rather an issue that should concern all Canadians and therefore all members of the House. It is therefore my hope that my colleagues from all parties will come together, support the bill and stand with victims.

• (1120)

Chi Nguyen (Spadina—Harbourfront, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-225, the private member's bill sponsored by the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola. The bill aims to confront one of the most heartbreaking and pervasive crises facing families and women across this country: intimate partner violence.

Addressing intimate partner violence is a shared responsibility, and today we have an opportunity to demonstrate that when lives are on the line, collaboration must prevail over division. Gender-based violence must end, and we must ensure that survivors receive the protection and justice they deserve.

I want to thank the member opposite for bringing the bill forward. His efforts reflect a genuine commitment to ensuring that our justice system responds effectively when individuals, often women, face threats to their safety. I also commend the Minister of Justice for engaging closely with the sponsoring member and with provinces, territories, survivors and experts on the issue. This is exactly what Canadians expect of us: to work together, to problem-solve and to put people before politics.

When Parliament addresses issues with focus, urgency and compassion, it offers not only policy solutions but also hope, not just to survivors but to all Canadians who believe in the power and poten-

tial of the House. Today our task is both clear and urgent; we must strengthen protections for people at risk, close the gaps in our justice system and ensure that violence is met with action and not silence.

While Bill C-225 may appear tough, strength on paper does not always translate into protection in practice. As drafted, the bill risks punishing the very individuals it seeks to protect. Rather than its restoring trust in the justice system, there is a real danger that survivors, especially women, could lose even more confidence in our legal institutions.

Any legislative response must be thoughtful, rooted in evidence and grounded in the lived experience of survivors. This means listening to experts in gender-based and intimate partner violence, working in lockstep with the provinces and territories that administer the justice system, and, most importantly, centring the lived experience of survivors. Their voices must ground our approach.

As drafted, Bill C-225 would duplicate existing offences, impose automatic first-degree murder charges and significantly restrict police release discretion without regard to context, coercive control or self-defence. It may make for compelling headlines, but it does not make for sound, evidence-based policy. In fact the bill could create harmful unintended consequences, both legal and human. It would place additional burdens on an already strained provincial justice system, potentially causing delays, barriers to prosecution and the inconsistent application of justice. This strain could further erode confidence for survivors already facing fear, trauma and risk.

Intimate partner violence demands careful and thoughtful treatment under the Criminal Code. Blanket measures that lack flexibility fail to recognize the realities of coercive control, the cycles of abuse and the life-threatening circumstances faced by many victims. Most concerning is the real possibility that victims, particularly women defending themselves against violence and life-threatening abuse, could be penalized rather than protected.

Private Members' Business

Under the bill, a victim who kills their abuser in a desperate act of self-defence could face an automatic first-degree murder charge. That is not justice; it is traumatization. It is not protection; it is punishment. It is not what survivors deserve. We need legislation that protects survivors, holds perpetrators accountable and supports the justice system in delivering better outcomes. This is how we build trust and not erode it.

Our approach is different. Criminal law must reflect the full spectrum of intimate partner violence, including coercive control, psychological manipulation, economic abuse and the pervasive cycles of fear and entrapment that survivors experience. That is why our upcoming intimate partner violence reforms would be targeted, trauma-informed and grounded in the voices of the people who experience abuse first-hand and of those who work directly on the front lines.

IPV is complex. It cannot be adequately addressed through isolated or symbolic amendments but must be addressed through meaningful and modernized legal reforms that truly protect survivors and hold abusers accountable. A survivor-led approach is essential. Survivors have told us that punitive measures alone do not necessarily create safety and in some cases can create risk.

Real reform must reflect lived realities and address the root causes of violence, not just its outcomes. It means building on the excellent work of organizations like Next Gen Men, which promotes emotionally supportive and positive masculinity, challenging the harmful gender norms that often drive violence. It also means addressing socio-economic conditions like poverty, financial dependence and housing insecurity that keep too many victims trapped in cycles of abuse.

Experts like Julie Lalonde have told us that intimate partner violence is not limited to physical harm. Her work on coercive control, stalking and bystander intervention has helped shape national conversations about how violence often begins before it becomes visible. She reminds us that protection is not just about reacting; it is also about recognizing early warning signs, intervening sooner and ensuring that survivors know they are not alone.

- (1125)

Another survivor, Attiya Khan, has challenged Canada to rethink how we talk about intimate partner violence, so it is centred not only on punishment but on healing, accountability, prevention and survivor empowerment.

While there are many contributing factors to intimate partner violence, we know this for sure: It must end. Real progress comes through prevention, capacity building, early intervention and strong supports. There is much work ahead, but the government's commitment is unwavering. We are doing the work outside of legislative reforms. Through the national action plan to end gender-based violence, we have invested more than half a billion dollars, \$539 million, which is flowing directly to provinces and territories. Importantly, at least 25% of that funding is specifically dedicated to education and prevention initiatives, because protecting survivors means not just responding to violence after it happens but also working to prevent it before it occurs.

I recently participated, as part of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, in its study of gender-based violence, femicides and section 810 of the Criminal Code. Expert witnesses, such as Louise Riendeau from the Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale, shared some important concerns about Bill C-225 as it is currently written.

In her testimony, Madam Riendeau shared, "On the one hand, Bill C-225 simply repeats most offences and places them in a context of intimate partner violence. That maintains the logic of isolated incidents, which wouldn't be the case if there were instead an offence of coercive control." In other words, rather than recognizing ongoing patterns of abuse, this bill would maintain a narrow, incident-focused view of violence. That approach fails to capture the lived realities of survivors.

She went on to warn of another troubling impact of the bill. Under the proposed framework, she notes, "A victim who left marks on their attacker by biting or scratching them while they were being strangled would be charged with a crime against an intimate partner, just like a controlling and violent spouse." This means that a victim acting in self-defence while fighting for her life could be charged in the same way as the perpetrator.

These concerns show why simply duplicating offences or automatically classifying all intimate partner violence as first-degree murder fails to reflect the full spectrum of intimate partner violence, especially those rooted in coercive and controlling behaviour. Rather than protecting survivors, it risks criminalizing them. Rather than bringing justice, it risks retraumatizing them. Rather than enhancing safety, it could silence the very voices we are trying to empower.

We must ensure that our reforms protect victims, not punish them. We must build laws that reflect reality and not just react to it. Collaboration across party lines on intimate partner violence is not only important; it is critical. If we are serious about reducing the violence that affects women, children, families and communities, then we must work together with determination.

Private Members' Business

In that spirit, our government intends to put forward amendments that strengthen this bill, not to dismiss its intent but to ensure that it truly protects survivors and does not unintentionally criminalize them. Criminal law must reflect the full spectrum of intimate partner violence, including coercive control, ongoing patterns of abuse and physical assault. That is why our government will be proposing targeted amendments to ensure victims are not captured under the first-degree murder clause, to modernize the seized property regime and to avoid unworkable bail measures.

The government can support meaningful reforms that would actually enhance protection for survivors while maintaining charter-compliant, evidence-based policy. These reforms will be grounded in evidence developed in close consultation with provinces and territories, ensuring that the law is informed by those who administer justice and by those who experience abuse first hand.

Our government, with the largest women's caucus in Canadian history, is committed to making Canada safer and protecting victims of IPV. Protecting women is not a partisan issue, and we will continue to work with survivors, communities and all levels of government to ensure targeted, evidence-based reforms.

• (1130)

[*Translation*]

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are discussing a very important topic today, and I find it reassuring that we are able to talk about it. I hope that we will be able to vote on this bill quickly. In my speech this morning, I will explain the content of Bill S-225, but I will also talk about what I experienced before becoming an MP. Members may not be aware, but I worked in community organizations for many years. I served as the director of community organizations in the Antoine-Labelle RCM. Laurentides—Labelle is home to many extraordinary organizations that will have to adapt to this bill if it is passed.

This bill is sponsored by the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola. I am very pleased that this bill is coming back in another form and that it was tabled by my Conservative colleague. This bill would amend the Criminal Code to “create specific offences in respect of intimate partner violence”. Second, it would “prohibit a peace officer from releasing a person arrested for an intimate partner offence if the person has committed an intimate partner offence in the preceding five years or is at large on a release order in respect of an intimate partner offence”. Third, it would “increase the detention period of things seized under section 490 of the Act from three months to one year and...provide for circumstances in which notices to the person from whom the thing was seized may be dispensed with”.

All of this seems quite complicated, but I hope that this bill leads to the creation of better measures that will help all victims, who have my full sympathy and support this morning. This sort of thing should never happen. Unfortunately, as my colleague from Shefford mentioned a few minutes ago, the number of victims is on the rise. The number of reports is also growing. Action must be taken. The bill could have completed all the steps in the legislative process a few years ago, but here we are today, still dealing with this matter.

I would note that this proposal originally came from the NDP, and now the Conservative Party is picking up the baton. This tells

me that we need to sit down at committee and fine-tune the bill to ensure that it is consistent with all our values. I am very pleased this morning, and I would really like victims to know that we are doing all we can to help them. When a bill dies on the Order Paper, we have to start over, but I am sure that we will move forward. I spoke a bit earlier about the parliamentary context. Bills were proposed in 2020 and in 2023, and then came the prorogation and the election. I think, however, that we are going to get to the finish line quickly.

I would like to move on to talk about statistics, because I am not convinced people are fully aware of the situation. Every 48 hours, a woman is killed by an intimate partner in Canada. That number comes from the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability for the year 2024. Furthermore, according to Statistics Canada data for the year 2023, 76% of victims of domestic violence are women. More than 127,000 cases of domestic violence were reported to the police in 2022. This is an increase of approximately 5% over the previous year.

• (1135)

I have three more statistics to share. Indigenous women are three to four times more likely to be victims of domestic violence. Women aged 15 to 24 are the most at risk. I will conclude by saying that four out of 10 victims report coercive control before physical violence occurs.

What is coercive control? Today's technology makes it possible to learn a lot about a person, but also to monitor their activities and to use that information to limit their privacy and freedom. Today's discussion needs to be about what can happen when, six months after a breakup, an intimate partner still has an unhealthy attachment and attempts to control or dominate their former partner. This domination can be financial or verbal. It has to stop. When people talk to us about this type of situation, they ask if there are enough resources. In my opinion, we need to agree from the outset on the need to legislate and make significant changes to put a stop to this. We will have to adjust and ensure that there are sufficient resources.

Earlier, I was talking about existing organizations. I would be remiss if I failed to mention an organization in Mont-Laurier that is very important to me: La Passe-R-Elle. This organization is over 30 years old. In fact, I believe it just celebrated its 40th anniversary. It is an emergency shelter where women can go when they feel so threatened that they need to leave their homes to go into hiding. For decades, this organization has been providing support and guidance so that these victims can take back control of their lives.

Private Members' Business

I feel sure that the organization has helped prevent femicide, even though there is probably no data to prove it. Furthermore, right now, in 2025, the organization is taking the next step. Due to the current economic situation, people who leave their homes are worried about what is going to happen next. Will they have the necessary means, resources and financial support? This organization has just built housing units for these women and children, so they can take the time to get back on their feet, regain their freedom and become self-reliant by reclaiming their power. That takes courage, but it also takes time. Often, time is what is lacking. I believe that, today, we will be able to take a step in the right direction.

In closing, I would like to make one last point. We talk a lot about women, but we should also talk about children. Sixty per cent of children are exposed to domestic violence. It has been noted that they develop trauma-related symptoms, which is something that should not be overlooked. What is more, 30% of children become direct victims of violence themselves. Children who are exposed to violence are seven times more likely to develop anxiety disorders. I hope that we will quickly vote to refer the bill to committee for review so that we can offer all the victims the help they deserve.

• (1140)

[English]

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise this morning on behalf of my neighbours in Oshawa to speak in strong support of Bill C-225, a bill that would protect victims, hold repeat offenders accountable and strengthen Canada's ability to respond to the growing epidemic of intimate partner violence.

For 10 years, Canadians have lived under Liberal hug-a-thug policies that have made our communities less safe. Crime, chaos and disorder have become a daily reality in too many neighbourhoods, including in my own hometown of Oshawa.

Intimate partner violence is nothing short of an epidemic in this country. It has been said before that, every 48 hours, a woman or girl is killed in Canada. That means, by that statistic, since the House was sitting last, a woman was killed due to intimate partner violence. By the time we sit on Wednesday, another woman will be killed by intimate partner violence, and again on Friday, and so on and so forth. It is impossible to hear “every 48 hours” and not feel the weight of what we are up against. Behind each heartbreaking news headline, real families are suffering, because Canada's broken criminal justice system is not working. The human cost of these reckless policies is devastating.

According to Statistics Canada's most recent report, intimate partner violence grew by 14% between 2018 and 2024. In 2024 alone, more than one-quarter of all victims of violent crime were victimized by a current or former intimate partner. These are not just numbers; they are lives. As a mother of two children, I think about the kind of Canada I want them to grow up in: a Canada where the justice system protects the vulnerable, where violent repeat offenders are held accountable and where no child has to witness the suffering or loss of a parent because the system failed to do its job.

Canadians have not forgotten and will not forget the tragic story of Bailey McCourt, a young woman whose life was stolen just hours after the judicial system failed her. Her husband murdered

her three hours after he was convicted for assault and threats. He walked out of court and carried out a fatal attack on Bailey. This is why I am proud to stand here today in support of Bailey's law.

As a mother, I cannot imagine the grief her family carries. I cannot imagine the unimaginable pain of telling a child why their mother is gone. No family should ever live through that. Unfortunately, stories like Bailey's are not isolated. Intimate partner violence is significantly under-reported, with just 36%, one-third, of intimate partner violence cases reported. Victims are often caught in a cycle of fear, trauma and economic dependence. Far too often, they feel trapped, unheard and unprotected by the very system that is supposed to safeguard them.

In 2024, police reported 142,724 victims of family violence, which included nearly 130,000 victims of intimate partner violence. Since 2014, there have been 1,755 family-related homicides in Canada, and nearly six in 10 of the victims were women or girls. More than 25,000 children and youth were victims of family violence last year, along with more than 7,600 seniors. These numbers are disturbing, and each represents a broken home, a traumatized child or a family that will never be the same. They show that the epidemic of intimate partner violence is escalating.

Doing nothing is not an option. Bill C-225, introduced by my colleague, the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, is a serious, targeted and urgently needed response, which is why I was proud to jointly second this bill in this session. One important step that C-225 would make is that the murder of a current or former intimate partner is automatically deemed first-degree murder, whether it was planned or not. This reflects the tragic reality that intimate partner killings often follow long patterns of control, coercion and escalating violence. It would guarantee that the harshest penalties would be applied in these cases.

• (1145)

Bill C-225 would also create clear stand-alone offences for intimate partner violence, including assault, assault with a weapon, causing bodily harm, aggravated assault, criminal harassment and uttering threats. This legislation additionally would empower courts to order risk-of-reoffending assessments at any stage. It would allow judges to detain an accused person for a short period to complete a professional assessment when needed to protect victims. The bill also would modernize how seized evidence is handled, extending retention periods to ensure investigations are thorough and victims remain safe.

Private Members' Business

I want to take a moment to thank Victim Services of Durham Region, Luke's Place and The Denise House, all located in my hometown of Oshawa. These organizations do extraordinary work supporting survivors, advocating for safety and providing a lifeline to women, men and children in danger. I also want to thank the intimate partner violence unit of the Durham Regional Police Service, which is also based in Oshawa, for its dedicated efforts to respond to these cases with professionalism, compassion and urgency.

Oshawa formally declared intimate partner violence an epidemic this past March. The Denise House, a 33-bed shelter for women and children fleeing violence, shared with me the reality behind that declaration. Last year, it supported more than 300 women but was forced to turn away more than 600 others because there was simply no space. Most of the women seen at The Denise House have experienced repeat violence, and Durham regional police continue to see intimate partner violence calls rise by about 25% each year.

The people at The Denise House also told me that ensuring repeat perpetrators are held in custody is essential because it allows women and children to remain safely in their homes, reduces pressure on overcrowded shelters and prevents the destabilizing displacement that often follows violent incidents. They also stressed that too many offenders are released on bail or receive sentences that do not match the seriousness of their crimes or their actions, creating a dangerous disparity compared to similar offences outside intimate relationships. When weapons are involved, the risk of a woman's being killed increases five-fold. That is why stronger sentencing provisions matter.

Because a woman's risk of harm increases when she seeks help, The people at The Denise House believe that Bill C-225's risk assessment mechanism would have the potential to save lives, especially considering the 43 femicides recorded in Ontario in the past year. Ultimately, the people at The Denise House shared that Bill C-225 would be a meaningful and necessary step forward in improving safety and accountability for survivors. Their perspectives are essential. They are the ones on the front lines. Victims are falling through the cracks and legislative change is so urgently needed.

This bill should be bipartisan. It should pass swiftly through the House and through committee and on to the other House, where I would like to see this bill pass very soon so that we can see real change for women, children and families who are suffering. Victims deserve more than words and promises. They deserve action and a Canada that protects them, believes them and makes their safety a priority. As a mother, I want every child to grow up free from fear in a country where justice is real and violence is never tolerated. Bill C-225 would move us closer to that Canada.

• (1150)

Jeremy Patzer (Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in the House of Commons to speak on behalf of the great people of southwest and west central Saskatchewan.

I want to commend my colleague from Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola on this fantastic bill. It is our job as members of Parliament to take issues from our local communities and find ways to advo-

cate for or work on them to make a better Canada. I firmly believe the member has done a great job with this bill. Unfortunately, it takes yet another tragic story for this bill to become reality.

When I was first elected in 2019, one of the first meetings I had in my office was with a group of women who wanted to talk to me about domestic violence. Saskatchewan, unfortunately, still carries the mantle for the highest rate of intimate partner violence per capita in Canada, and that number continues to be on the rise. In fact, if we go back to 2018, before I was even elected, there were 489 people per 100,000 who were impacted by intimate partner violence. That number is now almost 800 people per 100,000 in the province of Saskatchewan who are dealing with domestic violence. This is definitely a big issue in Saskatchewan and something I take very seriously.

One of the ladies who came to my office had lost, I think, her twin sister, who had been murdered by an intimate partner. They wanted to talk to me about what could be done about intimate partner violence. At that particular point in time, the issue they brought up and we worked closely on was a provision called Clare's Law, which was the disclosure of a person's history of domestic violence. We were able to do some work on that and, ultimately, get the RCMP to find a way to comply with Clare's Law, so that way Saskatchewan could become the first province to fully benefit from Clare's Law. We are here today to talk about a different law, though, which would be yet another great tool that could and should be used to deal with the scourge that is domestic violence.

We have heard the story of Bailey McCourt today. Multiple people have shared it. It is extremely tragic. When I read these tragic stories, I think about my two daughters and my wife, and what the tone is of what we are trying to accomplish in this place. I came to this place because I wanted to be able to make a better future, not just for my kids but for the next generation of Canadians. When we can learn from tragedy and the failures of the system and better protect people going forward, those are steps that we as parliamentarians must take.

With my final few seconds, I want to again acknowledge the great work by my colleague from Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, for putting forward this tremendous bill, and recognize the great speeches by my colleagues in the House today. I would acknowledge the family who is in attendance as well.

• (1155)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola has five minutes for his right of reply.

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

This is a profound moment for me. This is the first time I have been able to rise on my own private member's bill, as in within both the first and second hours. In the last Parliament, we had Bill C-291, which changed the name from "child pornography" to "child sexual abuse and exploitation material". I drafted that bill and worked through it with the member who now represents Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, but this being a bill that I both drafted and am hoping to usher through the House, it is very meaningful.

I want to acknowledge a few people: Karen, who is Bailey's mom, and Carrie Wiebe, who suffered in the attack that took Bailey McCourt's life. I also want to acknowledge that we have several members of Bailey's family here in Ottawa. We are not allowed to point people out, so I will not, but at the end of the day, Bailey's father, her stepmom and her aunt are all present. I thank all of these people, whom I will collectively refer to as "Bailey's family". I thank them all for their support and offer them my deepest condolences for what they have endured.

I thank the member for Lethbridge, the member for Oshawa and the member for Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, who rose on very short notice.

In my last two or three minutes, I want to address something. I had a good conversation with my colleague from Spadina—Harbourfront. I am quite frustrated with some of the talking points the government has put out, and here is why. We hear things like, "This bill sounds tough on crime, but it is not, because of issues with defence." When it comes to the murder provisions, that is about sentencing. Self-defence operates at the trial level, so if there is a valid self-defence claim, that occurs at trial, and the claim is either accepted or rejected by a judge or jury. If it is rejected, then there is a conviction.

In the current case, if there is a murder charge, the current state of law would mean that if self-defence is rejected, a person is liable for second-degree murder. When members say things like, "This could complicate it," it actually does not complicate it at all. Self-defence is a trial issue that is a decision for a judge and jury. What this would do is impact the sentencing.

I get very frustrated when I hear these things. I could point out so many things. The member for Victoria wrote to a constituent with words almost identical to the ones we heard. I was incredibly frustrated by reading that.

Somebody I want to acknowledge is Kelly Favreau, who was with My Voice, My Choice and is now with a group called Beyond the Verdict, which advocates. Her work is so tremendous on this. What a tremendous supporter she is. We come from opposite sides of the political spectrum, but we are united on protecting victims of intimate partner violence.

I will say this very clearly: If there is an issue whereby intimate partners who are abused may be liable for self-defence, then we as the House have to address it now. If there is an issue whereby the law would compel somebody to be found guilty of second-degree murder, then I challenge the House to address it right now, because that has been the state of the law for decades. Why are we not addressing that? I am happy to address it. Frankly, I will lead the

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charge to address that. Nobody wants to see a battered spouse who is acting in self-defence serve a life sentence.

I am optimistic and hopeful today. I am open to amendments. I would like to acknowledge the fact that this has been, in the last few weeks, a very collaborative exercise. I have met with the Minister of Justice with members of Bailey's family. I know other people in Bailey's family have also had time with the Minister of Justice.

I really hope we can get this through as a united House, to protect intimate partners and take one small step towards ending the very large scourge of intimate partner violence.

• (1200)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The question is on the motion.

[*Translation*]

If a member participating in person wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division, or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

[*English*]

Frank Caputo: Mr. Speaker, I would seek a recorded division, please.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, December 3, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

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[*English*]

MAKING LIFE MORE AFFORDABLE FOR CANADIANS ACT

The House resumed from November 19 consideration of the motion that Bill C-4, An Act respecting certain affordability measures for Canadians and another measure, be read the third time and passed.

Jeremy Patzer (Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour and privilege to rise on behalf of the great people of southwest and west central Saskatchewan. This weekend, we got to experience the first real blast of winter back home. It was down to the mid minus 20s. We had a bit of snow on the ground. I think we are fully into the grips of winter here now. To everybody who is out driving on the roads, or out working in the cold, I thank them for what they do and hope they stay safe. Again, it is an honour to be able to represent them here in the House of Commons.

I would like to say, as well, that I will be splitting my time with the member for Markham—Unionville.

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We are speaking today on Bill C-4. If the government were to come up with a creative title for this bill, it could start with “repealing Justin Trudeau”. This would be a good way to frame this bill, because, for the last number of years, we heard over and over, time and time again, from the Liberals on that side of the House that Canada had to have a carbon tax, that the carbon tax was the most effective way to deal with climate change, that the carbon tax was an affordability measure.

We heard all kinds of ludicrous and crazy comments from the government about the carbon tax, and the Liberals told us repeatedly, again and again, that we had to have it. We had to have it. Conservatives needed to support the government, or else, and so on and so forth, yet here we are: One of the Prime Minister's first acts after becoming Prime Minister was to halt the regulations on the carbon tax. Here in this bill, we have it written in part 3 about how they are finally going to repeal all the clauses of the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act and the fuel price on consumers. This is great. Conservative pressure got the government to finally admit and realize the carbon tax was punitive and punishing to Canadians.

Further proof of that is that right now, the price of gas around the country is actually at a nice low point. I would like to see it even lower yet. I will be honest; it could and should be lower, but at this point in time, it is significantly down from the highs of around \$1.80, when we were at the peak of the madness with the Liberals and their insistence on the carbon tax. The last time I filled up, it was \$1.18. Removing the carbon tax has had a huge portion to do with that. There are market measures, of course, that impact that, but the carbon tax was something that was imposed by the government on Canadians.

However, what the Liberals do not do in this bill is repeal the industrial carbon tax. We are seeing them actually double down on their insistence that it has to be in place. I am referencing the industrial carbon tax because this is an affordability bill, and the industrial carbon tax is a hidden tax on Canadians, but, in particular, it is because this bill also deals with housing and how the government is going to repeal the tax mechanism for first-time homebuyers on new or substantially renovated properties. Again, that was actually a Conservative idea. Conservatives were the ones who first proposed removing the tax on new and purpose-built homes, but the Liberals commandeered that as well.

Again, it is good to see two Conservative proposals and ideas make it into this bill. Our proposal would have gone a little further than this one does, but nevertheless, two Conservative principles in one bill is a good place to start for the government.

However, I would like to see them go a bit further. Why? Well, back in January, the Prime Minister, before he was the Prime Minister, was giving an interview, and he said to the interviewer something along the lines, “How much steel do you actually use? How much steel do you actually use?”, to downplay the role steel plays in the Canadian economy.

Well, this bill talks about housing. Within it, there are provisions on multi-dwelling units, condos and things like that. Just about every single condo that is built in this country has steel in it. We need steel in order to build high-rise buildings. We need steel for manufacturing. We need steel for all kinds of things.

I represent a riding in Saskatchewan. We have some manufacturers there. They tell me the industrial carbon tax is one of the single biggest threats they face. Again, because it is a hidden tax, they do not see it on their line items of the material they are bringing into their business to make their products with, but they know it is there, because it is forced onto the large emitters, which again are largely steel producers, concrete producers and things like that. This is one area where it applies.

● (1205)

However, it is also driving up the cost of housing. It has also had a dramatic impact on the cost of being able to build recreational facilities. I know the City of Swift Current is looking, first, to build a new swimming pool, and in the long term to add an indoor soccer facility and things like that. The cost to build this project in Canada has more than doubled in just the last couple of years.

The costs continue to skyrocket. We hear the Liberals get up and say it is Donald Trump's fault, or it is because of global issues, and so on and so forth, but the reality is that there are self-imposed issues at play here, and the industrial carbon tax is one of them.

There are other small towns affected, smaller communities, like the community of Biggar, for example. It is facing problems with its curling rink, which has been shut down for a couple of years. Biggar is one of the best communities for curling in Canada. It produces world champions, Olympic champions. People like Sandra Schmirler are from there, among a few others as well. It is a fantastic community that has always punched above its weight. The costs are exorbitant for Biggar to replace its curling rink, and when we look at a community of roughly give or take 2,000 people, plus or minus a few, that is a huge cost for a community like that to bear.

The government is single-handedly driving some of those costs to be higher than they need to be. If the government truly wanted to make this bill about affordability, it could have scrapped the industrial carbon tax, but it did not do it.

Another measure that the government could have taken is around lumber, so let us talk about lumber for a minute. If we are talking about housing, lumber is a huge part of that. We just had a take-note debate in the House last week on sawmill closures and on the softwood lumber issue. I will just reiterate that B.C. has seen around, give or take, 40 sawmill closures since 2015. Members will note that 2015 was the beginning of Canada not having a softwood lumber deal with the United States. That represents jobs and paycheques, but it is also GDP that Canada no longer has.

This time last year, there was an article written about nine forestry plant closures in Quebec. That was a CBC article. If anybody does not believe me, they can look it up. The CBC even wrote about it. Then we hear the Liberals trying to say that Canada has a better deal than everybody else around the world with the United States when it comes to tariffs and things like that, but we have some value-added products we make in Canada, such as kitchen cabinets, which we used to send down to the United States, and these have almost ground to a halt. Why is that? It is because we have one of the highest tariff rates in the world on these value-added products going down to the States. It is more than double what Europe's tariff rate is, so the Liberals' argument does not hold any water when it comes to some of these products.

If the government wanted to address affordability for Canadians, one of the places it could have started was getting a softwood lumber deal with the United States and prioritizing that. The Prime Minister said that he was the man for a crisis, and that was why Canadians needed to elect him. Tariffs have only gone up. They have gotten worse on steel and on lumber. If we look at affordability, it has gotten out of hand.

Part of this bill, as I mentioned earlier, is the tax cut for Canadians. The Parliamentary Budget Officer did a nice report outlining the impacts it would have on Canadians. The average Canadian is going to see \$280 in average savings, which is a small amount, but every bit of savings would help. However, let us break it down a bit more. When we look at what a single parent in the first income tax bracket is going to save in one year, it is \$140. A single senior in the first income tax bracket is the biggest loser here, with only \$50 in savings.

If we compare that to a senior couple in the second income tax bracket, they are going to save \$680. The discrepancy between people who are in the first bracket and later in the second, third, fourth and fifth income tax brackets is crazy. When we look at the cost of living, we know it is seniors on a fixed income who are disproportionately impacted. When we look at single mothers with children, trying to put healthy, nutritious food on the table, they are struggling. This tax break shows that they are basically getting the equivalent of a couple of loaves of bread and a couple of packages of sandwich meat. That is about what it would amount to.

● (1210)

If the government truly wants to tackle affordability issues, I have outlined a few areas where it could do that, and there are many others. I am sure I can get to them in the questions and comments.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member made reference to the industrial carbon tax. Look at the Alberta premier, who is a Conservative, by the way. She is supportive of the industrial carbon tax.

My question is related to Bill C-4. It is a very powerful piece of legislation that would enable over 22 million Canadians to get a tax break. The Conservatives like to talk, and talk is cheap when it comes to delivering on important issues. They like to filibuster to prevent laws from passing. Back in the day, I guess it was in 2015

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or 2016, the Conservatives voted against a tax break for Canada's middle class.

Will the member commit that they will not only vote in favour of this bill, but also see this bill pass before the end of the year?

Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, as I told the member, this bill has some Conservative values and Conservative principles in it. The Liberals are starting to run out of ideas. This is Bill C-4. It is only the fourth piece of legislation that this place has seen, and already, they are trying to plagiarize Conservative ideas and principles.

Of course, we are all for tax breaks for Canadians. We would like to see the government take it even a step further. When we look at the tax that is collected, it is not even enough to cover the cost of servicing the debt load the government is saddling onto the next generation of Canadians.

It is time for the Liberals to start talking about and doing things to try to increase productivity in Canada. Canadians need to see their paycheques go further and be able to do more. That would solve a lot more than the government coming up with more programs that do not actually help Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I really enjoyed my colleague's speech, and I especially appreciated when he mentioned the forestry plant closures in Quebec. That is what happened with the Arbec mill in Amos, in my riding. I wonder if he could talk about solutions that could have been included in this bill.

For example, the Bloc Québécois is proposing that the federal government pay 50% of the countervailing duties being imposed. Everyone agrees that borrowing from the federal government is essentially cost-free. The result is that it is the people on the ground, namely the machinery owners and so on, who end up paying. A wage subsidy would also be useful.

That is the context, but what did the government propose in this bill? It plans to lower taxes. What does that mean? It means that one-third of this year's deficit will go into people's pockets. People will take the cheque, but the generational debt will remain.

Should that money have been invested elsewhere, perhaps in our forestry industry?

● (1215)

[*English*]

Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, the member is right. The forestry sector is one of the breadwinners for Canada, or at least it has been historically. The government has completely abandoned and neglected it. I would have liked to see more measures to support economic growth, because that is what the forestry sector brings. Unfortunately, the member's riding has been decimated by bad Liberal policy, again ignoring getting a trade deal done with the United States.

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We need more demand for these products in Canada. Housing starts are still going down across this country. If the government got out of the way so that we could truly enable homebuilding to happen, the forestry sector could continue to go up and we would have more places to be able to use these products here in Canada.

The government cannot quite figure out how to take advantage of this strategic asset that we have.

Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Feed Ontario's "Hunger Report 2025" came out in recent days, and the numbers were very shocking. We saw an increase in the number of seniors, working people and people with disabilities accessing food banks. I have a question for my colleague, who cited some of the disparities in the savings on taxes within this bill for single seniors and single parents.

The bill is called the making life more affordable for Canadians act. Does it accomplish that at all? What should have been done differently?

Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, while there is little income tax relief in this bill, the cost of inflation and the cost of food continue to go up. I keep track of the price of butter, for example, and in just the last year, it has gone up \$2 at my local grocery store.

There was an article by Policy Options magazine, entitled "Ten million Canadians live in food-insecure households. The federal budget doesn't help them." A quarter of Canadians are food insecure. This bill does nothing to help those Canadians be able to get out of that particular position. If the government was serious, this is the kind of thing it would look to address.

Michael Ma (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is one message that the Conservatives have for the Liberals when it comes to their overall approach in bills like Bill C-4: Get out of the way.

On the surface, the Liberals are selling Bill C-4 as a way of giving a tax break to 22 million Canadians, among other components. That is the headline. That is the label on the packaging. What is the fine print on the packaging? The Conservatives took a look. The fine print is about embedding this proposed tax break in the bigger picture of Liberal deficit spending.

We have just passed a new budget that runs a \$78-billion deficit. The government is adding \$90 billion in new spending. That is \$5,000—

Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order. First of all, I want to apologize to my colleague.

There are some technical problems. I very much appreciate all of my colleagues here, but the camera is not focused on the person speaking. I am sure a lot of people have noticed. It reminds me of the good old days, when I was a TV journalist.

Maybe we can fix it right now.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I thank the hon. member for his intervention. I am going to pause for just a second.

I ask the member to hold on for a brief intervention while I consult with the Table.

• (1220)

SITTING SUSPENDED

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): What we are going to do at this point is suspend the House to the call of the Chair.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 12:19 p.m.)

• (1230)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12:33 p.m.)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Before we allow the member for Markham—Unionville to begin his statement, I ask whether he has the unanimous consent of the House to allow him to deliver his remarks from a seat that is not assigned to him.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Michael Ma (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is one message the Conservatives have for the Liberals when it comes to their overall approach in bills like Bill C-4: Get out of the way.

On the surface, the Liberals are selling Bill C-4 as a way to give a tax break to 22 million Canadians, among other components. That is the headline. That is the label on the package. What is in the fine print on this packaging? The Conservatives took a look. The fine print is about embedding this proposed tax break in the bigger picture of Liberal deficit spending.

We just passed a new budget running a \$78-billion deficit. The government is adding \$90 billion in new spending. That is \$5,000 per Canadian household. Meanwhile, the tax break on offer for Canadians in Bill C-4 checks out to \$90 per month. Anything on offer in the bill is already wiped out by interest on the Liberals' deficit spending. The central-planning Liberals are committed to interventionist tactics. We, as Conservatives, are simply asking them to get out of the way of hard-working Canadians so they can build our country strong.

We are in a shameful situation in this country, where over two million Canadians are visiting food banks every month. At the end of every month, paycheques are not going far enough. Why is that? The Liberals want to deflect and blame this solely on the trade deficit. However, there is a simple economic fact: When we create more units of currency and map them to an economy that is not meaningfully producing more units of goods and services, we get inflation. As a case in point, in the last five years, grocery prices have risen more than 20%. We cannot print our way out of economic stagnation. We are already in this situation because of all the deficit spending engaged in during the Trudeau years. Why are we doing more of the same?

How insulting it is to hard-working Canadians for the Liberals to create a macro situation where paycheques are not enough for food and rent, then pat themselves on the back for doling out welfare in various guises. It is no different from throwing rocks at household windows and offering window replacement services, or pushing us into a pool and offering us a floater, yet this is the world view of the interventionist, nanny-state central planners. The interest payments on our debt already exceed what is transferred to provinces for health care, yet the modus operandi of the nanny state is rather to add to this debt instead of simply letting the natural drive of hard-working Canadians carry our economy forward.

Instead of getting out of the way, the Liberals choose to continually stand in the way of a naturally productive, real economy. How can we meaningfully affect prices at the grocery store when the industrial carbon tax makes it harder to grow food, when the fuel standard makes it harder to ship food and when the packaging tax makes it harder to sell food? The Liberals operate in a system of intervention and then propose branded, one-shot measures to create the image of doing good by Canadians. If they stopped their environmentalist overreach, Canadians could do good by themselves.

I want to affirm, right now, that all parties in the House seem to me to be committed to making lives more affordable for Canadians. What separates us is not only our methods but also what we can call accumulated technical debt from previous approaches. No matter how many one-off, targeted measures the Liberals put on offer, they are weighed down by the second-order effects of having engaged in far too much deficit spending. The cumulative path of dependence on 10 years of out-of-control spending is a national situation where monthly income cannot meet monthly bills. Therefore, what we must address here is the root of the mindset behind all the deficit spending.

● (1235)

Allow me a moment to address how the Liberals could get out of the way and, in so doing, alter the course of Canada's affordability crisis. We can do this only by empowering hard-working Canadians to take the lead.

The first shift is one of mindset. Do the Liberals believe in the capacity of their fellow citizens? Do they believe in the entrepreneurs and businesses that move the needle economically in this country? If they do not, I completely understand why they are so attached to interventionist measures. It all makes sense. Otherwise, if the Liberals actually believe in the people, they should get out of the way and create opportunities for everyday Canadians to step up through grassroots initiatives.

The second shift consists of removing all the hidden taxes that pile onto the price of groceries. The Conservatives will keep on repeating this until the Liberals hear us: Remove the industrial carbon tax, remove the fuel standard and remove the packaging tax. When I say, "Get out of the way", there is a very literal way to do this. Why are the Liberals hindering every single step of the grocery supply chain? Food is such a fundamental part of total monthly spending, and this is the one, single area where a concerted effort to get out of the way would yield genuine results. The Liberals do not need a history lesson from me, but one of the core drivers of the French Revolution was the elevated price of grain. There is no area

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where the Liberals should be more incentivized to get out of the way than the total supply chain that affects grocery prices. When it comes to food, the issue extends beyond partisanship. This is life or death.

Finally, the third shift is amplifying the power of a common Canadian paycheque. Canadians are already putting in the hours, day in and day out. Why can Canadians not afford basic necessities through the income they are already earning? It is an insult to every hard-working household to receive handouts after putting in an honest day's work. I believe the Liberals need to do some soul-searching around how they have created this macro trap where the average monthly salary is not enough to afford the average monthly bills.

The bottom line here is very clear: The \$90-per-month benefit in Bill C-4 is wiped out by the \$5,000-per-household cost of deficit spending in the new Liberal budget. If the Liberals want to address affordability, their first step should be tackling the basket of items in every Canadian's monthly spend: groceries. They can do this by stopping their nanny-state, central-planning interventions, stopping the industrial carbon tax, stopping the fuel standard and stopping the packaging tax.

My Liberal colleagues, please get out of the way of hard-working Canadians and have the conviction that people can make this economy thrive.

● (1240)

Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two questions.

The member mentioned clean fuel standards. I find it disappointing that the Conservative Party, at a time when canola farmers in this country and members of the Canola Council of Canada are talking about the importance of biofuel policy in driving domestic demand while there is uncertainty in the markets.

Can the member opposite explain why the Conservative Party is against the biofuel policy that helps support canola farmers, including in many of the ridings the Conservative Party represents?

Also, on China, we think it is important to engage as a government and to have conversations to remove the tariffs that are in place. The member for Simcoe North and other Conservative members have suggested that any engagement with China is a bad policy.

Would the member care to give his perspective on that, as well?

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Michael Ma: Mr. Speaker, if we look at what is happening today, we are seeing reciprocal tariffs between China and Canada. When Canada imposed a 100% tax on electric vehicles, China imposed reverse tariffs on Canada. What we need to look at is how effective the Liberal government has been in negotiating all the tariffs around the world, whether it is with China, the U.S. or Europe. We seem to be getting more tariffs rather than reducing them.

I would like to understand how the Liberal government is going to be addressing this and demonstrating to Canadians that it is working for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, by officially scrapping the carbon tax, Bill C-4 confirms that Quebecers were robbed.

The Liberal government decided to entice voters with compensation for the carbon tax, even though the tax had not even been levied for the period in question. This was funded through taxes paid by Quebecers, meaning we lost \$814 million.

What does my colleague think of that?

• (1245)

[*English*]

Michael Ma: Mr. Speaker, this is another demonstration of the Liberal government mismanaging the taxes it has collected. The so-called carbon tax, back then, was ineffective. It did not do anything for Canadians and did not do anything for carbon reduction. It is a reflection of the Liberal government's mismanagement.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my colleague could comment on the hypocrisy of the Liberals.

For a decade, they said that, if we did not believe in the carbon tax, the world would burn, and that if we were against the inflationary carbon tax, flooding and catastrophes would happen. Then they turned around and withdrew the carbon tax, saying that it was too inflationary.

Michael Ma: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for highlighting the fearmongering slogans the Liberal government used to scare Canadians. However, with the stroke of a pen, it was able to eliminate the tax, and the world did not crash.

How can we now believe that, with this budget and going forward, the Liberal government can continue to deliver benefits to Canadians?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is interesting. Here we are debating Bill C-4, which would give a tax break to 22 million Canadians, get rid of the carbon tax for consumers and provide for getting rid of the GST for first-time homebuyers. One would think that this is something the Conservative Party of Canada could get behind and want us to pass.

Will the member give his personal commitment to try to get this thing passed before Christmas?

Michael Ma: Mr. Speaker, if the member had listened to my speech, I said that, for \$90 a month, we end up with a \$5,000 deficit

for each household. In my simple math, that does not really work out well. When we look at the various components of this, eliminating one tax and then piling up other taxes would not benefit Canadians.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Before we resume debate, I will inform the House that the technical issues with the broadcast appear to have been fixed. Going forward, members will be expected to speak from their assigned seats.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if I may, I will be sharing my time with the member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

To no one's surprise, the Bloc Québécois will oppose this bill, because it fails to meet Quebecers' real needs in several respects.

Let us begin with the elephant in the room: the tax cut. No one can be against tax cuts, obviously, but it is all a matter of perspective. Currently, the maximum tax reduction for an individual taxpayer amounts to a savings of \$4 a week this year and \$8 a week in 2026. During the student strike, that would not even pay for one coffee a day. In other words, the taxpayer will receive a maximum of \$210 in 2025.

This brings us back to a crucial question. What is Canada's financial position? Right now, the budget deficit is estimated at \$78 billion. In the coming years, the government will be forced to take action by making cuts all over the place. Therefore, asking where this \$210 in savings is going to come from is a legitimate question. If taxpayers have to resort to the private health care sector to get an appointment more quickly because of government cuts to health transfers, those savings disappear. If taxpayers see their rent go up because Ottawa fails to transfer money for housing to the provinces, those savings disappear. There is no shortage of examples of ways that those savings could disappear, whether through cuts to federal-provincial transfers or a reduction in the quality of public services following draconian cuts to certain key services. In short, these tax savings are interesting, but they will raise the cost of other services that taxpayers are entitled to receive. In essence, this tax cut is like robbing Peter to pay Paul.

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According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, these tax cuts will cost \$28.2 billion over five years. That is a third of the current deficit. That is a lot of money for the government, money that could have been used to build more housing and to spur the construction of sports and recreation infrastructure in the regions, while promoting the use of lumber to reduce the impact on the forestry sector. That money could have been used to provide more support for first-time homebuyers. It could have been used to increase health transfers to improve services for our constituents, particularly seniors. It is all about choices and priorities.

This bill would also have a negative impact on some taxpayers because it is poorly drafted. For example, some seniors who are subject to the alternative minimum tax would see their tax burden increase. People who are entitled to certain non-refundable credits, like the disability tax credit or the medical expense tax credit, would lose out. Roughly 60,000 people would be affected by an increase in their taxes, even though they should be entitled to this tax cut.

This brings to mind a rather special situation in Quebec in recent years. Quebec has increased the Quebec pension plan to help seniors. Because that pension income went up, the guaranteed income supplement on the federal side went down. It is the poorest people who have been hit the hardest. Instead of adjusting the calculation in Quebec, the federal government is cutting services to seniors. I can say that my office is getting calls from seniors about this.

On top of that, the Bloc Québécois had specifically asked the government to help seniors with declining incomes by increasing old age security for seniors aged 65 to 74 to put them on an equal footing with those aged 75 and over. All we were really asking for is that the government stop discriminating based on age. The government decided to reject that measure after supporting it last year.

That brings me to the matter of the GST on new homes. Once again, this is a worthwhile measure with which we agree. However, we had to fight with the government, because it tried to reject our amendment that would have moved the effective date to March 20 of this year. That was the date on which the government announced its intention of eliminating the GST for first-time homebuyers, but the government turned around and decided to go with the date of May 27 for its bill. Clearly, there is a lack of consistency here that created a gap, and many young families fell through it.

I would also remind the House that first-time homebuyers are by definition tenants. In Quebec, leases expire on June 30. Keeping May 27 as the date caused problems for first-time homebuyers in Quebec, who had to find someone to assign their lease to, rather than simply notify their landlord that they would not be renewing it. Our amendment served a dual purpose: It sought to ensure the government's integrity and respond to Quebec's reality.

• (1250)

It would also have been a good idea for this government to make interest-free loans available to first-time homebuyers, as a way to help them put together a down payment more quickly so they could access home ownership faster. This would have enabled many Quebecers to combine the benefits of the FHSA and these types of loans in order to purchase a property. This is a simple and effective measure that poses no danger to the government. The cost would

have been low, and it would have helped stimulate the economy, particularly through housing construction. At the same time, it would have helped our forestry sector.

Before I wrap up, I must address another fundamental issue raised by this bill, and that is the government's decision to eliminate carbon pricing outside of Quebec through this bill without putting forward a single credible measure for offsetting the environmental damage that will result from this decision. As the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development clearly stated, the price on pollution was one of the few elements of the federal emissions reduction plan that was really working. Eliminating it was not only an environmental error, it was a political decision that flew directly in the face of the science, the facts and possibly, in the long term, the interests of Quebecers and Canadians. Fortunately, Quebec will continue to play a role with its carbon market with California, which is still in place.

With climate change intensifying year after year, causing forest fires, floods, droughts and coastal erosion, the timing of this decision is profoundly irresponsible. Instead of strengthening one of the few tried-and-tested tools at our disposal, the government chose to weaken it for short-term political gain. Quebec will once again pay a steep price.

I would like to draw the House's attention to a very concrete example. In the summer of 2023, the Abitibi—Témiscamingue region and northern Quebec were among the areas hardest hit by forest fires. Thousands of residents, some 5,500 people, had to be evacuated from their homes. This tragic situation was not an isolated case. All across Canada, more than 10 million hectares burned that year, smashing previous records. The devastating fire that ravaged the Abitibi—Témiscamingue region is a striking illustration of what can happen when effective climate policies are abandoned in favour of short-sighted economic decisions.

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When it eliminated the carbon tax outside of Quebec, the federal government also issued so-called rebate cheques to the residents of those provinces. The cheques were intended to offset a tax that in reality no longer existed. These payments were given out in the middle of an election campaign. They were basically election hand-outs paid for by all Canadian taxpayers. Quebeckers did not receive any of these cheques, but they still helped pay for them. In concrete terms, this represents a direct financial loss of \$814 million for Quebec taxpayers. This is money that was taken directly from the pockets of Quebeckers and given out elsewhere in Canada. That is not responsible environmental or fiscal policy. It is an unfair transfer that penalizes Quebec for having established, well ahead of the rest of the country, an efficient and consistent carbon market through the greenhouse gas cap-and-trade system. The Quebec National Assembly voted unanimously to call for compensation for this injustice. The Bloc Québécois made it one of its pre-budget demands. However, the federal government refused, at committee and in public, to right this wrong or even acknowledge it.

A government cannot claim to be fighting climate change seriously and then ditch the only mechanism it had that actually reduced emissions. It cannot claim to respect Quebec while taking hundreds of millions of Quebec taxpayer dollars and sending them to provinces that have chosen not to join Quebec's carbon market. True environmental responsibility demands consistency, fairness and respect for the choices of provinces that lead by example. Bill C-4 fails on each of these counts.

By rejecting this bill, we are affirming our commitment, not only to the tax fairness that Quebeckers demand, but also to a responsible and sustainable vision of the environment. We refuse to sacrifice effective climate change fighting tools, which are verified by experts and have already proven to be effective, in favour of short-term political manoeuvring. By saying no to Bill C-4, we are saying yes to a future for generations to come, yes to consistency and yes to justice for Quebec.

I hope this vote will be considered not as a mere partisan gesture, but as a moral commitment to our constituents, our land and the rights of Quebeckers.

• (1255)

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is clear is the government's position on three very important tax breaks for Canadians. That is what Bill C-4 is about: affordability and being there in a very real and tangible way for Canadians.

What is unclear is the positioning of the Bloc. I would be very interested in knowing this: Does the Bloc clearly support Bill C-4? Does it want Bill C-4 to pass before the end of the year?

[Translation]

Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned at the beginning of my speech, I oppose Bill C-4 for obvious reasons. Yes, a cheque will be sent out that might amount to \$210 for one fiscal year. However, I am a Quebec taxpayer, and scrapping the carbon tax will cost me more because health care costs are skyrocketing. Climate

change is generating health care costs of \$6 billion a year. That money will come out of the pockets of Quebeckers.

As for the carbon tax rebate that Canadians in the rest of Canada received, it was paid for by Quebeckers. We paid \$814 million. Obviously, as a Quebec taxpayer, I am paying part of that amount, which the member for Winnipeg North will not admit.

[English]

William Stevenson (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my fellow committee member brought up a few things that the accountant in me likes to acknowledge, concerning the unintended consequences that happened with regard to the disability tax credit and to the seniors' supplement.

I am wondering if the member has any insight, from when he was looking at this, as to whether the Liberal government has actually taken into account any of the unintended consequences, if you have heard of any changes, and what you might suggest the government do with regard to these unintended consequences.

• (1300)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I remind members to please address comments through the Chair.

The hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

[Translation]

Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Yellowhead for his question and for the compassion and rigour he has shown on the two committees on which I serve. I really appreciate this member, especially because he talks about tax fairness in his speeches.

When it comes to seniors, I consulted with seniors in a dozen municipalities in Abitibi—Témiscamingue, including indigenous communities. The take-away from those consultations is that people feel as though they worked hard all their lives and yet many seniors are no longer able to make ends meet and have to do without. More and more seniors are couch surfing. Hidden homelessness is on the rise, and an increasing number of widows and widowers have to leave their homes because they can no longer afford to stay there. This is a very serious situation.

I do not think it would have been that difficult to increase seniors' income a little, but this government would rather cheap out on them.

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, three weeks ago, we proposed all sorts of measures to help the forestry industry. On Friday, I learned that my riding of Laurentides—Labelle will also be affected. Groupe Crête, which has three mills, just announced that it is closing its mill in Mont-Blanc for three months as of January, and yet we have solutions.

Can my colleague tell us once again what we need to do to save our forestry industry?

Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Laurentides—Labelle for emphasizing something so fundamental. Again, I will use the word cheap to describe the federal government. In Quebec, we have an industry that has been unstable for decades because of the crisis with the Americans. We are not in this situation just because of Donald Trump. This has been going on for decades because the federal government has not been doing anything about it. The government may have spent tens of millions of dollars over the years, but that is nothing compared to the tens of billions of dollars it invests in the oil and gas industry.

The forestry industry is in crisis. It needs help. The Bloc Québécois proposed that the government pay some of the countervailing duties and provide a wage subsidy to help businesses. That would have been so simple, but the federal government ignored that suggestion. It is cheap and meanwhile, people back home are losing their jobs. People throughout Quebec are losing their jobs. Temporary layoff notices are being issued just before Christmas. I think that is unacceptable. The solution is simple, and it does not involve giving another credit card to anyone about to declare bankruptcy.

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ) Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise in the House, and I am very humbled to follow on from the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue, with his great eloquence and the heart he puts into standing up for the residents of his region and of Quebec as a whole. I thank him very much for all he does.

As my colleague said, the Bloc Québécois is going to oppose Bill C-4. There is nothing surprising in that. Part 4 of the bill proposes amendments to the Canada Elections Act for British Columbia, which does not really concern us. In any event, we are in agreement on that matter. There is, of course, the tax on homes, with which we are also in agreement. We appreciate the changes that are being made.

There are, however, two big issues that were not changed by the government even though, as usual, the Bloc Québécois members worked like reasonable adults with the common good in mind. We proposed arrangements and amendments, but they were not accepted. We find ourselves in a position where we must oppose Bill C-4, particularly due to the measure concerning the price on pollution. This will come as no surprise to my colleagues. I would like Canadians listening to this speech to take a moment to think. I am going to provide a fine example of the way populism can be harmful in politics.

The Conservatives and the Leader of the Opposition have succeeded so well in demonizing this measure through slogans—always repeating the same phrase, making repetitive little videos where they do not explain things and often do not even tell the truth—that this ended up taking root in the public's mind. People started saying that the carbon tax was a bad thing. However, what the Liberal government eliminated was the part that benefited those who are less well off, and that is the great irony here. Most people on lower incomes received more money back than they paid in carbon tax. By repeating all day every day that they wanted to build the homes, stop the crime and fix the budget, the Conservatives succeeded in taking money away from Canadians who are less well

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off. The Liberals were okay with that, as they used it to stay in power.

That is a damned good example of the dark side of what can happen in a parliament. It is incredibly sad. What makes matters worse and makes this situation even darker is the fact that the Liberals refused to pay back the \$814 million they owe Quebeckers who had paid this money. This is completely unfair. To get elected, the current Prime Minister decided to pad the final cheque even though these rebates were being made in advance. People used to get a cheque every three months to compensate for what they were going to spend on carbon taxes over the next three months. Ninety per cent of the revenue collected through the carbon tax was returned to taxpayers. Not only did the Liberals yield under pressure, but they also dropped the ball on communication. It seems to me it would have been easy to defend that.

The Liberals got rid of the carbon tax and let rebate cheques go out at the beginning of the election campaign, a few days before the vote, for a tax that had already been eliminated and would not be paid. I cannot imagine that they had a right to do that. They just ended up giving out gift cards. The message the people heard was, “The generous Liberals cut us a cheque, so let us vote for them”. Money for that cheque came from the consolidated fund. The Minister of Finance or any other Liberal elected official can say what they want, but the fact is that the \$814 million that Quebeckers paid into the consolidated federal fund was withdrawn and given to Canadians in the other provinces, and then they are saying that members of the Bloc Québécois are always complaining and that Quebec is part of confederation. That is but a small example of what we see each and every day. That is why Quebec needs to be independent.

This is really outrageous, and what is more, it hurts our own policies. We know that Quebec has always been forward-thinking. I apologize for saying this to my colleagues and I am sorry if that hurts them, but it is what it is. We are always ahead of the curve. We need only think about day cares, which we put in place 10 years ago. English Canada has just woken up and recognized that it is a good, so they are going to do the same.

Fortunately, this was on the eve of another election and we managed to get money for Quebec because had we been mid-way through a majority term, not only would the government have ran with our idea, but it would also have crushed our existing system and replaced it with its own because whatever comes from the federal Canada is always much better, right?

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• (1305)

We are tired of that. Withdrawing from the environmental policy is affecting our carbon exchange. Quebec and California are the last jurisdictions in North America focusing on the future of our children and grandchildren. That is incredibly sad. I am not telling the people listening to us at home that we want to tax them or prevent them from putting gas in their cars. That is Conservative rhetoric. That is not what I am saying. What I am saying is that we need to put reasonable and effective incentive measures that will work over the long term. This is working well in Quebec, as evidenced by the fact that Quebec has experienced the most significant development among Canadian provinces in recent years. It is funny that we are the only province with a carbon exchange. It cannot be all that bad. Moreover, it will be even better in the future because there are places around the world, including the European Union, that will start to put limits on what comes in from outside. They could tell countries that have not paid for pollution in their own area that they will have to pay for it before they can export anything to another country. Why can we not do the same thing here? Once again, I am quickly running out of time.

Let us turn to the tax cut. Initially, we were all happy with the tax cut. No one can be against that. Inflation is high, wages have not kept up with inflation, everyone is struggling to pay ridiculously high rent and interest rates are up. The government decided to offer a tax cut, which, although small, is not a bad thing. The difference is that before we vote on a measure, we study and we analyze, and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House does not seem to have done that, from what I can tell from the last question he asked my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

One thing became clear when we were analyzing this bill. I am not saying this just for the sake of it. I did not wake up one fine morning and get a light bulb moment and think it would be a good idea to say that this bill will hurt the poor or think that this would make a great argument. Other political parties do that. The Parliamentary Budget Officer—a reliable, solid and independent figure, one so independent we sometimes get the impression that the government would like to whittle away his powers—has told us the tax cut as designed is problematic for the most vulnerable individuals. Some seniors subject to the alternative minimum tax will see their tax burden go up instead of going down and some people who receive non-refundable tax credits, such as the disability tax credit, will also see their tax burden go up. How disgusting is that? People with disabilities will see their taxes go up.

It is the same thing when it comes to the medical expense tax credit. Those already burdened with high medical bills will face even greater expenses. Not all expenses will be covered and not everyone has good drug coverage. These tax credits will lose all value when calculated at the first tax bracket. This is appalling and it is disgusting. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, this will impact over 60,000 people. Could the government not have made a small amendment for these 60,000 individuals by amending a subsection here and there so that they are not impacted? I guess not, because the government is moving at speed and wants to have this bill passed before Christmas so they have something to brag about

around the dinner table. They will have cut taxes with a bunch of empty words that mean nothing.

There lies the problem with this Parliament. There are people here putting up appearances. Is it possible to have real content? People will say that Bloc members are the bad guys because we are voting against tax cuts. Yes, but I do not think my constituents will be angry when I tell them that the cuts amount to less than four bucks a month for the least fortunate. Those same constituents will give me 20 bucks to put in Christmas hampers, because 'tis the season of giving. Berthier—Maskinongé celebrated Noël du coeur last weekend. We raised funds for some 140 families in Saint-Jean-de-Matha and some 220 to 260 families in Louisville. These families will get food hampers throughout the year. Will I vote for a tax cut that will lower my own taxes and increase taxes for the least fortunate? The answer is no thanks, and better luck to them next time.

• (1310)

Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech this afternoon. I really enjoyed working with him at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food when I was there.

However, I would like to set the record straight regarding what he said in his speech about the government's decision to do away with consumer carbon pricing. We mainly did that to support bilingual people, respond to the needs of rural residents and protect vulnerable families who were worse off. That is exactly why the government replaced this measure with a tax cut in this bill. This measure is very important for Canadian and Quebec families.

Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Kings—Hants, who I really appreciate. He was right to bring this up, but I think that he is going to be disappointed with what I have to say. There are two things.

First, when he says that the government eliminated carbon pricing for individuals to replace it with something else, that is false, because it was not replaced with anything. No new environmental measures have been introduced. On the contrary, the Prime Minister has wiped out so many environmental measures that the architect of his environmental policies stepped down last week. It is a big deal when the environment minister steps down. I refuse to believe that this tax was replaced with something else.

It was replaced with a small tax cut of \$200, or \$4 a month, for less fortunate individuals. The main reason why my colleague and others agreed to it was that they were at risk of losing their ridings to Conservatives. That is the real reason when it comes right down to it. They realized that they had to get rid of the carbon tax in order to keep their jobs.

I would rather lose my job on a matter of principle than change a policy that is so important for the country.

• (1315)

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague on his speech and on the comments he just made, but I would still like to ask him the following question.

The so-called architect of environmental policies that he mentioned earlier—obviously referring to the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie—was there six months ago when the government decided to get rid of the carbon tax. He was there when the government introduced and voted for Bill C-5, which allowed for last week's announcements.

Did the architect's conscience finally catch up to him, well after all the things he did in the past? We must not forget that he was elected by the people of his riding with a 17,000-vote majority after getting rid of the carbon tax, this government's flagship environmental measure.

Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate my colleague, who always has good, intelligent and well-thought-out questions.

I have to agree that, yes, he seems to have woken up. At the same time, I cannot criticize the guy. He was trying to change things from within.

There are two ways to work in politics. The first is to come in and toe the line, and the second is to try to get inside the system and make changes from within. I think what ultimately pushed the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie to resign was the cap on greenhouse gas emissions and the fact that generating electricity from thermal power plants in the west will now be permitted, but it will no longer be included in the pricing. Those things matter. I mentioned architecture earlier. There is not enough time to say very much in a 10-minute speech. I think that is what was so disappointing. Sooner or later, after swallowing so many bitter pills, the last one is too much to bear.

I have to say yes, that I agree in part with what my colleague just said, but I still—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I must give the hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle a little time to ask a question in 30 seconds.

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague whether he heard the response from Quebec's former finance minister when I asked him a question and told him that investments are assets and equipment. Investing in loans and in tax cuts is an economic lever, but no one can convince me that that is an investment, per se.

Would my colleague agree that the current budget is nothing more than smoke and mirrors to win votes?

Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, that was quite the assist. Yes, I agree with my colleague. Her comment basically demonstrates what I was saying in my speech.

I was saying that this government is all about looking and sounding a certain way. It talks about a generational budget, saying that it is an investment. However, when we scratch beneath the surface and take a closer look, it is clear that they are spending money and pretending that they have just bought a house. I am sorry, but peo-

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ple cannot go to the bank one morning to borrow money saying that they gave their brother-in-law \$10,000 and claiming that is their collateral. It does not work that way. To provide collateral, they need to have an asset.

The finance minister's creative accounting is nonsense.

[*English*]

Billy Morin (Edmonton Northwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my friend from Richmond—Arthabaska.

I rise today to speak on Bill C-4. Although this bill is inspired by the Conservatives' platform and promises, Bill C-4's collection of half measures does not deal with the real drivers of the affordability crisis: large deficits, high spending, and heavy taxation and regulation. We acknowledge the Liberals for admitting that certain measures are needed after 10 years of Liberal economic mismanagement, which has caused high inflation, doubled housing costs, and high food prices, and, on top of the pandemic pressures, has made life unaffordable for everyday Canadians. However, no matter how we slice it, Bill C-4's impact is too small compared to the previous tax increases, carbon pricing and other failed Liberal economic policies.

When I think about affordability, I think of the residents of Edmonton Northwest who have been hit hardest by Liberal policies that are out of touch with everyday Canadians. For seniors on fixed incomes, who are among the hardest hit by rising grocery, energy and housing costs, Bill C-4 does not provide targeted relief. Seniors are worried about being able to stay in their long-term care facilities or their own homes, or even being able to afford to be active in the community, such as at the Westend Seniors Activity Centre. I also think about the many others who are left out of Bill C-4: low-income, working-age adults who do not earn enough to pay income tax; people who pay large shares of their income on rent; people not old enough for OAS; food-insecure households who need more than hampers; women-led households with multiple children; uncompensated caregivers; people new to Edmonton Northwest; and the list goes on.

Food Banks Canada reports that food bank visits doubled since 2019 to about 2.2 million in March 2025. These are everyday, middle-class Canadians who are now relying on food banks. One in five clients is employed and one in three is a child, with 70% living in market-rent housing. The Liberal government's school lunch program ignores the two-thirds of individuals who rely on food banks who are not children. In their recent report, Food Banks Canada says, "the program does not directly address the structural causes of food insecurity". Critics also say that this government is out to lunch:

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The Carney government says its November budget empowers and invests in Canadians. But it lacks meaningful measures to reduce food insecurity—an important indicator of economic well-being and a strong predictor of poor physical health. It is therefore out of touch with the financial struggles that millions of Canadians face.

Eighty-three per cent of food banks say that “more affordable housing [is] the single most important policy intervention”, which is up from 61% in 2019. Low-income households are now spending about 66% of their disposable income on shelter. Instead of flowing funds to the many urban and indigenous organizations, who have plans and shovels ready to address housing, the government wants to put more money to grow the Ottawa bureaucracy it promised to cut.

Existing renters, especially in big cities, see little in Bill C-4 that addresses their rent increases this year. This is yet another example of elite-banker policies that are disconnected from the realities faced by everyday Canadians. Supply-side housing measures, such as Build Canada Homes and the GST rebate on new rental housing, will take years to see more new homes built. They also do not compare to the stated need for 500,000 homes per year and do not immediately lower rents for current tenants.

In Edmonton Northwest, these measures structurally leave out a growing group of residents who can only afford to rent. Record rents and huge mortgages benefit banks, institutional investors, property management companies and other friends of the Prime Minister. The government has no serious plans to help young people who struggle to build their lives or to restore affordability. While young people are looking to move into affordable starter homes, house-rich but cash-poor seniors are paying ever-increasing property taxes on homes they cannot afford to live in or sell.

Announcing the concept of a plan for housing at Build Canada Homes without money and programs on the ground only delays investments that could be made today in the hope that government will subsidize some of the costs. This is just another example in the government's suite of affordability failures and half measures.

• (1320)

We have heard from stakeholders that the dental care plan requires significant new red tape on the part of dental professionals, who are already in short supply. Being modelled on the non-insured health benefits program for indigenous peoples means that this dental care program will more strongly favour the minority of Canadians who are lucky enough to have practitioners who will spend hours or sometimes days on the phone with the insurer to advocate persistently for the basics of medically necessary treatments for their patients. On the other hand, this will give Canadians a taste of the disastrous bureaucratic inequities that many indigenous people face daily.

We have heard directly from persons with disabilities that the Canada disability benefit and the entire system for enrolling into the federal program is a nightmare for taxpayers and practitioners. The government has built massive paperwork and inconsistent bureaucracies, where somehow we put CRA instead of medical professionals in charge of determining who does or does not have a disability. The Auditor General found that CRA was unreliable even for tax information. Why would vulnerable Canadians trust CRA on medical matters?

Now I will speak to the few positives of Bill C-4. Bill C-4 would finally repeal the consumer-facing carbon tax, after nearly a decade of stumbling around. I am glad the government has finally listened and admitted its cornerstone climate policy failed, but that has not changed its overall spending and regulatory approach. It had the power to fix the carbon tax without a bill years ago, but waited to maximize political benefit over the needs of Canadians. Household goods and services that have the industrial carbon tax baked in are not suddenly going to be less expensive.

Many car-dependent workers and families in Edmonton Northwest will certainly benefit. Tradespeople, delivery drivers, warehouse and logistical workers, health care staff and others commuting by car from the northwest into other parts of the city will feel the immediate gain from lower fuel charges at the pumps brought on by the lobbying efforts of the Conservative Party, but that leaves out the lowest-income Albertans who cannot afford to drive or have no jobs to drive to. Those are some of the people the Liberals exploited to champion the carbon tax years ago with the promise of rebates.

This new automatic tax-filing program will probably increase the take-up of benefits, which matters a lot for very low-income households who currently do not file. We heard from students studying in health fields that couch surfing without a permanent address to file taxes remains a top concern, just as it would be for some of the folks who would gain the most from access to benefits.

Going forward, how can Canadians trust the same Liberal government that saddled current and future generations for the last decade to fix what it has broken? The Prime Minister promised to get tariffs fixed in July, and now Liberals are promising to make life more affordable. This is another promise they are poised to break.

• (1325)

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrak, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when we talk about Bill C-4, obviously we are talking about the carbon tax. The point is that when we talk about the carbon tax, we are talking, sincerely and correctly, about the exploitation of all kinds of energy and natural resources.

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Can the member inform the House about his experience as a leader of his community in terms of natural resources? Can he share with the House his experience with his community and the federal and provincial governments?

Billy Morin: Mr. Speaker, certainly in my experience as the chief of my community, we always had the paternalistic aspect of the federal government with Indian Oil and Gas oversight of how we developed our resources. There always seemed to be some kind of hidden motivation there when it came to limiting access to the resources back directly to the community or whether it was negligence on its part to actually regulate.

Again, this is the same federal government that is administering a carbon tax for the whole country with the same principles and the same bureaucracy. I do not trust it to be any better at making life more affordable by keeping these same policies in place.

Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I found my hon. colleague's remarks to be balanced. Obviously, there were moments when he critiqued, but remarkably, he talked about some things that are positive in the bill, which gives me confidence that he will hopefully see this bill through before Christmas.

There are a couple of things I want to highlight. It was the Atlantic caucus and the rural caucus of the Liberal Party that helped make the adjustments and changes to the consumer carbon tax. On carbon pricing in this country, again, to change the record, we allow provinces to do that. Premier Danielle Smith made it very clear during her UCP address that it is the provincial government that actually controls the carbon pricing at the industrial level in the province.

Will the member support passing this bill before Christmas? It is urgent that we get this through for Canadians. He highlighted some of the positive aspects. Will he talk to the House leader and whip of his party to see this bill pass before Christmas?

Billy Morin: Mr. Speaker, proper due diligence is still required on this bill. As mentioned, it has several shortcomings. It did do a few good things when it came to the consumer carbon price, but at the end of the day, I still think it was this side of the House that advocated for that and made it happen for Canadians. We will still do our due diligence on this side of the House, and we will see what happens to make life more affordable for Canadians. In the first place, it should have happened a long time ago. Canadians should have had a Christmas in 2025 that was more affordable, instead of having the one of the last 10 years, which was set up to fail by the Liberal government.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Edmonton Northwest. I particularly appreciate his very sensible contributions to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs and the role he plays as a first nations member in ensuring that the voice of first nations is heard in the House.

Bill C-4 does not put forward anything specific for first nations, yet the needs are enormous. The government is saying that cutting taxes, eliminating the carbon tax and other measures will have a

huge impact on the budget deficit. These are funds that could have been invested in communities.

What impact will this really have? What measures would my colleague have liked to see put in place to help his community and many others across Quebec and Canada?

[*English*]

Billy Morin: Mr. Speaker, I like serving with my colleague on committee as well, but that aside, as for his question today, nothing in this current bill, Bill C-4, addresses first nations. The current Liberal government is doing cutbacks on the ISC budget to the tune of over \$2 billion. In addition to that, it has zeros across the board for years to come when it comes to reconciliation. I find, again, that first nations are being left out. The excuse from the government is that it will consult them on Zoom, but nothing is ever going to happen. It is all reconciliation rhetoric from the Liberal government.

● (1330)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts on his own leader's position in regard to a pipeline going through the province of British Columbia. The leader of the Conservative Party believes he does not need indigenous consent or the consent of the Province of B.C.

What are the member's thoughts in regard to his leader's commitment to not consult with indigenous people?

Billy Morin: Mr. Speaker, our leader has never said anything as of such. We certainly have section 35 rights. Nobody has ever talked against those rights. I think it is the leader's position that the Liberal government has said it will do consultation half-assed, therefore setting this project up for failure. It had eight months to do this one-on-one engagement. It is only now saying it is going to be done through Zoom in the months coming forward. I have no faith in the government to get reconciliation done in order to get a pipeline built.

[*Translation*]

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, we are here to talk about Bill C-4, which seeks to make life more affordable for Canadians. My Conservative colleagues and I supported Bill C-4 at second reading. I think that all members agree that we need to put more money back in taxpayers' pockets. Since 2015, everything costs more and Canadians are working harder for every dollar they earn. It is more important than ever for the government to take measures to support our workers, our families and our seniors during this cost-of-living crisis.

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It is especially important to help Canadians who continue to struggle because of food inflation. It is becoming more and more difficult to put food on the table. A father told us that he and his wife eat only if there is any food left after their children have eaten. Who here has ever said that they would eat if there was any food left? There are people out there right now who are saying that. That breaks my heart. We need to do everything in our power to put money back in the pockets of these men and women so that they can earn a decent living and support their families.

According to the food price report published by the Agri-Food Analytics Lab at Dalhousie University, 80.6% of Canadians say that food is the main source of financial stress and 25.5% of Canadians are food insecure. That is one in four. The average family of four is going to spend \$800 more this year on groceries than it did in 2024. According to Food Banks Canada, the number of Canadians visiting food banks reached a record high of 2,165,766 visitors in March 2025.

Food Banks Canada has even said that “employment is no longer a reliable buffer against poverty”. What does that mean? That means that even Canadians who have a job are not immune to food insecurity. Among those experiencing food insecurity—one in four—are those who work full time and are still struggling. People in my community and all across the country are working hard, but the Liberal government’s endless spending continues to make livelihoods unaffordable.

I have the privilege of serving as a member of the Standing Committee on Finance and the Conservative members of the committee proposed several amendments to Bill C-4. This bill essentially incorporates three of the Conservative Party’s election pledges. It lowers income tax, offers a tax rebate on new homes and eliminates the consumer carbon tax. The difference is that we want to go further.

First, the bill reduces the tax rate from 15% to 14%. We proposed reducing it from 15% to 12.75%. Our proposal would have saved Canadians \$900 per year instead of \$420. As costs continue to rise, Canadians deserve a bigger tax cut so they can buy the food they and their families need. Unsurprisingly, the Liberals rejected our amendment. I also want to mention that, during committee proceedings, the Liberals systematically filibustered this amendment for over an hour, proving how reluctant they are to lower taxes.

Second, our Conservative team proposed expanding the tax rebate on new homes. Bill C-4 proposes a rebate, but only on new homes that are first homes. What we are proposing is that this rebate apply to all Canadians who purchase a new home. This would stimulate the construction industry, ease pressure on the housing market, and provide significant assistance to Canadians. On this side of the House, that is what we believe is needed.

● (1335)

We did everything in our power during the housing crisis to call for more affordable housing and more construction using this approach, but unsurprisingly, the Liberals refused.

Third, we proposed permanently axing the consumer carbon tax and the industrial carbon tax, which make life less affordable. The

Conservatives were ready to do that. Unsurprisingly, the Liberals rejected that proposal.

The Liberals took one tiny step forward to alleviate the cost of living crisis by introducing Bill C-4. However, they took several steps backward when they tabled this budget. The Conservatives consulted Canadians and then recommended priorities that should be included in the budget to address the cost of living, such as bringing down the deficit, eliminating the taxes on groceries and ending the inflationary taxes. Unfortunately, but once again unsurprisingly, the budget did not address these priorities. Instead, the Liberals chose not to tackle the issue of affordability. They decided to use our children’s, grandchildren’s and great-grandchildren’s credit cards. They decided to spend, spend, spend, spend and run a \$78-billion deficit.

The federal bureaucracy has increased by 80% since 2015 when the Liberals came to power, yet services have not improved. Instead of reining in the inflationary spending that keeps making the cost of living crisis worse, the government continues to favour bureaucracy over affordability. Taxpayers continue to bear the cost of these deficits. Interest on the public debt will reach \$55.6 billion in 2025–2026. Each and every Canadian will owe approximately \$1,350 in interest. It will cost \$1,350 per person in interest alone.

Personally, I am still stunned that the Liberals decided not to tackle the cost of living in their budget. However, the Prime Minister decided that it would be a good idea to lower taxes on luxury items, more specifically, the tax on private yachts, instead of focusing on removing the taxes on groceries. We are talking about priorities. As the Prime Minister has shown, his priority was the luxury tax on private yachts.

Meanwhile, a record number of people are using food banks. Household budgets are getting tighter and tighter. The cost of housing is extremely high. Everything is more expensive, yet the government is lowering taxes on private yachts.

In committee, the Liberals had a chance to support our amendments to lower taxes for all Canadians. The Liberals had a choice: They could lower taxes for workers and families or they could lower taxes for private yacht owners. They chose to help private yacht owners.

Canadians are worried. Food costs more. Housing costs more. Everything costs more. Bill C-4 aims to make life more affordable, but we would like to see it go even further. We have made proposals. I hope that the Liberals will listen to our suggestions to finally help Canadians make ends meet.

On this side of the House, our priority will always be to help make life in this magnificent country of Canada safer and more affordable for Canadians and their families.

• (1340)

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba (Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is always fearmongering.

Since his colleague did not have an opportunity to answer the question, can he tell us today whether his party is going to support this bill in the House?

Eric Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, we made some proposals to the Liberal government to take it a step further. We need to cut taxes even more so that we can put money back in the pockets of Canadians. That is what we are going to propose.

We also wanted to eliminate the industrial carbon tax. We made some proposals on this side of the House. The ball is now in the Liberals' court.

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this bill is poorly thought out. The government is offering a tax cut, but at the same time, this means higher taxes for some seniors and some people with disabilities.

What does my colleague think about these flaws in the bill?

Eric Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, as everyone knows, members on this side of the House want to significantly reduce taxes so that all Canadians will have more money in their pockets to help them cope with the cost-of-living crisis.

[*English*]

Jeremy Patzer (Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was reading in the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report about the tax break the Liberals are supposedly giving to people. For a couple with a child, if they are both in the first income tax bracket, it would amount to only about \$20 a month in savings for that family. When I look at the cost of groceries, I see that the cost of butter alone is up two dollars. If people are using butter for cooking and different things, they would eat into the \$20 savings pretty quickly. A person could spend that amount just on butter alone in a year.

I am wondering what my colleague has to say about the cost of living and about how the so-called affordability bill would not actually go far enough to help Canadians with the affordability crisis.

[*Translation*]

Eric Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we proposed.

Currently, Bill C-4 does not go far enough to put more money back in taxpayers' pockets. The proposed tax cut amounts to about \$400 per year, which is not enough. We need to go further to put more money back in taxpayers' pockets. That is what the Conservatives will propose.

Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I heard my colleague talk about the importance of agriculture, agri-food and our farmers. However, I was a bit surprised because there was absolutely nothing in the Conservative Party's platform last April for farmers across the country. My colleague represents a rural riding in Quebec. He can influence the

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Leader of the Opposition and the Conservative Party to include more measures for farmers in their platform for the next election. That is crucial for the country.

Eric Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, and I also want to thank him for making the effort to ask it in French. I really appreciate that.

I want to reassure my colleague that when it comes to supply management, the Conservatives and the Quebec Conservative caucus will be there to protect farmers and support them in the future. To reiterate what I say in every one of my speeches, agriculture is about what we put on our plates morning, noon and night. I would like to take this opportunity to thank farmers, who work 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, to feed Canada.

• (1345)

[*English*]

Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Beauport—Limoilou.

I rise today to speak to Bill C-4, the making life more affordable for Canadians act.

For over a decade, I have had the enormous privilege and honour of representing the amazing people of my constituency of Davenport. It is a riding in the heart of downtown west Toronto, and it is home to 120,000 residents. It is a community that I love deeply. It is vibrant, diverse and hard-working. It is home to Canada's largest Portuguese community. It is also home to artists, entrepreneurs, newcomers and families whose roots stretch back generations. It is from their kitchen tables, their small businesses and their community centres that I draw both my purpose and my perspective.

We are living through what our Prime Minister has rightly called a rupture. It is not merely a transition, but a sharp change in a short period of time. The global order that has shaped our prosperity for decades is shifting beneath our feet. Trade relationships are being rewritten, alliances are being tested and our citizens are feeling the pressure. As the Prime Minister said in a pre-budget address, "if we don't act now, the pressures will only grow."

Bill C-4 is one of the many ways our government is acting. It is how we are responding to this moment: not with half measures, but with meaningful relief that puts money back in the pockets of Canadians who need it most.

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I want to be direct about the reality Canadians are facing. According to Abacus Data polling from just last week, 64% of Canadians now name the cost of living as their number one concern, which is the highest level recorded this year. Some two-thirds of Canadians worry about affording the basics in the next six months. As the Abacus CEO put it, “the cost of living continues to be the dominant lens through which Canadians evaluate politics and policy.” We hear Canadians and we are responding, not just via Bill C-4, but through the plan and the numerous measures found in budget 2025.

Let me tell members what these national numbers look like in my riding of Davenport. The median household income is \$85,000, which is close to the Toronto average, but 41% of our renter households spend more than 30% of their income on shelter. That is the definition of housing stress. More than 10% of the residents in my riding live in low income housing. Nearly half of my constituents rent their homes, many of which are in buildings constructed more than 60 years ago.

Davenport is also profoundly shaped by immigration, as 43% of my constituents were born outside of Canada. Another 30% are second-generation Canadians. They came here, as my family did, believing in the promise that hard work would lead to a better life. That promise must continue to mean something. Bill C-4 would deliver on that promise through three concrete measures.

First, we would cut taxes for the middle class. The lowest federal income tax bracket would drop from 15% to 14%. It would drop to 14.5% for 2025 and then to 14% permanently. This would benefit nearly 22 million Canadians. For a two-income family, that would mean up to \$840 more in their pockets every single year. In my riding of Davenport, where 77% of our population is of working age, this would be direct relief for the people who power our economy.

Second, we would make home ownership possible again. The first-time homebuyers' GST rebate would eliminate GST on new homes priced up to \$1 million and provide partial relief on homes priced up to \$1.5 million. For a young couple in Davenport dreaming of their first home, this would mean savings of up to \$50,000. In a city where housing has become a barrier to building a life, we are opening a door.

Third, we are lowering everyday costs. By permanently removing the consumer carbon price, we are reducing what Canadians pay at the pump and to heat their homes. For the seniors in Davenport living on fixed incomes, and for the small business owners watching every dollar, this is real, immediate relief. It started earlier this year, on April 1, and will continue to provide ongoing savings.

• (1350)

I want to speak to why these measures matter beyond the immediate dollars and cents and why strengthening our middle class is a matter of national security.

Just over a week ago, I had the privilege of attending the Halifax International Security Forum, alongside defence ministers, parliamentarians, security experts and others from around the world. The theme this year was dialogue, decency and democracy, and the message that echoed through every session was clear: Democracy has everything to do with international security. We heard that the

foundations of democracy are showing cracks. We heard that democracies cannot meet external threats unless they are working internally, and we heard a truth that has been understood since Aristotle wrote his seminal book, *Politics*, more than 2,000 years ago: A strong middle class is the bedrock to a stable democracy.

This is not abstract political theory. The OECD has documented that thriving middle classes are the backbones of democratic societies and strong economies. Through their consumption, their investment in education and housing, their support for quality public services, their intolerance of corruption and their trust in democratic institutions, the middle class provides the very foundations of inclusive growth. Aristotle himself observed that democracies are safer and more permanent when they have an abundant or numerous middle class with a greater share in government. When there is no middle class, he warned, trouble arises and the state soon comes to an end.

Canada has always understood this. We have always invested in our middle class, not as a luxury but as a necessity. We have always ensured that those working hard to get ahead are given more than just hope. They are given opportunity. They are given a fair chance. Bill C-4 would continue that proud tradition.

Let me be clear: These three measures alone would not solve every challenge. Budget 2025 contains a comprehensive suite of investments in housing, in skills, in innovation and in defence that together would move us forward. Bill C-4 is a critical piece of that plan, with direct, immediate relief that would reach Canadians where they need it most. It is how we would ensure that Canadians have the resources to participate fully in our democracy and in our economy.

I am acutely aware that what we say in this chamber is recorded for history. Students will one day study this period, this moment of rupture and response, and they will ask whether we rose to meet the challenges of our time. I believe Bill C-4 is one of the many parts of how we answer “yes”. In my community, I think of Adelina, someone who lives on my street. She is a senior on a fixed income. She lives in Little Portugal, and she is going to be seeing lower heating costs this winter. I think of Carlos and Ana, second-generation Canadians saving for their first home, who will now be able to afford the down payment they never thought possible. I think of the small business owner in Dundas West who will keep more of what she earns to invest in her shop and her employees. I think of the young family in Junction Triangle, newcomers who chose Canada because they believe in its promise and who deserve a government that delivers on that promise.

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I will be supporting Bill C-4 and I encourage all members of the House to do the same.

In my constituency of Davenport, we have a saying.

[Member spoke in Portuguese]

[English]

It means, together we are stronger. Let us be stronger together.

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this bill would reduce taxes for people, yes. We have already heard it is probably like \$20 a month, so it is not a really big deal. If this government was truly serious about saving money and saving taxpayer money, I wonder if the member would consider changing the federal interim health benefits that asylum seekers get when they are denied asylum in Canada but are trying to stay on by appealing that decision. I mean benefits like vision care, urgent dental care and dental exams, dentures, nursing visits and emergency ambulances. Of course they would get basic health coverage, which we would agree with, but these extra benefits that asylum seekers who have been told to leave the country get are a way this government could save a significant amount of money and pass those savings on to Canadian citizens.

I am wondering why the government does not do that.

• (1355)

Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his great work on the citizenship and immigration committee. He started off by saying that there is minimal savings through our middle-class income tax cut. I completely disagree with this statement. For a two-income family, it is \$840 more in their pockets every single year. As someone who grew up in a working-class family, \$840 extra a year would be a life change for us. It would mean a lot. It would actually buy us a lot more. If there was ever a family that knew how to use its dollars and put them to use effectively, it would be a working-class family or a middle-class family in Canada.

[Translation]

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised in March to provide first-time homebuyers with a GST rebate on new homes. When we came back to Parliament after he was elected, he made the GST rebate effective only as of May in the original version of Bill C-4, which meant that thousands of homebuyers who believed what the Prime Minister said were ineligible for the GST rebate. The Bloc Québécois proposed amendments to the bill, but the Liberals opposed those amendments. They rejected them. We made our case to the Speaker and, finally, thanks to the Bloc Québécois, thousands of first-time homebuyers will get their GST rebates.

Can my colleague tell me why the Liberal Party of Canada opposed, both in committee and here in the House, before the Speaker, GST rebates for thousands of first-time homebuyers on new homes? We are talking about Canadians who are having a hard time getting into the housing market.

[English]

Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, the first-time homebuyers' GST rebate in Bill C-4 would help thousands of people who want to buy their first home, and it would be a very effective tool.

I will also say that in budget 2025, we are investing an additional \$25 billion. We are determined to increase housing supply in this country, and we are trying to increase housing supply across the whole spectrum of housing. With this period of heavy investment at all levels of government, home ownership or being able to live affordably in this country will soon be a possibility for every single Canadian.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, within Bill C-4 is a tax break for over 22 million Canadians. It deals with the consumer carbon tax by getting rid of it. It also provides a tax exemption for first-time homebuyers. All of these are wonderful measures dealing with issues like affordability.

I am wondering if my colleague could provide her thoughts on how important it is that we pass this legislation. Would it not be nice to have it pass before Christmas?

Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, yes, I truly believe that the three measures contained in Bill C-4 would be very beneficial for all Canadians because they would provide direct, immediate relief that will reach Canadians where they need it most. It would be an early Christmas gift that we could provide to all Canadians.

Jeremy Patzer (Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member talked in her speech about how a family could save up to \$840 with the Liberals' tax break, but at the end of the day, a couple with children making about \$75,000 a year would realize only about \$20 in savings with this tax cut. In fact, a single parent making \$50,000 would realize only about \$140 or \$150 in savings with this tax cut.

I am wondering how the Liberals can square this. They are trying to sell the bill as having big, grand savings for people, but the reality is that the people who need it the most would be receiving the least amount of benefit. How can the member sell this to her constituents?

Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, it is not just that we are providing this tax cut, which I believe will put more immediate funds into the pockets of 22 million Canadians; over the last 10 years, we have introduced the Canada child benefit, national child care and the dental care plan. We have introduced a whole series of measures that are supporting our families and helping them live affordable lives and—

• (1400)

The Speaker: We will now move on to Statements by Members.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS***[English]***WORLD AIDS DAY**

Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is World AIDS Day, a day to remember the 42 million people who have died: our neighbours, friends and relatives.

AIDS is an ongoing pandemic. It used to be a death sentence, but the discovery of antiretrovirals has really changed everything, turning AIDS, when treated, into a chronic disease. Making these drugs affordable to millions of people worldwide has been one of the greatest scientific and humanitarian triumphs of all time, yet today our progress faces a grave threat as major donors slash international assistance and HIV funding.

The impact has been devastating. For example, in South Africa, treatment initiation has fallen 30%. The funding cuts could create a whole new wave of disease and tens of thousands more deaths. This is why our government's recent \$1-billion pledge to the global fund is so welcome. As many wealthy nations backtrack on their commitments, we need to unite globally to ensure that decades of progress in fighting this terrible disease do not unravel.

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*[Translation]***FOOD ASSISTANCE IN LOUIS-SAINT-LAURENT—AKIAWENHRAHK**

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are facing a sharp rise in food prices, and two million of them are using food banks. Fortunately, in the riding of Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, hundreds of volunteers are working hard to help the least fortunate among us.

In Loretteville, the Maison de la Famille in St-Ambroise and Accueil Saint-Ambroise are getting ready to distribute Christmas hampers.

In L'Ancienne-Lorette, the Society of Saint-Vincent de Paul and Rayon de soleil are providing food assistance services, just like Solidarité familles is doing in Les Saules.

In Val-Bélair, the Rotarians are looking after the Val Bon Coeur community fridge.

The Quebec City indigenous friendship centre and the Wendake food service will be distributing food hampers across the nation's territory.

Every day, the Amélie et Frédérick organization provides direct assistance to families in Neufchâtel and Lebourgneuf.

In addition, all of these organizations can count on support and assistance from the Knights of Columbus, the Optimist Club, the Rotarians and the Lions Club.

As Christmas approaches, the generosity of Canadians is shining through in all its glorious splendour.

*[English]***BELINDA CRADDEN**

Kelly DeRidder (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I share today the loss of one of my oldest friends, Belinda Cradden. On November 17, her life was taken through an unimaginable act of violence by a person she stepped in to help when our justice system had failed them.

Belinda had an open, generous heart, and her compassion was her strength. Her murder is not only a personal heartbreak for me but also a reflection on the failures of our justice system. When people who pose a clear risk to society are not kept behind bars or provided with the mental health and rehabilitation tools they need, this is the consequence. Belinda's death is a painful reminder that we must do better.

I will always remember her beautiful soul and her light-up-the-room, bold, dynamic personality. I love Belinda. May she rest in peace, and may her memory tell us and inspire us to fight for a safe and more just world.

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*[Translation]***JEAN-GUY LEVESQUE**

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to Jean-Guy Levesque, who recently announced his retirement after a decade in municipal politics.

A well-known figure in Restigouche, he has dedicated his life to public service, beginning in the school system as a teacher, school principal, and district superintendent. A tireless volunteer, he made a name for himself in several community and sports organizations. Recently, he headed the bid committee that secured the next Acadian World Congress in 2029 for the Baie-des-Chaleurs region.

After serving as chair of the Val-d'Amour local service district, he was elected municipal councillor in Atholville in 2015 and then mayor. In 2023, he became the first mayor of the Campbellton Regional Community, following local government reform in New Brunswick.

Known for his collaborative spirit, sense of ethics, and unifying sense of humour, Jean-Guy leaves a lasting impression.

I thank him for his years of public service, and I hope he knows that he has left a lasting impression on Restigouche.

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*[English]***INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us play "today in history".

It has been 133 days since the Prime Minister said he would have a trade deal with Donald Trump's U.S.A. It was the PM's main campaign promise, but he broke it. It is now December, and there is no deal in sight. Tariffs are higher: Softwood lumber tariffs exceed 45%, tariffs on steel are 25%, and they are 25% on some Canadian autos. It is now almost impossible to sell many crucial products to the U.S., and jobs are being lost.

The Prime Minister travels the world to get trade deals with other countries, but he fails there too. Tariffs have now increased on Canadian products shipping to the U.K., India, China and other nations. The PM has racked up the air miles, but that is money for nothing.

We do not need a globetrotter; we need a deal maker, but the Prime Minister is not that guy. Conservatives, though, will always fight for Canadian workers and jobs.

* * *

• (1405)

NO. 2 CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

Alana Hirtle (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, leading into Remembrance Day, the town of Truro, Nova Scotia, re-named its outdoor athletic facility in honour of the No. 2 Construction Battalion, the only all-Black Canadian unit in World War I. The men of the No. 2 showed up ready to enlist, and Canada said, “No, thanks; this is a white man's war.” When eventually allowed to serve, the No. 2 was the backbone of Canadian efforts, laying track for railroads and milling lumber, every board going to trenches, bridges, observation towers, walkways and fence posts.

These men built the infrastructure that won the war; it was first-class service from men treated as second-class citizens. The No. 2 Construction Battalion provides us with an example of national service and commitment to community that we would do well to remember today. Let us serve the memory of its members by being of service to one another.

* * *

TAXATION

Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a good day to be Brookfield when the Liberals are in power. The Prime Minister just committed \$500 million to the European Space Agency, creating good-paying jobs in none other than Europe. What is so significant about this? Brookfield actually owns 50% of the Harwell campus, where the agency is located. This is the same Brookfield that has avoided \$6.5 billion in Canadian taxes through offshore havens.

Meanwhile, 2.2 million Canadians line up at food banks each month, the unemployment rate is at 6.9%, and the Prime Minister has tabled the most expensive budget in history since COVID. I am talking about a \$78-billion deficit.

Conservatives have a solution to offer. It is this: Twelve companies' avoiding taxes just like Brookfield does would equal that \$78 billion in deficit. As the 12 days of Christmas approach, would the Prime Minister maybe do us a favour and commit to those 12 com-

Statements by Members

panies' paying their fair share? On the first day of Christmas, he can start with Brookfield.

* * *

[Translation]

RITA LÉONARD-LAFOND

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to mark the passing of a remarkable woman from Sainte-Scholastique and an important figure in the history of Quebec, Rita Léonard-Lafond.

She was a woman of conviction and courage, who dedicated her entire life to defending her community at the height of the Mirabel expropriation saga. Through her efforts to support the public battles that led to the return of 85,000 acres of land, she became the voice and the face of those who had been expropriated. Her tenacity inspired citizens, elected officials and academics to demand investigations into the Mirabel airport file.

Rita Léonard-Lafond leaves behind a huge legacy, that of a woman who refused to accept injustice and who stood firm until the end, despite a federal government that, to this day, refuses to officially apologize to the people expropriated from Mirabel. One thing is certain: From up above, her integrity will continue to inspire my work in politics for a long time to come.

To her loved ones and all who knew her, I offer my deepest condolences. I want to thank Ms. Léonard-Lafond for everything.

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[English]

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the time it takes to deliver this statement, another survivor of intimate partner violence will call for help. IPV is happening now, and 106 Ontario municipalities, including Guelph, have declared it an epidemic. It is pervasive, and we must end it. During the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence, let us acknowledge our shared responsibility, work to change the norms that allow violence to persist, and ensure support for survivors.

I thank everyone leading Guelph's 16 days campaign: the CFUW, Guelph Public Library, the Guelph Resource Centre for Gender Diversity and Empowerment, Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis, the International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation, Out on the Shelf, Queer Night Out, the student wellness centre at the University of Guelph, Thrive HIV Prevention & Support and Zonta Club of Guelph. I thank all the frontline organizations that support survivors and work toward prevention every single day.

Everyone deserves safety, justice and dignity.

Statements by Members

● (1410)

GIVING TUESDAY

Hon. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is Giving Tuesday, the day that follows Black Friday and Cyber Monday. It is a day that asks us to turn our attention to something entirely different. Instead of deals and discounts, Giving Tuesday encourages us to look around our community and ask, “How can I help today?” It is a day built on simple gestures that mean a lot: supporting a local charity, checking in on a neighbour, giving a ride, sharing a meal or stepping up for someone who could use a hand.

In Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, and in communities across this great country, we see this spirit every day, especially from non-profits, charities and the incredible volunteers that keep them going. Giving Tuesday is a moment to shine a little extra light on their work and to join in. Let us take tomorrow and lift people up in big and small ways. Generosity is contagious, and I hope we all catch it.

* * *

FOOD SECURITY

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the annual hunger report from Feed Ontario came out today, and it shows just how hard life in Canada has become. For the ninth year in a row, food bank use has increased. More than one million Ontarians visited a food bank, for a total of 8.7 million visits, in the last year, the highest level ever recorded. These are not conspiracies; these are facts. The more the Liberals spend, the more Canadians go hungry. With the Prime Minister who thinks like a banker, these human struggles are treated as numbers on a balance sheet, not as people.

It does not matter how hard people work in the Liberals' cost of living crisis, as 23% of food bank users were employed, and nearly one-third were children. As we head into the cold winter months, food banks are warning they are at a breaking point. Some fear they will run out of food within six months.

The Liberals boast about their school food program, yet there is nothing to celebrate when kids grow hungry. This is not *The Hunger Games*, but under the so-called new government, the Capitol feasts while the districts fight to survive. Families cannot live on Liberal talking points and paper promises.

* * *

ALAN WELLS

Hon. Helena Jaczek (Markham—Stouffville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recently lost a great Canadian. I first knew Alan Wells when we worked together at The Regional Municipality of York. A chartered accountant by profession, he served there with dedication for 27 years, including as commissioner of social services and finally as chief administrative officer and my boss.

After his retirement, our paths crossed again when I was the member of provincial Parliament appointed to serve on the Rouge Park Alliance, of which he was chair. Under his leadership, along with our colleague the member for Wellington—Halton Hills North, we were finally able to establish the Rouge National Urban Park.

Alan was a dedicated environmentalist, Blue Jays fan, fishing enthusiast, former Uxbridge town councillor, engaged supporter of the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust and so much more. His contributions will benefit our communities for generations to come.

I offer my sincere condolences to Alan's family and friends, and to everyone who had the privilege of working alongside him. We will miss Alan's twinkling eyes.

* * *

FOOD SECURITY

Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last year alone, one million Ontarians needed a food bank, and that totalled 8.7 million visits, according to today's Feed Ontario hunger report. This is the highest number of visits ever recorded. Of those visitors, one in three was a child, one in three was a person with a disability, and one in four was a working Ontarian who still could not earn enough to make ends meet. Ontario had twice as many seniors turning to food banks as it did five years ago, and three in five visitors were social assistance recipients who simply cannot keep up with the cost of living.

This is not normal, and it is not sustainable. After a decade of Liberal spending and broken promises, Canadians cannot afford to live. How many more warning signs will the government ignore while families, workers and seniors are being pushed to the breaking point?

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[*Translation*]**CANADIAN FORCES RESERVES IN TROIS-RIVIÈRES**

Caroline Desrochers (Trois-Rivières, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I want to highlight the exceptional work of the women and men of the Canadian Forces Reserves in Trois-Rivières. Every day, the men and women of HMCS *Radisson* and the 12e Régiment Blindé du Canada embody the professionalism and dedication that is at the core of our armed forces.

Whether they are on a mission here at home, supporting Canadians during floods or helping battle COVID-19, or whether they are serving overseas, such as with Operation Reassurance in support of NATO, they always step up. Their ability to mobilize quickly and to protect, support and represent Canada with honour deserves to be recognized.

I want to thank these military members, the majority of whom have busy professional lives beyond their commitments to the Canadian Forces. They give of themselves by spending hours in the evenings and on weekends training and drilling so they are ready to deploy when we need them. I thank them for their commitment, their courage and their willingness to serve in our region and for our country.

We are proud of them.

* * *

● (1415)

[English]

ETHICS

Jeremy Patzer (Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, the Prime Minister left his position at Brookfield Asset Management as head of ESG and impact fund investing. He claims to have put all his assets in a blind trust and disclosed his investments to the Ethics Commissioner. With the conflict of interest screen in place, everyone is supposed to just trust the process, after the head of Canada's government left working with a company known for using tax havens in the Caribbean. It also means he must recuse himself from policy discussions involving multinational investment firms. How is that going to happen consistently while he is running a G7 country?

Last week, a senior Brookfield executive admitted to the ethics committee that the Prime Minister would not have to worry about managing so many conflicts of interest if he just sold his assets instead of putting them in a blind trust. It was also confirmed that 95% of Brookfield's companies are not included in his screen. By the way, the same Brookfield executive had a meeting with the Prime Minister in October after he had already met with the Brookfield CEO in May. Are Canadians really supposed to believe that the blind trust is hidden from him?

What more do we need in order to see that the government is starting yet another round of Liberal corruption?

* * *

CHILDREN'S HEALTH ADVOCATE

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege today to rise to celebrate a great Canadian, a great leader and a good friend.

For 10 years, Julia Hanigsberg has served as CEO of Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital in Don Valley West. Holland Bloorview has become an incredible centre of excellence, with a reputation in Canada and abroad. Holland Bloorview recently received the highest possible rating from Accreditation Canada, an exemplary standing that recognizes its commitment to excellence in all parts of health care delivery.

This is just one of the marks of Julia's incredible leadership. She has combined her passion for helping children with disabilities, her work ethic and her magnetic personality to make Holland Bloorview a place of innovative treatments with the highest level of respect for children and their families, as it promotes social justice and inclusion for children and youth with disabilities. Holland

Oral Questions

Bloorview is a family. It continues to do great work. It will miss Julia. Her legacy will continue.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians should not have to go hungry, but today's report from the Observatoire québécois des inégalités says that food insecurity has increased by 82% in Quebec and that food bank visits have increased by 116%. The percentage of workers living with food insecurity has doubled to 20%. That means that 1.7 million Quebecers are going hungry.

Why is this Liberal government forcing Quebecers to pay more in taxes and inflation to feed the bureaucracy instead of feeding their families?

Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course no parent should struggle to feed their children. That is why we have invested in school meals, the Canada child benefit and tax cuts for families, benefiting 22 million Canadians. We have invested in affordable housing, which is a very important aspect of fighting poverty. Those of us on this side of the House are here for families. On the other side, they have voted against all of these measures every single time.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we vote against measures that feed bureaucracy rather than children and families.

Since the school food program was created, the number of young children who need to use food banks has doubled, and 90% of children receive nothing from this program, even if we believe the government's own figures. Every time the government spends more, it costs people more in food inflation, on top of the taxes on food.

Why is the government forcing Canadians to pay more for bureaucracy instead of paying for food?

● (1420)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague just mentioned Canada's national school food program. We could also mention the Canada child benefit and automatic benefits. There is no bureaucracy in these programs, but they provide direct assistance to moms and dads who are experiencing food insecurity, which, yes, is all too widespread in our society.

Why are this leader and his party so bent on voting against measures that help people experiencing food insecurity?

*Oral Questions**[English]***CARBON PRICING**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today Algoma announced it is laying off 1,000 steelworkers, nearly a third of its workforce, in the Soo. Our thoughts are with them. The Prime Minister looked them in the eye and promised he would protect their jobs, negotiate a win and have a deal by July 21, but it was a bait and switch that is costing people their livelihoods. On top of that, the Liberals are hammering the steel mill with a higher industrial carbon tax.

Is it not bad enough that the Prime Minister broke his promise on trade? Why is he going ahead with an industrial carbon tax that will kill even more steel jobs?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously, our thoughts are with the workers affected by the unjustified and unjustifiable tariffs imposed by the White House.

We will continue to work with them as Algoma Steel goes through a difficult situation, to say the least. My team and I have been in contact with Algoma's leadership team. We absolutely have every confidence in the Algoma workers as they are going through this hardship. We will make sure we support them as they are developing new products and accessing new markets. We will fight for these jobs.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, more promises and more Liberal thoughts will not put food on the tables of those out-of-work steelworkers.

They are not alone. The Liberal food cost crisis is growing, according to today's Feed Ontario report, which reveals that food bank use is up 13% in one year and 165% since the current Prime Minister became the economic adviser to the Liberal government. There have been 8.7 million visits in one year to Ontario food banks while the Prime Minister hikes carbon taxes on food production.

Why is he driving more people into hunger with higher taxes?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every step of the way, the Conservatives fight against the supports Canadian families talk about needing. In fact, they just asked a question about workers who are facing job losses at Algoma Steel, yet when they had a chance to vote for the expansion of EI for easier access, longer duration and more generous benefits, they voted against it.

How do the Conservatives, in any way, have the right to stand up and talk about the needs of Canadians when they stand in the way of the supports those very Canadians need?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the support those Canadians want and need is a paycheque. They want to be able to afford food, and they should be able to. In a country with this much farmland and this much wealth, our people should be able to eat.

However, according to the latest report by Feed Ontario, there has been a 165% increase in food bank use in Ontario alone since the Prime Minister joined the government, yet he wants to go ahead with an industrial carbon tax on farm equipment, food processors and fertilizer, which will drive up the cost of food.

Why does the Prime Minister get fat on his tax havens while he taxes people's food?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is amazing to hear the Leader of the Opposition, because the first thing we did was make sure Canadians could have more money in their pockets. We, in fact, reduced taxes for 22 million Canadians. What is most disturbing for Canadians watching at home is that, at every step of the way, when we were there for families, for workers and for Canadians, Conservatives stood in the way. He is the leader who voted against Canadians.

On this side of the House, we believe in Canada. We are going to grow this country. We are going to work for families. We are going to protect our workers. We are going to build Canada.

* * *

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister did not just break his promises on food. He also did on housing. He said he would double homebuilding, but, today, a report out from the Missing Middle Initiative shows that housing starts are down 34% across 34 Ontario municipalities, and condo starts are down 51%. However, the Prime Minister is going ahead with a Liberal industrial carbon tax on the steel, aluminum, glass and other inputs required to build homes. It is a tax on homes, all while he hides his millions of dollars in a Bermuda tax haven.

Why does the Prime Minister hide his money abroad while taxing homes here in Canada?

● (1425)

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition and the Conservatives actually cared about affordable housing, they would have voted for a budget with \$13 billion for affordable housing. They could have voted for \$1 billion to fight homelessness and build supportive housing. The Conservatives have stalled the first-time homebuyers' GST break since June. They have no credibility on affordable housing.

[Translation]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the oil deal between the Liberals and Alberta is climate betrayal. Canada is walking away from the global fight for the environment. The Liberal member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie confirmed this yesterday on *Tout le monde en parle*. He said, “If we are being honest with Canadians, we can no longer meet our 2030 targets. With the recent announcements, it's not possible”.

Will the Liberals be as honest as that member and admit to the public that they have no intention of meeting their targets?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the agreement reached last week is a major step forward for climate change and the environment in Canada. The deal includes carbon capture. It includes renewable energy intertie projects across western Canada. It includes nuclear energy, and it also includes a clear process and clear conditions for the Province of Alberta to meet.

This is a major step forward for our environment. The rules are clear, and Alberta has committed to implementing its environmental plan.

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it pains me to see the Liberals compromising their values like this. The oil deal with Alberta will position Canada as one of the world's worst environmental offenders for decades to come. It confirms that the Liberals have sold out all of their principles to the same oil companies that are the majority shareholders of the Conservative Party.

Ultimately, it is not surprising that members are defecting from the Conservative Party to the Liberal Party, since they are both pursuing the same policies. The real question is this: Why are there not more Liberals following the example of the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie and resigning?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, does the Bloc Québécois know what the people in British Columbia are not saying? They are not saying that they need the Bloc Québécois to stand up for them.

We have a clear path in British Columbia. We are creating jobs and opportunities. We are ensuring that we work collaboratively with B.C. first nations. We are creating renewable energy and electricity grids. B.C. is the big winner when it comes to creating opportunities, jobs and major projects in Canada. We were elected to build Canada. That is what we are doing.

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, he is calling oil a renewable energy source.

Quebeckers did not vote for a climate betrayal. Many of them even voted Liberal out of fear of the Conservatives. Today, the Liberals are betraying them with a conservative oil deal with Alberta. Quebeckers elected 44 Liberal MPs and got betrayed. Alberta elected two, and all its wildest oil dreams are coming true.

What is the point of electing members from Quebec who do not stand up for the interests of Quebeckers?

Oral Questions

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the 44 members from Quebec are very proud to defend this government and to stand up for the interests of Quebeckers because, during the last election, Quebeckers told us that they wanted us to be able to protect them from what was happening in the United States.

Given the changing geopolitical context and given that the United States is also making its own decisions regarding energy policy, we need to be able to be our own sovereign nation. That is why we decided to sign such an important agreement with Alberta.

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[English]

HOUSING

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once upon a time in Canada, one could work hard, earn a decent living and build a better life. In the decade of Liberal policy, that bargain has been blown to pieces.

A CTV report this weekend showed that even families earning \$200,000 are being driven out of Toronto because they cannot afford a basement rental, a home or anything else. Last year, 35,000 households fled the GTA, not because they wanted to, but because they had to.

Is “move somewhere cheaper” the new official government slogan of the Liberals for Canadians who cannot afford to stay in their homes?

● (1430)

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is hypocrisy to hear this from the Conservatives. All of a sudden they are concerned about affordable housing.

Building starts are up across Canada this year versus last year. If we look at year to year, we are moving up. We are investing \$13 billion in Build Canada Homes, which is focused on non-market housing and market housing that leverages it.

We are getting no support from the Conservatives to scale up affordable housing at an unprecedented rate, and we would expect that if they are going to speak out here about it.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that we would never support any of the policies that doubled home prices over the last decade.

Oral Questions

However, families are not just leaving Toronto because it is expensive. They are leaving because it is dangerous. We have needles in parks and crack pipes on the subway, and everybody is just supposed to pretend that all of this is normal.

Does the government understand that public safety failures, the cost of housing, the cost of food and the cost of everything else are pushing Canadians out of their own communities after 10 years of Liberal failures?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it would be really nice if the Conservatives would read the reports that they quote in the House of Commons. Food banks Ontario talks about the importance of increasing base rates for social assistance, making sure that people living in poverty have sufficient social supports and investing in income supports for Canadians, like we have done through the Canada disability support payment. The kinds of recommendations coming out of these reports fly in the face of the individualism we hear from over on the other side.

What Canadians know is that sometimes people face hard times, and when they do, they want their country to be there for them.

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[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister shelters his personal profits in Bermuda without paying taxes, he is forcing the Canadian middle class to pay hidden taxes every time they buy groceries.

The Observatoire québécois des inégalités reports that 20% of workers are experiencing food insecurity. That figure has doubled in four years. Even people with a job can no longer afford food and rent.

Why is this Prime Minister so proud of running up a record deficit and imposing historic spending that makes life even more expensive for Canadians? It is even harder for people to put food on the table.

Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I would like to emphasize that no parent should struggle to feed their children.

I was in Nova Scotia this weekend. I had the opportunity to meet with mothers, with women who run day care centres and take care of our children. They told me just how much our investments are doing for their families, whether it is because of lower day care costs or because they are receiving the Canada child benefit. They are very happy with these investments, which opposition members vote against every single time.

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will give an example of what 10 years of Liberal governance is doing. Thousands of Quebeckers are choosing to eat less in order to keep a roof over their heads.

The Observatoire québécois des inégalités also reported today that food insecurity has nearly doubled in four years under this Lib-

eral government. This is affecting one in three renters. Severe food insecurity has jumped 63% in three years. That means people are skipping meals, losing weight and suffering from extreme deprivation. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister is asking young people to make sacrifices.

How many young people will this Prime Minister sacrifice to keep making Brookfield richer at Canadians' expense?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a serious issue.

My colleague forgot to mention that the first thing we did as a government was to lower taxes for Canadians. Twenty-two million Canadians are now paying less tax.

The second thing that the Conservatives voted against—and it is important that people tuning in watch when these Conservatives ask questions—is measures to build housing. Affordable housing is the foundation of affordability.

If they were serious and genuinely concerned, each and every one of them would rise to support budget 2025.

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● (1435)

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington—Tyendinaga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at a time when families are under unprecedented financial pressures, Canadians expect their government to put them first. While the Prime Minister travels abroad, meeting with dictators and autocrats, Canadians here at home are struggling to make ends meet. In parts of Ontario, food bank visits have increased by over 250%.

This budget was an opportunity for the government to lower the cost of living by eliminating the industrial carbon tax. Instead, it callously increased it. Why?

Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these Conservatives voted against lowering the cost of living when they voted against budget 2025 because they voted against food in schools for children, against a tax cut for middle-income Canadians, against \$75 million in apprenticeship training and against a refundable tax credit for personal support workers. They also voted against \$45 million in funding to address gender-based violence.

Canadians and seniors want to know who these Conservatives are fighting for, because it certainly is not them.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington—Tyendinaga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, instead of disingenuous replies to very serious questions, Canadians deserve answers.

Let me share the state of food banks in Ontario. Two in three food banks are concerned about sustaining their operations over the next six months. One in two worries it will not have enough food to meet the needs in their community. This is directly from the “Hunger Report”: “Over the past five years, the proportion of first-time food bank visitors has increased.” The trend is unsurprising, as overall food bank use has nearly doubled.

Can the Prime Minister explain why he is driving up grocery costs?

Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these Conservatives voted against lowering the cost of living for seniors when they voted against budget 2025. They voted against old-age security. They voted against the guaranteed income supplement. They voted against the new horizons for seniors program. They voted against anti-fraud measures that would protect seniors from scams. They voted against a tax credit for personal support workers who support seniors who need care. They voted against dental care for the over six million Canadians who are currently taking advantage of that.

Canadians want to know who these Conservatives are fighting for, because it clearly is not them.

Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, food bank usage is at a dangerously high level with over one million people using the food bank in Ontario. This past year, usage has skyrocketed 165%. Parents take pride in providing for their families. However, in the cost of living crisis, 29% of food bank users are children.

When will the Liberal government stop playing games with their Brookfield buddies and stop the industrial carbon tax so Canadians can afford to feed their families?

Hon. Adam van Koevorden (Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Feed Ontario and Food Banks Canada do important work on the front lines, but they also make important recommendations for government.

What are some of those recommendations? They recommended that budget 2025 include automatic benefits, There is the Canada disability benefit, which was brought back by our government and the national school food program, which was made permanent by our government, and the Conservatives recently called “garbage”. They called on the government to make sure that we were building more affordable housing, and Build Canada Homes does just that.

How do the Conservatives sleep at night just exploiting the challenges that Canadians are facing for their own political gain without following one suggestion?

* * *

[Translation]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the oil deal between Canada and Alberta amounts to climate betrayal. Canada is scrapping its greenhouse gas reduction targets, abandoning all of its environmental policies from the last 10 years, giving up on biodiversity by revoking the moratorium on oil tankers and even giving up on protecting indigenous lands.

Oral Questions

At this rate, will there be anything left in the Minister of Environment and Climate Change's mandate, or will she just rubber-stamp the Prime Minister's oil deal?

Hon. Nathalie Provost (Secretary of State (Nature), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure we can call it betrayal. Our government is developing a new strategy to achieve important goals. My Prime Minister, the 44 MPs representing Quebec and I all share environmental values. We may need to do a better job of explaining, but we are going to adopt strategies to achieve our goals. We must be able to that, and this agreement provides us with important tools to get there. In addition, Alberta will be working with us and will help contribute. This is a step forward.

• (1440)

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, once again, the Liberals are ashamed and are talking about everything except their dirty oil pipeline from the oil sands. They are ashamed to admit that they are no longer fighting against climate change and that they are abandoning their greenhouse gas reduction targets. They are ashamed to admit that they are even going to make climate change worse by producing an additional 1.4 million barrels of dirty oil a day.

How can the ministers agree to that? They are ashamed to talk about it. They should go hide under their desks.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is saying things that are not true. Nobody understands why those members are getting so worked up.

We have a climate plan with Alberta to develop renewable energy in western Canada, to focus on nuclear energy and to set very specific conditions for conventional energy development. At the same time, we are working with Quebec and the other provinces to continue our efforts to make Canada a world leader in renewable energy.

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TAXATION

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, food drives, company and organization dinners where people are asked to bring food, and roadside donation drives to raise money for our food aid organizations have well and truly begun. Lucky thing because demand is increasing significantly. The rate of food insecurity in Quebec has nearly doubled. The reality is harsh: food insecurity has gone up from 11% in 2019 to 20% in 2023 under the Liberal government. People have jobs, but they cannot afford to eat.

Oral Questions

Why is the Prime Minister maintaining the fuel tax, which makes groceries even more expensive?

Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our budget is helping Canadians move forward. The report indicated that access to support measures needed to be improved. That is what we are doing with automatic tax filing, which will help more than five million Canadians get what they are owed. That means they can access support measures like the Canada child benefit, which provides up to \$8,000 tax-free per child. We are here for Canadian families.

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I invite my colleague to visit the food banks right now to see all the people waiting in line. The situation is worrisome. The system is no longer working. Every month, 600,000 Quebecers visit food banks. Fortunately, there are organizations and kind-hearted people, such as Clan Destins and many others, that are involved in my community.

What I want to see is a Liberal government that takes responsibility. How can it choose to cut taxes on luxury boats when our constituents are struggling to put food on the table? Are there any other Liberal members who, like the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, will say that enough is enough?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like the member, I am making appearances at food drives, dinners and food banks this festive season. We are making sure that we show the same solidarity that Quebecers and Canadians have always shown. However, what the people at these events ask me is why the Conservatives always vote against school food programs, the Canada child benefit, tax cuts, dental care and pharmacare.

Why do the Conservatives vote against measures designed to support the vulnerable among us?

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Mr. Speaker, food banks across Vancouver Island are overwhelmed. We are seeing a surge in seniors, young families, newcomers and, increasingly, full-time workers who cannot afford the price of food. These are people who played by the rules, who worked hard and who never imagined they would need a food bank just to get through the week. Instead of helping, the Prime Minister is increasing the industrial carbon tax, driving up the cost of transporting and producing food, and making groceries even more expensive.

Why is the Prime Minister insisting on hiking the industrial carbon tax when British Columbians cannot afford to feed their families?

Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are supporting seniors and individuals across Vancouver Island to ensure that they have an affordable life. For example, I met with the Mustard Seed in my riding of Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, where they are running several food programs to ensure food security. This includes a food program called Flourish for children that ensures that they are fed. This takes advantage of

the national school food program. They are also ensuring that they can run their programs with the Canada summer jobs program. These are initiatives that are so key to ensuring that people are fed well on Vancouver Island, initiatives that the Conservatives voted against.

● (1445)

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I asked a question, and I got a deflection.

People in my community can speak to the impact of the industrial carbon tax, because unlike the Prime Minister, they do go to the grocery store. It is not just my local food bank, the Saanich food bank in that member's riding says they have also been seeing more young families, seniors and newcomers. Family Services of Greater Vancouver is also seeing more full-time workers. Right now, everyone is in need.

I ask again: Will the Prime Minister commit to eliminating the industrial carbon tax?

Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what Canadians and Vancouver Islanders need to ensure an affordable life is money in their jeans. They need things like the old age security. They need things like the guaranteed income supplement. They need things like the child tax benefit. These things put money in folks' jeans. These are initiatives that the Conservatives have voted against time and time again.

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Family Services of Greater Vancouver reports record demand for Christmas food hampers and food banks in general. They outline that families working full time, even those in higher income tax brackets, cannot afford the basics. For nine straight months, grocery prices across Canada have risen faster than inflation, yet the government keeps piling on costs, driving food prices even higher while Canadians struggle to meet their basic needs.

Why is the Prime Minister increasing the industrial carbon tax on things like cold storage and fertilizer, making food even more expensive for struggling Canadian families?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here we go again with the imaginary taxes.

In fact, the food professor himself said that one of the hardest things to predict is the effect of climate change on the cost of food. They do not use that quote when they are misleading Canadians with inaccurate information. On this side of the House, we know what helps families; it is actually money in their pockets. When the Canada child benefit is indexed to inflation, when the OAS and GIS are there for seniors, when we have dental care and pharmacare, and affordable early learning and child care, these things are reducing costs for families and putting money in the pockets of Canadians. That is how we help.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the last election, we committed to build Canada strong, to make Canada an energy superpower, to grow the strongest economy in the G7 and to strengthen industrial carbon pricing. Last week's memorandum of understanding between Canada and Alberta provides a framework to advance those goals.

Can the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources explain how Alberta and Canada will work together with indigenous rights holders in British Columbia to get projects built, create good jobs and diversify our exports beyond the United States?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week I invited the Conservatives to come to Calgary. What they would have seen is not one but two standing ovations from a sold-out crowd in Calgary. That is because this MOU is about getting results for Canadians. That means more certainty for investment, unprecedented collaboration with Alberta and a clear path to move energy infrastructure projects forward. This will get done while increasing the durability of industrial carbon pricing, requiring consultation with British Columbia and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples.

That is how we build Canada strong.

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the leave-it-in-the-ground Liberals outed themselves, admitting their fake announcement last week was not a pipeline approval. The eco-radical Liberal member for Victoria admitted there is no route, there is no project and there is no proponent, which means no pipeline. Who needs pipeline opponents when we have Liberal caucus members like that? The Prime Minister is fuelling confusion to divide Canadians, all while talking out of both sides of his mouth.

To the Prime Minister, when will shovels be in the ground? We just need the year.

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I guess the member opposite did not listen to his premier because his premier said it was a great day for Alberta. If the Conservatives are serious about getting things built, they should clarify whether they support this made-in-Canada agreement or whether they will keep opposing co-operation, undermining investment and scrapping policies that will help Canada compete in a lower-carbon world.

• (1450)

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the difference is that Conservatives will build pipelines while the Liberals

build pipe dreams. That answer is as fake as when the Prime Minister said he was working for the best interests of Canadians and not Brookfield. Entropy is a carbon capture company getting massive Canadian handouts. Its biggest investor is Brookfield. The Prime Minister is more worried about making big bucks for his Brookfield buddies and building pipe dreams.

Starving Canadians want to know, how much are the Prime Minister and his Brookfield buddies getting bankrolled by Canadians instead of getting a pipeline built?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here the Conservatives go again with conspiracy theories. Perhaps they could get on board with getting things built. They should stop undermining investment certainty and stop trying to scrap policies that will get us to be an energy superpower in a low-carbon world.

Billy Morin (Edmonton Northwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Liberal Minister of Energy and Natural Resources blatantly disrespected indigenous groups by rudely offering pipeline consultations over Zoom. Not only is this insulting, but consultations with indigenous groups should have started eight months ago in person when the Liberals promised to move at a scale and speed not seen in generations. Canadians support pipelines and many indigenous groups do as well.

Was last week's announcement just another Liberal photo op underpinned by reconciliation rhetoric?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I addressed those comments last week. I apologized for those comments. This MOU lays out clearly how we will work with indigenous peoples to get things built in Canada.

Ellis Ross (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, LNG Canada and Chevron's Kitimat LNG project got efficient approvals mainly due to pre-consultations, which the Liberal government has not done. Instead, the Liberal government proposed to do consultations over Zoom, over video calls, to deal with constitutionally protected rights and title. Now the Liberals say it is up to Alberta to get consent, which is wrong. This is Canada's responsibility.

When will the Liberals deal with constitutionally protected rights and title honourably, because it is too late to deal with pre-consultations?

Oral Questions

Hon. Rebecca Alty (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all major projects require the duty to consult and, if appropriate, accommodation. The projects, as they move forward, require that consultation, and that is what we will do.

Aaron Gunn (North Island—Powell River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada used to be a country that built things and got things done. It built the Canadian Pacific Railway through the Rockies and across the Canadian Shield. Today, we are governed by Liberals who spend more time building fake backdrops for press conferences than on nation-building projects to secure our sovereignty from the United States. A new pipeline to the Pacific was already approved 11 years ago, and the Liberals killed it. Macdonald did not promise one day to maybe review a proposal and hope a railway got built. He promised a route to the Pacific and he delivered.

Will the government do the same, yes or no?

Hon. David McGuinty (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this summer, we signed a historic agreement to forge a new, ambitious and comprehensive partnership with European countries. Today, the Prime Minister announced the conclusion of negotiations for Canada's participation in SAFE. This will unlock billions of dollars in defence opportunities for our Canadian businesses. It will give our defence industry expanded access to the European market, new reliable suppliers for the Canadian Armed Forces and catalyze massive private investment in Canada.

We can compete and we can win. We are the only non-European country able to participate. We are building Canada strong.

David Bexte (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, Liberal members scrambled to explain that their so-called MOU with Alberta was not the approval of a pipeline. It was just more consultations, and the B.C. Liberal caucus rushed to distance themselves from it entirely. The same agreement includes a massive increase in the industrial carbon tax, a hike that will raise the cost of everything for families and businesses already struggling under the government. At committee today, the minister admitted Alberta's exemption for the clean electricity regulations will take place way down the road.

When the Liberals said they could move “at a speed and scale not seen in generations”, did they mean building projects or just raising taxes?

• (1455)

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is in a trade war, and it is about time we all recognize that. Our agreement with Alberta is a wartime-like team Canada plan to strengthen our hand and put Canada in a winning position—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I would like to continue with the answer, but we need a little more silence. I think we are good now.

The hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources.

Hon. Tim Hodgson: Mr. Speaker, I will continue. This MOU is about growing exports beyond a single customer, while driving down emissions with strong industrial carbon pricing and a commitment to decarbonization projects. Our goal is to create invest-

ment certainty, reduce regulatory overlap and ensure meaningful consultation with provinces and indigenous communities.

* * *

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, termination letters are starting to roll out for CAMI workers out in Ingersoll, just weeks before Christmas. One of the workers said that it is “a punch to the gut”. On October 23, the Minister of Industry said, “I expect a full update within 15 days” from GM. Well, her self-imposed deadline has come and gone. There is no plan. There is no action. There is no update. Our workers cannot keep feeding themselves with empty Liberal promises.

After breaking her own promises, why should our auto workers believe a word she says?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I beg to differ, because the workers do not agree with my colleague's statement. The Unifor unionized workers are completely behind the government's plan to push back against any form of movement at Ingersoll, because we believe GM can act, along with the government and along with Unifor, to bring back a new model. Meanwhile, I have had several meetings. I even went to Ingersoll. I met with Unifor. We will continue to fight for these jobs.

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when GM shut down the CAMI plant and laid off 1,200 workers, the industry minister claimed she was on it. She said she was demanding a full update from GM within 15 days, and that she would offer transparency to Canadians. This was 39 days ago. There is no clarity, no plan and no relief for auto workers in Elgin, St. Thomas and London, whom the Liberal government told it would have their backs. When the Prime Minister was asked about standing up for Canadian jobs, he said, “who cares?”

My question for the industry minister is this: Does she?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are all very much aware that auto workers are affected by the unjustifiable and unjustified American tariffs. That is why we have been supporting all of them, working with Unifor and working with Lana Payne, who is on speed dial and to whom I speak pretty much every day. This being said, we will continue to fight against Stellantis to make sure it brings back its operation in Brampton. We will make sure we work with GM at the CAMI plant in Ingersoll, because we think there is a path towards a good news story—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton West.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, apparently nobody in the government bothered to read the Stellantis contract to see if Canadian jobs would be protected before giving Stellantis billions of dollars in taxpayers' money. The Minister of Industry did not read it. The deputy minister of industry and the former deputy minister of industry did not read it. Finance Canada lawyers did not read it. They all pointed their fingers at the former industry minister, who is, of course, the finance minister now.

Before giving billions of taxpayers' dollars for a project whose jobs are now fleeing to the U.S., did the finance minister read the contracts?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, not only did the entire team read it, but we also read what the Harper government did in 2009 when it bailed out GM and Chrysler at the time. What we saw was that there was no job protection in that deal. What we will do now is make sure we fight for these jobs. We will make sure we will put maximum pressure. The Conservatives should stop whining. They should just get on board and make sure—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Vaudreuil.

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that artificial intelligence may be central to the economy of the future. Everything from health care to transportation has the potential to be revolutionized by AI. Canadians want to be confident that Canada is staying at the cutting edge of AI innovations.

Can the Minister of Artificial Intelligence tell the House how our government is supporting Canada's AI ecosystem and ensuring that Canadian researchers and companies continue to lead globally?

• (1500)

Hon. Evan Solomon (Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his leadership in his community of Vaudreuil.

Canadian pioneers like Jeffrey Hinton and Yoshua Bengio helped invent modern AI right here in Canada, and our three world-leading institutes, Mila in Montreal, AMII in Edmonton and the Vector Institute in Toronto are success stories.

Oral Questions

We just invested more: \$42.5 million in new AI compute for researchers all over the country. As the head of our digital research said, we are ensuring innovators have the tools they need to compete globally while keeping our data sovereign.

We are building here in Canada.

* * *

HOUSING

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a resident pleaded with me, “My family and I are struggling with rent costs and the price of food.”

They are not alone. A CTV News article tells us that 35,000 families are fleeing the GTA because staying in the GTA means living on the edge financially, with very little room to grow. Families are being uprooted, with generations torn apart. Canadians are forced to leave the very communities that they grew up in. Increasing the industrial carbon tax increases the cost of cement, steel and all the materials that go into building homes.

Why is the Liberal government increasing the industrial carbon tax and making housing even more expensive?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the good news is that the price of housing is actually coming down. We can see in the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report in October that average rents are down across Canada, the average price of housing is down, mortgage rates are down and housing starts are up.

This side of the House is doing something about housing affordability; that side of the House is voting against it.

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all we hear from the Liberals are empty promises. For the last decade, they have been promising the same things. They know these ideas do not work. The record speaks the truth.

In the GTA, housing starts have plunged, not increased, by 34% in just nine months. Condo starts are down 51% and the slowdown in the construction industry means 35,000 lost years of employment for Canadians. Instead of building homes, the Liberals are piling on more bureaucracy and increasing the industrial carbon tax.

Oral Questions

Why can they not stop raising punishing taxes, driving away our jobs and investment, while Canadians cannot afford a home or food on the table?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this side of the House has proposed a budget that has unprecedented investment in affordable housing. The Conservative side of the House has an opportunity to support a \$13-billion investment in affordable housing.

Conservatives have dragged on the first-time homebuyers tax break on GST since June. That was an opportunity to save first-time homebuyers money.

We are giving them opportunities to support our investment in affordability and affordable housing across Canada.

Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over 35,000 families fled the GTA last year because they could not afford a home. CTV News followed a Toronto woman who could not buy a house with a \$200,000 income.

The Liberals pretend that the impact of the industrial carbon tax on a new house is imaginary, but clearly the industrial carbon tax increases the cost of cement, the cost of steel and the cost of all materials that go into new homes. Last month, only 25 new condos were sold in Toronto, a city of three million people.

When families are fleeing the GTA, why did the Liberals make housing even more expensive by increasing the industrial carbon tax? Why?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the northern Ontario mayors who were here this week, talking about their incredible work to attract people to northern Ontario. These mayors are actually investing in the very things that create affordable housing, using the housing accelerator, working with infrastructure, working with the Province of Ontario and making sure that as critical mineral projects boom in our region, we have the housing to accommodate those workers.

Good things are coming for northern Ontario.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Marianne Dandurand (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, despite obstruction and the stalling efforts of Conservatives, we successfully referred Bill C-12 back to the House. This legislation is critical to securing our borders, strengthening our immigration system and keeping Canadians safe.

Can the Minister of Public Safety tell Canadians why this legislation is essential to ensuring their safety and protection?

• (1505)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Compton—Stanstead for her incredible work at the SECU committee, and I want to thank the members of the SECU committee for making sure that Bill C-12 passes report stage at committee.

Bill C-12 would give law enforcement the tools to keep our borders secure and to combat organized crime, auto theft, extortion, money laundering and the trafficking of illegal weapons and drugs. The bill would enhance the integrity of our immigration system by creating robust screening standards, as well as ensuring fair and transparent enforcement.

Keeping Canada strong means keeping Canadians secure.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Bernard Généreux (Côte-du-Sud—Rivière-du-Loup—Kataskomiq—Témiscouata, CPC): Mr. Speaker, December is shaping up to be the toughest month in decades. Back home, the director of Moisson Kamouraska told me that demand is literally exploding. Across Quebec, we are talking about 3.1 million requests in 2025. That is 37% more than in 2022. The demand for Christmas hampers is going to be off the charts.

With the price of food going up, eating is becoming almost a luxury. The Liberals are keeping their fuel tax in place, driving up the cost of food even more.

Why does the Prime Minister refuse to help families struggling to put food on the table?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for my colleague. We work together very well. What he and I both know is that ordinary Quebecers want to be able to get good jobs.

At a time when the U.S. administration is imposing a host of tariffs, we must always be there to protect businesses that provide good jobs in Quebec's regions.

I am therefore going to keep working with him, especially in summer, so that people can keep their jobs and to ensure that a social safety net is in place in Quebec and across Canada, because that is something we believe in.

[English]

MARINE TRANSPORTATION

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 2021, the *Zim Kingston* lost over 100 shipping containers. In 2016, the *Hanjin Seattle* spilled dozens, and now a barge off Bella Bella has nearly gone down with a full load. Each time, first nations and local communities are left to respond and face lasting impacts. The Transportation Safety Board says that Canada still has no system for cargo unit or marine debris spills.

When will the government act on these recommendations and create a coordinated response system that includes coastal communities, backed by an ecosystem service fee on cargo units so industry can help protect our coasts?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an important issue. We want to make sure we have marine safety and indeed the safety of all vessels. Their seaworthiness, the safety and security of those aboard them and the environment of those who must deal with these transgressions must all be dealt with.

I am very glad to have the hon. member's co-operation and interest in this file. I can assure him that we will continue to work on it as we work on the security of our supply chains and the sustainability of our marine transportation system.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1510)

[Translation]

PETITIONS

DECLINE OF POLLINATORS

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to speak today virtually.

[English]

I am honoured to present a petition from constituents and others concerned about the drastic and global decline in the population of pollinators, particularly honeybees.

The petitioners ask that the government consider following the lead of the European Union in exerting the precautionary principle and removing the authorizations, which are wide in Canada and restricted elsewhere, on what are called neonicotinoid insecticides. These are based in nicotine. They are highly toxic to pollinators, among other forms of life. It is time for Canada to step up and protect our pollinators, as the petitioners ask us to do.

I will await the response and share it with the petitioners when the government does respond.

[Translation]

STRIPED BASS

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fishers of Montmorency—Charlevoix, and particularly those from Isle-aux-Coudres who are the subject of today's petition,

Routine Proceedings

are facing a situation that makes no sense. The number of striped bass, which is a protected but unregulated species, has increased so much that it is now destroying the entire ecosystem of the St. Lawrence River. Striped bass are out of control, and they are very efficient predators. They attack herring, smelt, even crabs, lobsters and now salmon. They are so plentiful that fishers are unable to fish their quota despite having paid for a licence. The entire local economy and the balance of the river are at risk.

I have tried several times to discuss the issue with the Minister of Fisheries. My requests have been completely ignored. I received no response to the official letter I sent her. Faced with this lack of response, locals are now taking action with this petition. Their demands are clear: act quickly, work with local fishers to find concrete solutions and allow striped bass sport fishing in order to get the situation back under control.

The government must take action, help our fishers, help our local economy and regain control of a good idea that has gone awry, as is too often the case under the Liberals.

The Speaker: I would like to clarify something. I know the member is a new member, but when it comes to presenting petitions, let us not get into debate. I understand that the member may not have been aware of it and that it was not his intention. That is just a little reminder for everyone.

The hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford.

[English]

OPIOIDS

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise again on behalf of the concerned parents who send their kids to Abbotsford Traditional School. They are rightly concerned about the increase in drug use, and they are rightly concerned about the proposed safe consumption site across the street from the school track.

Parents are calling on the federal government to respect the special agreement with British Columbia and not allow this project to go forward. Parents are demanding that all funding to BC Housing cease until they come to their senses and eliminate this project, in order to protect the innocence of children.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise for the first time on behalf of the people of Dauphin, Manitoba, to present a petition on the rising rate of crime.

Points of Order

Residents of Dauphin and the Parkland region are demanding that the Liberal government repeal the soft-on-crime policies that have fuelled the surge of crime throughout our communities. Since 2015, there has been a 54% increase in violent crime and a 75% increase in sexual assaults across Canada. Petitioners are deeply concerned about what they read in local papers, including a report last week that the Dauphin RCMP are searching for a wanted man with three separate arrest warrants. Our once-safe communities have now turned into places where people fear for their lives because the government's catch-and-release policies have allowed violent repeat offenders to be out on bail instead of in jail.

The people of Dauphin and the Parkland region demand that the Liberal government repeal the soft-on-crime policies that directly threaten their livelihoods and their community. I fully support the good people of Dauphin.

FIREARMS

Ellis Ross (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again I rise on behalf of Skeena—Bulkley Valley lawful firearms owners. Alberta does not endorse the firearm confiscation plan. Ontario police do not endorse the confiscation plan. In fact, the safety minister himself, the guy who is in charge of the firearms confiscation plan, does not support his own plan.

On behalf of Skeena—Bulkley Valley lawful firearms owners, I say that they want the Liberal gun grab to stop because it is misdirected and is not addressing crime.

• (1515)

CHILD PROTECTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I met with a few constituents from the riding of Waterloo and also from ridings across the country, and today I present a petition that over 600 individuals have signed in regard to families in Canada that have wrongfully been separated due to what they suggest are flawed child abuse assessments by child abuse pediatricians.

Petitioners note there is no legal requirement for a second, independent medical opinion before children are apprehended. They note there are medical conditions that can mimic signs of abuse, yet differential diagnoses are often not properly considered. They note there is no federal data collection on child abuse cases that are initially substantiated but later found to have had medical explanations.

Petitioners are therefore calling on the House of Commons to require physicians offering medical opinions in federal or inter-provincial child protection matters to hold certification. They are requesting that a second, independent expert opinion be offered or mandated, that national guidelines ensuring relevant medical conditions be ruled out before concluding that something is abuse, and that data be collected and published. In addition, because of past incidences, they are also calling for a national inquiry into wrongful apprehensions due to medical misdiagnosis.

I am presenting this petition on behalf of constituents of the riding of Waterloo, parents primarily, as well as from people across the country.

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[For text of questions and responses, see Written Questions website]

* * *

[Translation]

POINTS OF ORDER

ADMISSIBILITY OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS TO BILL C-12

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to respond to the point of order raised on Friday by the deputy government House leader regarding the second report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security in relation to Bill C-12, an act that deals with, among other things, “the integrity of the Canadian immigration system”.

[English]

In brief, the deputy government House Leader has asked that several common-sense amendments adopted by the committee be struck from the report and therefore stripped from the bill. Her argument relies on the so-called parent act rule. While she cited a passage from the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, allow me to quote the October 24, 2018, ruling of Mr. Speaker Regan, found at page 22797 of the Debates, which elaborated upon this rule:

[Translation]

The Parent Act rule, the idea that an amendment should not amend an act or a section not already amended by a bill, rests on a presumption that such an amendment would not be relevant to the bill. This can be true. Often, such amendments attempt to deal with matters not referenced in the bill, and this is improper.

However, there are also occasions when an amendment is relevant to the subject matter of a bill and in keeping with its scope but can only be accomplished by modifying a section of the parent act not originally touched by the bill or even an entirely different act not originally touched by the bill. This is especially so when the amendments are consequential to other decisions taken by a committee or by the House.

...

The parent act rule was never intended to be applied blindly as a substitute for proper judgment as to the relevance of an amendment. Clearly, amendments that arise as a direct consequence of other admissible amendments should be considered relevant to the bill, even if they are made to a section of the parent act otherwise unamended.

[English]

Given that most of the challenged amendments touched upon the immigration portions of the bill, it is important to understand the purpose and the principle of the immigration-related measures proposed in Bill C-12. I can do no better than to quote the remarks of the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship during the debate at second reading on October 21.

• (1520)

[Translation]

The bill would also strengthen the flexibility, efficiency and responsiveness of the asylum system by establishing new ineligibility rules, creating a more streamlined application process...

[English]

The minister concluded her second-reading speech by remarking this:

[Translation]

We want to be simpler, faster, fairer and more focused. These reforms would enhance public safety and security, reinforce the integrity of our programs and improve services for those who rely on them.

[English]

Conservatives think those goals are worthy, though Bill C-12 falls short of realizing them fully, so we offered amendments at committee to help get it there.

Bearing those quotations in mind, let us turn to the amendments mentioned by the hon. member for London West in her intervention.

First, there are the amendments known in committee as CPC-8 and CPC-14. Collectively these amendments would require, rather than allow discretion for, the issuing of arrest warrants in certain circumstances, such as danger to the public or to national security. That certainly sounds relevant to the minister's description of the bill.

Then there is amendment CPC-13, which would impose time-limits for decisions on judicial review of security certificates before the federal court. That surely speaks to the minister's objectives of efficiency, responsiveness and a streamlined process.

Next are amendments CPC-15, CPC-16 and CPC-17, which collectively would amend section 94 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, which establishes the framework for the immigration minister's annual report to Parliament to require additional content in the report related to, among other things, removal orders, warrants, cancellation of documents and federal benefits for refugees.

This range of items touches upon proposals in the government's own legislation, such as the cancellation of documents, or speaks directly to the government's own stated objection with Bill C-12: public safety and security, responsiveness and, most importantly, integrity of the immigration system, which I would argue could be strengthened by public confidence built upon transparency and accountability.

With respect to amendment CPC-15, I might add that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and

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Citizenship moved a subamendment, which the committee adopted. However, now there is a committee amendment that one London Liberal thought was good enough to ask the committee to tinker with, and another London Liberal wants the Speaker to throw the whole thing into the recycling bin.

With respect to amendment CPC-17, I might add that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, the Liberal responsible for shepherding Bill C-12 through the public safety committee, proposed a subamendment that, though defeated, suggests to me that again there is chaos inside the government caucus when one Liberal thinks a committee amendment is good enough to work with while another wants to tear it up.

I turn to amendment CPC-30, which would strengthen accountability for corporations convicted of human trafficking offences by increasing the maximum fine a court could impose from \$1 million to \$25 million. That too would strengthen public safety and security while reinforcing the integrity of our immigration system.

I might pause here to observe that during clause-by-clause consideration, the parliamentary secretary to the immigration minister asked questions of the public servant witnesses, which inspired a unanimously adopted subamendment. It is sad to see his London Liberal colleague the deputy government House leader now stand in the House and attack the work her fellow Liberals inspired at the committee table.

Next we come to amendment CPC-33, which would remove the requirement that the chairperson of the Immigration and Refugee Board must live in the national capital region, and which would instead simply require that he or she reside in Canada. That simple gesture alone, I would argue, could boost public confidence in the integrity of the immigration system, knowing that the appointment is not in reality limited to a government crony or a bureaucratic crony living in Ottawa.

Finally, I would like to address amendment CPC-2, which would amend section 40 of the Oceans Act, an amendment which I must point out was identical to amendment G-3, standing in the name of the parliamentary secretary to the public safety minister. This amendment would reflect the reality that the Minister of Fisheries is no longer responsible for providing Coast Guard services, because that was reassigned, effective with Order in Council PC 2025-639, dated September 2, to the Minister of National Defence.

Moreover, amendment CPC-2 would simply coordinate with the change made by amendment CPC-3, which was identical to amendment G-4, to amend section 41 of the Oceans Act addressed in clause 25 of Bill C-12 to reflect the national defence minister's new responsibility for the Canadian Coast Guard. This amendment was admissible and was not subject to the deputy government House leader's objections.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would urge you to look at the challenged amendments through the lens of Mr. Speaker Regan's 2018 ruling, which I respectfully submit should lead you to the conclusion that the committee acted entirely within its authority and that it therefore legitimately adopted all the common-sense, Conservative amendments.

Government Orders

• (1525)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: I would like to thank the hon. member.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

MAKING LIFE MORE AFFORDABLE FOR CANADIANS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-4, An Act respecting certain affordability measures for Canadians and another measure, be read the third time and passed.

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak to Bill C-4, the making life more affordable for Canadians act.

I am pleased to rise today to proudly represent the people of Beauport—Limoilou. It is the proudest and most beautiful riding in Canada. Representing it is the greatest honour I have ever been given. Beauport—Limoilou is made up of young families, workers and seniors who believe that we need strong leadership to build, protect and empower our country.

What we are doing here is not theoretical. It is not a discussion among financial experts. This bill directly affects what goes in the fridges and gas tanks of families in my riding of Beauport—Limoilou, as well as the rents and mortgages they pay. I want to be clear from the outset: This bill is good for us. It is good for families, workers, students and seniors. It is good for all Canadians.

First, there is the middle class tax cut. Bill C-4 will reduce the tax rate for the first income bracket from 15% to 14%. That means nearly 22 million Canadians will end up with more money in their pockets. That represents more than 50,000 people in Beauport—Limoilou with more money in their pockets. In Beauport—Limoilou, people in the 25- to 64-year age group make up 58% of the population. The measures we are talking about today affect them directly.

The average and moderate incomes in a riding like mine, Beauport—Limoilou, remind us of the importance of social support and affordability measures, whether in terms of housing, transportation or services.

This tax cut has been in effect since July 1, 2025. Across Canada, it will put more than \$27 billion over five years back into the pockets of Canadians. Middle-class taxpayers will benefit the most. About 85% of these amounts will go to taxpayers in the two lowest tax brackets. Almost half will go to those in the lowest tax bracket, made up of people with a taxable income of \$57,375 or less in 2025. After just five months, people are already seeing the difference directly on their paycheques.

Of course, no one has called me to complain. Instead, people are calling to thank us for that decision. For many people in Beauport—Limoilou, that means up to \$420 a year, and \$840 for a two-income household. That \$420 can pay for groceries for a week or for part of the rent. It means a parent can enrol a child in a sporting

activity. Above all, it is a clear choice to reduce the tax burden on the middle class. This is not symbolic. It is concrete and immediate.

Second, we are eliminating the GST on the purchase of a first home. In my riding of Beauport—Limoilou, I have met many young people who are working hard and saving money, but their dream of home ownership was slipping away because costs are too high. Bill C-4 completely eliminates the GST on the purchase of a first new home worth up to \$1 million. This could mean as much as \$50,000 in savings. The average house price in Beauport—Limoilou is about \$450,000, so this will mean \$22,500 in savings. That is huge. Everyone knows that that is huge for a young couple.

This measure applies to houses, condos, duplexes, mobile homes and co-op housing. It will encourage the construction of new housing. It will increase supply, including in my riding of Beauport—Limoilou. This measure acts on both sides of the problem, meaning both supply and demand. It is smart public policy.

All of this is combined with the acceleration of housing construction in Canada. Our government knows that we need to build more housing more quickly in this country.

• (1530)

Third, the bill permanently repeals the consumer carbon pricing law, which, I would remind members, was already repealed last April. As many will recall, the government ended the federal fuel charge through regulatory action. Some may wonder why a bill is being introduced now if the levy is no longer in effect. The answer is simple. We must finish the job. By repealing the legislative provision, we are sending a clear and unambiguous message to consumers and businesses: Carbon pricing for consumers will not return. This provides stability, predictability and certainty. What is more, the government has also removed the requirement for provinces and territories to impose a carbon tax on consumers. Here again, we are doing what we said we would do. We are walking the talk, as they say.

However, let me be very clear. Pollution pricing for large emitters remains in place, and that is key. It is one of the pillars in our plan to build a strong, modern and sustainable economy. These industrial pricing systems are designed to minimize costs, protect the competitiveness of our industries and encourage investment in clean technologies. These investments will reduce emissions and create the green jobs of tomorrow. Our government has been clear, and I want to reiterate that today. Large emitters must continue to pay their fair share. Industrial pricing will remain a central element of our economic and environmental plan.

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I want to be clear. The tangible impact that Bill C-4 will have on Beauport—Limoilou includes things like more money in workers' pockets, more workers who can become homeowners, lower energy bills, better protection of personal information and more financial stability for families. This is a bill that affects everyday life—not in 10 years, not as a promise, but now. It is a bill that has been studied, analyzed and debated. It is a well-thought-out bill. It is proof of the serious work that has been done. It is proof that this bill is sound. It is proof that it deserves the support of all MPs who represent communities like mine. It is a vision for the future.

Creating affordability is not just about solving a present-day problem. It is about allowing families to look to the future, to make plans and to invest in their children, their neighbourhood and their community. Bill C-4 gives them the space they need to breathe, dream and build. That is exactly what my constituents need. I want to send my constituents in Beauport—Limoilou a direct message, and it is simply this: This bill is good for us. It was designed for our reality, for our budget and for our future. Sending me to Ottawa was not just a symbolic gesture. It was a mandate for action. Today, with Bill C-4, this mandate has become concrete action.

In closing, I am proud to repeat that this bill is good for Canada. It gives renewed hope to the middle class, opens a door to home ownership, makes life more affordable and energizes our families. For these reasons, I firmly support Bill C-4 on behalf of all the people I am honoured to represent in the riding of Beauport—Limoilou.

• (1535)

[*English*]

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, at the very end, my colleague talked about how Bill C-4 would give new hope to the middle class and how they are going to be able to afford things. The Parliamentary Budget Officer says this Liberal tax cut, which is going to give so much new hope, for a single senior living by themselves, would be 13¢ a day in a tax reduction. A single parent would get 38¢ a day under this new tax regime.

How much hope is the government going to give to someone for 38¢ a day? How much hope does 13¢ a day purchase?

[*Translation*]

Steeve Lavoie: Madam Speaker, Bill C-4 is good for the middle class. We are lowering the tax rate for the first income bracket from 15% to 14%. This will save each family up to \$840. This practical measure has been in place since July 1, with the money going straight into people's pockets. It affects them directly. It is combined with all the other measures in the budget.

The entire population is therefore affected by the budget and by Bill C-4, which take direct action. What is interesting is that these are not promises and they are not things that are going to happen a year from now. People have been benefiting from these measures since July 1. The same applies to the purchase of first homes.

In my riding, this will help more than 50,000 people. That is huge. People tell me when I see them. They thank me for doing this, because they have the money in their pockets right away.

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, there are some good things in Bill C-4, but basically it is a collection of elec-

tion promises, including the tax cut. My colleague must know that the amounts of many of the tax credits received by the most vulnerable members of our society, including the disability tax credit, are calculated based on the tax rate for the lowest tax bracket. That means that, under Bill C-4, people who are getting the disability tax credit, among others, will actually lose income. They will lose more in the value of their tax credit than they will save from the tax cut.

Is this not a sign that the government designed this measure in a hurry, that it pulled this together at the last minute? Why did the government forget about these people? Why did the government need the opposition to remind it in committee that people with disabilities will be paying rather than getting a tax cut? When these people tried to contact the Minister of Finance and National Revenue, why did no one respond to their emails and phone calls? The Bloc Québécois finance critic had to personally put them in touch with the minister.

Steeve Lavoie: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to hear my colleague say that there are good measures in Bill C-4. I am pleased to hear him say that there is a collection of good measures. That makes me really happy.

I have had the opportunity to work with my colleague on several committees. What is important here are the people who are affected. In my riding, more than 50,000 people are directly affected. In the 18-to-64 age group, more than 58% of people are affected by Bill C-4. It affects them directly. Think of first-time homebuyers. My 30-year-old son bought his house four years ago. He would have loved to get a GST rebate of more than \$22,500. We are thinking of people. We are thinking of young people. We are thinking of seniors.

• (1540)

Natilien Joseph (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, Lib.): Madam Speaker, regarding Bill C-4, how can Bloc Québécois and Conservative members expect to be taken seriously when they say one thing in the House and do another when it comes time to assume their responsibilities?

Do Quebeckers not deserve to finally find out whether these parties are choosing to stand on principle or whether they are choosing to score easy political points?

Steeve Lavoie: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his passion. What is important here is to highlight all the measures that are helping many segments of our society. In Beauport—Limoilou, the benefits are direct, quick and immediate. As soon as we took office, we implemented measures right away. As of July 1, people saw the rebate on their paycheques. That is concrete action.

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[English]

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today. Before I start, I will mention that I will be sharing my very valued time with my colleague from Brandon—Souris.

I am rising today to talk about Bill C-4 and its various issues. I will start with the tax cut first. I am a big fan of Milton Friedman, who is famous for the line, “I am in favor of cutting taxes under any circumstances...for any reason, whenever it's possible.” I actually had a watch done up on with that slogan and a picture of Milton. I agree with that very much, but when Milt Friedman mentioned this, he had the assumption that the tax cut would come with an accompanying cut in spending, or a reduction in spending somewhere.

Unfortunately, with the government, we have a minor tax cut, which is going to cost the Treasury billions, and it is all borrowed money. The Liberals seem to have a reverse Milt Friedman attitude. It is to spend more, but instead of finding a balance, borrow more. Eventually, every penny of this tax cut, minor as it is, is going to be paid for by the next generation, the generation after that, the generation after that, and on and on.

Now, when listening to the government, including those in the House today, one would think this tax cut was some monumental life-changing amount that would make their lives so much better. We just heard how it is going to give hope to the middle class, yes, hope for the middle class. Two million people are going to a food bank in Canada every month. When questioned, the government says “the middle class tax cut”, as if this tax cut is going to allow these two million Canadians to leave the lineup at the food bank and be able to afford groceries at home.

When we question the government, we end up hearing about this tax cut, despite youth unemployment, record deficits and record lineups at the food bank. What do Canadians actually get from this tax cut, apart from a future bill down the road?

I am going to read right from the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report, which says, “The average savings range from \$50 for a low-income single senior, to \$750 for high-income couples with children.” Now, we have to wonder what it is with this government that it would bring in such a tax cut that would benefit the well off. We have a progressive tax system, but it is like my colleague from Mirabel says, it looks like they rolled it out without any thought of what was going to happen. A low-income single senior is going to get \$50. A wealthy person, like those in the House, are going to save more, up to \$750.

Continuing on with the report, a single senior in the lowest income bracket will save 13¢ a day under this Liberal tax cut. Again, any tax cut is better than a tax increase, but my point is, repeatedly, when we stand in the House to talk about the problems that we are facing in Canada right now, such as food inflation, etc., the Liberals push this out as the saving grace. They say that everything will be okay because we have a tax cut of 13¢ a day. It is about \$50 a year in savings. Food inflation, based on 3.5% for last year, cost the average person \$150.

This vaunted tax cut does not even cover 50% of the cost just for food inflation. However, somehow, when we bring up two million people at food banks, the government says, “Oh, don't worry, we have the middle class tax cut.” They want people to do something with that 13¢. For a couple with a child in the first income bracket, 68¢ a day is what they will save with this tax cut, or \$250 a year on average, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer. For a family of three, food inflation cost them an extra \$420 last year, but they are going to get \$250.

Now again, I will state, like Milt Friedman, I am for tax cuts, but this cannot be the be all and end all of addressing the issues we are having in Canada right now. Canadians want a better answer for the 2 million people lining up at foods bank than to hear that Conservatives voted against a tax cut. Canadians deserve better.

● (1545)

I will note that, if someone is single with no child in the upper tax bracket, they would be saving 50% more than those in a lower-income couple who are both working and have a child. A couple with no children, and both are in the second income tax bracket, will get \$710. A couple in the top tax bracket will get back \$750.

I know we have a progressive tax system, and therefore, if someone is earning more, they are going to save a bit more, but I would argue that, instead of this poorly thought out election pledge, or propaganda pledge, if we are listening to the Liberals in the House, the Liberals could have used the money to increase the Canada workers benefit, which would help out very low-income workers, and perhaps top up the GIS. Yes, people are not paying taxes if they are on GIS, but it would certainly help out a lot more than paying wealthy Canadians an extra \$750.

Taxes across the board are too high in this country, but if the Liberals are going to do a little boutique cut like this, they should maybe focus on those who are a lot more in need than those earning the top incomes.

Now, I will move on to the GST rebate. Again, it is a tax, so I am very happy to see the tax being reduced. Any tax cut is better than no tax cut, but I think the one that the Conservatives proposed in the last election was far superior. It allowed up to \$1.3 million, but also allowed it for people who would be buying their second home. It did not restrict it to only first-time homebuyers.

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The member across the way talked about his son buying a house four years ago. It would have been nice if he could have taken advantage of it. I do not see why we discriminate against someone who has owned a house before. Someone selling their house to buy a newbuild house opens up inventory of the previous house. It is silly that we put these rules forward.

One of the issues I do have with the program the Liberals introduced is that they announced it on March 20, and we have heard that there were people running out and buying a house immediately. It came into effect on March 27 with the ways and means motion, but it meant that the second it was dropped in the House as a ways and means motion, if someone had signed to buy a house the day before, even if it was going to be built for six months or a year, they were cut out of the system.

We brought this up in the House, and I mentioned we had worked with the government in a non-partisan fashion to get this done. The member for Mirabel brought through some changes in finance committee to address this for those who had purchased when the announcement was made, and the Liberals in the House stood to fight against that. Canadians, through no fault of their own, took it on good will that the government was bringing this in.

It is silly. I realize we have to cut off with the ways and means motions to stop people from gaming the system, but if someone had bought a house and signed the documents, but the house was not going to be built until a year from then, and that is when the GST would be paid, it would make sense that they would not have to pay the GST immediately because of the cut-off date.

Conservatives reached out to the government to see if it would find some way to address that. Many people in Edmonton West were blessed that we built a lot of new homes. In Edgemont, in the southwest part, new homes are going up like gangbusters. The government should address this, but it chose not to.

The last issue is the carbon tax. Do members remember all the Liberals standing in this place saying that the world would burn if we did not have a carbon tax, and that we are basically Satan if we disagreed with their carbon tax dogma? The member for Winnipeg South, who was here earlier, said that carbon pricing does not contribute to inflation. The Liberals stood and repeatedly said that the carbon tax does not lead to inflation, but now they pretend that they are the heroes for killing the carbon tax.

Stats Canada, by the way, states that the carbon tax did cause inflation. The Liberals' own budget 2025 stated five times that the carbon tax caused inflation. Public Accounts notes it, and even the Bank of Canada notes it. I am glad it is gone. I just wish the Liberals had not pushed this hypocrisy saying that the carbon tax did not cause inflation.

● (1550)

Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague's speech today was a bit meandering at times. I heard him talk about the fact that, in one breath, there are too few measures, quoting 38¢, while in the next piece he talked about the fact that there are hundreds of dollars of savings that would go to either individual Canadians or families.

I think he needs to pick a lane on whether he supports these types of measures or whether it is too little.

However, I want to get to the point that he made about this idea that future generations would be paying for this. I was born in 1991. There was a Conservative government at that time in this place. The Conservative Party was actually spending 35¢ of every dollar that was federally invested on debt. Right now, that is below 10¢.

Will this member recognize, notwithstanding he might like to see more calibrated spending and less federal spending, that we are nowhere near where the Conservative Party had our finances back in 1990?

Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the incorrect history lesson he provided. Everyone knows that the debt inherited by the Mulroney government was left by a Trudeau. Where have we heard that before? Oh, we have heard it here, repeatedly. The PC party actually ran an operational surplus, but they were saddled with massive debt from the previous government.

Getting back to his comment about picking a lane, I very specifically stated that this program of Liberal tax cuts benefits those who need it least, not the most. It focuses giving more to the wealthiest and gives very little to those who are mostly in need. The government had a chance to change that. It chose propaganda instead of actual results for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Edmonton West for his speech. I very much enjoy working with him.

Bill C-4 demonstrates the fact that the Prime Minister was willing to promise anything during the election campaign, without having done the math, without knowing how to go about it. This bill was introduced without any attention to detail. My colleague gave a very good example of that.

In March, the newly appointed Prime Minister promised a GST rebate for first-time buyers purchasing a new home. However, after the election campaign, he introduced the notice of ways and means as well as the bill, and we realized that all those who had believed the Prime Minister in March and decided to buy a new home would not get the GST rebate. Once elected, the Prime Minister decided to abandon those people and refund the GST only for homes purchased in May or later.

The Prime Minister made a promise in March. He was elected, and in May he announced that he was abandoning these people. Beyond the content of the bill, I would like to know what this type of behaviour tells us about the Prime Minister's character, but above all what it tells us about the value of his word.

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• (1555)

[English]

Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, my colleague from Mirabel brought up an excellent point about the Prime Minister's temperament and true plans. At the finance committee, the member for Mirabel led a change to this law and the GST credit to allow some flexibility for those who took the Prime Minister at his word when he made the announcement. That passed through the finance committee.

The Liberal government, led by the member for Winnipeg North, used procedural tricks to kill that amendment in the House. The finance committee worked to serve Canadians, while the Liberal government used procedural tricks in the House to kill the work that was brought forward by the member for Mirabel.

It is disgraceful. We had a chance to help Canadians. The government chose announcements and propaganda instead of actually serving Canadians.

Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, right now we are at a point when we are spending more money in interest to repay our debt of over \$50 billion a year than we are in health care transfers within our country. In my opinion, being the health critic, it is putting our health care system at risk.

I wonder what my colleague would have to say about that.

Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, that was a great question.

The public accounts, volume 1, show that the government has a mandated law to increase health care transfers. It was about 4.5%, while the increase in interest payments was 11%. That just shows how broken the government is, as it prioritizes payments to Bay Street corporations over payments to our provinces for health care needs.

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin today by thanking my colleague from Edmonton West for splitting his time with me to share some words about Bill C-4.

The last question of my fellow Manitoban from Riding Mountain about the interest payments on our debt now being higher than health care transfers to provinces was an alarming note to leave it on. With a health care system that is in crisis across Canada, that is an absolutely disastrous record for the Liberals to be leaving this country with.

Six months ago, the Liberals stood in the House, and during the election campaign, and asked Canadians to trust them one more time. They promised lower spending. They said, spend less to invest more. They promised lower costs and a smaller, slimmer federal government. They said that they had heard Canadians loud and clear and that they understood the pain their policies had caused for nine and a half years in this country. They assured us all that things would be different, but every single one of those promises has turned into failure, and this bill is no different.

The House has now passed a budget with a record \$78-billion deficit. That is more than twice the kind of deficit that was at one time considered excessive in this country. This is not a minor mis-

calculation; it is a massive burden added by the government to the future of this country.

According to the independent budget officer, the chance the deficit stays below that is less than 10%. That is no surprise given that it took the Liberals more than halfway into this fiscal year to come up with the amount of money they had already spent and what they planned to spend for the few remaining months left in this fiscal year, by the time they introduced their budget. Make no mistake: The words used to describe the government's spending, including "shocking", "stupefying" and "unsustainable", did not come from partisan critics. They came from the very independent fiscal office that the Liberals themselves put in place and staffed.

Meanwhile, the government is adding \$80 billion in new spending, which works out to over \$5,000 for every household in Canada that someday will have to get paid off. That is money being taken out of the pockets of families, seniors and workers through higher taxes, inflation and interest rates. Why does this matter for the people in southwestern Manitoba? It matters because many working families and individuals are already making due on modest incomes while the cost of living climbs.

Let us consider this. In Brandon, the average monthly cost of living for a single renter, including housing, food, transportation and basic necessities, is estimated to be approximately \$1,800 a month. That is roughly \$22,000 a year. Meanwhile, the typical household income in Brandon is lower than the national average. Local data suggests the average individual income does not match national paycheques in my region. For some residents, especially renters, younger workers or those early in their careers, that means a very tight budget from month to month. A small tax cut or a few dollars here and there will not move the needle for these households when rent, groceries, fuel and utilities continue to rise due to Liberal inflationary spending.

Looking at the structure of employment in Brandon and Westman more broadly, around 45% of jobs in Brandon are in health care and social services, retail trade or manufacturing sectors. These sectors often run on modest wages, where many workers feel the pinch of inflation and rising costs most severely. Manitobans are hard-working people. Families raising children, seniors on fixed incomes who worked hard all their lives and young adults trying to start their lives deserve more than vague promises and symbolic gestures.

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While the Liberal government continues to rack up debt and deficits, cost of living pressures mount. There are higher taxes, higher inflation and a rising burden on ordinary Canadians. At the same time, we see record food bank growth, including in my constituency at the Samaritan House Ministries food bank in downtown Brandon. This is a rising burden on ordinary Canadians that is resulting in families skipping meals and seniors being forced to choose between heating their homes or putting fuel in their cars.

• (1600)

That is not governmental success; it is a systemic failure on a grand scale that is forcing more and more Canadians to be reliant on government handouts just to get by. The Liberal answer is more government programs, more spending and more planning, increasing the money supply, raising debt and calling it investment. This does not change the reality that every dollar collected from Canadians is being poured into interest payments and debt service rather than helping Canadian families make ends meet.

I find it ironic that after a decade of lecturing Canadians, the Liberals have finally admitted what Conservatives have said from the very beginning. The carbon tax was a costly, punishing failure, and the mental gymnastics that these Liberals now go through, after 10 years of flogging how the carbon tax was going to save the planet and then proudly putting forward a bill that cancelled it, are nothing short of hypocritical. For years they mocked and demonized anyone who questioned their tax-and-spend climate scheme, and they told families in southwestern Manitoba that paying more to heat their homes, drive their trucks and buy their groceries was somehow good for them in the long run. Now 10 years later, in the middle of an affordability crisis that they helped create, the Liberals are desperately trying to walk back the very policy that they flogged and pushed for countless years.

Canadians are supposed to applaud the Liberals for putting out the fire they started, but they would not find much of a warm reception for that in my constituency. Let us be clear: The Liberals did not scrap this tax because it was the right thing to do. They scrapped it because Conservatives made it impossible for them to keep defending the indefensible. For years, our party warned that the carbon tax would raise the cost of everything without reducing emissions, and for years, the Liberals insisted that they were right, we were wrong and everyone else was wrong as well. However, now they are plagiarizing Conservative common sense and pretending it was their idea all along. If they had listened a decade ago, families in communities like Verdin, Boissevain, Souris and Killarney would not be drowning in skyrocketing costs today.

Now we see the Liberals rolling out a temporary GST new-housing rebate for first-time homebuyers, a policy that Conservatives campaigned on in the spring election. It took pressure from our party to finally get the Liberals to act, and even now they are presenting it as if it was their own idea. The reality is that homes are being built incredibly slowly due to bureaucratic red tape and gong-show housing policy legislation on the Liberal side.

Home ownership, with or without this GST rebate, has never been further out of reach for Canadians. Young families and first-time buyers are struggling to enter the market, while construction stagnates, costs rise and regulatory red tape continues to slow the

growth of new homes. Conservatives have long been fighting for real solutions, like lowering taxes, cutting red tape and supporting builders, so that Canadians can finally achieve the dream of owning and not just renting a home.

Conservatives support letting Canadians keep more of their own money, but when the government gives small tax cuts here, while taking away thousands on the other side, that is not relief; it is just a bait and switch. As such, while we are pleased that there are small tax cuts, this bill certainly does not go far enough. We would have liked to see in this bill a full carbon tax repeal on everything, to support affordability and increase Canadian competitiveness abroad; the GST removed from more homes as well as home construction; a bigger income tax cut that would actually help those in the working class; and responsible government savings by cutting wasteful bureaucracy, foreign aid and corporate handouts to protect the financial health of this country for future generations.

That is the government Canadians deserve. That is the legislation they deserve. That is why Conservatives are standing here. We will continue to stand up for that in this Parliament every day going forward until we deliver a Conservative government that will bring that home for Canadians.

I look forward to my colleagues' questions on this bill.

• (1605)

Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Madam Speaker, that member represents a rural riding in the prairie provinces, in Manitoba. It is remarkable to me to consistently see prairie MPs from the Conservative Party stand up and refuse to support biofuel policy that matters for canola producers at a moment when it is really important to help drive demand signals.

Maybe the member of Parliament can explain why he is against those types of policies, which are actually good for farmers in his own constituency. Even better, maybe he can explain to his own constituents why he ran on a platform in April that had absolutely nothing for farmers. In the Conservative Party platform, there was nothing there. I have had the opportunity to review it. Maybe that member can explain to his own constituents, his own farmers, why there was nothing. Is it because they take farmers for granted in this country?

Grant Jackson: Madam Speaker, the member is sadly very lost about the conversation going on today. At no point did I talk about fuel standards.

Government Orders

Here is something I would like to ask the member: When he travelled on the taxpayer dime to China, what exactly did he achieve in terms of results for ongoing Chinese tariffs on Canadian canola, which is grown and produced in my constituency?

We are calling on the government to get over itself and get a deal with China so our producers can continue to sell at prices at which they can make a profit. They know the Conservative Party continues to stand up for Canadian canola producers. Why will that member not do his job and get a deal for Canadian canola farmers?

[*Translation*]

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Liberals have gotten into the habit of using the words “tax cuts for the middle class” for things that are not tax cuts for the middle class.

In 2015, Justin Trudeau promised to lower the tax rate for the second income tax bracket. Those who benefited the most were the people earning more than \$200,000 a year, because it is the wealthy taxpayers who go through all the tax brackets and hit the jackpot.

Of course, the bill we are debating today reduces the tax rate on the first bracket, which is more aimed at the middle class, but it targets very little. For example, there is nothing in it to help seniors receiving pension benefits, who are on fixed incomes and who are no longer able to work.

I want to know whether my colleague agrees with the member for Edmonton West, as he said earlier in his speech, and whether he thinks that the government could have helped the middle class by using other tax tools while ensuring that this tax cut does not necessarily go into the pockets of those who go through all the tax brackets and who already have quite a bit of money in their pockets.

[*English*]

Grant Jackson: Madam Speaker, I certainly do agree with the comments from the member for Edmonton West as well as the member for Mirabel. This bill does not strike at the heart of the people who most need tax relief in this country. It screams of Liberal elitism, giving big tax breaks to the corporate elite in this country, who are very good friends with most of the Liberal front bench. However, it does not help low-income seniors, certainly, or low-income workers. I think it results, for low-income seniors, to 13¢ a day or \$4.16 a month, something like that. That is hardly a cup of coffee a month. It is not even that in some parts of the country.

This is nothing. There is no real relief here. There were better levers and better avenues and paths this could have been taken down if they wanted to provide real results for working-class Canadians and seniors on fixed incomes. We know we worked very well with our Bloc colleagues to try to bring that about. It is a shame the Liberals blocked all of those initiatives at committee.

• (1610)

Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Brandon—Souris talked of record food bank use in his region. We had the Feed Ontario hunger report out today, which made some of the same observations about record food bank use, including among seniors. It says senior food bank use has doubled over the last five years. The member had, I think, in his speech that it is \$50 that a single senior is going to save from this tax cut, which is 13¢ a day, yet there was another report

out that states the average family is facing an \$800 increase this year in the cost of food.

Are Canadians continuing to pedal backwards under the Liberals?

Grant Jackson: Madam Speaker, the answer to the question is absolutely. Liberal math is that they are going to give people \$50 back, but then charge them \$800 more. Are they really better off? No, they are not.

Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Madam Speaker, while the member for Brandon—Souris is still in his seat, I have the opportunity to respond to his query back across the line. Our government is focused on recalibrating the relationship with the PRC and having that engagement. There had not been a leaders' meeting in eight years.

However, I do think the Conservative Party needs to pick a lane on the issue. I have Prairies colleagues wearing a blue jersey for the Conservative Party and saying that we ought to engage and ought to be doing more, but there are members such as the member for Wellington—Halton Hills North, the member for Simcoe North and other members from the Ontario area saying it is a bad idea for the government to be engaging. I do think the Conservatives are going to have to pick a lane about what they feel the government ought to be doing.

We feel as though we need to be having the engagement, because it matters for farmers across this country and for seafood harvesters. I am confident, because I am very close to it, that the work is going to continue and that we will see results. The opposition ought to pick a lane instead of speaking out of both sides of its mouth on this.

I would again highlight to the Conservative Party that there was absolutely nothing in the Conservative platform for farmers. That is remarkable in a bad way for farmers in this country. The Conservatives love to beat their chest about being there for Canadian agriculture, but there is nothing in their platform.

I hope the rural members who represent large agricultural constituencies are going to remind the leader of the official opposition, who now represents Battle River—Crowfoot, to actually do something to support Canadian farmers so we do not get into the same situation again, because it is not good policy for the Conservative Party to be taking farmers in this country for granted. It is a constituency I do not think the Conservatives are actually servicing very well.

Maybe we can have some more conversation on that at some point. I want to make sure we finish that.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

I am rising today to speak to Bill C-4. I think it is interesting to talk about how there is absolutely nothing for our farmers in the Conservatives' platform. The Conservatives do not like talking about that, and I can see that some of the opposition members are getting a bit angry with me, but that is okay.

The reason why we are here today is to discuss and debate Bill C-4. The bill is relatively simple, but it is very important to address the issue of affordability and the cost of living in Canada. I would like to take the time today to talk about this bill, as well as about other government initiatives to help Canadians in general.

First, the bill seeks to lower taxes for 22 million Canadians across the country. I am talking about lowering the tax rate for Canadians in the first tax bracket from 15% to 14%. This measure will save families up to \$840 a year and individuals up to \$420 a year in taxes.

As the Conservative members mentioned, these savings will depend on a person's income because our tax system is progressive. Some people may benefit more than others, but this tax cut will affect 22 million Canadians, which is very important in these circumstances. This tax cut is directly related to the government's decision to do away with consumer carbon pricing.

I served as an MP in the previous Parliament. I represent a rural riding, and I have always spoken out very strongly about the need to change our national policies.

• (1615)

I am glad that the first act of this Prime Minister and this new government was to eliminate consumer carbon pricing. It was the Prime Minister's first decision on taking office, and I support that measure. I think it is the right approach. Furthermore, the tax cut for Canadians complements this measure because, in a way, it is equivalent to the carbon pricing cheques and rebates that were in place during the previous Parliament.

I am a relatively young member of Parliament. Right now, young people are having a tough time finding housing. That is exactly why our government put forward various initiatives to build more homes. We also want to target young Canadians by making easier for them to own their own home. That is why our government introduced a measure to remove the GST for first-time new homebuyers. This is an important measure. My riding is home to a lot of young people my age with families. This measure is extremely important to families in Kings—Hants considering that the average home costs \$1 million. This is going to make a big difference in my riding.

Beyond this bill, I believe it is equally important to have a conversation about other affordability-related initiatives in Canada. Something occurred to me while I was listening to the speeches by my Conservative Party colleagues. I am not sure how to say it in French.

[*English*]

One would think that the Conservatives think that Canada is within a snow globe, that Canada is isolated, and that in terms of all the decisions that happen in Canada, there is no global influence on

price impact or what we are feeling as Canadians, essentially, that the global economy does not exist and that we are in a snow globe. I think it is an unfortunate approach.

I understand that 10 years in opposition is frustrating. The Conservatives are going to raise things, they are going to push and they want the government to do better. That is fine. That is opposition, but most Canadians understand, for example, that we do not produce coffee in the country, so when we get a coffee, it comes from other countries. Therefore when the price point goes up, maybe that has to do with where the coffee beans originate. I have heard Conservative members list items we do not produce in this country and then suggest that it is the Prime Minister's fault or the government's fault.

Yes, scrutiny of a government is exactly what we do as parliamentarians, but it is a bit of a fallacy, is it not, when the Conservatives suggest it is government policy that is leading to higher costs. I do think we need to be thoughtful around that.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, there are certainly some policies, as I hear the members opposite saying. We can talk about those, but they go outside the range of what is reasonable on an everyday basis.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I look forward to my colleagues' being able to answer.

There is no real rationality. Some members are better than others, but there is no recognition that maybe a war in eastern Europe, a war in the Middle East and some global conflicts can have an impact on supply chains.

There is no recognition that actually there are U.S. tariffs being imposed by the President, not in terms of section 232 tariffs on Canadian industry that the government is working to engage and remove, but in terms of how tariffs on products that actually transit through the United States on their way to Canada may be higher as a result of U.S. tariffs that have been put in place on products that are inbound to the United States.

We never hear that level of nuance from the opposition benches.

There are the impacts of climate change, forest fires and disruption. There are a number of reasons for price increases and challenges. The government is focused on what we can control, in order to be able to support Canadians. The Prime Minister has been very clear on that. I do think, in that context, that it is important to talk about other affordability measures the government has introduced.

Government Orders

● (1620)

Automatic tax filing is one measure that has not received sufficient attention in the House. It is something the government introduced in the budget as part of the budget implementation act. The measure would allow 5.5 million Canadians to benefit from automatic tax filing that would make them eligible for the programs the government either previously introduced or is moving forward in introducing, of which they would be benefactors. That is important.

The member for Edmonton West, who stood up a few speakers ago, never really mentioned that. He talked about equity around programs and taxes. The automatic tax filing program is a prime example of where the government is being very targeted in trying to support the most vulnerable people in our country, and it is a good public policy measure that I think all members of the House should want to support. It would ensure that Canadians make sure they are being compliant with CRA, that they are getting benefits and that we are able to track that accordingly.

I do want to talk about Canada summer jobs. The government is also introducing 30,000 additional Canada summer jobs per year; that means there will be up to 100,000 jobs across the country. In Kings—Hants, this is a big deal for small organizations, not-for-profit organizations and small businesses that benefit from the Canada summer jobs program, and as a source for getting young people into opportunities that could be their first job. It could be building a job that allows them to be able to move on to what might come next in their career.

These are important measures we are introducing for youth, and they are on top of the youth employment strategy, the YESS program, which is focused on creating internships and opportunities for youth in strategic sectors across this country. Our government is focused on being able to move those forward.

They are also on top of the continuation of affordability programs that have been put in place. One of the legacies of the last prime minister's tenure, when we look back in 30 or 40 years, will be the introduction of social programs the Liberal government has committed to protecting that directly benefit Canadians while at the same time recalibrate federal spending to ensure that we can be sustainable over time.

With respect to the Canada child benefit, because the member for Edmonton West talked about targeted programs, under the Harper government, millionaires were getting child benefit cheques of the same amount as was a single mother in my riding with next to no means to her name. That is the legacy of the last Conservative government in this country.

The Liberal government revolutionized the Canada child benefit to make sure it is now targeted to the people who need it the most. In Kings—Hants, it represents almost \$16 million of direct support for families. I have talked to single mothers who said they would not be able to put their young children in sports, for example, or be able to participate in the community or buy groceries without the Canada child benefit program. It is an important measure.

The Conservatives voted against it consistently throughout the last number of Parliaments. They do not admit that, even under the

Harper government, it was a response to a program that created no nuance in terms of supporting the people who most needed help.

The national school food program is such an important program. I want to take a moment to talk about what it can mean for Canadian agriculture in this country. We are making permanent the national school food program, a program that is about making sure young kids can have a great start and no kid will have to go to school hungry. The Conservatives voted against it.

I was deeply disappointed that the member for Central Newfoundland called the program to feed hundreds of thousands of children through the national school food program, in connection and in co-operation with provinces and territories in this country, “garbage”. He has yet to apologize. It is a program that is benefiting children in his riding, but he chose to call it garbage. He has not explained why, and the Conservative Party has not even suggested why it supports the member's saying it. It is terrible.

The program is a policy, and members can disagree about the government's track broadly, but to call “garbage” a program that should be universally supported among all members of Parliament, of the House, is disappointing.

I want to make the point that we have to use the program as a way to support local farmers. I think about my own riding of Kings—Hants, and there are kind of two tiers. There are operators of larger farms in my own riding in Nova Scotia who are able to sell into a federal food system, so to speak, whether that is Sobeys, Real Canadian Superstore or larger industrial markets. Maybe some of the farmers are exporting around the world.

Then there are small farmers trying to get into the industry, who might not come from a farm family but are interested in contributing to our food systems, and they do not have the economies of scale to be able to sell into a federal system. By letting each province control how it procures good healthy food to go into the bellies of our children in this country, we can use the national school food program as a tool to support more farmers in this country, to build up small and medium-sized farmers to make sure they have a future.

● (1625)

It is important because we are going to need more farmers. The RBC report by John Stackhouse mentioned we need about 10,000 farmers over the next decade. I think, undoubtedly, there is going to be some consolidation in the sector, but that is a program that allows a scalability for farmers across this country. There are some federal parameters around that. I think we can do more on the affordability side. Feeding kids is health care. It is affordability. It is a good educational program and it can be a rural development tool.

Government Orders

Speaking of rural development, I have to highlight this again. At a time when our farmers could use support from the Conservatives, particularly in western Canada, around canola, they continue to not want to support any policy that actually demonstrably reduces emissions in this country and supports rural communities. I would challenge the Conservatives to point to a single measure they have in their tool kit that they are willing to come out and support that actually reduces emissions and also supports rural communities.

The biofuel policy is the best example of that. It actually invests in Canadian farmers primarily in western Canada and the Conservatives choose not to support it. There is very little policy about what they would actually do. In fact, in April, the Conservatives' platform called for spending more taxpayers' dollars to reduce emissions. Is that not remarkable? Instead of using the small-c ingenuity of the private sector, the Conservatives would like to spend more taxpayers' dollars to accomplish less and turn their backs on the policies that actually support farmers in their own backyard. It is madness. We need to be talking about this a bit more.

I do want to talk about child care as an affordability measure. We have reduced child care fees in this country. We have been talking, as a country and as a civil society, for almost 50 years about the importance of national child care. The Liberal government introduced child care. I had the Secretary of State for children and youth in my riding. We were on the ground this weekend talking about what that means through the lens of the communities in West Hants in my riding. We have talked to proponents who have seen the expansion, the build-out of that program and what it means for families. We never hear that from the opposition benches. Those are policies that the Conservative Party is either very silent on or is outright against.

I do want to take time to talk about debt. We hear about it from the Conservatives and they would suggest that the financial track of the country is not sustainable. I would point out that as much as they like to quote the Parliamentary Budget Officer's comments from two months ago before the budget was released, they never quote the Parliamentary Budget Officer's most recent comments when he said the financial track of this country is "sustainable". Maybe one of the hon. members on the other side will at least start quoting that metric.

Of course, this government is looking at recalibrating spending. The government has a plan to reduce the size of the Government of Canada over the next number of years. We have a plan to balance the operating budget within three years, while also making room for larger capital spends. This includes for the Canadian Armed Forces by making the investment in the equipment and the infrastructure that it needs. I think about my good friends at 14 Wing Greenwood and the work that its members do. It is in Acadie—Annapolis, but it supports many jobs and livelihoods in Kings—Hants.

We need to go back to basics. We have to compare apples to apples. In 1990, the Conservatives of the day were spending 35¢ for every single dollar of the federal budget on servicing debt in this country. Right now, we are below 10¢ of every dollar being spent. This government is working to be able to reduce that, but we need to put that into context.

The Conservatives stand up and suggest it is going to be the next generation who pays this debt. If that were the case, I would not be

standing here because under them, it was 35¢ for every dollar. That is the metric we should be using. We should recognize that this government is taking measures to reduce it from just under 10¢ and bring it down lower, but the Conservatives are ludicrous to stand in this House and suggest that we are on a financial cliff anywhere near where we were when they were in government in 1990.

I wish I had more time. When I was a new MP, 20 minutes was a long time. It is not anymore. Maybe we can start doing 30-minute sessions sometime. I do have 10 minutes in questions, so keep them short and we will go through a bunch of them.

• (1630)

Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened attentively to the member's speech. He invoked the name of former prime minister Stephen Harper on several occasions. What he conveniently forgot to mention, of course, is that in 2015, under the Harper government, we had a balanced budget in this country. That means that every dollar we took in we spent, but we did not spend more than what we took in.

He also referred to support for the budget and that he wants the Conservatives to support this budget moving forward. What the Liberals are doing, in effect, is trying to fool Canadians. The fiscal year started April 1. They have already spent eight months' of the money. Now they are saying if we do not vote for it we are not supporting it. They have already spent that money.

More importantly, he also mentioned the Parliamentary Budget Officer. I have numbers here from the Parliamentary Budget Officer. What he said is that a single senior in the first income bracket would benefit from this budget, from these moves, to the tune of \$50 a year. Someone who has contributed all of their lives is going to get 13.6¢ a day.

Can the member opposite tell me if he thinks 13.6¢ a day for a single senior on a very low income is enough money, is enough support from a government?

Hon. Kody Blois: What I can tell the seniors at home across this country and in my own riding, Madam Speaker, is that when this government introduced measures to actually increase old age security to be able to strengthen support for seniors, the Conservative Party voted against them.

We always, as colleagues, want to do what we can to support Canadians, to be able to put programs on the table. That same member would tell this House that the government is spending too much. If we put forth another measure that actually puts more money back in the pockets of seniors, the Conservatives consistently vote against these things. The member voted against even a \$50 increase because he suggested it was too much money back to Canadians. Again, the Conservatives need to pick a lane.

Government Orders

I would also like to highlight that it is an average of \$50. Depending on one's circumstances, one could receive more. The important point is one could receive up to \$840 a year. It will depend on one's circumstances. However, if that member and that party had their way, seniors would not have had an increase in the last 10 years.

[*Translation*]

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very articulate speech in which he criticized the inappropriate comments that some Conservatives allegedly made about the national school food program.

I would like him to know that, when Paccar, a truck manufacturing company in Sainte-Thérèse in my region, recently laid off 300 people, his Liberal colleague from Thérèse-De Blainville told these workers on Mario Dumont's show to seek help from food banks and other organizations if they needed to get back on their feet and, above all, to not to take their job loss personally. She offered no solutions, and the government provided no assistance to these workers. These comments by the member for Thérèse-De Blainville were heard by tens of thousands of people in the region.

I challenge my colleague to tell me whether he thinks it is appropriate to tell 300 workers not to take their layoff personally and to go to food banks to get something to eat. I would also ask him, in passing, if it is not high time the government implemented a permanent reform of the employment insurance system.

● (1635)

Hon. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. The situation is indeed difficult right now. I imagine that these jobs losses at the trucking company are related to the tariffs and the situation between the United States and Canada. That is precisely why we made changes to the EI system. We wanted to make it available to workers who are feeling the impacts of the U.S. trade war and the U.S. tariffs. That is also why this government is focusing on creating major projects. We want to stimulate the economy to support workers and to work with them despite the current circumstances.

I am certainly available to work with my colleagues from Quebec and across the country to come up with solutions to address local situations in this context.

[*English*]

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, this is my first chance to weigh in on Bill C-4 and I have a very important question for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister. It is about part 4 of this bill, which has nothing to do with affordability and changes to the Elections Act.

My question for him has two parts. How is it that this is included in the Affordability Act; and why is it that, under part 4 of Bill C-4, if the member would turn his attention to the last section of the bill, clause 49, it states, “deemed to have come into force on May 31, 2000”? These are the sections that relate to personal privacy information held by political parties.

Hon. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I do not have exact purview ultimately on the host leader and the team that put this together, but my understanding from the conversations we had is that the reason

the provision is in there is to address something that all Canadian political parties agree upon, which is that we need a unified system around data management and the disclosure therein as parties collect information. The reason we are going back to 2000 is to make sure that there is a period in time where we can all agree that the information that may have been collected since that period is unified and handled from a data storage perspective so that we can be protecting the rights of Canadians in terms of the information that may be collected by political parties.

Sima Acan (Oakville West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Bill C-4, the making life more affordable for Canadians act, puts forward three practical measures that would provide immediate relief for families: lowering taxes for nearly 22 million Canadians, a savings of up to \$50,000 in GST relief for first-time homebuyers and permanently removing the carbon tax as of April 1. These steps would work together to help Canadians with income, housing and energy costs at once.

We know that the affordability challenges Canadians are facing are serious, and also we know that Canadians are looking for cooperation across party lines. However, we saw many support programs voted down by the Conservatives.

Could my hon. colleague explain to us the importance of supporting Bill C-4 so that we can deliver these benefits and beyond to Canadians without delay?

Hon. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for her work in this place, and for highlighting the work and the importance of this bill and what it means to everyday Canadians.

Bill C-4 is about a tax cut for 22 million Canadians. It is also about removing the GST on new homes for first-time homebuyers, as the member mentioned. I can imagine that there are many people in her own riding who would benefit from that type of program as we work to build out housing across this country.

On the elimination of the consumer carbon price, as the Prime Minister said, it was a program that became highly divisive, depending on which region one was in. We wanted to make sure that we had a policy we could bring forward that would help support the environment and tackle the ability to reduce emissions, but do so in a way that brings Canadians together.

The member is right, and it is a question all members in this House need to ask themselves. We need to get this bill done before Christmas, and hopefully, with her help and the help of other colleagues, we can make that happen.

● (1640)

John Williamson (Saint John—St. Croix, CPC): Madam Speaker, there are two whoppers I want to address that the member spoke to.

Government Orders

The first was his idea that prices are high because prices are set abroad and we have nothing to do with that. Of course, under this government, our foreign exchange rate, the value of the Canadian dollar, has plummeted, which is why foreign goods have gone up so much. That is why it costs so much to live in this country and why families and businesses feel poor today. The dollar is down because investment is down, because of this government's policy. For 10 years, the Liberals put in place tax-and-spend policies that have led to that outcome; that is on the government.

Second, the member mentioned that the war in Ukraine drove up prices. I live in a border community. Today, if I go to the state of Maine to buy a litre of gasoline, it is 30¢ to 40¢ cheaper in Maine than it is in New Brunswick. That is not because of the war in Ukraine. All that gasoline comes from the refinery in Saint John, it is priced in U.S. dollars on both sides, and so it is because of tax. While getting rid of the consumer carbon tax helped, all the other taxes and regulations from this government are driving up energy, and that is why the government is going to find itself in the same position in a few years. High energy prices—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I need to give the hon. parliamentary secretary 10 seconds to answer.

Hon. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I presume during the time that member was in government that the difference in the price of gasoline between United States and Canada was equally not similar. I think maybe he ought to ask himself that question on that side.

I recognize that this government is focused on what we can control in this country. However, the member opposite should get up more often, because too many of the colleagues around him would suggest that inflation and some of the affordability challenges are tied only to domestic policy and not to other international events. We are focused on what we can control in this country, and we are going to take care of that.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for York—Durham, Border Security.

[English]

David Bexte (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very thankful for the opportunity to rise today in the House to speak to Bill C-4, a bill respecting certain affordability measures for Canadians and another measure. I will not be speaking to the other measure, but I will be speaking to the first three.

I am splitting my time today with the member for Richmond Centre—Marpole.

Let me begin with a simple truth. Some elements of this bill are based on long-standing Conservative principles, but every single one of them has been diluted, weakened or watered down by a government that has spent nearly a decade creating the very affordability crisis it now claims it wants to fix. That is why I find it fitting that, perhaps unintentionally, the bill is titled “C-4”, because the Liberals have certainly blown up affordability in this country.

Bill C-4 contains four major components: an income tax cut, a GST rebate for certain homebuyers, a partial repeal of carbon tax

measures and a legislative response to a recent British Columbia court decision regarding federal political privacy rules. Again, my remarks today will be restricted to the first three.

The first part of the bill would lower the lowest income tax bracket by 0.5% in 2025 and another 0.5% in 2026, reducing it to 14%. However, Conservatives campaigned on lowering this bracket to 12.75%, which is a real cut that would have offered meaningful relief to working Canadians who are struggling to get by. Under our plan, a typical worker earning \$57,000 would have saved \$900 annually and a couple would have saved \$1,800. The Liberal plan, in contrast, would eventually save the average Canadian just \$420. This is not even enough to buy a cup of coffee a day. It would be \$840 for a couple. That does not come close to matching the rising cost of groceries, rent or mortgage payments.

While Conservatives support tax relief, we also believe in fiscal responsibility. This measure would cost \$27 billion over five years. Canadians deserve to know that any tax reduction will be matched by responsible spending decisions rather than higher deficits passed on to future generations. I must say the problem is that the spending goes nowhere. It does not add meaningfully to anything in the country.

The second part of Bill C-4 would offer a GST rebate on new homes, but only for first-time buyers and only until 2031, with construction deadlines extending to 2036. Once again, the Liberal government adopted an idea rooted in Conservative policy and then stripped out the very elements that would have made it effective. Conservatives proposed removing the GST from all new homes under \$1.3 million, because we recognize that housing affordability is fundamentally a supply problem. More homes need to be built, and the government should encourage construction across the entire market, not just for a narrow, politically sensitive subset.

The Liberal version is so restrictive that housing experts are already warning it would have little impact on construction or affordability. The Building Industry and Land Development Association in Toronto, one of the largest homebuilding voices in Canada, has said plainly that very few new buyers are first-time buyers, meaning the policy would barely move the needle. Even finance department officials admitted the measure could push prices up, not down, which is completely counterproductive if demand rises without matching increases in supply.

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The rebate is also unfair. Canadians who are widowed or divorced and need to purchase a new home would be excluded, and so would anyone who signed a purchase agreement even one day off the arbitrary May 27, 2025, cut-off.

The third major element of Bill C-4 deals with the consumer carbon tax, which Liberals now admit, after years of denial and vehemently obstructing any discussion about it, has become unaffordable for Canadian families. Even as they attempt to backtrack on the consumer tax, the industrial carbon tax, which drives up prices for farmers, processors, manufacturers and ultimately consumers, remains firmly in place. That means the carbon tax will continue to increase the price of groceries and put punitive costs on farmers, who will have to pay extra to heat their barns, dry their grain, purchase and use fertilizer and buy and operate farm equipment.

• (1645)

As a bit of an aside, the carbon tax is also on steel, concrete, aluminum and glass, everything required to build homes, build businesses and build factories. It is increasing the cost of everything for everyone. This is not how we stimulate an economy. Farmers, truckers, small businesses and working Canadians understand that. However, the Liberal government seems unable to grasp the obvious: A tax on everything increases the cost of everything. Conservatives will continue to advocate for a full repeal of all carbon taxes, including the industrial carbon tax, so that families and small businesses can finally get the relief they deserve.

All these measures also come with significant fiscal implications. The first part would cost \$27 billion, and the second part, nearly \$4 billion. As carbon taxes are potentially reversed, GST and corporate revenues will inevitably decline. Without reductions in wasteful spending, these policies risk further expanding deficits.

I must say that spending is out of control. Conservatives will put forward amendments to ensure that tax relief is paired with reasonable, responsible savings, by cutting wasteful bureaucracy, reducing excessive foreign aid and eliminating corporate handouts that benefit the well-connected, rather than working Canadians.

In conclusion, Bill C-4 simply does not go far enough to address the cost of living crisis facing Canadians. The income tax cut is too small. The GST rebate is too limited, too temporary and too specialized. The carbon tax changes leave the industrial carbon tax completely untouched. As much as my colleagues across the aisle might want to claim that this does not impact affordability, it impacts all affordability at every level of the economy. These measures borrow from Conservative ideas, but they lack the ambition and substance required to give Canadians real relief. Canadians deserve a plan that delivers a stronger tax cut for working people, broader GST relief, a full repeal of all carbon taxes, including the industrial carbon tax, and responsible spending that finally stops driving up inflationary deficits.

Canadians cannot afford half measures. They need a government that will build homes, lower taxes, scrap the carbon tax and restore hope. Conservatives will continue working to deliver that future.

It must be noted that when Conservatives previously put forward common-sense amendments at the finance committee to expand tax

relief to more Canadians, Liberals filibustered and blocked those proposals. That is their record, not ours.

• (1650)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am sure the member is aware that his premier, the Premier of Alberta, asked to sign an agreement in acknowledgment of the valuable role of the industrial carbon tax.

I have a two-part question for the member: Does he support the Premier of Alberta's signing of a document that ultimately inflates or causes a greater increase in the carbon tax for the province of Alberta, which he also represents?

The other thing, just to be very clear, is that a lot of Conservatives like to talk tough against this legislation. They like to filibuster the legislation. Can he give us an indication about how he will actually vote on the legislation?

David Bexte: Madam Speaker, it is two parts, two questions and too much time.

With voting, it is up to the government to convince us how to vote and to bring in the amendments required to make this something that will actually help Canadians. It is up to the government House leader to earn the support across the aisle.

As to the first part of the member's question relating to the Premier of Alberta, the grand ransom was a deal where the premier did not have a choice because the government across the way boxed everybody in. It is a fallacy to think that the compromises that had to be made are going to result in anything productive or an improved economy.

Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, earlier, I asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister if he thought the 13.6¢ per day that a single senior in this country is going to get as relief through this particular budget bill they are putting through is enough for a single senior who is struggling to pay for their groceries. When they go to the grocery store, they are making a decision as to whether they should buy less or they should eat less quality and less quantity, so that they can afford to live.

Does the member think roughly 13.5¢ a day is enough money to give support to a senior who has contributed to this country all of their life?

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David Bexte: Madam Speaker, the short answer is that the question answers itself. It is absolutely ridiculous that this is the circumstance seniors find themselves in after more than 10 years of the Liberal government. Thirteen and a half cents is a pittance and an insult to the people who have worked so hard and contributed their whole lives to the building of this country. It is absolutely not acceptable, not at all.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the bill does three things. First, it reduces income tax. Twenty-two million Canadians are going to get a tax break. Second, it gets rid of the GST for first-time homebuyers. Again, it is a great tax break. Third, it deals with the consumer carbon tax in terms of getting rid of it in law. These are three things I would have thought the Conservatives would vote in favour of.

Can the member not agree it is unfortunate he has not been told how he is going to be voting by the Conservative leadership? I would have figured they would have been told by now that this is good legislation and that they will be voting in favour of it.

David Bexte: Madam Speaker, again, the member opposite knows full well it is fully up to the government and the House leader to convince this side of the aisle that the government has good legislation, or it could accept our amendments and incorporate them into the legislation. It is absolutely a no-brain circumstance, and that may be part of the problem on the other side of the aisle. Amend the legislation. Make it actually useful. Eliminate all of the carbon tax. Make a meaningful tax cut that meaningfully affects all Canadians, and make sure the GST comes off homebuilding for all Canadians.

• (1655)

John Williamson (Saint John—St. Croix, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member in response to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, who, in responding to my last question, presumed that when Stephen Harper was in office, the tax differential on gasoline between Maine and New Brunswick was the same. It was not. He was wrong to presume. He should check his facts and get the story straight. It was half the amount. Under the current government, the carbon tax regulations and levies have gone up. My other colleague, my colleague from Saint John, knows this well.

Could the member please inform the House what the impact of taxes is on goods? When we tax something, what happens? Does the price go up? Does that explain that big yawning differential in gas prices?

David Bexte: Madam Speaker, taxes on goods make everything go up, and make everything more expensive in life. There is less—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Richmond Centre—Marpole.

Chak Au (Richmond Centre—Marpole, CPC): Madam Speaker, before I address Bill C-4, I want to speak about the tragic fire in Tai Po, Hong Kong, which is the deadliest in the city in 77 years.

Like many Hong Kong Canadians in Richmond and Vancouver, I immigrated from Hong Kong 37 years ago. I still have family there, including in the affected districts. Many people in our community are grieving and shaken.

Let us acknowledge the brave young firefighter, Ho Wai-ho, who lost his life in the line of duty. As a father of a firefighter in Richmond, this loss is deeply personal. My family understands the risks first responders face every single day. Our prayers are with the families who are mourning, with those waiting for news and with a city that is hurting. May they find strength and comfort.

After 10 years of the Liberal government, Canadians are living through the worst affordability crisis in over a century. In Richmond, Vancouver and across Canada, families face record food prices and rents, and mortgage payments that have doubled for many households. Young people say that they may never own a home. Seniors tell me they cannot keep up with everyday costs. Newcomers are struggling to build a stable life. Canadians deserve better than theatrical policies; they need real help.

The most affordable thing about Bill C-4, the making life more affordable act, is the title. The truth is that this is not an affordability plan; it is political theatre. The government is boasting a small reduction in the lowest income tax rate, but as the saying goes, “Distant water cannot put out nearby fires.” The actual benefit for most families is tiny. It is a penny of relief while the budget behind the bill brings a dollar of new costs: higher payroll taxes, higher debt servicing costs than Canada spends on health transfers, benefits that fall behind inflation, mortgage renewals that have doubled for many households in Vancouver and Richmond, and the largest deficit outside of the pandemic.

Groceries are up, gas is up, insurance is up, child care wait-lists are longer and families are losing their savings and financial security due to the government's fiscal incompetence. Canadians do not need pennies or a creative accounting bill; they need a government that understands the real cost of living, rent that does not take up more than half of their income, renewal rates that do not add thousands of dollars a month to mortgages, child care they can afford and groceries that are not so expensive that families need to cut back.

Parents should not have to skip meals so their children can eat. This is the reality Canadians face after 10 years of irresponsible Liberal spending. Bill C-4 does not change that reality; it offers scraps off the table of the Liberal government and their friends.

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Food bank usage in our region is at the highest level ever recorded. Across Canada, food bank visits have more than doubled since 2019, reaching over two million visits a month. Seniors in Richmond tell me that they are rationing their medication because they simply cannot afford both groceries and prescriptions. I speak with young people who have moved back in with their parents, not because they want to, but because rent in Vancouver and Richmond has become completely out of reach. This is not normal; this is a crisis.

If the government has taught Canadians anything at all, it is that just because it glitters does not mean it is made of gold. The GST rebate for first-time homebuyers is a glittering gift with charcoal inside. In Richmond, Vancouver and the vast majority of Canada, almost every new home is above the \$450,000 to \$550,000 price cap. This measure helps almost no one, not young families, not newcomers and not renters trying to save for a down payment. It is a gift to Brookfield's bottom line, especially with their pending U.S.-manufactured modular housing project.

● (1700)

Real homebuilding is slowed by red tape, slow approvals and the current government's gatekeeping. Bill C-4 would not fix that. It would not build more livable homes. It would not lower mortgage payments. It would not make rent affordable. Canadians would save a penny while making a buck, and I will add that the pennies do not come free.

Inside the affordability bill, the government has hidden that it will weaken privacy protection for federal political parties by exempting them from privacy laws. That has nothing to do with affordability. It is blatant government overreach, a bribe at the expense of Canadians' civic liberties. It is an underhanded fire sale on Canadians' personal and private information. Why hide the changes inside a bill that Canadians think is about the cost of living?

One of the clearest examples of the government's creative accounting and misleading affordability policy is its decision, in the same budget, to eliminate federal student loans for most public career training programs. This is not a small adjustment; it is a war on the working class. These programs train tens of thousands of Canadians every year for jobs we desperately need: health care workers, childhood educators, trades and technical workers, IT and cybersecurity people, hospitality workers, medical administrators and frontline community service staff.

Students rely on federal loans because they cannot pay thousands of dollars upfront. There are also people who are career transitioning, low-income people, immigrants and people supporting families while trying to survive the government's crumbling economy. The government is closing the door on Canadians trying to pursue a livelihood. The decision would remove opportunities for young Canadians and second-career workers at the exact moment our country needs trained talents the most.

The government's claim that Bill C-4 would make life affordable is just theatre, while the budget does the opposite behind the scenes. Education would be harder to access, and training would be more expensive. Bill C-4 promises affordability but would not deliver. It gives pennies while the budget takes dollars. It glitters but hides unrelated privacy changes inside an affordability bill. It

would do nothing for struggling Canadians. Families in Richmond, Vancouver and across Canada would only continue paying more each and every month.

Canadians deserve better than charcoal this Christmas; they deserve a real government with real and honest solutions. Canadians deserve a Conservative government.

● (1705)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, right off the top, just to echo the member, my prayers and thoughts are with the 150-plus people who fell victim to the Hong Kong fires. I appreciate the member's making reference to that.

I have a few fascinating questions. I am sure the member is aware that the Conservative Party today is really a far-right political entity, and I understood him to have been a candidate for the NDP back in the day. That is a pretty big leap, from a progressive party to a far-right party. Could he provide a comment on that, with respect to the bill?

The other thing is that I am told you are still a current city councillor. Is it because you do not have confidence in the leader?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The member has to speak through the Chair. I am not a city councillor anywhere.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, is it because of a lack of confidence in the leadership of the Conservative Party that the member is not giving up his seat at the council level?

Finally, could the member provide his thoughts on whether or not he will be voting in favour of the legislation?

Chak Au: Madam Speaker, while I listened to my colleague on the other side, I realized only one thing: The Liberals have copied from policies the Conservatives advocate.

In addition, as a city councillor, I have the privilege and advantage of listening to people right on the ground. They are telling me day in day out that they are having a very big problem with affordability, which Bill C-4 would not address.

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his great speech on Bill C-4, the unaffordability act, as the government wants to call it.

We know that the Liberals have no good ideas of their own, and that when they take our good ideas, they wreck them. Conservatives put forward a proposal to take the GST off new home builds, and the Liberals came in with something that sounds like that, but it is only for first-time homebuyers. First-time homebuyers are generally not buying newbuilds; they are buying older homes. Newbuilds are what we need in our country.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague has any comments around the fact that the Liberals steal our ideas but then wreck them.

Chak Au: Madam Speaker, when I read this bill, a word comes to my mind, which is “smokescreen”. I see the Liberal government trying to deceive Canadians by telling them that this is going to help them, but, at the same time, they are doing other things that are going to hurt the economy, hurt people and make life more difficult for Canadians. In this case, they might say that the GST rebate is helpful, but again, it is to a very tiny subgroup of Canadians. It is not helping everybody. It is not helping the people who need help the most. The Liberals are using a smokescreen to pretend they are doing something.

Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Madam Speaker, a 26-year-old, a 24-year-old, a 22-year-old and a four-and-a-half-year-old and their better halves make up my family, along with my wife. They all live with me, and by the way, they have very good-paying jobs. They cannot afford a home or to start a family, so they all live under my roof. It is probably my greatest gift, but, at the same time, any loving parent would want their children to move on.

Other than the industrial carbon tax, what falls short in Bill C-4 that would truly give young adults an opportunity, something that Conservatives would put into this bill to give them a chance to start their own families and buy their first homes?

Chak Au: Madam Speaker, Canadians do not need handouts. They need a government that is competent and that will help us make the economy better and stronger, so that everybody can be self-reliant and independent and feed their families with the incomes they receive.

Canadians need more help, not in terms of handouts but in a government that is competent enough to help the country and the economy move forward.

• (1710)

[*Translation*]

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, the third part of Bill C-4 reflects what could be called the Prime Minister's environmental fiasco. Actually, what we are witnessing with the abandonment of consumer carbon pricing is the beginning of the official end of the fight against climate change. This step back was taken on April 1, before the people had even given him an electoral mandate.

Instead of countering the Conservatives' carbon pricing disinformation, the Prime Minister simply started chanting from their slogan sheet by eliminating one of the flagship measures for achieving the country's greenhouse gas reduction target. Since then, it has been one step back after another, back to the Stone Age, which happens to be exactly what the Leader of the Opposition wanted. That

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is what we are seeing. In the end, the oil companies will have gotten everything on their wish list, courtesy of the government.

Added to this, more recently, is the climate capitulation budget. The icing on the cake is a new oil sands pipeline. Getting back to Bill C-4, it is the elimination of the carbon pricing rebate. Let us be clear. This spells the end of any possibility of meeting Canada's greenhouse gas reduction targets. Obviously, the Bloc Québécois strongly opposes this environmentally irresponsible behaviour. This shows that the government has no intention of fighting climate change. It also highlights a major injustice for Quebeckers. I am talking about the elimination of the carbon rebate that came with a cheque for Canadians outside Quebec, but was paid for with Quebeckers' money. They were not entitled to a cheque. That means that money from Quebec was taken out of Quebeckers' pockets and sent as election goodies in the form of cheques worth \$814 million in the middle of an election campaign. Once again, that money came out of Quebeckers' pockets.

The government told us that it was going to increase industrial carbon pricing, but this bill does not mention that at all. If we look at what is happening abroad, in the rest of the world, on January 1, the European Union will be imposing a tariff on the import of products and goods from other countries. If there is no price on pollution in those other countries, Europe will put a price on carbon at the border. Right now, given the uncertainty in the United States under Mr. Trump and given that access to the U.S. market is becoming more difficult, it is clear that this would be the worst time to close our doors to the European market. This is especially true given that the consumer carbon price is being removed in Canada and we do not yet know what will happen to industrial carbon pricing.

I want to remind the House that the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development believes that carbon pricing is one of the few effective aspects of the federal greenhouse gas reduction plan. By ending carbon pricing, however, the government is not only giving up the fight against climate change, it is also leaving Quebec in the lurch after it has once again been cheated, literally robbed. The Bloc Québécois has repeatedly demanded that the government acknowledge this situation in its budget and return the \$814 million in question to Quebeckers. We are not alone in calling for this; the Quebec National Assembly is calling for it too. Every one of the parties in Quebec City is unanimously calling for the federal government to return that money to us. What has the government and its 44 Liberal members from Quebec done? They have shown us that they are utterly incapable of supporting the Quebec National Assembly's unanimous demand. They are ignoring Quebeckers and condoning the fact that Quebeckers were just robbed of \$814 million to send out vote-buying cheques.

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• (1715)

When we talk about carbon pricing, it is worth remembering that Quebec has a price on carbon. Quebec established a carbon market; it has taken action. However, by removing carbon pricing in the rest of Canada, the government is obviously putting Quebec at a disadvantage. It is important to remember that nearly 90% of the money collected by the government was returned to citizens outside Quebec. This rebate allowed 80% of the population, or the majority of households, to receive more money than they paid in carbon pricing.

The former environment minister said very clearly that this was a very good measure to combat climate change. However, what was the first thing we saw the new Prime Minister do? He took a big pen and, like Donald Trump, signed an executive order to proudly abolish carbon pricing, which the previous government and the previous environment minister considered to be a good environmental measure. The Liberals even dared to abolish this measure on April 1. What did they do on April 22, which is Earth Day? On Earth Day, they decided to send Canadians cheques totalling \$3.7 billion. That was \$3.7 billion to buy votes in an election campaign.

Obviously, it is important to remember how carbon pricing works. It is a rebate that has always been paid in advance. It was therefore an advance payment to households. This money was not being reimbursed. In other words, Canadians received a cheque for money they had never actually paid. I repeat that Quebecers did not receive any, but they did pay for it. We believe that this amounts to funding the environmentally irresponsible behaviour of the Canadian provinces at the expense of Quebecers. Quebec is being penalized because it has made efforts to fight climate change. The government stole money from the pockets of Quebecers to reward Canada for not making an effort. That is why the Bloc Québécois is calling on Ottawa to unconditionally transfer the \$814 million that was paid by Quebec, because those cheques were written for a carbon pricing system that no longer even existed. They were sent on Earth Day, which is truly a dark day and marked the beginning of the end of the government's fight against climate change.

The Prime Minister justifies his lax approach to combatting climate change—or rather his abandonment of the fight against climate change—by invoking Canada's need for economic development. What is the logic behind saying that we are going to develop the Canadian economy when we need to develop international trade partnerships with other countries, yet EU countries and other countries are going to impose carbon pricing at the border for non-compliant countries that do not put a price, or a high enough price, on carbon? What will the Prime Minister say to these trading partners when he himself abandons important measures? There is uncertainty in the United States, we agree, but we know that we need to strengthen trade ties outside the North American bubble.

• (1720)

I would like to point out that Quebec accounts for one-third of trade between Canada and Europe. We receive nearly 40% of European investment in Canada. We have an advantage and we are the gateway to Europe. Quebec is, in a way, the bridge between America and Europe. Obviously, we hope that Quebec will be able to double its trade with Europe, including, of course, the United King-

dom. Ideally, we would increase it from \$42 billion to \$84 billion within five years.

However, Europe currently has the carbon border adjustment mechanism. In 2023, the European Union adopted legislation creating this carbon border adjustment mechanism, which is set to come into force on January 1, 2026. What Europe wants to do is prevent carbon leakage and avoid unfair competition from competitors located in places where it is free to pollute. Europe will therefore impose a tax adjustment. Again, Europe will impose a tax adjustment on imports of certain products from countries where carbon pricing is too low or non-existent. This is now the case in Canada. In 2024, the United Kingdom also adopted legislation similar to the European law. The U.K. law will come into effect on January 1, 2027.

This is the direction the world is heading in. We need to keep that in mind when we talk about carbon pricing. Pollution comes at a cost, and a price has to be put on that cost. Other countries are preparing to do so, and Canada will pay a very high price if it ignores the cost of pollution. Canada intends to pass the cost on to taxpayers as a whole, forcing them to pay the cost if the companies that pollute do not.

Essentially, when a product enters Europe, a levy will be charged that is equal to what the carbon price would have been in Europe. In the beginning, this levy will apply to select products, such as aluminum, iron, steel, cement, fertilizer, hydrogen and electricity. Gradually, it will be extended to include all goods. While border carbon adjustments may be a new mechanism, similar mechanisms already exist. They are completely legal and trade-rule compliant. Examples of equivalent measures include the excise tax on tobacco or alcohol, which is charged when these products leave the factory where they are made, or at the border for imported goods. This is a global trend that Canada is bucking.

The World Bank compiles a list of carbon pricing mechanisms around the world. In 2023, it counted 53 countries with carbon pricing. That is five more than in 2022, 12 more than in 2021, and 69 more than 20 years ago. The trajectory is very clear. The world is waking up to the reality of climate change and is putting a price on pollution by choosing carbon pricing. No country in the world has abolished its carbon pricing. Canada would be the first to choose this path. Clearly, it is sinking deeper into climate irresponsibility, primarily to satisfy oil and gas companies.

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It should be noted that carbon pricing does not apply in Quebec. Quebec has its own cap-and-trade system for emissions. It is not the only one to have implemented such a system. It works with the Western Climate Initiative, among others, with California. There are exchanges between companies, including between Quebec and California. Together, they have a combined GDP of \$4.8 trillion. That is enormous. It is a major market. There has never been carbon pricing at the federal level in the United States. The states are taking action. Washington is also taking action in this regard. Having Mr. Trump as President does not change the situation.

• (1725)

Nothing has changed, since individual states are continuing to move forward. California has even strengthened its market under the cap-and-trade system and committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions even further. This means that the fight against climate change is accelerating in certain countries, whether in the state of California or in the European Union, which, although imperfect, is continuing the fight against climate change. That is the opposite of Canada, which is bucking the global trend. Quebec could once again suffer because Canada has taken on certain responsibilities while Quebec is going to play by a different set of rules. In Quebec, we decided to put a price on pollution because, otherwise, it is passed on to society as a whole. We need to have carbon pricing, just as we have other types of pricing. There is a price for electricity and a price for water consumption. There must be a price for pollution, because it is not free.

The Conservative Party wants to abolish industrial carbon pricing. According to the Conservatives, any pricing would be bad. They never explain how we are going to combat climate change if we abolish the basic principles recognized by some of the world's most renowned economists. There is a consensus that putting a price on carbon is an effective measure, and it is a measure that the world is moving towards.

For its part, Canada has chosen to return to the 20th century. It wants to abolish and reduce carbon pricing. Once again, this will undermine the efforts of Quebecers, who believe it is important to diversify exports and export destinations and to ramp up trade with Europe. Obviously, Quebec's businesses, our SMEs, will find themselves at a disadvantage if the rest of Canada does not feel the same way.

I would like to remind members that both the European Union and the United Kingdom have implemented exemption schemes and carbon pricing at the border. The Bloc Québécois will oppose this bill to ensure that Canada stops thwarting Quebec's efforts to diversify its markets and combat climate change. We will not allow ourselves to be distracted by the Trump effect. There is a global reality on which countries are taking action, and I mentioned several examples, but unfortunately, it is not a reality that Canada has embraced so far.

It is not just one measure. If there were something to replace that and if it could be shown that there was a willingness to meet the country's greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets, comply with the Paris Agreement and reduce pollution, we would believe it. Unfortunately, the very first thing that the new Prime Minister did, through an order in council, was followed by several other steps

backward. That is concerning from the standpoint of the fight against climate change. This is not just one major step backward. We were expecting the government to show us a climate competitiveness strategy that would highlight the government's commitment but, in reality, there is no new money to fight climate change. There is no clarity on industrial carbon pricing. How much will it cost? To what extent will it be increased? What kind of additional greenhouse gas emission reductions will it bring? In fact, we see a desire to come to an agreement with Alberta, which is currently refusing to harmonize its industrial pricing system with the Canadian system. Once again, this will likely lead to a decrease in Alberta's commitments.

We cannot give a blank cheque to a government that is eliminating important measures, such as consumer carbon pricing, while giving billions of dollars more in its latest budget to increase or extend funding and subsidies to oil and gas companies, removing the cap on greenhouse gas emissions from the oil and gas sector, and striking a deal with Alberta that makes it very clear that they plan to harmonize their standards. Harmonizing with Alberta means lowering the standards. Just look at the carve-out for Alberta on the clean electricity regulations.

• (1730)

For us, abolishing industrial carbon pricing means abandoning the fight against climate change, and that is completely irresponsible—

The Deputy Speaker: We have to move on to questions and comments.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the legislation provides tax relief for all Canadians, including those in the province of Quebec. There are significant tax savings for over 22 million people in total. It also provides the opportunity for first-time homebuyers to benefit by being exempt from the GST. Both of those programs benefit the people of Quebec.

How have the Bloc members made the determination to say no to those particular benefits?

[*Translation*]

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois has been very clear. We had six non-negotiable demands for the government and it turned them all down. It refused to pay back the \$814 million that was stolen from Quebecers. It refused to increase health transfers. It refused to help young people access home ownership, as we proposed. It turned down a wide range of requests that garnered consensus in Quebec and that cost very little. It also refused to provide assistance to seniors aged 65 to 74. That is like putting arsenic in a cake, and that is not good for Quebec. It is not something we will accept.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the member's speech. While he is new here, his ideas are quite outdated as Canadians fully rejected a carbon tax in the last election. Even people like Bill Gates are saying that we have to focus on things like eliminating hunger and poverty, which are on the rise right here in Canada. This bill purports to do some of those things.

Why is the member bringing these outdated ideas back to this place and not focusing on reducing hunger and poverty in this country?

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, our Conservative colleagues say nothing about the roughly \$10 billion in subsidies that the Canadian government gives oil and gas companies every year. They say nothing about the \$10 billion it costs Quebec to purchase hydrocarbons, oil and gas each year. That is money that leaves Quebec and goes to Alberta, among other places. That represents a cost.

They say nothing about the cost of insurance, which is rising because of climate change. They say nothing about how droughts, floods and the problems facing farmers are driving up the cost of groceries and food. I would like them to talk about the real issues. I would like them to tell us who will pay if we do not put a price on pollution. Everyone is paying now, and we can see that in climate change and the devastating consequences we are experiencing today, such as the forest fires that have occurred again this year.

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. It is always interesting to hear him speak, particularly when he talks about the environment. However, I do not think that these subjects are mutually exclusive. Our Conservative colleague just told us that his constituents want us to get rid of the carbon tax and to instead focus our efforts on economic measures so that people can buy homes and so on.

There is something that I am wondering about. We often hear this kind of rhetoric. I would like to hear my colleague's comments on that. Is taking care of the environment and leaving a healthy, viable planet for our children really at odds with investing today to enable families to put food on the table and a roof over their heads? Are these two challenges mutually exclusive or not?

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, we believe that it is actually possible to grow the economy, help people cope with the rising cost of living, including insurance premiums and groceries, while also fighting climate change and developing the jobs of the future. Yes, we are concerned about the cost of living and access to home ownership. That is one of the reasons why we proposed two key measures that we wanted to see in this budget, but the government did not include them.

For example, we proposed a measure for a down payment for first-time home buyers. We proposed that parents be able to use their RRSPs to help their children access the home buyers' plan. It is hard to get the money needed for a down payment.

We also suggested offering interest-free loans, which would cost the government next to nothing, but would allow these new families, these young people, to make the necessary down payment to

buy a home. This measure would have complemented what the government has proposed. Access to home ownership is important to us. We think it is important for everyone to have access to it, not just those who can afford a down payment, which is becoming increasingly expensive.

● (1735)

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the boldness of the answer I was provided. It is somewhat disappointing that the members of the Bloc believe that the people of Quebec, through their eyes, should be denied a tax break on their income tax and, further to that, that first-time homebuyers should not be provided the opportunity to get an exemption from the GST.

Does the member believe he is consistent with what his constituents would want to see happen with respect to those two measures?

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, we are simply asking the question. If the government really intended to move forward with the decent measures in its budget, why is it presenting everything as a take-it-or-leave-it package? Why did it not split it up so that we could support the decent initiatives?

What we are being asked to do is swallow a bitter pill in exchange for a few small, interesting measures. Looking at the budget, we are stuck with it as a whole. We had six specific demands for Quebec. The government deliberately chose to ignore them and did not want to work with the other opposition parties. As a result, we cannot support it, unfortunately.

It is undemocratic to say that we must take it or leave it. We are telling the government to work constructively with the opposition and make amendments, for one. Then, perhaps we could accept it, but at this point, the package deal is unacceptable to Quebec.

[English]

Eric Melillo (Kenora—Kiiwetinoong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals, throughout this debate, have spoken a lot about the GST relief for first-time homebuyers, leaving out the fact that relief is available particularly when it comes to first-time homebuyers buying new homes. I know in northwestern Ontario, this is something that almost never happens, in part because there are not many new homes being built but also because what young first-time homebuyers can afford are often homes that are 20 or 30 years old. I wonder if the member shares my assessment of things in his own riding as to how this program or this proposal being brought forward by the Liberal government is not going to be as effective as it would have us believe.

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, I completely share my colleague's concerns about how difficult it is for young families, among others, to buy a home and to save up enough money for a down payment. Obviously, we support the GST measure, but we think it needs to be complemented by other measures. The biggest obstacle to home ownership is how hard it is to save up a down payment. With house prices continuing to rise, it is becoming increasingly difficult for young people to save and to buy their first home, partly because of the cost of living.

I hope my colleague will say that he supports the idea that parents should be able to use their RRSPs to help young people get into the housing market, that the government should introduce low-interest or even interest-free loans to help young people get that down payment so they can buy a home, because there is a fundamental problem with access. Eliminating the GST is not enough. The problem of saving for a down payment also needs to be addressed.

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives rise to say that all Canadians voted in the last election to get rid of the carbon tax. However, the political reality is that people voted for the current Prime Minister because they were afraid of the Leader of the Opposition. They believed that getting rid of the carbon tax was a temporary compromise, even though they still supported the fight against climate change, but thought that things would be worse under the Conservatives. In voting for the Liberals, they were choosing between the lesser of two evils.

Today, however, we have a Liberal Prime Minister who is even worse than the Conservatives. He going farther than people dreamed the Conservatives would go. That is exactly what we got with the infamous pipeline agreement. The Prime Minister is also discarding other carbon tax policies, including in Alberta. It is the end of the fight against climate.

I would like my colleague to tell me whether he believes that this is truly what people voted for.

• (1740)

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, people never even saw the current government's real oil and gas agenda. During the election campaign, the Liberals did not say a word about the fact that they were even more in favour of oil and gas than the Conservatives, who never approved a pipeline project under Stephen Harper.

Yes, people were tricked.

[English]

Ellis Ross (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Kenora—Kiiwetinoong.

Like a few members, I am brand new here. This is my first term as an MP, but I was an MLA back in B.C. for seven years. I was also a chief councillor for six years, and previous to that, I was a councillor for eight years. A lot of the issues we talk about are very similar to what I have done in the last 20 years, but I have not really seen what is happening here happen before in my previous political life.

What I am talking about is the Liberal government basically borrowing, or stealing, ideas from the Conservative platform. Whether it is stealing or borrowing, it is all in the same vein to try to get life more affordable for Canadians, which is the short title of Bill C-4, the making life more affordable for Canadians act. It is not bad for the Liberals to steal Conservative ideas, as long as they take 100% of the idea and not water them down. If they were to water down the ideas, they would not actually be making life more affordable for Canadians. It is political spin, or rhetoric, and it would not achieve what Conservatives wanted to do in the first place, which was to make life affordable across the board for all Canadians, not just those who would get a tax break buying a \$100-million jet.

Take the carbon tax, for example. I watched CPAC when the Conservatives were hammering the Liberals to get rid of the carbon tax: Axe the tax. However, the Liberals would not hear of it. They would accuse the Conservatives of burning the planet if people took their family for a drive in a car. Anybody who questioned the carbon tax was a climate change denier. How did it turn around? The Liberals are the ones who are burning the planet by driving their family all around Canada and jumping on jets to go to Brazil for an environment conference of all things.

The Liberals pulled off a sleight-of-hand trick. They pulled off taking the carbon tax off for fuel, for example, which Conservatives wanted, and overnight that created savings for Canadians, but they kept the industrial carbon tax. We just got through talking about that in committee today where a farmer told the Minister of Environment that the industrial carbon tax on farmers is not imaginary. It is real. The farmer sees it when he is purchasing fertilizer or purchasing equipment. The farmer cannot absorb these costs, and so it has to be transferred down the line to average Canadians.

On top of this, the Liberal government basically admitted today that it is going to support the International Maritime Organization for a carbon shipping tax. However, it will not say how that is going to affect Canadians who want to purchase goods and services in Canada. I do not like the carbon tax, but in this case, when the Liberals support an international shipping tax, unlike the carbon tax, that money is going to leave Canada and it is not going to come back. It is going to go to a foreign agency, and who knows what it is going to do with it, at a time when Canadians are trying to decide whether or not they should skip a meal or pay the energy bill. That is an absolute shame.

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I heard my colleagues talking about housing affordability and about first-time homebuyers. First-time homebuyers really cannot afford to buy the construction of a brand new home. They are usually buying homes that were built 30 or 40 years ago. This would work if Canada was building houses, but Canada is not building houses. Now, the government is taking unprecedented moves where Liberals are promising to build houses when really it is the private sector that has been building houses in Canada for the last 100, 150 or 200 years. It was not a problem until the Liberals brought in policies to crunch Canadians in affordability in all sectors.

• (1745)

We would not need this if the policies were not in place, and now the Liberals are trying to unwind them. The Liberals' 10 years of policies created these issues, and now they come to the table and say, "We have the solutions to the issues we created." Why do this to Canadians? Why do this to a country? Why do this to the next generation, who cannot really imagine buying a house in Canada and building a home?

In B.C. alone, in September, food prices increased by 3.9%, with beef jumping 17.8% and coffee and tea increasing by 26%. The Business Council of British Columbia reported that costs have risen 23%. What does the Liberal government say about the costs and the taxes? It says they are imaginary. I can say that the two million people lining up at food banks do not think these costs are imaginary. They do not think the idea that they cannot afford to live, to eat, or to pay their energy bill is imaginary. The costs are real. I do not think the 700,000 kids who are lined up at food banks think this is imaginary.

The only ones who think it is imaginary are the Liberals. They think that if they keep saying the word and the phrase over and over, Canadians will believe this. I did hear this as a statement coming from previous Liberal ministers: that if we say over and over something that is not true, Canadians will ultimately believe it is true, but we have to keep repeating it.

I can say right now that the costs and the unaffordability crisis Canadians are facing are real. I know people in my riding who know that the costs are real and that the unaffordability crunch is real. When an elder in my riding has a shopping cart with two items in it, expired items at 50% off, it is not the food she wants. It is not nutritious, but it is what she can afford. This is Canada. I could see this maybe happening in a third world country.

What is so shameful about this is that the Liberals have known for years that people are suffering and struggling. Low-income people and seniors are hoping to see some light at the end of the tunnel in terms of affordability, but they are not seeing it. They are hearing more rhetoric.

We have not even talked about the idea of either printing more money or borrowing more money and dumping it into the economy without addressing the goods and services that go into that. I thought that, as a banker, the Prime Minister would know better. Apparently he does not, so laymen like us from small communities are trying to point out that this is not the way to run a country; it is the way to run a country into ruin. It is a shame that this is coming from a first world country like Canada, which used to be a leader in affordability and freedoms. We are going the wrong direction.

• (1750)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously I disagree with the members' assessment. Canada is still the best country in the world to call home. Quite frankly I am a bit disappointed in the members of the Conservative Party, in the words they have been using to try to justify their positioning of what is actually in Bill C-4. It is a very straightforward piece of legislation. One is either for it or against it. The Conservatives like to criticize it, but I think they will likely end up voting in favour of it.

Would the member not recognize that if we want to deal with the issue of affordability, one of the ways we can do that is by voting in favour of Bill C-4? Will the member make a commitment to the House today that he wants the legislation to pass before Christmas?

Ellis Ross: Mr. Speaker, I could not care less about what the member is disappointed in. Why does he not come to talk to the people in my riding who cannot afford a loaf of bread? What does he say to that? Why does he not get around the spin and the rhetoric of the budget and Bill C-4, and actually do something of substance to reduce costs like the Liberals promised?

Right now I am judging the member and his Prime Minister on the prices at the grocery store, which the Prime Minister said he would reduce. He said to judge him by the price of groceries. I am passing judgment on you right now. What do you plead, guilty or not guilty?

The Deputy Speaker: As a reminder, all comments are through the Chair. The Chair will not be pleading anything, but he will let other members do so.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North.

Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley raises a good point. The Prime Minister said to Canadians to judge him on the price of groceries at the grocery store. We know that he has not actually visited a grocery store, but we also know that grocery price inflation is 40% higher in Canada than in the U.S. There have been multiple reports as to the food price pressures that Canadians are facing.

Why does the member think that the government would not do something as straightforward as scrapping the industrial carbon tax, which we heard about in committee, as a measure for increasing affordability?

Ellis Ross: Mr. Speaker, it is a mystery as to why the Liberal government will not go 100% of the way, in terms of taking the Conservative ideas to reduce the pressure on families. It is a mystery. All the government seems to do is water down Conservative ideas and take 50% of what we did. The carbon tax is a great example. The government is keeping the industrial carbon tax and keeping the International Maritime Organization's tax and then telling Canadians that this is somehow going to make our lives more affordable, when, in reality, we all know that it is not going to make a difference.

[*Translation*]

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-4 sets out a GST rebate for first-time buyers of new homes. The Prime Minister promised this rebate in March, when he was Prime Minister. We went on the campaign trail, then we came back. The Prime Minister finally tabled the notice of ways and means and the bill.

Everyone who bought a home between the time the Prime Minister promised this rebate in March and the time of the election was denied the GST rebate. The Bloc Québécois and our Conservative colleagues had to table amendments to force the government to keep its word and grant the GST rebate to those who had been promised it, those who had been naive enough to believe the Prime Minister and who, in the end, would have been forced to pay the full price.

I would like my colleague to tell me why, in his opinion, the Prime Minister and the government decided to behave in this manner and why the government tried to take away a GST rebate that had been promised to thousands of Quebecers and Canadians.

[*English*]

Ellis Ross: Mr. Speaker, that is basically what the Liberal government has been doing for the last how many years, since I have been watching, anyway, in terms of not really looking after the average Canadian and not looking after low-income Canadians. If we look at the budget, for example, there are not many residents in my riding who can afford a \$100-million yacht or a \$100-million jet. Those poor billionaires who are maybe looking at the market for a second jet are going to be happy about this, especially corporations like Brookfield.

This is just an elitist budget looking after elitists.

• (1755)

Eric Melillo (Kenora—Kiiwetinoong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am happy I was able to catch the Speaker's eye and join the debate. I appreciate the warm reception from my colleagues here in the chamber. I hope that they have that same enthusiasm after they hear what I have to say. Of course, I appreciate the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley for graciously sharing his time with me to take part in the debate. He is a great, valuable member of our team and a wonderful advocate for the people of northwest British Columbia.

Before I get into the substance of this piece of legislation, Bill C-4, I think it is important to look at this within the economic situation that we have after 10 years of the Liberal government. There is no question that we are in an affordability crisis. I hear from people all across northwestern Ontario that they are struggling to put food

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on their tables. They are struggling to fill their gas tanks to go to work or to travel for necessary medical appointments, often along the highways, which is the reality of living in rural northwest Ontario.

This is a crisis that people are feeling day to day. We see it in housing as well, as housing costs have doubled—

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order, with apologies to my hon. colleague and his speech.

I simply want to inform the House that I will be bringing forward a motion for the unanimous consent of the House to schedule a take-note debate on the auto sector for this Wednesday evening.

Eric Melillo: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to continue the debate.

I was talking about this affordability crisis we are facing right across Canada and specifically in my region of northwest Ontario. We are seeing a housing crisis along with that. People are struggling to afford rent or housing for first-time homebuyers. Those who have a home are also worried about being able to hold on to it, with rising interest rates and the rising costs associated with that.

For younger people, many of them have given up completely on that dream of home ownership. It used to be the case in Canada that if a person played by the rules, worked hard, did the right things and got a good education, they could expect to have an affordable life, an affordable home, a safe neighbourhood and a good job, and to be able to pay the bills. That is the promise that has been broken after 10 years of Liberal policies.

We see this affordability crisis manifest itself at the grocery store as well, with food inflation on the rise. Stats Canada is reporting a massive increase in food costs, with beef up about 17%, chicken up 6.2%, apples up over 4%, carrots up 11%, and infant formula up nearly 6%. It is no wonder, with these rising costs, that over two million Canadians are visiting food banks in a single month. Again, that is a large national number. We see that happening in small communities across northwestern Ontario as well. I have spoken to individuals at food banks right across the region.

Recently, I had a chance to visit the food bank in Kenora. Thankfully, it had just received a lot of donations ahead of the Christmas season, but it is continuing to see an increase in people needing to visit the food bank, even just a couple times, just to get by. Of course, other people are struggling on a more steady basis and needing to visit more frequently. However, that demand has just continued to increase each year under this Liberal government, with the government's industrial carbon tax adding to the cost of food, and the food packaging tax and the Liberal fuel standard adding 17¢ per litre of gas, not to mention that the Liberal government's inflationary spending is driving up the cost of living. All of these things are adding to that cost of food.

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If members look further than just the cost and the affordability crisis, Canada has the worst employment rate in about 25 years, and youth unemployment is at a record high that we have not seen since 2010, outside of the COVID-19 pandemic. All of this paints a picture of the economic situation we are in and why the Liberals are bringing forward Bill C-4, intending to make life more affordable for Canadians.

I would like to go into a bit more detail about this bill and the government's overall economic policy in terms of where it misses the mark. I would like to comment as well that in the budget we see just more of the same policies: bureaucratic spending driving up the cost of living, more taxes, and all of the things that are the status quo after 10 years of Liberal government.

The Prime Minister promised that spending would go down; it has increased by \$90 billion. He promised the deficit would be \$62 billion; it is now \$78 billion. He promised that investment would go up, yet his own budget shows that investment will decline in Canada. We already heard today that the Prime Minister said he should be judged by prices at the grocery stores, but we know they are skyrocketing.

By every single measure, every single standard the Prime Minister has set for himself, he is missing the mark. Again, these are not the standards or the measures that I myself or the Conservative Party laid out for him. These are the measures that he has asked Canadians to hold him to account on, and he is failing on each and every one of them. While the bill does bring in some tax cuts, what they result in is about \$90 per month in savings for the average Canadian. With Liberal inflation and spending, those savings are going to be wiped out.

● (1800)

The government has added, as I mentioned, \$90 billion in new spending. That is \$5,000 more in spending for every Canadian family, to put it in perspective, driving up the cost of living on all Canadians and pushing our fiscal situation to the point where we are going to be paying more to service our debt than the federal government is spending on health care transfers to the provinces.

This bill also brings in a GST rebate for first-time homebuyers purchasing new homes, and I think that is a very important aspect. It is for the purchase of new homes. I do not want to say it is none, but it is next to none. Virtually no first-time homebuyers in northwestern Ontario are going to be buying new homes. The majority of homes in northwestern Ontario are about 30 years old, give or take, and those are the ones that first-time homebuyers and young Canadians are going to be able to afford. Perhaps this is a well-intentioned policy on the part of the Liberal government, but it is one that, in practice, will not be effective for the vast majority of people in my region.

The Liberals, although looking to move on removing the consumer carbon tax, are leaving in place the industrial carbon tax. In fact, they have actually tripled that tax, and that is just going to make everything even more expensive, especially when it comes to the cost of food. Whether it is fertilizer on the farm, fuel in the trucks to ship it or power in the grocery store, this industrial carbon tax is still going to be passed down to consumers, just not in the

more obvious way of the consumer price. Canadians are still paying for this carbon tax, even under the new Prime Minister's plan.

That is where I think this bill misses the mark. The Liberals have tried to adopt some Conservative ideas, but they have not gone far enough to actually implement them in the right way. As I mentioned earlier with the price of food, food inflation in Canada is rising faster than in nearly every other G7 nation. According to Stats Canada, grocery prices have risen more than 20% since 2020. Again, that is just to paint the picture of where we are.

Bill C-4, although bringing forward some steps in the right direction, at least from a rhetoric standpoint with the Liberal government, is not doing anything, nor is the budget doing anything, to address the real drivers of inflation, which are Liberal overspending, overtaxation and over-regulation. Those are the things that Conservatives are going to keep fighting against, and we are going to continue to stand for a plan that truly makes life more affordable for Canadians right across this country.

● (1805)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I do not believe the member's comment when he said that our grocery inflation rate is higher than all the other G7 countries. I do not believe that. I would appreciate it if he could provide the source he has drawn that conclusion from. Second, the member says it does not provide tax relief, but that is what Bill C-4 does. Bill C-4 provides direct tax relief for over 22 million Canadians. It also provides tax relief for first-time homebuyers through an exemption from the GST. It also, in law, deals with getting rid of the carbon tax.

How can the member say that it does not deal with the issue of taxation? Will the member not agree that given what the bill does, we should be passing it before Christmas?

Eric Melillo: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the member for Winnipeg North must not have been listening at all to any of the comments I was making.

In terms of the tax cuts being brought forward, it is going to be about \$90 per month in savings for the average Canadian, but with Liberal inflation and Liberal spending, that is going to be completely wiped out. He mentions the GST relief for first-time homebuyers, but it is only if they are purchasing new homes, which is something that is very rare and pretty much non-existent across northwestern Ontario. That is something that is not going to be useful for people in my region.

The member talked about the carbon tax. Again, the Liberals are looking to take action on the consumer carbon tax, finally recognizing, after 10 years, what Canadians know all too well: the fact that it drives up the cost of living. However, they are leaving the industrial carbon tax in place, which is going to continue to drive up the cost of living for Canadians.

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[*Translation*]

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-4 is the story of a Prime Minister who runs in an election, promises everything but the kitchen sink, comes to sit in Parliament and then introduces a bill too quickly. The bill is poorly crafted and poorly thought out.

For example, for the tax cut where the first bracket is reduced by 1%, the government failed to consider all of the potential effects because it worked too quickly. Tax credits, particularly those for people with disabilities, are calculated in proportion to the first bracket rate. As a result, when the government lowered taxes, it also caused the most vulnerable members of society, particularly people with disabilities, to lose more with the tax cut than they gained from it.

I would like to know if my colleague agrees with me. When the government decides to make tax changes, including changes to personal income tax, should it not systematically submit a list of all those who are likely to see the amount of their tax credits change, so that we, as parliamentarians, can understand the real impact of these tax changes on all taxpayers, particularly the most vulnerable?

[*English*]

Eric Melillo: Mr. Speaker, I think the member from the Bloc Québécois raises some very interesting, very compelling points. In response to that, all I can truly say is that it speaks to the broader discussion that I laid out in my speech around the fact that these policies being brought forward in Bill C-4, however well-intentioned they may be, are largely missing the mark in terms of what Canadians are looking for and the relief that Canadians deserve and need to see when it comes to tax cuts and relief from this cost-of-living crisis that, after 10 years, the Liberals have caused.

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it seemed to me that the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader wanted some sort of pat on the back for some small, minuscule relief measures in Bill C-4, when at the same time and with the other hand, they are taking and stealing from the next generation with a generational debt binge.

I wonder if my hon. colleague from Kenora—Kiiwetinoong could give his comments on this apparent contradiction from the other side, where they sprinkle a few savings but then steal from the next generation.

Eric Melillo: Mr. Speaker, that is definitely what young Canadians are facing. That dream of Canada's promise has been taken away after 10 years of the Liberal government driving up the cost of living and pushing the cost of housing to the point that young Canadians are giving up on their dreams of home ownership. The Liberals are just moving forward with the exact same policies, which is going to continue to put more of a burden on future generations.

● (1810)

[*Translation*]

Carlos Leitão (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is now my turn to speak to Bill C-4. I want to mention that my colleagues across the way spoke of minuscule savings. While it may seem minuscule to them, in my riding,

in Laval, every dollar counts. I will not presume to know what constitutes minuscule savings for someone in serious need.

I am going to talk a little about Bill C-4, but I also want to talk about my riding of Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, in Laval. I want to talk about what the bill means to my riding. I will talk a bit about Laval. If I have enough time, I would like to come back to the matter of rising food prices.

To begin, I will start with Bill C-4. The bill responds to our government's priority of building an economy that works for everyone and taking concrete steps to make life more affordable for Canadians. The bill follows up on three of the government's initial announcements: cutting taxes for nearly 22 million middle-class Canadians, eliminating the GST for first-time homebuyers on new homes worth up to \$1 million, and eliminating consumer carbon pricing legislation. Those are the three main components of Bill C-4.

What does that mean in my riding, Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, in Laval? I would like to say a few words about my riding and the Laval region. As many people know, this city north of Montreal has one of the fastest-growing populations in Quebec. I believe there are now 460,000 people living in Laval. In the part of Laval that I represent, Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, there are a lot of young families, but there are also older people who live in the more traditional part of that riding, in the former village of Sainte-Rose. It is a vast area where there is still a lot of land and agriculture in a somewhat urban setting. It presents quite a challenge. There is still plenty of land that could be used for housing. This is being done intelligently and in a way that is aligned with our desire to preserve green spaces.

The population of Laval is younger than the average. During the election campaign in April, we heard a lot about housing issues. Indeed, it is a very serious problem. The city's ability to support some degree of densification in Laval is helping to keep housing prices at a relatively affordable level, but there is pressure on prices and on access to home ownership.

That is why Bill C-4 is very well received back home in Laval. The second component, the elimination of GST on the purchase of new homes, can represent a significant savings of \$20,000 to \$25,000 on the purchase of a new home. There are new homes being built in Laval. There has been steady construction in Laval. I am not talking about Quebec as a whole, but Laval, where construction is progressing at a very good pace.

● (1815)

Young families will certainly benefit from this GST reduction. This effort will help many young families achieve their dream of owning a house or an apartment. It will also increase urban density and therefore encourage construction.

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The housing problem is really a supply problem. The cost of housing is so high mainly because supply has not kept pace with population growth, even though supply in Laval has increased much more quickly than elsewhere in Canada. Still, with these measures and those of the city, which is very supportive of real estate development, I think we will be able to provide affordable housing in our region.

Laval's economy is very diverse, but obviously manufacturing is very important to our region. It creates a lot of jobs, which are generally well paid. Fortunately for us in Laval, the manufacturing sector is very diverse. No single industry is more prominent than another; it is very diverse. There are truly cutting-edge industries, especially in the life sciences, for example. Consider Moderna's vaccine plant, which is located in Laval. There are all kinds of other SMEs in aerospace and other fields.

Everything related to the uncertainty surrounding trade with our American neighbours is of great concern to us in Laval. During the election campaign, citizens told us that it was absolutely essential for us to be able to stand on our own two feet and find a way to maintain our access to the U.S. market.

There is one thing that is often overlooked and should be considered, which is that 85% of Canadian manufacturing exports to the United States still enter the United States without paying taxes or customs duties if they comply with CUSMA.

Because the manufacturing sector in Laval is highly diversified, exports remain very strong, but this uncertainty plays a very important role in any new investment project. We are seeing a major slowdown. We will have to pay close attention to this, because the creation of new jobs is currently being affected by the fact that most companies are waiting to see what the rules of the game will be a little later with regard to trade with our neighbours in the United States.

It is really the housing market that sets Laval apart from the rest of the province. I think that, even across Canada, it is relatively unique, because there is a lot of activity. There is a lot of construction going on. Prices are still reasonably affordable. There is an effort to increase the city's density. One of the problems resulting from all this is the significant challenge related to transportation and public transit as the population grows. Access to subways and public transit is becoming an issue.

● (1820)

The budget therefore also includes measures to improve local infrastructure and transport infrastructure, which is certainly welcome.

When it comes to Bill C-4 and the tax cut, let me be clear. When we talk about reducing income taxes, the people who will benefit from a tax cut are those who pay taxes. Someone on a very low income who pays very little tax is obviously not going to benefit from a significant tax cut, since they do not pay much tax to begin with.

There are other social measures provided by the federal and provincial governments to meet the needs of people with very low incomes, such as old age security, the guaranteed income supplement and, for younger people, the Canada child benefit. There is a

whole series of social programs that support people with lower incomes.

An income tax cut has a real and significant impact for the middle class. It is not minuscule. I mention that because, recently, we have talked a lot in the House about the cost of living and especially about the pressure on food prices, and with good reason. Food prices are very high, even though inflation, the annual increase in prices, is much more under control than it was a few years ago. Prices really started skyrocketing as of 2022 and have now reached problematic levels, which is affecting a lot of families in Canada.

However, it is also important to note that, if the federal government started to massively reduce its programs to assist families, whether it be the Canada child benefit, old age security, the guaranteed income supplement or the national school food program, like our Conservative colleagues are implicitly suggesting, that would make life even more difficult for low-income Canadians. It would take away a big part of their safety net.

Furthermore, these are primarily international issues. Canada is not the only country where food prices are high. This is happening in the United States, in Europe, and more or less everywhere. I would say that we are now facing a structural change. For a long time, in North America, in developed countries, in Europe, and in Japan, we saw a long decline in food prices for all sorts of reasons, such as technological discoveries and new means of production. There was a structural decline in food prices shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic, but certainly after the pandemic, we saw this long-term trend change. We are now seeing upward pressure on food prices around the world, regardless of the Canadian government's fiscal and budgetary policies, which have no impact on the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, or crops affected by climate change.

● (1825)

Our friends often cite the price of coffee as an example. Coffee is imported, but more importantly, harvests have been poor, especially in Brazil, but also, to a lesser extent, in Africa. There is less coffee on the world market. It is a question of supply and demand.

There is also a lot of talk about the price of meat. In North America, in the United States and Canada, structurally speaking, herds are smaller now than they were a few years ago. We have moved from a period of meat surplus to a period where herds are much smaller. This creates an imbalance between supply and demand. This puts upward pressure on the price of meat, sugar, cocoa and so on. All of these products, which are imported, are affected by climate change, and the supply of these products is decreasing.

Adjournment Proceedings

It is not simply a matter of an industrial carbon tax. That is not it. In fact, every study completed shows that an industrial carbon tax has very little impact on consumer prices. While that may not be the case 10 years from now, at the moment, the impact of the industrial carbon tax on food prices is virtually zero. It really is a matter of supply and demand. It truly is an international issue.

In fact, the situation points to a need for more collaboration and international co-operation. My Conservative colleagues also talk a lot about massive cuts to Canada's international aid. They believe that Canada should drastically slash its international development assistance. Right now would be the worst time to do that. If we think that we have food problems, in a rich country like Canada, imagine what it is like for countries with fewer resources than us that rely on international aid to feed their people. I fail to understand how, at this point in human history, we can consider cutting international aid to less fortunate countries. This is really not the time for that.

I see that my time is almost up. I have a lot more to say, but I think I will continue at the next opportunity.

[*English*]

Jeremy Patzer (Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just want to pick up on a thread one of my colleagues was talking about earlier, with regard to Bill C-4 and the rebate on new housing.

We know that most first-time homebuyers do not purchase newly built homes. There is a phrase, “starter home”, that usually means an older house, smaller in square footage but more cost-friendly to purchase. This is what first-time homebuyers are looking to purchase.

We wanted the tax removed for all people buying a newly built home, and the Liberals changed that. Why would they do that?

[*Translation*]

Carlos Leitão: Mr. Speaker, I would simply like to say that it depends on many factors. The situation is not uniform across the country. As I said at the beginning of my speech, back home in Laval, it is quite the opposite. The new homes currently being built are affordable for middle-class families.

• (1830)

The Deputy Speaker: I must interrupt the parliamentary secretary, as it is now 6:30 p.m. He may use the remainder of his speaking time for questions and comments the next time this bill comes before the House.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

BORDER SECURITY

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise again this evening to speak about the Canadian border.

Let me recap last week. On Monday, there was a CBSA outage at the border; on Tuesday, there was a CBSA outage at the border; on Wednesday, there was a CBSA outage at the border; on Thursday, there was a CBSA outage at the border. Let me remind everyone what that means. That means goods are not being cleared for import, goods are not being cleared for export, just-in-time deliveries are missed, food is not delivered, consumers are lost and customers are lost.

I asked the CBSA in a written question to tell me how many border outages have taken place over the last several years, because I wanted to get a sense of the scope of this issue that I have been hearing about. Here is the response: “The Canada Border Services Agency concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require a manual collection of information that is not possible in the time allotted”.

The CBSA had 45 days to do this. That response from the agency is simply unacceptable.

If it is true, how can the CBSA solve a problem that it cannot even identify or quantify? I will note that the response was signed by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety. However, we know that response is not true. I will not presume the intention of the agency, but I can tell the House that the answer is not true. How do I know it is not true? It is because someone else did the work that the CBSA said was not possible. The Canadian International Freight Forwarders Association reports that as of November 27, there have been 117 system outages this year alone, 69 failures, 39 maintenance outages, five system changes and four holiday issues. In a letter to the Minister of Public Safety just last week, the association said, “Minister—this is simply unacceptable.” I agree. It is unacceptable.

My very simple question to the parliamentary secretary is this. What is causing the high frequency of outages, why are they continuing to happen and when will they end?

[*Translation*]

Jacques Ramsay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by mentioning that the Canada Border Services Agency manages borders at 1,200 designated ports of entry. It works very hard. It enforces our laws and constitutes our first line of defence nationwide.

Adjournment Proceedings

The CBSA is an impressive organization with 8,500 frontline employees who play a critical role every day in protecting our communities, stopping the flow of illegal goods and preventing inadmissible individuals from entering Canada and committing offences. We have a strong border. We continue to look for ways to make it even stronger.

The CBSA assessment and revenue management system, or CARM, which is what Mr. Mantle is referring to, is software—

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind the hon. member that using a member's name, whether first name or last name, is not permitted. He is the member for York—Durham.

The hon. parliamentary secretary may continue with his answer.

Jacques Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, I apologize. What the member for York—Durham was alluding to is CARM, a newer software from 2024. It is not unusual for there to be outages or bugs with new software.

Furthermore, the department is not happy about the high number of outages, and the minister has acknowledged that. This is nothing new. I am not revealing anything new here in the House today. The minister has requested an investigation into this matter and has asked the agency to share its findings with him. Based on these findings, we will take action and ensure that those responsible, if anyone is responsible, are held accountable.

That said, beyond this new software, the border plan is much broader than that. We have invested unprecedented amounts of money, specifically \$1.3 billion to strengthen the border, with more staff, advanced AI technology, new drones, helicopters, canine units, and more effective coordination and information sharing between partners.

The government takes its responsibilities seriously. As proof, we have invested more than \$350 million to help the CBSA strengthen its frontline workforce and equip its staff with the latest tools.

The border security legislation represents another major step forward in border security. It is clear, therefore, that there are two important responsibilities. The first is to facilitate trade, which is particularly important. The other, of course, is to ensure our security at the border, stem the flow of drugs, and improve the integrity of our immigration system. That is what the president of the Canada Border Services Agency is doing. She is taking responsibility and communicating with us.

This is a team effort that we are currently undertaking. We hope to be able to rectify the situation that the member for York—

Durham was alluding to. We are aware of it, we recognize it, and we are determined to act quickly to ensure that the situation is corrected promptly.

• (1835)

[*English*]

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, we know who is responsible for this: It is the Minister of Public Safety. That is how our system works, with ministerial responsibility. Unfortunately, the parliamentary secretary is woefully misinformed.

It is not just CARM. That is one of many systems that the CBSA uses at the border, and many of them have experienced outages. Even if it were CARM, the CBSA has been working on CARM for a decade, so the parliamentary secretary cannot tell the House that this is a new software and that we are just having some bumps. We have known about this for a long time, and there are still problems. This is unacceptable.

To add insult to injury, the CBSA issued a bulletin on November 26 warning businesses that it expects additional strain and delays because of Christmas. Christmas comes every year. This is not new.

What is new is that these outages keep occurring. CIFFA, the freight forwarders association, has one simple request for the minister. They wrote to the minister and asked for a meeting.

Will the minister accept that request and meet with them?

[*Translation*]

Jacques Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, just last week, I met with the people that the member for York—Durham alluded to. He is not telling us anything new today.

We are taking responsibility. We have acknowledged the situation. We are taking steps to identify any defects in these new software programs. We fully expect the situation to be rectified in the short term. We recognize the importance of having a border system in good working order. In fact, the system in question has proven its worth to date. Right now, certain things need to be fixed, and we are fixing them. That is our promise and our strongest wish.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:38 p.m.)

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