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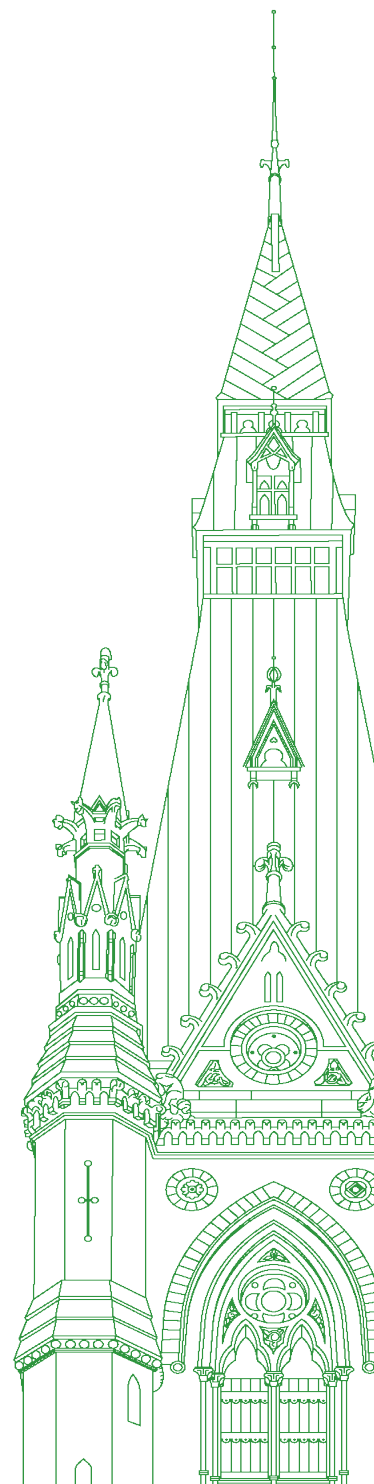
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Friday, June 6, 2025

Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, June 6, 2025

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1000)

[Translation]

MAKING LIFE MORE AFFORDABLE FOR CANADIANS ACT

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.) moved that Bill C-4, An Act respecting certain affordability measures for Canadians and another measure, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, I would first like to thank my colleagues. I also see a big smile on the opposition side.

Congratulations on your election. I am pleased to see you presiding over our meetings. I appreciate the work you are doing and the professionalism and honour you bring to this position.

[English]

It is my privilege to rise and take part in today's debate as we begin the very important second reading of Bill C-4, the making life more affordable for Canadians act.

I would note that the House has voted unanimously for the ways and means motion. This is a good start. It is a new Parliament, a new government and a new era of doing big things quickly.

[Translation]

Canadians asked for a serious plan to change how we address the rising cost of living, which has eroded their quality of life over the past few years. They are calling for change that will put more money in their pockets, build the strongest economy in the G7, build one Canadian economy, not 13, and build a more affordable Canada. With Bill C-4, our government is delivering on this mandate for change.

Bill C-4 will implement the middle-class tax cut our government promised. It will give more than 22 million Canadians a tax break. It will save two-income families up to \$840 a year, starting in 2026.

[English]

With the adoption of the legislation, the lowest marginal personal income tax rate would be reduced from 15% to 14% effective July 1, 2025. This is great news. I can hear my colleagues cheering because they reflect the Canadians who are cheering at home for that. I see the same thing from the Conservatives. They are cheering silently on the other side of the House.

The tax cut would help hard-working Canadians keep more of what they earn and build a strong future for themselves, their families and their communities. The benefit of the tax cut would go to those hard-working Canadians who need it most. This means that the bulk of the tax relief will go to those with income in the two lowest tax brackets, with nearly half of the tax savings going to those in the lowest bracket.

What is more, Bill C-4 would start delivering tax relief almost right away. With the announcement of our middle-class tax cut, the Canada Revenue Agency can update its source deduction tables for the July 2025 to December 2025 period so pay administrators are able to reduce tax withholdings as of July 1.

[Translation]

That means that individuals with employment income and other income subject to source deductions could begin to have tax withheld at the lower 14% tax rate as of July 1. That is excellent news.

This middle-class tax cut is expected to provide \$2.6 billion in tax relief to Canadians over the next six months and \$5.4 billion in 2026. The middle-class tax cut is expected to deliver over \$27 billion in tax savings to Canadians over five years starting in 2025-26. That is just the first step in putting more money back in the pockets of Canadians.

• (1005)

[English]

We have more good news. This is a great day to be a Canadian, because the next aspect of the bill is eliminating the GST for first-time homebuyers on new homes up to \$1 million.

There is a lot to be cheering for. I can see, in the smiles of my colleagues, that they are cheering. It is a great Friday for the opposition as well.

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It used to be that the federal government helped build the housing that our growing population needs in this country. The last time we faced a housing crisis on such a broad scale was after the Second World War. In the face of crisis, Canada did what we do best as a nation: We came together, got to work, and put a roof over the head of tens of thousands of families.

Canadians want their government to get back to the business of building homes, and that is what we are going to be doing. That is why one of the first decisions of our government was to eliminate the GST for first-time homebuyers on the purchase of a new home valued up to \$1 million. The new first-time homebuyer GST rebate would mean upfront savings of up to \$50,000 on the purchase of their first home.

That is not all. There is really great news in the bill: The rebate would also lower the GST on homes between \$1 million and \$1.5 million for first-time homebuyers. There is a lot to celebrate in helping Canadians.

[Translation]

As my colleagues in the House know, buying a home is often the largest purchase most Canadians will make in their lifetime. Purchasing a home is more than just a financial investment. Often, it is an investment in their future and their family. It is an investment in their retirement, their peace of mind and their comfort. It is an investment in the Canadian dream.

[English]

By supporting Bill C-4, we would be providing a significant increase to the already substantial federal tax support available for first-time homebuyers through programs like the first home savings account, the RRSP home buyers' plan, and the first-time home buyer's tax credit.

[Translation]

By so doing, we will enable more young people and families to make their dream of home ownership come true, and we will enable more Canadians to begin investing in their future, their family, their retirement, their peace of mind and their comfort.

[English]

Bill C-4 is just the first step in our ambitious plan to build more homes and ensure that the housing market serves Canadians, rather than vice versa. We will build on our GST cut for first-time homebuyers with a credible plan to build more homes, a true team Canada approach that will build the future of this country and help build the strongest economy in the G7. I want to applaud the work of my colleague, the Minister of Housing, who is going to do a great job in helping to build more homes in this country.

I see that my Conservative friends are very excited, because there is a third measure that I am sure they are going to be cheering in their hearts and minds, and they are going to put it in their householder to make sure all Canadians are aware. We are going to be removing the consumer carbon price from Canadian law. In their hearts, I am sure they are going to be cheering, silently I must say this morning, but silently cheering because, as we know, the first thing that the Prime Minister did upon assuming his responsibilities

was to suspend the application of the federal consumer carbon tax, effective April 1 of this year.

This was a moment for this country. Cancelling the consumer carbon tax was the first step in our government's plan to ensure that Canadians can keep more of their hard-earned money. While it was effectively accomplished through government regulations, Bill C-4 would take the necessary step beyond regulatory suspension of the fuel charge by completely removing the consumer carbon price from law.

• (1010)

[Translation]

At the same time, we will refocus federal carbon pollution pricing standards on ensuring carbon pricing systems are in place across Canada on a broad range of greenhouse gas emissions from industry.

[English]

This means that a price on pollution for large emitters will continue to be a pillar of Canada's plan to build a strong economy and a greener future for our kids. We will ensure a system that is fair and effective. Industrial carbon pricing is one of the most important greenhouse gas emissions reduction policies in the government's comprehensive emissions reduction plan to bend the emissions curve and meet our 2030 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target.

[Translation]

Overall, the measures included in this bill will pave the way for economic growth in Canada. Our government has a plan to help Canadians keep more of their hard-earned money. It is a plan to protect them from the worst effects of the unjustified trade war, a plan to build the strongest economy in the G7, a plan to build more than anyone could ever take away from Canadians.

[English]

Our plan is based on a new approach, where we spend less on government and invest more in the people and businesses that will grow our economy. Canadians elected the current government to stand up for our country and to build a strong economy that works for everyone. Canadians voted for change.

[Translation]

Change means adjusting the way we do things, taking advantage of new technologies and saving money so we can invest more.

It means focusing on results for Canadians and making sure that they get what they expect from their government. It is time for Canada to have a government that focuses on maximizing investments that drive growth and deliver results. Excellence and efficiency must guide all government actions.

[English]

Canada is the best country in the world. America's unjustified trade war is an attempt to weaken us, and our sovereignty is under threat. We will not let that happen. We will fight it every step of the way. We will stand up for Canadians, our industries and our workers. It is time to build a future that makes Canada strong, and Bill C-4 is the first step in doing that for our nation.

[Translation]

I encourage all of my colleagues to support the first steps of our plan to build a strong Canada by voting in favour of this bill.

[English]

We are the true north strong and free, and we should all be proud to be Canadians.

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Madam Speaker, with this, the Liberals have turned themselves completely inside out. Every Canadian knows when they fill up at the pump that if they are not paying the carbon tax today, it is thanks to Pierre Poilievre and the Conservative team that rallied against it.

I do not often visit it, but I am on the Liberal Party website, and it says, "When Conservative politicians [like Pierre Poilievre] railed against putting a price on pollution, [the Liberals] did it, while putting more money back in the pockets of families."

Does the minister have a contact at the party so we could update their website?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Speaker, I am delighted to hear that the Conservatives are spending their time on the Liberal website. They can, in fact, register as a member. It is free, and they can join this great party that has changed the lives of Canadians for decades and decades. It is very interesting that the Conservatives would want to look at our website; it is a great website actually, and I am pleased to hear that they are watching the policy that is going to build Canada strong.

However, this morning is not about the Conservatives. It is not even about our website. It is about Canadians. What we are going to do today is change the lives of Canadians, because by building Canada strong, we give hope to the next generation. We give hope to the workers in Hamilton, in Shawinigan and in Cape Breton. We give hope to this country because we are the best country in the world.

[Translation]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have two questions in one for our esteemed Minister of Finance, the member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain.

I would assume that, as a seasoned parliamentarian, he has a solid understanding of the value of Parliament and the importance of respect and consideration for Parliament. His government was pret-

ty pleased with itself for getting the throne speech and the ways and means motion adopted. I wonder if he intends to respect what Parliament added to the Speech from the Throne, that is, the request that a budget, or at least an economic update, be presented before the summer. That is my first point.

I will now turn to the bill we are debating today. The member is also a member from Quebec, so I would assume that Quebec is important to him. He may be aware that \$3.7 billion was paid out in carbon tax rebates to the rest of Canada, but not to Quebec. That means we handed over \$800 million for Canadians, even though no money was being collected. In short, money was paid to Canadians, even though they did not pay either. This is a serious problem.

As a Quebecker, does the member opposite think it is right that Quebec is not getting its fair share?

• (1015)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Speaker, I welcome my colleague's question. First, I have a great deal of respect for him.

Like most Quebeckers, I was pleased to see the Bloc Québécois vote in favour of the motion. The Bloc Québécois has voted for a strong Canada. It is not very often we see the Bloc Québécois stand up for that.

We have been saying for a long time that building a strong Canada is obviously good for Quebec. I am pleased to see that the member is just as concerned as we are about the future of Quebec, and at the same time, interested in building Canada strong. It was refreshing to see the Bloc Québécois support the government on this initiative to reduce taxes for so many Canadians across the country.

We are always willing to collaborate with the Bloc Québécois because, as Quebeckers, we know in our hearts that Quebec's future depends on a strong Canada.

[English]

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Madam Speaker, congratulations on your appointment.

The minister talked about the industrial carbon price as being fundamentally important. What is really important, especially when our steel industry and our aluminum industry are under attack, is the price itself. Is the minister going to tell us here today what the price per tonne will be, or is he going to simply put it in the Canada Gazette?

This is about accountability. This is about letting Canadians know what the industrial carbon price will cost them.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Speaker, that is a member for whom I have a lot of respect. We have seen that our steel and aluminum industry is under threat. We are really in a trade war, and it is time that we, as Canadians, stand up together. This is the role of not only the federal government but also the nation. This is the time to stand up for our workers, for our industry and for Canada.

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That is why yesterday I was with the CEOs of the major steel companies in this country. Many of my colleagues represent communities that would be affected. It is all-hands-on-deck at this time, and I am happy to see that the member is willing to support the bill, because he knows that putting more money in the pockets of Canadians is a way to help them at a very difficult time.

I am confident about this nation because, when Canada is under threat, we put the elbows up, and together, we win.

[Translation]

Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. minister for his presentation today.

I know that people in Hull—Aylmer and across Quebec are truly worried about this trade war and the unjustified tariffs that have put our aluminum and steel industries under added strain.

I would like my colleague to tell us how this tax cut will help all Canadians, especially Quebecers, who are concerned about this tariff war.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking my colleague for his service in the House of Commons. All parliamentarians have seen the work he has done. On behalf of all Canadians, I would like to commend him and thank him for his work.

He raises an important question. The measure at the heart of the bill that was introduced this morning is a tax cut. That tax cut will benefit 22 million Canadians across the country. It comes at a time when many industries and communities are facing hardship, and there is a lot of anxiety and fear about everything that is going on. We have seen that things change quickly when it comes to tariffs.

This morning, what we can do as parliamentarians is tell Canadians that we will be there for them and that we know that things are difficult. One of the best ways to help people is to put more money in their pockets, so that families can have a little extra money to deal with the challenges that are coming in the days ahead.

I have hope for this country's future. Canada is a strong country.

• (1020)

[English]

Tako Van Popta (Langley Township—Fraser Heights, CPC): Madam Speaker, the minister says he wants Canada's economy to be the strongest in the G7. He must realize that we are lagging way behind our trading partners. The OECD report says, "The level of Canada's labour productivity lags its peers", and Carolyn Rogers of the Bank of Canada said just last year that our productivity metrics is in crisis: "it's an emergency—it's time to break the glass." The minister's predecessor, back in 2022, said that Canada's productivity challenges are an "insidious" problem.

Does the minister really think that, after 10 years of recycled Liberal ideas, they finally they have the solution?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Speaker, the member is a very experienced member of the House, and I have had the pleasure of hearing him for many years, but there are facts that he is avoiding.

Canada is one of the few countries of the G7 that has a AAA credit rating. Canada has the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio. The member comes from British Columbia, but just next door, we were in Banff with the G7 finance ministers and central bank governors, and the policies that have been adopted by Canada are applauded around the world.

People understand that this plan to build a country, increase our defence spending, meet the moment and make sure we build more housing, is the way forward, so the member should rejoice. I saw that he voted for the motion, but he should rejoice that together we are going to build Canada strong. It is going to benefit every region of the country, including the one that he represents in British Columbia.

We are proud to build this country together.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a very exciting day for Canadians, and this is legislation that I know constituents within the riding of Waterloo have been waiting for. I also know that I am going to go home this weekend, and people are going to ask how quickly they can get this relief, so I just wanted to remind Canadians, and all members of Parliament, because many are new here, what the next steps that need to take place are.

The House has demonstrated that we can work together in the best interest of Canadians. How can we get this relief to Canadians, in their pockets, sooner rather than later?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Speaker, the member for Waterloo is asking a great question. She has served with distinction, and the people of Waterloo are delighted. They should be proud of having her representing them, because Waterloo is at the centre of innovation in this country.

It is good news, as the member said, because if our colleagues on the other side are acting with urgency, we will be able to update the table, starting July 1 of this year, and adjust it so that people will pay less tax. This is what we want for Canadians, and that is what they are expecting from the House and the government.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today in the House on what is, in fact, a very sad day for our country. I am quite surprised, flabbergasted really, to hear members across the way say that it is an exciting day. Today is a very sad day with the devastating unemployment numbers that have just come out.

Statistics Canada released unemployment numbers for today showing that unemployment in Canada has risen to 7%. This is the highest unemployment that our country has seen outside of the COVID period since 2016, and it is part of a trend that has been chugging along under the Liberal government. We have seen, if we look at unemployment statistics over the last two years, this increase, particularly in youth unemployment. In unemployment in general, we are now at 7% unemployment.

Many experts expect these numbers to continue and to get worse. For example, a forecast from TD said that it expects 100,000 job losses by the third quarter of this year. The Governor of the Bank of Canada has warned us that “businesses are generally telling us that they plan to scale back hiring.”

If we delve a little more into these numbers, we will see just how painful the situation is for young people. For students looking for summer jobs, one in five Canadian students are now unemployed, which is extremely high. These are young people who are trying to get ahead, trying to pursue opportunities for the future, studying post-secondary, and trying to find jobs so they can sustain themselves and be able to continue their studies. However, one in five Canadian students, more than one in five, are unemployed. This is really a desperate situation for Canadian young people. We have 7% unemployment, and very high rates of unemployment for youth, in particular, for students.

I notice unemployment rates are particularly high in various major centres in southern Ontario. Unemployment is at 10.8% in Windsor, 9.1% in Oshawa, 8.8% in Toronto and 8.4% in Barrie. Toronto's unemployment rate is the highest it has been in over a decade outside of the COVID period. We have seen various sectors being particularly hard hit, with 25,000 manufacturing jobs lost in Ontario alone since a year ago.

Canadians are more desperate. They are searching longer for work. The data shows that, while the number of unemployed Canadians is increasing, the average duration of unemployment is also substantially up, to over 21 weeks. More Canadians are unemployed, in particular, more young Canadians are unemployed. Canadians are waiting longer, struggling more and getting more desperate as they try to find jobs.

As we were preparing for these numbers, I have been speaking to Canadians who are dealing with unemployment. In a number of cases, I talked to people who told me that they put in over 1,000 job applications. I talked to one software developer in Vancouver, for example, who told me his story. He is a young man my age, and a skilled professional. He had to go abroad for some health care that he needed, which he was struggling to get access to in Canada. He came back in the hope of finding a job, and has been struggling to find one for over a year.

I think we can expect Liberals to try to find excuses for this, as they always do, and they will try to point to external events that are beyond their control, but it is important to underline that this is the continuation of a long-running trajectory.

• (1025)

As we have been warning for years, Liberal policies have made it harder and harder for employers to hire people and for Canadians to

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find work. We have warned about that as these numbers have unfolded and as we have progressed into this unemployment crisis over, really, the period ever since we came out of COVID. I hope that today's dire unemployment numbers are a wake-up call to the Liberal government, a wake-up call that its policies are not working and that it is time to change course.

The other thing we hear from Liberals, in response to bad economic news, is a promise to do the same thing even harder. They instituted bad economic policies that caused a housing crisis and an unemployment crisis, and now they say they are going to do more of the same thing again. They are going to increase taxes and expand spending. I think what Canadians actually want to see is the government change course, change its direction.

As it relates to unemployment, I think we can identify a number of concrete factors, factors that we have been talking about for a long time, that are driving up unemployment in this country. One, and it is very clear, is a lack of private sector job growth. We also had, earlier this week, numbers come out on labour productivity. Labour productivity is down in the service sector, and we are not seeing the kind of productivity growth across the board that would allow us to address these long-running problems.

We are not seeing investment because of barriers that the government has put up. Gatekeepers and obstruction are preventing small and large businesses from moving forward with creating jobs for Canadians. This is most evident in the area of major projects, projects such as pipelines, which are critical for fuelling job growth. Major projects in natural resources, mining and other sectors have been blocked by Liberal Bill C-69, as well as other legislation that undermines the ability of major projects to move forward. We have heard a lot of discourse about major projects from the government, but it continues to speak out of both sides of its mouth, saying it will keep Bill C-69 in place, while also saying it will only move forward with major projects if there is consensus.

We are never going to get everyone to agree on things getting built, on investments being made. If we wait for complete unanimity, then we are just never going to build anything, and that has implications on jobs and opportunities for Canadians, as we are seeing in today's 7% unemployment number and the jobs crisis that we are seeing across the board. Getting major projects by repealing Bill C-69, reversing course on the obstruction and red tape, is going to be critical for our future.

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Also, small businesses face all kinds of barriers. We have had growing payroll tax increases that make it harder to hire Canadians, to hire new employees. We have seen a tax on small business over the course of the government's time in office, which is demonizing small business owners as tax cheats. These actions of the government have all had an impact on the escalating unemployment crisis we are seeing.

One thing that we need to do as a country to move forward with addressing this employment crisis is to reverse course on these Liberal antidevelopment, anti-investment policies that have made it so difficult for companies, large and small, to create jobs and employ Canadians.

Another problem that we are seeing is how the cost of living is forcing older workers to stay in the workforce for perhaps longer than they intended. The unemployment crisis is particularly acute for young people. We have had continuous growth in the unemployment rate for youth and, as I mentioned, it is particularly pronounced for students looking for summer jobs.

● (1030)

A contributing factor to that, as some experts have said, is that while Liberals had predicted a so-called grey tsunami of people in older generations leaving the workforce, what has happened is that there have been dramatic increases in the cost of living and the price of groceries. These things have hit seniors particularly hard and have impacted people's ability to retire on the timeline they intended. With the cost of living and obstruction of development, these policies that we have been talking about filter into the unemployment numbers, in which we are seeing this continuous growth.

Then there was, of course, immigration. The Liberals have made a mess of our immigration system, and the conversation around this has completely changed. I recall that 10 years ago there was broad consensus among Canadians about the levels of immigration pursued under the previous government, because there was always an emphasis on understanding what Canada's labour market needs were, viewing immigration through the lens of what is in Canada's interest and welcoming people to this country who could fill in skill gaps and catalyze job growth for Canadians. That was the prudent, effective and welcoming approach taken by the previous government.

It also included a major emphasis on rule of law and proper enforcement. Under the Liberal government, numbers have ballooned and there has been a complete failure of alignment, a failure to align immigration with our national interest and labour market needs. There are major problems, and levels need to come down. There is a broader failure of the government on immigration that is contributing to unemployment. For instance, if we have issues of fraud in the LMIA system, which *The Globe and Mail* has reported on, that has implications for people who are supposed to be coming here in cases in which there are not Canadians available to work but are actually coming when there are Canadians available to work. Conservatives will continue to hold the government accountable on all of these issues: getting projects moving forward; creating an environment in which small businesses can invest and grow; addressing the cost of living crisis that is affecting seniors and people of all ages, impacting retirement choices; and immigration.

We have talked about these policies; we have predicted these problems, and again we see them in the numbers today. The continuation of a long-running trend now reaches total unemployment of up to 7%. As I mentioned, there are some regional pockets of very low unemployment, but unemployment is particularly high, above the national average, in many of our major central Canadian cities. I know people in Toronto, in particular, are going to be looking at these numbers with great concern, given that they are the highest numbers we have seen in more than a decade.

The path forward is clear. We need to remove barriers to work, reduce the tax burden on working Canadians and get government out of the way so that businesses can grow and hire, and the government must fix immigration. To deliver a government that works for those who work and for students and young people pursuing their dreams, these changes are vitally necessary. Despite talking the talk of change, we continue to see a government that doubles down on the policy failures that have gotten us to this point, a government that continues to talk out of both sides of its mouth on resource projects, a government that continues to allow extremely high levels of immigration. These are the policy choices made by the government that have not changed and that are leading to more of the same in terms of unemployment numbers.

● (1035)

In the context of this overall economic situation, we have Bill C-4 before Parliament. This is a piece of legislation that purports to be about affordability measures for Canadians. When it comes to what the government is talking about in the bill, Conservatives have been very clear that we do not think its proposed measures go nearly far enough in terms of providing Canadians with the tax relief they need.

Of course, Conservatives have for a long time talked about the need to get rid of the carbon tax, the consumer carbon tax and the industrial carbon tax. Liberals have, in the most hyperbolic terms, denounced that advocacy for 10 years. They continue to believe in a consumer carbon tax, as well as an industrial carbon tax, and they would bring it back and raise it if they were ever anywhere close to having a chance to do that.

However, the Liberals perceived that their political interests were at odds with their deeply held convictions, so they announced an intention to change course on the consumer carbon tax while leaving in place the industrial carbon tax, effectively leaving in place a structure that would see those costs passed along to consumers.

These failures of the government to fully address the barriers to opportunity and to investment, such as the industrial carbon tax, and these decisions of the government deter the kind of investment and job growth this country needs. It is about what the Liberals have done and what they have not done, which is leaving in place and continuing to raise taxes on various sectors, on small business, on large business, on companies and on Canadians. This is what is holding back jobs and opportunity.

We do not need to see more of the same. We need to see a change in course. I hope that today's job numbers will evoke some humility from the government members and that they will look at these numbers and say perhaps they need to do something different for the Canadians in their ridings who are struggling, perhaps they need to reverse course on these policies that have, in fact, prevented job growth and led to the increases in unemployment we have seen.

I want to drill down on one specific point, which is that we have seen, over the years, increases in taxes on businesses in the form of increases in payroll taxes. At a time when unemployment is rising, the government should not be planning to hike payroll taxes. Payroll taxes are a tax directly on employment, a tax on jobs, so when the payroll taxes individuals and businesses have to pay are increased, it makes it harder for them to choose to hire more Canadians.

As we go further into this unemployment crisis, as we reflect on the numbers that are in the StatsCan report today, we should remind the government of the importance of not further increasing payroll taxes in the year ahead. I want to very clearly call on the government to not increase payroll taxes in the year ahead.

In conclusion, we have before us Bill C-4, a bill the government says contains affordability measures. It is being debated on a day when we find catastrophic news in the space of unemployment. There is 7% unemployment, which is a number not seen since 2016, outside the COVID period. This is the third consecutive monthly increase in the unemployment rate.

Unemployment has been going up steadily for two years. Canada has had virtually no employment growth since January. Again, students are hit particularly hard, with more than one in five Canadian students now unemployed. This is the highest rate in decades, excluding the COVID period. There are some regional pockets of lower unemployment, but there is very high unemployment, above the national average, in many of our major cities. These unemployment numbers should be a wake-up call for the government about the need to change course and actually allow our economy to move forward.

• (1040)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member spent a great deal of his time talking about unemployment. I do not think there is anyone inside the House, definitely within the Liberal caucus, who is not sympathetic to the issue of an individual who does not have a job and is looking for employment. We will continue to work hard as a government to provide opportunity and hope.

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I would remind the member opposite that Liberal administrations in the last 10 years have created literally hundreds of thousands more jobs than Stephen Harper created in his 10 years. The member should make note of that.

My question is with respect to the legislation itself. The Conservative Party voted against legislation to give a tax break before, but this is an election-mandated tax break. Will the member agree to see the legislation pass before we rise at the end of June, so Canadians will benefit from this tax break, which was assured to them during the last federal election? Does he support it?

Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, what worries me most about that question is to hear the members say the Liberal government “will continue to”. I think what Canadians want to hear is that the Liberal government “will stop doing”. Canadians want to hear that the government will stop doing what it has been doing, because it is not working, and they would rather do something different. Frankly, during the election, the Liberals wanted to give the impression that they “would not continue to” and they “would stop doing”, yet we do see a lot more “continuing to” than stopping, and the trajectory continues.

The member's account of the numbers is simply wrong. He should read the StatsCan report; there is 7% unemployment, and one in five students cannot find a job. That is a terrible record. It is time to change course.

• (1045)

[Translation]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have a question for my colleague that is particularly relevant to Quebec, but that may appeal to his Canadian spirit.

We often hear about the infamous equalization payments and the fact that English Canada, especially in the west and Alberta in particular, sends a lot of equalization payments to the rest of Canada. This time, however, it seems that Quebec made a large lump-sum equalization payment when the federal government scrapped the carbon tax.

The first thing the Prime Minister did after he was elected was abolish the carbon tax, yet he still sent out cheques. One could even say that he was writing NSF cheques, since people had not actually paid the tax to begin with. A total of \$3.7 billion was paid out to all of Canada except Quebec. In the end, Quebec is left with a bill of \$800 million.

Does my colleague think that is fair? Does he think it is all right to treat Quebec this way? At the end of the day, we got played. We got ripped off. We paid out \$800 million to the rest of Canada. What does my colleague think?

*Government Orders**[English]*

Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, the member spoke about how, in the process of the elimination of the consumer carbon tax, there was a dissonance in the timing. I think we can clearly see that this was very political. The government wanted to be able to have things look as good as possible during the election and then not worry too much about the consequences afterwards.

When it comes to regional accounting, there are a lot of different things that are coming and going, and it should be viewed in a macro way. What is most important is that the Liberals have left in place the industrial carbon tax and other policies that clearly, according to today's numbers, are killing jobs and opportunities.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague from a neighbouring community gave a wonderful speech.

The Liberals constantly talk about their great middle-class tax cut, which works out to barely \$1.50 a day. In the recent main estimates, we saw the Liberals put in an extra \$26 billion for high-priced consultants, such as those at McKinsey, GC Strategies and any other of the myriad of those connected to the Liberal Party. That works out to about \$1,400 per household, but their middle-class tax cut would barely be \$800 per household.

Could my colleague explain why the Liberals placed a higher priority on paying out taxpayers' money to their connected friends at McKinsey and GC Strategies and other management consultants than on looking after Canadian families?

Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, that is an excellent question from my colleague, the famous chair of the government operations committee, where we have worked so hard to dig into the outrageous sums of money the government has paid to well-connected consultants. Those who are following these issues of corruption and waste closely will be interested to know, and the member can correct me if I am wrong, that next Tuesday, the Auditor General will be releasing a report specifically on government contracts to GC Strategies, one of the firms at the centre of the arrive scam scandal.

Absolutely, the government is much more interested in supporting its insider consultant friends than it is in helping Canadians. This is evident in its spending, and it is evident today in the jobs numbers. I hope the government is seized with the jobs numbers and how bad they are. They need to change course as a result.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think it was less than six weeks ago that Canadians went to the polls and elected every member of Parliament in this place. It was a very interesting election, and at least in the Waterloo region, we saw a record number of Canadians engaging. I listened to what they had to say at the doors, and it was not a monolith; there was a diversity of views and perspectives. However, there was definitely a sentiment that government has a role to play.

What the member said was quite telling today. It is the first time that a Conservative has been so honest in saying the government has to "stop doing". One thing Canadians in my community knew is that a Conservative government, and let it not happen anytime soon, would not invest in Canadians and would not be there for

Canadians because Conservatives do not believe that government has a role to play.

The member has a history of voting against benefits and programs, such as the Canada child benefit, national child care and dental care, and voting against constituents, against Canadians. Is he recognizing that in this legislation, there are important measures that Canadians have supported and expect to see advance? Could he see himself advancing measures in this legislation to benefit Canadians?

• (1050)

Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, what I said was that the Liberal government needs to stop doing the things it is doing and take a very different approach.

In response to what the member said, I want to draw her attention to her region. Maybe she has not seen it yet, but as she talked about what people in Kitchener-Waterloo are saying and thinking, I note that her region's unemployment is substantially above the national average. The national average is 7% unemployment, which is quite significant, and in her region, according to today's release from StatsCan, it is 8.5%.

Rather than ask such a partisan question, I think the member should have stood up and asked what we can do about the 8.5% unemployment rate in her region. Why does she not stand up for her region instead of constantly defending the government?

She wants to know what we should do. What we recommend the Liberals do is cut taxes, stop getting in the way of development, remove the gatekeepers so that individuals and businesses can invest and grow, and fix the mess they have created in the immigration system. If they do the things we have recommended all along, we will be able to address the very high 8.5% unemployment rate in her region.

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to apologize in advance to the member. He did not really speak about what I am going to ask him in my question.

Having looked at Bill C-4, which is supposed to be about addressing affordability measures, I have noticed that it has amendments to repeal sections of the Elections Act. I wonder how he feels about these repeals in the Elections Act, which seem to have nothing to do with affordability measures.

Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, it is a bit of an odd combination of provisions to see these things together. I will let our shadow minister for democratic institutions speak in more detail about that later, though. I want to give him the opportunity to comment on those provisions specifically.

I just want to extend my best wishes to the people of Nunavut. In looking at the unemployment numbers in parts of the country, I saw there was a very dramatic increase, more than 1%, including—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): We have run out of time.

[Translation]

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan.

Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to seek the unanimous consent of the House to share my time with the member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Marilène Gill: Madam Speaker, as I have not had a chance to do so yet, I would like to thank my constituents in Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan for electing me just over a month ago. They have given me their support for a fourth time, and I must say that I was deeply humbled and touched by this renewed trust. I thank my constituents.

I also want to thank my team, because an MP is nothing without their team. Yes, there are voters, but there is also our team and all the volunteers around us helping us continue to work on all the issues that are important to us. The election campaign centred on economic issues, and I expected that they would have been addressed in the House already, at the beginning of this Parliament. As several of my colleagues in the House have noted, this government was elected on a promise to “fix” things. In fact, it seemed as though that was the only promise made during the election. I say “fix”, but I do not know if that is the right word. On the one hand, the Liberals talk about the issue of tariffs with the United States. On the other hand, they also remind us that they want to create wealth and make Canada strong, from an economic standpoint.

I would like to reiterate something that I think is totally irresponsible on the government's part. I have to say it. In fact, that is what the Conservatives' amendment was about, the one we supported. The government is not even tabling a budget. It is talking about the economy and people's fears. The forestry, aluminum and steel industries are present in my riding. People are worried, but absolutely nothing is being proposed for those industries. The government is not even tabling a budget, but, in my opinion, the primary responsibility of a government is to explain how we are doing financially and where we are headed. It should provide a status update before deciding how to spend the money from the budget that no one knows anything about. That is the first thing I wanted to mention.

Part 1 of Bill C-4 proposes a tax cut. Evidently, we are surprised that the government is proposing a tax cut when it has not even presented a budget or economic statement. The government is already proposing spending without offering any indication of where the money is going to come from. That is causing a lot of concern. Now, we are not going to object to a tax cut. We support lowering taxes in principle. However, we need to know who will pay for the tax cut. Are health transfers going to be reduced?

I talked about the economy, but throughout my election campaign, people talked to me about health. As we know, the federal government's health transfers to Quebec and the provinces have

dwindled to a trickle. People told me that they cannot get health care in my riding. Out of our 1,300 kilometres of shoreline, there are 400, 500, 600 or more where people cannot get a doctor or receive treatments such as dialysis, for example. As a result, people have to move away. That is a very specific, very concrete example of the needs that we have. We expect the federal government to assume its responsibilities. I will give the government the benefit of the doubt, but in my opinion, the promise to lower taxes was very much an election promise. The tax cut currently amounts to \$4 a week. It will be \$8 in 2026. However, the government is not saying where it is going to get the money to pay for this measure.

We hope that the government will respond to the amendment that was adopted and present a budget by the end of spring. We hope that it will respect all the areas under Quebec's jurisdiction that are governed by Quebec's institutions, namely the National Assembly. With that, I will segue to another aspect of the bill, which is the partial elimination of the carbon tax.

• (1055)

Once again, during the election campaign, the Prime Minister promised a cheque to all Canadians, except for people in Quebec and British Columbia, after he abolished the carbon tax. The cheque was meant to cover a three-month period ending at the end of June. The fact is, this cheque is not a rebate to consumers, since the tax is no longer being collected. This cheque is a vote-buying gimmick that will cost us \$3.7 billion. I did say “us”, but Quebecers are not among the privileged citizens who will benefit from this amount. Quebec is being deprived of \$814 million. The Quebec National Assembly—

• (1100)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I must interrupt the hon. member.

She will have four minutes and five seconds to finish her speech after oral question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

SERGE DION

Madeleine Chenette (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on March 30, the Thérèse-De Blainville chamber of commerce and industry held the Gala Stellar, a major must-see event, where a prominent member of our community with an exceptional history of service was honoured.

Serge Dion was given the prestigious Jean-Marc Boisvert award. As president of Jardin Dion, he built a flourishing business that employs over 250 people today. He has innovated and supported the third generation with generosity and vision.

Statements by Members

I would like to pay tribute to him today not just as an entrepreneur, but as a man dedicated to serving his community. His impact extends far beyond the business world. He has served as president of the Sainte-Thérèse Lions Club, the Thérèse-De-Blainville chamber of commerce and industry, and Odyscène, not to mention his commitment to a number of local causes, including the Maison des jeunes, the Laurentides Alzheimer Society and the Saint-Eustache hospital foundation.

Mr. Dion's history of service is a source of inspiration. I thank him for contributing to our RCM with such devotion, ambition and constancy. He knows how to build, transform and innovate.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN INFLUENCE REGISTRY

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Madam Speaker, under the Liberals, Canada has become a playground for foreign interference. For years, CSIS, national security experts and diaspora groups have been calling on the Liberals to establish a foreign influence registry to counter foreign interference.

Only after the Liberals got caught turning a blind eye to Beijing's interference in our democracy did they finally introduce legislation to establish a registry. It has been a year since the legislation passed. Where is the registry? There is no office established, no commissioner appointed, and no timeline provided. After years of opposing and obstructing a registry, the Liberals' latest tactic appears to be one of endless delay.

This is completely inexcusable. It is time for the Liberals to finally take foreign interference seriously and get the registry up and running now.

* * *

MARITIMES ECONOMY

Alana Hirtle (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to thank Premier Houston, Premier Holt and our federal government for their leadership in securing critical flood protection for the Chignecto Isthmus. This is not just about protecting land. It is about protecting livelihoods, supply chains and the economic backbone of Atlantic Canada.

As this government doubles down on our belief in Canadian businesses and pursues one Canadian economy, we cannot stop here. The Maritimes hold an untapped potential that demands our unwavering commitment. Every dollar we invest in strengthening this vital corridor is a dollar invested in maritime workers, maritime families and maritime futures.

The question is not whether we can afford to invest more; it is whether we can afford not to. Let us work together across the political aisle to unlock the full economic power of the Maritimes.

* * *

[Translation]

CITIZENS' SYMPOSIUM ON BETTER HEALTH

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Madam Speaker, last week, the Charlevoix region hosted the very first citi-

zens' symposium on better health, a first in Quebec and Canada. This shows that today, more than ever, health is everyone's business. The symposium brought together elected officials, professionals, citizens, researchers and doctors to discuss the topic of health.

The event, which was organized by Dr. Jean-Luc Dupuis and his team, provided an opportunity to identify meaningful solutions to today's health problems, from access to health care to the prevention of chronic diseases. The workshops focused on four main areas: mental health, physical health, nutritional health and environmental health.

I want to thank the organizers and all those who participated. I want them to know that they have a strong ally in Ottawa because I believe that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure and that it is more important than ever. We need to get moving in Charlevoix.

* * *

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FROM A MEMBER

Eric St-Pierre (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I rise to give my first member's statement in the House, I want to thank the people of Honoré-Mercier for putting their trust in me. I am here thanks to them and thanks to a team of volunteers, friends and colleagues who believed in the vision of a stronger, fairer and more united Canada.

[English]

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my wife and my two young daughters for joining me in this journey. Serving as a member of Parliament is an absolute privilege, but it comes with sacrifices, especially for those closest to us.

On that note, I also wish to reach out to all members in the House and thank them for their service. I would like to thank their families for supporting them. I invite everyone to applaud if they feel thankful for their families playing a vital role in our democratic process.

• (1105)

DUFFERIN—CALEDON

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Madam Speaker, today I want to thank the people of Dufferin—Caledon who elected me for the third time in a row since 2019. This is a task that is accomplished by many people, mostly the volunteers and the people who have worked so hard on my campaign: my campaign manager, my E-Day chair, the sultan of signs and my sign crew, who put up the most signs I have ever seen, as well as all of my canvassers who went knocking on doors every single day and the people who worked on election day. As a result of all their hard work, I received 42,500 votes, which is the most votes a Conservative has ever received in the history of the riding of Dufferin—Caledon.

Of course, I want to thank my wife, who is my rock and who is always there for me.

I want to say to the people of Dufferin—Caledon that every single day I will work tirelessly to represent their interests here in Parliament and make sure I hold the government to account for them.

* * *

[Translation]

TERREBONNE

Tatiana Auguste (Terrebonne, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I feel very honoured and humbled as I rise today to thank the people of Terrebonne for putting their trust in me and allowing me to represent them in the House of Commons.

Throughout this memorable election campaign, I had the privilege of meeting hundreds of people at shopping centres, seniors' residences, places of worship and their own front doors. These frank conversations gave me the opportunity to hear their concerns, their aspirations and their desire for change. Now, here we are.

I want to thank my parents for their unconditional support throughout this adventure. I also thank my team of volunteers and all those who believed in me all the way.

I promise to listen to my constituents, vigorously stand up for their interests and work tirelessly with the other levels of government to improve their daily lives. Together—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

* * *

[English]

IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, today we found out that unemployment has climbed to 7%. Canada's youth face a 14.2% unemployment rate, and Canadian students returning to school this fall face a whopping 20.1% rate.

The future outlook is even more grim. TD Bank expects 100,000 job losses this fall, and the Bank of Canada just stated that businesses are planning to significantly reduce hiring, yet the Liberals issued over 500,000 foreign student visas and 101,000 temporary work permits last year and have enabled over 300,000 pending asy-

Statements by Members

lum claims, which is roughly a city the size of Ottawa, of non-Canadian labour. This means even bigger competition for scarce jobs.

This situation is not fair to anyone, and it is not the fault of the immigrants who came to Canada hoping for a better life. Rather, it is the Liberals' fault for breaking the immigration system while pushing inflationary spending and job-killing policies.

The path forward is abundantly obvious. Conservatives demand that the Liberals immediately—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Shefford.

* * *

[Translation]

LA VOIX DE L'EST

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to draw the House's attention to the 90th anniversary of La Voix de l'Est, a newspaper founded in Granby in 1935 by a group of committed French-speaking men, including politicians Horace Boivin and Joseph-Hermas Leclerc and industrialist and journalist Aimé Laurion.

From the very beginning, La Voix de l'Est was a powerful outlet for progressive ideas, and it helped shape the development of Granby and the surrounding region. This newspaper has never been just another publication. For many families, it has been a source of affirmation and cohesiveness. It is still a key tool for communicating our local identity today.

La Voix de l'Est has evolved over the decades by developing new projects, and it was recently reborn as a co-operative thanks to the determination of its employees.

Today, it continues to pursue its mission as a digital newspaper with the same level of commitment to quality news. In a context where regional media are vulnerable, preserving this voice is crucial to maintaining a strong, informed democracy that is rooted in its communities.

* * *

• (1110)

[English]

TIBET

Karim Bardeesy (Taiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Madam Speaker, 36 years ago this week, the world watched in horror as peaceful democracy activists in Tiananmen Square were met with tanks and gunfire. Less known, but deeply remembered by many of my constituents, is that Tibetans have, for decades, been met with brutal repression as they assert their basic rights to freedom and dignity.

Statements by Members

Today that includes a more recent horror: colonial-style boarding schools, run by the Chinese government, that house approximately one million Tibetan children. A new report by the Tibet Action Institute shares how these schools now separate children as young as four years old from their parents, stripping Tibetan children of their religion and mother tongue and threatening to destroy Tibetan culture in China.

In recent weeks, I have met with the Sikyong, or leader of the Tibetan government in exile, and several other Tibetan human rights groups, guided by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Their unwavering commitment to self-determination for Tibet, to justice and to cultural survival in a non-violent way is deeply inspiring.

I am proud to represent the resilient Tibetan community of Taiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park. Together with the community represented by my colleague, the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore, it is the largest population of Tibetans and Tibetan Canadians in North America. To them, we say that we see them, we hear them and we stand with them.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, as a young mother in the early 1980s, I experienced the challenges so many mothers are facing today.

Under the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Liberal government, our resources were hijacked and our economy was ravaged. Interest rates rose to 22%. When we talk about inflation being the highest in 40 years under the current Liberal government, it takes me back 40 years to when we, as small business owners with a young family, experienced the devastation in real time.

Now my children and grandchildren are facing the same challenges, with higher food costs that alone are overwhelming. The Liberal Prime Minister is more of the same, causing even more chaos. Ten years and counting of Liberal inflationary deficits have record numbers of Canadians needing food banks, single mothers watering down milk and Canadians eating less nutritious meals.

What is Prime Minister “I am a banker and I know how to grow the economy without spending money” doing to solve this inflationary crisis? He is bringing in half a trillion dollars in new spending.

* * *

BGC CLUB DAY

Mike Kelloway (Sydney—Glace Bay, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a vibrant celebration in the heart of my riding: the annual Club Day hosted by the Boys and Girls Club in Whitney Pier.

This year's celebration holds a special significance, as the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada marks its 125th anniversary. That is a remarkable milestone in its legacy of supporting children and youth across this country. For generations, the Boys and Girls Club has been a cornerstone of our community, providing safe, supportive spaces where young people can learn, grow and thrive.

Each year, Club Day brings together families, volunteers and youth to celebrate the inclusion, leadership and community that define the great community of Whitney Pier. This event is more than just a day of fun and activities. It is a powerful reminder of the incredible work being done every day to empower our next generation.

The dedication of the staff, Chester Borden, the volunteers and the community of Whitney Pier is creating a better Cape Breton, a better Whitney Pier, and I say happy day for them.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

John Williamson (Saint John—St. Croix, CPC): Madam Speaker, for 10 years, the Liberals have relentlessly targeted law-abiding firearms owners, hunters and sport shooters while letting gun smugglers and criminals off the hook. Now the Prime Minister has pledged to reinvigorate Justin Trudeau's gun-grab program.

The government's main estimates show the Liberals will spend four times more targeting legal gun owners than fighting gun crime in our cities. This is not about public safety. It is political theatre designed to appease ideologues who have never held a firearm and do not understand responsible firearm ownership. This includes the public safety minister.

As the member of Parliament for Saint John—St. Croix, I will vote against these measures, work to protect communities and stand with law-abiding firearms owners across the country. Common sense, not ideology, must guide our public safety laws. It is time to bring jail, not bail for criminals and stop the crime.

* * *

RECOGNITION OF BRAVERY

Hon. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary act of courage and selflessness by Mr. Lee Spafford, a UPS driver in my riding of Kingston and the Islands, whose bravery turned an ordinary workday into a moment of heroism.

While on his delivery route, Mr. Spafford spotted smoke, which appeared to be rising behind a house. Without hesitation, he investigated the situation and indeed found the house to be on fire. With no regard for his own safety, he rushed into the burning home and rescued an elderly woman alone and trapped inside. His swift and fearless actions saved a life and exemplified the very best of our community spirit.

In a world where headlines often focus on division, Mr. Spafford reminds us of the quiet heroes among us, those who act not for recognition but for doing what is right. We thank Mr. Spafford.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS**

• (1115)

EMPLOYMENT

Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—Glengarry, CPC): Madam Speaker, the latest job numbers are out, and they are bad. Unemployment is up 7%. It increased to 14% from just one year ago and is the highest it has been in a decade, outside of COVID.

There has been virtually no growth in employment in 2025. One in every five students is unemployed and looking for work. Stats Canada itself confirmed just how bad things have gotten in our economy: "People are facing greater difficulties...in the current labour market." This is the result of 10 years of the same Liberal inflationary and job-killing policies. The Prime Minister wants to double down on the same failed approach that got us into this mess in the first place. He promised to cap spending at 2%, but the first spending bill that he tabled increased it by a whopping 8%. That is half a trillion dollars more of inflationary spending with no budget.

On behalf of the 1.6 million Canadians who are unemployed, when will the Liberals get serious and table a spring budget, so Canadians can get back to work?

* * *

*[Translation]***STEEL AND ALUMINUM INDUSTRY**

Giovanna Mingarelli (Prescott—Russell—Cumberland, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am deeply troubled by President Trump's new threats to impose additional tariffs on our Canadian steel and aluminum industries. The aluminum and steel industries in Canada and the United States are highly integrated. We all prosper when we build together.

I had the privilege of visiting Ivaco Rolling Mills in L'Orignal back in April, and I was able to speak directly with workers and management about the challenges facing our steel industries in Prescott—Russell—Cumberland.

[English]

This week, I met again with Ivaco's president, Stéphane Oehrli, to address growing concerns over President Trump's latest threats of a 50% tariff on Canadian steel. I, along with the government, am standing firmly with Ivaco and with all steel and aluminum workers in Prescott—Russell—Cumberland and across Canada.

Our government is fighting for the steel and aluminum industries to ensure fair trade, protect good jobs and defend these vital industries from unjust foreign pressures—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Oral questions.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

*[English]***EMPLOYMENT**

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the job numbers are out, and they are bad. Failing Liberal policies have now caused a full-blown unemployment crisis: 7% unemployment overall. Ontario alone has shed 25,000 manufacturing jobs, and one in five students cannot find a job this summer.

When will the government reverse its job-killing policies so that Canadians can get back to work?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have seen the job numbers, and I would say it is in large part due to the trade war that we are facing with our neighbour to the south. For Canadians, and I hear that the Conservatives will rejoice, later on today we will be tabling legislation, including a plan to build Canada strong.

On that side of the House, they just ask questions. On this side of the House, we put plans forward to build Canada strong.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the fact is that unemployment has been steadily increasing under this government for two years.

This week, I spoke to Josh, a hard-working and experienced labourer in his late 30s. Josh has been unemployed for more than a year and has now put in over 1,000 applications. StatsCan's numbers show that unemployed Canadians like Josh are searching longer and becoming more desperate.

By raising taxes, obstructing development and letting immigration get out of control, Liberals are depriving people like Josh of the opportunities they deserve. Will they change course so that Josh and others can get back to work?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think about Josh, his family, his community and all the communities around the country that are affected by this trade war. That is why we are going to table legislation later on today with a plan. The way to address what is going on for Josh and his employment status is to build a plan to create opportunities, to build Canada strong, to build a confident Canada and a prosperous Canada.

I salute the work of my colleagues the Minister of Transport and the Minister responsible for One Canadian Economy. They have done great work to build that one Canadian economy that will create—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Oral Questions

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, if the Liberals had a plan, the typical way they would put a plan before the House of Commons to address unemployment is in something called a budget, and yet we have no budget. Their response to terrible unemployment numbers is to blame others, blame external events, and to fail to present the House of Commons with a budget.

The Liberals said that a plan beats no plan. They have no plan. They have no budget. They have no plan to address out-of-control unemployment. They need to cut taxes, allow development and control immigration. When will they change course so that people can get back to work?

• (1120)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, indeed this government has a plan. This plan will be tabled later today in the form of legislation, which the member and his colleagues will have a chance to support. It is a plan to build this country; a plan to collaborate with every premier in this country, who have endorsed this plan; a plan to build major projects; a plan to get our economy on track; and a plan to create opportunity for Canadians from coast to coast. Will that member stand up and support our plan?

Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Madam Speaker, today we learned that Canada's unemployment rate has risen to 7%, the highest in a decade outside the pandemic. For students, this number is even higher, at over 21%. Canada's youth are eager to start their career paths but are facing obstacles at every step. They want to have independence and not be a burden to their parents.

For 10 years, the Liberals have been at the helm of our economy, and things have only gone downhill. The Liberals have created this unemployment crisis. Do they have a real plan to fix it?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Madam Speaker, we stand with the families who are impacted by unjust, unfair and illegal tariffs to the south of us. We stand with those businesses.

We are a government of action. We have just advanced legislation to cut taxes for 22 million Canadians, we are lowering the carbon tax, and we are lowering the taxes on first-home homebuyers.

[Translation]

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Madam Speaker, the youth unemployment rate in Quebec is three times higher than it is for the rest of the population. Specifically, it is 17%, compared to 5%. Summer job postings have fallen by 22% compared to last year. With house prices skyrocketing by hundreds of thousands of dollars, our young people just want to start working so they can begin saving up.

When will the government finally present a budget so that our young people can budget for their future?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague will have the opportunity later today to vote in favour of legislation that includes a plan to build Canada strong with projects of national significance to ensure that Canada has the strongest economy in the

G7, that industries can thrive and that young people can find jobs in the future.

The best way to build Canada strong is to put forward an action plan. That is exactly what we are going to do on this side of the House. Canadians will be watching to see what the Conservatives do. Will they support us in building Canada strong?

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Madam Speaker, those are still just words, and there is still no budget in sight for us.

Our young people just want to participate in the economy and make sure they are working to build their future. Now we have learned that youth unemployment is three times higher than the rest of the population. Worse still, a new Statistics Canada report tells us that 1.6 million people are unemployed, which is a 13.8% increase over last year.

When will the government stop abandoning our young people, who just want to work to build a future?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, young people want to see what the Conservatives are going to do today.

Instead of just talking, they will have the opportunity to take action to support young people across the country by backing legislation that lays out an ambitious plan for Canada. The Prime Minister has put forward an ambitious plan. He had a meeting with all the provincial and territorial premiers. Canada is more united than ever to build a strong future for our young people, our communities and our industries.

Will the Conservatives support our plan to build Canada strong?

* * *

STEEL AND ALUMINUM INDUSTRY

Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ): Madam Speaker, our aluminum and steel industries have been paying the price for Donald Trump's tariffs for three months without any help from Ottawa. This week, the tariffs doubled.

Employers like Alouette and Alcoa are the backbone of the economy in a region like the north shore, not to mention all the businesses that depend on steel. We need to provide liquidity for our industries. The money from the countertariffs needs to be redirected. We need to set up a wage subsidy program to prevent job losses.

After three months in a tariff war, what is Ottawa waiting for?

• (1125)

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs and One Canadian Economy, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on the contrary, we are not waiting.

Yesterday, my colleague the Minister of Finance and I met with people from the steel industry and others. We talked about the importance of supplying liquidity to support the aluminum sector in Quebec and across Canada. The Department of Finance has a mechanism specifically designed to provide that support. We already adapted EI measures before the election to guarantee that workers would be eligible. We will continue to collaborate with workers and industry to ensure that we are there for industry while standing up to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan.

* * *

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ): Madam Speaker, an employment relationship is not employment insurance. The Liberals are abandoning our regions. We can see it.

There is another example: softwood lumber. Groupe Remabec, among others, is laying off people throughout Quebec, and Arbec is doing the same in my community. Our industry has been in a trade war with the Americans, not since Donald Trump was elected, but since his first term in 2017. Our forestry industry has been getting hit with U.S. tariffs for eight years now, without liquidity and without support for creating added value through processing.

How many layoffs will it take for Ottawa to do something about this?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Madam Speaker, softwood lumber is very important for Canada and its regions. That is one of the reasons I will be very pleased to get the support of all members in the House for our legislative measures to implement our plan to build one Canadian economy. This plan will truly build Canada. We need softwood lumber to build our magnificent country. That is why anyone who is worried about softwood lumber needs to support this bill.

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Madam Speaker, Donald Trump's attacks on our economy are escalating, and our industries are not asking for the moon. They are asking for guarantees in terms of access to liquidity when needed and access to wage subsidies to hang onto their workers and their expertise.

All we are asking the Liberals to do is to plan ahead for once, rather than waiting for plants to close and for Quebecers to lose their jobs. The Liberals need to be proactive, rather than reacting after it is too late.

What are they waiting for?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, like the Conservative Party caucus, the Bloc Québécois will have a golden opportunity to support the Government of Quebec and all the provincial and territorial governments in Canada, industry stakeholders, the business community, unions and, most importantly, people who are looking for good opportunities, because we intend to build the country through projects of national significance.

Oral Questions

We intend to respond to Mr. Trump and the Americans by building and developing major projects in Canada. Later this afternoon, the Bloc Québécois will have the opportunity to support a real plan to do that.

* * *

[English]

FINANCE

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Madam Speaker, last year, 15,000 Islanders relied on Loaves & Fishes, the food bank in my community. While there were 225,000 visits to food banks across B.C., one-third of those were for children.

The Prime Minister promised affordable groceries. Instead, the cost of infant formula is up 9% and the cost of beef is up a whopping 33% since January. Liberals keep spending; Canadians keep hurting.

Will the Liberals finally table a budget that fights inflation so Canadians can afford to eat?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member, whom I welcome to the House, was obviously not here, but perhaps she should talk to her colleagues, who systematically opposed every affordability measure proposed by the government: child care, the Canada child benefit, school nutrition programs, dental care and pharmacare. The party she ran under has systematically resisted and voted against every single affordability measure that would help the very people she claims to represent.

● (1130)

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Madam Speaker, the minister engages in finger-pointing, while a third of the people who are using food banks are children. How are parents supposed to provide healthy lunches for their kids when the cost of apples is up 19%, the cost of cheese is up 5% and the cost of oranges is up 26%, not since 2015 but since January?

Two days of groceries cost more than \$100 in my community. The Liberal government is spending a half-trillion dollars without telling Canadian parents where the revenue is coming from.

Will the Prime Minister respect the will of the House and table a budget this spring?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member asks about budgets. She should ask her colleagues in her own caucus about past budgets, budgets that have helped the very people of whom she speaks: the people who are looking for school nutrition programs, who benefit monthly from the indexed Canada child benefit or who take their kids and drop them off at federally subsidized child care—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Oral Questions

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Could we allow the hon. member to answer a question that absolutely nobody heckled while it was being asked?

The hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons has the floor.

Steven MacKinnon: Madam Speaker, the member should ask her colleagues, and maybe plead with them. The next time we bring in a measure to help Canadians get ahead, maybe they should support it.

David Bexte (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am not sure whether the Prime Minister does his own grocery shopping yet or not, so maybe that is why he still thinks that food prices are just fine. Let me walk him through this. My wife and I, with two carts, spend many dollars at Costco. Beef strip loin is up 34%. White rice is up 14%. Coffee is up 9%. Sweet potatoes are now a luxury. I have not even talked about strawberries.

What is the Prime Minister's response to half a trillion dollars in new spending, with no budget and no plan? Will the government finally present a budget that feeds families instead of feeding inflation, or is this just the price of Liberal leadership?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have watched the party opposite vote against every one of our initiatives that have helped families across the country from coast to coast, whether it be the Canada child benefit, the dental program, the day care program or housing initiatives. The party opposite has not done one thing to support families across the country, so shame on them.

David Bexte (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the member for Edmonton West. That is supposed to be a joke.

The Prime Minister does not buy his own groceries, so of course he does not notice when the cost of beef jumps 34% or the cost of infant formula climbs 9%, but I do, and so do families in Bow River, who are skipping meals so that kids can eat.

We do not need lectures. We do not need spin. They need relief. The policies of the past Liberal government have not been working. The current Liberal government is not going to work.

Will the Liberals finally bring forward a budget that cuts inflation and cuts more taxes so all Canadians can afford dinner again, or is this just the price of bad Liberal policy?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Madam Speaker, let us look at some facts. In 2022, inflation was 8.1%. We have driven that down, per our policies, to 1.7%. Members of the party opposite hold themselves up as strong economic stewards. They are not. Under their previous governments, our economy failed.

We are going to aggressively rebuild our economy back by investing in Canadians. It is time for all Canadians to come together.

Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was amazed yesterday when the answer with respect to the school food program rose from 400,000 children to 500,000 children, between two 30-second questions.

The Prime Minister said he wanted to be judged by the experience of Canadians at the grocery store, so let us evaluate him. The cost of apples is up 18% since January. Oranges are up 26%, coffee is up 9% and beef is up a staggering 33%. Canadians are being crushed, and the Liberal response has been an additional half a trillion dollars in new inflationary spending.

When will the Liberals table their budget that reduces inflation and cuts taxes so Canadians can afford to feed their family?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Madam Speaker, let us look at facts. Members of the party opposite voted against the school food program; they would not support children who needed food in schools. They do not support families, they would not support young mothers and they do not support Canadians who need dental work. They do not support very much that supports Canadians.

It is time for all Canadians to come together. I wish the party opposite would do the same and vote for our initiatives.

• (1135)

[Translation]

Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Madam Speaker, the House is demanding that a budget be tabled this spring, but the Liberals are asking for the approval of more than \$500 billion in spending without submitting a single figure or a single budget.

Meanwhile, unemployment is rising, mortgage payments are late and even full-time workers are being forced to turn to food banks.

Even though all Canadians have to make a budget for their spending, this government refuses to table one.

When can we expect to receive the beginnings of budget?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the good news is that this member will get not just one but two chances to support the creation of new opportunities and jobs for all Canadians. Today, we are going to debate the affordability bill, which lowers taxes for 22 million Canadians. Later on, we are going to introduce a bill backed by stakeholders in Quebec and the Government of Quebec to create opportunities and launch major projects in Canada.

Will the member support those bills?

Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals broke their promise by increasing spending by 8% when they promised to reduce spending to 2%.

The result is out-of-control food inflation. Since January, the cost of beef is up 34%, apples are up 18%, rice is up 14% and infant formula is up 9%. Food banks are overwhelmed. Canadian families are hungry.

When will this government table a budget this spring? There are fewer than 10 days left.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, later today, my colleague will have the opportunity to once again show her constituents that she wants to support affordability. We had second reading of the tax cut bill. Twenty-two million Canadians, including many people in her riding, will benefit from it. Later today, she will have the opportunity to show political courage and say that, yes, she will support the Liberal government because we are going to build a strong Canada together.

Today, her constituents will be watching at home, and so will ours.

Will she do the right thing to give people in her riding a helping hand and build a strong Canada?

* * *

JUSTICE

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, \$1 million is not the next 6/49 jackpot; it is the amount of public money that the federal government has already wasted fighting Bill 21, Quebec's secularism bill. The Supreme Court has not even begun hearing the case, but the Liberals have already spent \$1 million of our tax dollars on attacking secularism in Quebec.

Is there a limit to the amount of money Quebecers will have to shell out to fund the Liberals' attack on their own laws with their own money?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this case raises important questions. I think it is important for the federal government to participate.

The member is talking about costs, but it is important to realize that there are a lot of expenses. For departmental employees, it is always very important to keep protecting charter rights while respecting provincial jurisdictions.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, one does not respect Quebec's jurisdictions by attacking Quebec's laws. I do not think the minister really understand his role.

By spending \$1 million in legal fees to challenge Bill 21 before the court proceedings have even begun, the federal government is proving one thing: It will stop at nothing to crush Quebecers and undermine Quebec's secularism. It will stop at nothing to attack the notwithstanding clause and the ability of Quebec and the National Assembly to pass its own laws, laws that we want and that Quebecers want, but that are not the laws of Canada.

Oral Questions

The federal government wants to fight the will of Quebecers no matter what the cost, but why is it taking their money to do so?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government has long expressed reservations about the Government of Quebec's Bill 21, especially regarding what we consider to be its misuse of the notwithstanding clause. We made up our minds a long time ago that we were going to intervene. What we are doing now is preparing to intervene, since the matter in question extends beyond Quebec's borders.

As my Bloc Québécois colleague is well aware, a lot of people, including Quebecers, are very concerned about this bill.

* * *

● (1140)

[English]

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, after their last job-killing, anti-development decade, Liberals now claim they want Canada to be an energy superpower but will approve pipelines only if there is consensus, yet there is no consensus even in their own cabinet. Most of the ministers have stopped pipelines for years. The PM's top gun said, "It is essential not to...[increase] oil...production", and the PM himself says, "half of oil reserves...need to stay in the ground".

The PM copied Conservatives on energy after he helped block Canada's for half a decade. Is it not true that they really will not ensure that private sector pipelines are built in all directions in Canada quickly?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, later today we will be tabling new legislation to help build Canada strong, build projects of national interest and make us the strongest economy in the G7. I really hope the members will support our bill.

Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, that rhetoric and the Liberals' photo ops do not matter; actions do, and the truth is that no private sector pipelines will be built to coasts with shipping and drilling bans. Companies will not build pipelines while the government is the only one in the world to cap Canadian oil and gas and to carbon-tax Canadian industries; the U.S. and others do not.

The Liberals will not kill the anti-development bill, Bill C-69, which premiers, indigenous leaders, the private sector and the Supreme Court oppose. The Liberals also say that there has to be consensus but that they alone will define what is in the national interest.

Oral Questions

Why will the Liberals not just repeal all their anti-energy laws so Canadian workers can at least—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. government House leader has the floor.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, sometimes the member talks about concrete actions. For one rare occasion, she gets to not just simply criticise, but gets to stand up for workers, stand up for the Government of Alberta, stand up for all the premiers and all the territories in this country and stand up for workers, unions, businesses and people who want to build this country and want to create opportunity in this country to do major projects and build Canada strong.

Will the member stand up and do something for once?

Jonathan Rowe (Terra Nova—The Peninsulas, CPC): Madam Speaker, during the lost Liberal decade, North Atlantic stripped its investment in our local refining, causing major instability in our area.

On Wednesday, my hon. Liberal colleague from Newfoundland announced with pride that North Atlantic is now investing once again, not here but in France. This does not seem like something a proud Newfoundlander would announce. Did the Liberal leadership force my fellow Newfoundlander to spin this shameful news?

Hon. Joanne Thompson (Minister of Fisheries, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think it is really important for the member opposite, whom I welcome to the House, to remember that there is a bill that will be tabled later today that is about growing this country, and I am so proud of the work that the new government is doing to ensure that Canada meets this moment. That includes Canada's becoming a world superpower, and I truly hope that the member opposite is going to be there to vote for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and for all Canadians.

Jonathan Rowe (Terra Nova—The Peninsulas, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals are good at promises but not production. In fact, they will cap it.

The refinery used to produce 100% of our island's diesel, propane, jet fuel and gasoline. Then, the Liberal government wasted \$89 million on a conversion for only biodiesel. Now we have to ship in all the other fuels, and everyone is paying the price.

Does the government realize that its political headline is now costing Newfoundlanders an extra five cents a litre to import fuels that used to be made on our Rock?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on Monday we met with the premiers, including the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, to talk about how we will build Canada strong. We had consensus with all of the different premiers. Just five days later, we are tabling legislation to start building again. We really hope the members will support this new legislation.

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, after the Liberals' Bill C-69 cancelled a dozen pipeline projects in Canada, Germany, Japan, Greece, Poland, Latvia, Ukraine, South Korea, the Philippines and Taiwan all pleaded with Canada for our LNG. Now, in the middle of a jobs crisis, the

promise of an energy superpower and the world wanting our energy, we could use Canadian steel and Canadian labour to build Canadian pipelines to get Canadian energy to the world.

How many new pipelines can we expect to be operational in the next two years?

• (1145)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, that member, just like all of his colleagues, is going to have a golden opportunity. Presented later today, there will be a bill with a plan, a plan to build this country with wood, steel and aluminum; with companies; with unions; with workers, men and women from right across this country, to build the economy of tomorrow.

That member will have a golden opportunity to support this government's plan. Will he do it?

* * *

[Translation]

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canadian workers and businesses are already taking action to build a clean and competitive economy. However, at a time when our largest trading partner is threatening to impose new tariffs, it is crucial that we expand our trade with other countries.

[English]

Can the Minister of Environment and Climate Change tell us how Canada's industrial carbon pricing system supports clean growth and helps protect Canada's economic sovereignty?

[Translation]

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, industrial carbon pricing is important for building a strong economy for Canada.

[English]

In the face of U.S. tariffs, Canada is seeking to diversify our trade, and in that, we are looking at countries around the world that are adopting border carbon adjustments. Making sure that we have a strong industrial carbon price is a part of the solution to making sure we have access to those markets. Beyond that, it protects our planet, and it protects Canadian jobs.

Unlike the Conservatives, who do not care about this and are actually seeking to avoid it, we—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Langley Township—Fraser Heights.

HOUSING

Tako Van Popta (Langley Township—Fraser Heights, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Canadian dream is to own a home, but that dream has been shattered for so many young families. Those who own a home are now facing higher mortgage payments due to higher interest rates caused by 10 years of the Liberal government's mismanagement of the economy. According to a recent CMHC report, 63% of Canadian homeowners are worried about defaulting on their mortgages, and 17% have actually missed mortgage payments.

Will the Minister of Housing acknowledge that the Liberal government has totally mismanaged the housing file?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this new government is focused on rolling out the most ambitious affordable housing plan that Canada has ever seen. We expect the members opposite to support this. They have raised many questions on this issue. Clearly, they are keen to support our initiatives to scale up affordable housing across Canada with the “build Canada homes” initiative. We look forward to that support. It is time to build.

[Translation]

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, there is a housing crisis across the country. Rent prices have skyrocketed over the past 10 years under this Liberal government. Federal programs for multi-unit housing developments are too slow, too cumbersome, too expensive, too complicated and, above all, inflationary. The measures announced by this government are insufficient. Young people in Beauce deserve to buy their own homes.

My question is very simple. When will this government present a budget?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would first like to congratulate my colleague on his arrival in the House and his election.

I will note that over the past 10 years, though, his party has voted against every affordability measure, whether it be tax cuts for the middle class, the Canada child benefit, the dental care program or more child care spaces in Quebec.

The Conservatives have now gotten off on the right foot by supporting us with a measure to lower taxes for 22 million Canadians, as well as eliminate the GST on new builds, which will directly help first-time buyers become home owners.

I hope they will keep going and support us with estimates that fund essential programs for my colleague's constituents in Beauce.

[English]

Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Madam Speaker, according to the Liberals' own housing agency, 60% of Canadians are struggling to pay down debt, and one in four are using one credit card just to pay off another. The cost of living is up 45%, job losses are up 34%, and interest rates are climbing 29%. The dream of home ownership is slipping further out of reach. Canadians are stuck living in their parents' basement.

Oral Questions

What is the Liberal government's plan to restore the hope Canadians once had? When will it table a budget so people can plan for the future?

● (1150)

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I have said numerous times in this House, there is a real focus on this side of the House on ensuring that young Canadians have an opportunity for home ownership. That is why we brought in the GST break for first-time homebuyers, \$50,000 for homes up to \$1 million, and a GST break up to \$1.5 million in the markets that are higher priced.

We are delivering a break for first-time homebuyers. We are also focused on scaling up “build Canada homes”, which will build homes that are needed at the prices that are affordable for young people across Canada in these years ahead.

Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals promised 500,000 new home starts a year, but according to a TD report, the target is completely unrealistic. Even under the most generous projections, the Liberals' plan falls dramatically short of what is needed, and now construction is falling, not rising. Let us be honest. A GST cut on homes under \$1 million does nothing if there are no homes being built.

When will the Liberal government stop spinning its talking points and provide a real plan for Canadians, or maybe it just does not have one?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I urge the member opposite to check the facts. The year-to-year housing starts are up across Canada. We are building more than ever before. We need to scale that to the next level, though. That is why this government ran on a commitment to build up to 500,000 homes a year across Canada. In 10 years, we have to scale up to that level, and that means cranking up a whole new industry on modular and off-site construction.

We have to build faster, cheaper and greener across Canada to deliver the homes that Canadians need. That is what we are committed to.

*Oral Questions***PUBLIC SAFETY**

Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, as wildfires force tens of thousands to evacuate their homes, criminals are taking advantage of the situation to loot homes and businesses and steal emergency equipment needed to fight the flames. In Redwater, a man was arrested for tampering with sprinkler equipment during the fire, and in Yellowhead County, emergency equipment was stolen. The RCMP is saying that this is the work of repeat offenders. This is happening across the country.

When will the Liberals finally get serious about protecting our communities and crack down on these thugs?

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Madam Speaker, this new government is taking community safety very seriously. We have committed ourselves to bail reform for repeat violent offenders, for those who are involved in home invasions, auto theft, human smuggling and drug trafficking.

However, let me be clear: The provinces and territories also have a critical role to play. I am glad to see that the Province of Ontario has taken some steps. We welcome Premier Ford's announcement to strengthen Ontario's bail system. I hope other provinces also follow suit—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Parkland.

Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberal government's record is a clear failure. I spoke with an RCMP officer in Drayton Valley who told me that he had arrested a meth dealer only to see them back out on the street four hours later.

The Liberals' catch-and-release bail policies have endangered our communities, as drug dealers and violent criminals are released back out onto our streets in record time. There is something seriously wrong in our country when a criminal can be arrested, processed and back out on the streets faster than a sick Canadian can see a doctor in an emergency room.

Do the Liberals recognize that their catch-and-release bail policies have made our communities far more dangerous?

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have said before that we are committed to making it tougher for violent criminals to get bail, and we are going to impose stricter sentences for repeat violent offenders. The provinces, too, have a role to play. We have had these discussions with provinces. Some provinces have been stepping forward. We look forward to working with our provinces and territories to make sure that Canadians are safe. We will stop at nothing to protect Canadians.

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, Liberal experiments in leniency have led to lawlessness on our streets. Ontario court data shows that major assaults have increased 70% since 2015, from 13,000 cases to over 23,000 cases. That is not just a failure of so-called social justice policy; it is a failure of moral responsibility by the government.

Will the Prime Minister put victims ahead of violent offenders and cancel his “get out of jail free” laws, Bill C-5 and Bill C-75?

• (1155)

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Madam Speaker, once again, we are going to bring forward bail legislation in the coming months. We are working hard to make sure feedback is being taken from all our policing agencies. We are going to do whatever it takes to protect Canadians. We are working hard to make sure we strengthen this regime, but provinces, too, have a role to play in the administration of justice.

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, it has been ten years and no bail reform. Why? The Liberals think everything is okay. In Durham, they do not. In 2015, there were 68 cases of sexual assault. Last year, there were 128 cases. At the same time, offenders violating bail and other conditions were up 137%. That is not mere coincidence; that is cause and effect.

Will the minister please break this cycle of violence and repeal the “get out of jail free” laws, Bill C-5 and Bill C-75?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member is right to raise concern around crimes involving sexual violence, but his solution is to repeal a law that makes it tougher for people who have committed acts of intimate partner violence to escape bail and return to our communities. That is a nonsensical approach.

In the months ahead, we are going to be moving forward with legislative reforms that are going to make it harder to get bail for people who commit violent acts, for people who are engaged in auto theft, home invasion and human trafficking, and tougher sentences for violent repeat offenders. We need to be smart. We need to look at the facts, and we need to make sure we understand the laws that we are putting forward or, as the member suggests, we would take off the books.

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FIREARMS

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Madam Speaker, last night the Minister of Public Safety made some shocking admissions. He is the minister responsible for confiscating law-abiding firearms owners' guns. He does not know what the firearms safety course is. He does not even know what a firearms licence is. I invite him to come out to my local range, the East Elgin Sportsmen's Association, and learn the things he needs to know to do his file.

Oral Questions

Since the minister does not even know the basics of Canada's gun laws, will he halt the government's confiscation of firearms?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me first congratulate my colleague opposite for his Adobe editing skills, for the type of trash that he is putting out on social media.

Let me just address the issue of buyback. A serious plan to keep our communities safe starts with responsible action to keep guns off our streets. The buyback program will provide fair compensation to businesses and firearm owners in possession of prohibited firearms that are otherwise unusable or unsellable. The first phase allows gun stores and gun dealers now holding over 10,000 guns that are now illegal—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre.

* * *

DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, over the course of the past few weeks, we have watched as devastating wildfires have ravaged through my home province of Manitoba and the neighbouring province of Saskatchewan. Entire communities have been evacuated, homes have been lost, and the air quality has been so poor that everyday activities have been rendered very difficult. Unsurprisingly, in places like Winnipeg, my hometown, the community has responded with kindness and generosity.

Can the Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience share with this House how other Canadians can step up in this moment of need?

Hon. Eleanor Olszewski (Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience and Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question and for his deep concern for the people of Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

The wildfire season has hit earlier and harder than usual, and Canadians are stepping up to support those affected. That is why we have partnered with Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the Red Cross to match every single individual donation made to their wildlife appeals. Every dollar Canadians give will go further to provide shelter, food and essential supplies to those affected by wildfires.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

John Williamson (Saint John—St. Croix, CPC): Madam Speaker, yesterday I asked the government why a convicted child sex offender in New Brunswick is out on bail while appealing his jail sentence. The government blamed the provinces, judges and the police, yet this child sex offender was already arrested and sentenced for his crime. The predator got out on bail under federal law, and the government is not closing this dangerous loophole. Now, the minister pointed to Bill C-2 as an answer, but this bill does nothing to stop this from happening again.

I ask again, when will Liberals stop convicted child sex offenders from receiving bail?

● (1200)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I understand this matter involves Correctional Services Canada and is subject to the release by the parole board. Of course, Bill C-2 has a number of important measures in place to protect the border, including ensuring that in regard to those who are predators, especially on the Internet, using child pornography, for example, law enforcement has the right tools to be able to do its job more adequately.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Clifford Small (Central Newfoundland, CPC): Madam Speaker, this year's northern-cod assessment places the stock just a fraction below the healthy zone. With all those seeking increased quota, one sector stands out in terms of its historical access and adjacency to the resource. Those are the inshore harvesters of the northeast coast of Newfoundland in areas 3K and 3L.

Given that these harvesters had little increase in their share of quota last year, will the minister do the right thing and accept the FFAW's proposal to allocate any increase in the northern cod quota to the inshore fishers of the northeast coast?

Hon. Joanne Thompson (Minister of Fisheries, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I well know the historical importance of cod to the province, as well as the cultural importance. I also remember the moratorium 30 years ago and remember the absolute devastation to so many communities and individuals.

As we begin to move forward and see the stock return to a more healthy zone, it is imperative to ensure that we balance the future generations of fishers in the province with the need of harvesters to be able to have a reasonable livelihood. I will look at both.

Clifford Small (Central Newfoundland, CPC): Madam Speaker, inshore operators along the northeast coast are seeing heavy predation on their crab stocks by cod. This has impacted their crab quotas and will worsen as the cod stock grows. Plant workers and fish harvesters in this adjacent area must benefit from the growth of the cod stock, which is placing livelihoods that are now dependent on crab in peril.

Oral Questions

Will the minister not yield to high-paid lobbyists and foreign-funded ENGOs, and instead do the right thing and accept the FFAW's proposal to allocate any increase in northern cod to fish harvesters on the inshore sector of the northeast coast?

Hon. Joanne Thompson (Minister of Fisheries, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will repeat what I said earlier, because I do not know if my colleague heard me. It is imperative that we balance the future of stocks. We need to have a fishery to pass on to the next generation. At the same time, we need to understand that this is people's livelihood. We can do both, but we also need to ensure that we have a stock going forward.

* * *

SPORT

Bruce Fanjoy (Carleton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, sport brings people together, builds confidence and helps young people stay healthy and active. That is why programs such as the community sport for all initiative are so important, especially for kids who might otherwise face barriers to participating.

Could the Secretary of State for Sport update the House on how this program has helped make sport more accessible to Canadians?

Hon. Adam van Koeverden (Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my neighbours in Burlington North—Milton West for their confidence, but I would also like to sincerely thank the good people of Carleton for electing a fantastic community champion as their member of Parliament.

The community sport for all initiative lifts people up by breaking down barriers to physical activity, with programs such as Dribble Dreams in Milton and Ottawa South United Soccer in the member's riding, an organization the MP knows well because he is so connected to his community. Partners such as KidSport and Jumpstart have already helped more than one million Canadian families and kids to enjoy sport and participate. That is because every kid deserves a chance to play, to compete and to belong.

When kids play, Canada wins.

* * *

[Translation]

FINANCE

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Madam Speaker, after 10 years of Liberal inflationary deficits, here is the result.

Last night, I received the heartbreaking testimony of a Victoriaville resident who wrote to me saying she lives alone and struggles to make ends meet. After rent, bills and various payments, she barely has enough money for food. She said she can only afford to buy food if she has any money left. That is happening here in Canada.

My question is simple. Will the Liberals finally table a budget so that no one has to cut back on food?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we welcome our new colleague to the House.

He is lucky because today he will have the opportunity to support a bill that will lower taxes for the woman in Victoriaville he is talking about.

He will also have the opportunity to support a bill, supported by his former boss, Mr. Legault, that will create and build major projects, create opportunities, create economic activity and even create opportunities for the woman in his riding.

* * *

● (1205)

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, Trump's tariffs are just the latest blow for B.C.'s forestry sector. The industry needs a lifeline so it can provide good jobs in rural communities. Retrofitting mills to generate electricity from biomass could protect jobs and power grids with sustainable energy. The Domtar paper mill in Port Alberni made the switch, and now 88% of its emissions come from biomass. In 2023, the Liberals promised a tax credit for biomass energy, but they have delayed implementation while investments head south.

Will the Prime Minister show he has not forgotten about B.C.'s forestry sector and make sure biomass is in this year's budget?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government supports the growth of the biomass sector. Later today, we will be tabling a bill that would help us build energy-efficient sources of energy, including biomass. We hope the member will support the bill.

* * *

NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, Nunavut has the highest rate of child poverty in Canada. Almost half of Inuit children, at 42%, go to school hungry every day, yet the Liberals recently cancelled a hamlet food voucher program, with nothing to replace it. The nutrition north subsidy does not reduce grocery prices. Meanwhile, the North West Company consistently reports hundreds of millions of dollars in profits.

Will the Liberals admit they believe the so-called nation-building Grays Bay road is more important than feeding Inuit children?

Hon. Rebecca Chartrand (Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are committed to ensuring that full retail-subsidy benefits reach northerners. To enhance accountability, we formed the nutrition north compliance and audit review committee with indigenous and regional representatives.

We recognize that food is more than nutrition; it is also cultural identity and sovereignty. We are committed to ensuring that the subsidy goes directly to northerners.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I just want to remind members to please look at the chair and see if it is a woman or a man who is sitting in the chair. It would be much appreciated.

The member for Elgin—St. Thomas—London South is rising on a point of order.

Andrew Lawton: Madam Speaker, the Minister of Public Safety accused me of editing, in a misleading way, his own comments from committee of the whole. What was out of context? He said very clearly that he did not know what a fire—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): That is debate, and it really has no place right now.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

CANADIAN IDENTITY AND CULTURE

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), and in accordance with the policy on the tabling of treaties in Parliament, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaty entitled “Audiovisual Co-production Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of South Africa”, signed at Capetown on September 3, 2024.

* * *

[English]

ONE CANADIAN ECONOMY ACT

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (President of the King’s Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs and One Canadian Economy, Lib.): moved for leave to introduce Bill C-5, An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act.

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

* * *

● (1210)

PETITIONS

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, this petition was signed by members of the Tseshaht First Nation.

Routine Proceedings

They highlight that an essential part of reconciliation is addressing the harms first nations have experienced, including the devastating loss of language and culture. They also highlight that there is a growing number of indigenous language learners, but the number of remaining fluent speakers is falling.

The petitioners also highlight that changes to federal funding for indigenous language programming have put the preservation and revitalization of first nations languages and cultural heritage in British Columbia at risk and that there is urgent need to invest in indigenous language revitalization before it is too late.

They are calling on the Government of Canada to commit to ensuring fair, adequate and long-term funding for indigenous language programming, especially in British Columbia.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberal Party, according to petitioners, has been attacking the charitable status of various Canadian charitable organizations. Recommendations 429 and 430 in a finance committee report regarding budget consultations recommended stripping charitable status from any organizations that are effectively from any houses of worship and also separately from any pro-life organizations.

These recommendations, if implemented in a budget, would prevent these organizations from issuing tax receipts. Not only that, but they could actually force these organizations, including churches, mosques, gurdwaras, temples and synagogues, to lose their assets. This is a very extreme recommendation endorsed by the majority of that committee, and petitioners are opposed to that.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on an ideologically and politically neutral basis, without discrimination on the basis of political or religious values and without the imposition of another values test, as well as to affirm the right of Canadians to freedom of expression.

* * *

[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Government Orders***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 second time and referred to a committee.

Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to go back to what I was saying earlier.

Right off the bat, I addressed the responsibilities of the government, which was elected with a mandate that I would call economic. The tariffs imposed by the U.S. government are threatening the economy, especially where I live on the north shore. I am talking about responsibilities because we expect a government elected on the idea of being able to restore the economy to present a budget. However, we have not gotten one. That is why a motion was moved, calling on the government to table a budget before the end of spring. The Bloc Québécois supported that motion and moved an amendment to the amendment, calling for Quebec's institutions and jurisdictions to be respected.

That is where I got to and I wanted to provide an example of the fact that Quebec and its institutions are not being respected. Just this week, the National Assembly of Quebec unanimously denounced an injustice against Quebecers, the injustice associated with abolishing the carbon tax, which the Prime Minister did by signing an order in March. The tax was abolished on April 22 at a cost of \$3.7 billion. In the middle of the election, one last cheque was paid out to Canadian voters, but not those in British Columbia or Quebec. However, that cheque would not have covered the costs Canadian or Quebec voters would have incurred because those cheques were always sent in advance. The government had already cancelled the carbon tax, but people received a cheque anyway for the months of April, May and June. It was therefore a cheque paid for by Quebecers for absolutely nothing.

Quebec has had its own carbon market since 2013. If some people got a cheque that does not cover any expenses, it is reasonable to wonder why Quebecers were excluded. We did not get an answer, but that is what the National Assembly is denouncing, saying that of this \$3.7 billion, \$814 million should be paid to Quebecers because it is owed to them. The National Assembly asked Ottawa to pay this \$814 million that is owed to Quebecers. They talk about responsibilities, but there is no budget. This measure does absolutely nothing. To me, it was very much a vote-buying cheque.

What is more, we have already seen, both before and during the election, that the government does not respect Quebec and its institutions. We are seeing this again now with Bill C-4

The National Assembly itself is asking for this, but it is being denied. My colleague, the member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères asked the Minister of Finance, the member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain, but he did not get a response.

I hope that the government will respect Quebec, its institutions and its jurisdictions.

• (1215)

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the legislation we have before us is very simple and straightforward. It delivers on an election commitment. I believe that all political entities inside the House of Commons supported the idea, or at the very least the principle, of what the Prime Minister was proposing, which was to give tax relief to Canadians in all regions of the country.

Would the member not acknowledge and agree that this is something Canadians deserve given the mandate? For that to occur, we need to pass this legislation. Could I get the member's comments in regard to the sense of urgency so they are able to get that tax break by July 1 of this year?

[Translation]

Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the government that, typically, when voters go to the polls, they want to elect a government that is accountable. The Prime Minister promised that the government would be accountable, that the economy would perform well and that Canada would be in a strong position to deal with the United States.

As someone who has worked in finance for many years, I know what I am talking about. The government that just came to power is not a new government; it is a continuation of the old government. We saw this earlier when there was talk about old measures dating back to before the Prime Minister took office.

The government is not even tabling a budget. To me, that is completely irresponsible.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in her speech, my colleague from Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan talked about the infamous cheques related to the government scrapping the carbon tax, which were sent out even though no money was collected elsewhere in Canada. These cheques were sent everywhere in Canada except Quebec, even though the government did not collect anything from the rest of Canada. This means that, in the end, money was collected from Quebecers to hand out to the rest of Canada.

Why are Quebecers treated like second-class citizens in this country?

Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, I think we could talk some more about the fiscal imbalance, for example. We are always on the losing end in this situation. Until we have full power to decide what is right for Quebec, using our own money, I think this is going to keep happening. This is a prime example.

Another example is the fight against Quebec's secularism law. Once again, the federal government is using Quebecers' money against them. We need full authority to work in Quebec's interest.

• (1220)

[English]

Tako Van Popta (Langley Township—Fraser Heights, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier in the debate today, we heard the Minister of Finance say that he wants to make Canada the “strongest economy in the G7”. It was pointed out to him that Canada's productivity metrics are lagging behind those of our major trading partners, particularly the United States of America.

Does the member see anything in this bill that is going to improve our productivity numbers? Why should Canadians have confidence in the tired, old Liberal government, which has been promising this for years?

[Translation]

Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, the simplest answer I can give my colleague is no. Productivity is not discussed at all here, even though the Bloc Québécois is asking that businesses receive assistance precisely to improve their productivity.

Talking about productivity also means talking about competition. No, this bill does not in any way accomplish what it should as far as things like productivity are concerned.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the other aspect of the legislation is to eliminate the GST for first-time homebuyers, up to \$1 million, on the purchase of a home. I wonder if the member could indicate whether the Bloc supports that. Also, just to reaffirm her position, does she personally support or does the Bloc support the tax break for Canadians?

[Translation]

Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, since we started this morning, we have heard, for example, the Minister of Finance talk about relief, young people and the government's plan. He has been a member of the House for about 12 years now, even if he has not always been finance minister. I would expect a plan after 10 years.

When it comes to housing, we agree with the GST exemption. It helps, even though it does solve the whole issue. When I toured my riding during the election, young people were also talking to me about available housing.

We are waiting for the plan. It is quite incomplete at the moment.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am rising today in the House to speak to Bill C-4.

It is interesting because we are still in the early days of this Parliament, which is often the time when we assess a government's priorities, by observing the first steps that it takes. Usually, after an election, a government seeks to implement its priorities.

Our first disappointment in looking at this government's priorities, Bill C-4 notwithstanding, is the matter of the budget. The government spent the whole election campaign saying that we were in the midst of a crisis, that it had a plan, that it knew what to do and that it would explain to us how to solve the problem. However, now that the election is over, a question remains: Where is that plan? The government does not have a plan and it does not have a budget.

Government Orders

It does not know where it is going. That is the reality. It is sad to see that this was a sham, especially since businesses are suffering right now.

ArcelorMittal, a steel manufacturer in my riding, has 1,500 employees and is receiving no federal assistance. We asked the government how it planned to deal with the crisis caused by the dreaded U.S. tariffs that are now being increased to 50%. We were told that it had held discussions. Unfortunately, that will not save the jobs of people who will be laid off. It will not add any shifts for people on reduced hours. It is not going to solve the problem. Of course the government is talking to the Americans, but it seems to me that the 25% tariff has been in place for months. The 25% tariff has been in effect for three months now. It has just been increased to 50%, but no additional support had been provided before that. There is something wrong with this government. It always says that it is there for Canadians, but when real problems arise, it is not there to solve them.

Today, we are talking about Bill C-4, but I wanted to point out the current government's lack of priorities to address the real problems at hand. Nevertheless, the bill does contain some good things.

First, there is the tax cut. As we know, during the election, the Conservatives and the Liberals fought over who would offer the biggest tax cut. The Bloc Québécois said it was somewhat skeptical of that, but not because we are opposed to tax cuts, quite the contrary. Everyone would be happy to pay less tax, myself included. However, the question is whether that is a priority at this time. Is that really where the money should be invested first? Will that have an impact on our public services? Will it put us further into debt? Do we not risk falling short of what we need to balance our budget at the end of the month?

The fact is, we do not know, because the government did not present a budget. The proposed tax cut will bring the rate for the lowest tax bracket down by 0.5%. That will apply to about 22 million people. This seems like a good idea because it targets taxpayers in the first tax bracket. However, only those with a taxable income of at least \$57,000 will derive maximum benefit from the tax cut. The reality is that people who earn around \$60,000 will benefit the most. Those people are obviously not ultrarich, but the ultrarich will also benefit because this measure is good for everyone. It is not highly targeted, so it will be very costly. It will apply to everyone from millionaires to people with low incomes. Moreover, people who do not pay taxes or who have very low incomes will not benefit at all.

Government Orders

This measure is going to cost \$26 billion over five years. Is that the best use of public funds? We do not know because the government has not presented a budget. We do not know the federal government's financial situation. We do not know what cuts will have to be made to make up this \$26-billion shortfall. What we do know is that this government was already running a deficit, and had run massive deficits in the past. Where is the money going to come from? Are they going to run even bigger deficits or are they going to reduce transfers to the provinces? That is a good question.

In Quebec, we have problems in our health care system. It is important to invest in the health care system and that does not seem to be the federal government's priority. Health transfers are not keeping pace with the rising costs. The question is where is the government going to make those cuts to balance the books.

Another important question is whether the government will respect the opposition's proposed amendment to the Speech from the Throne. The Liberals bragged about getting the throne speech and the ways and means motion adopted. Now they think they can do whatever they want. No, that is not how it works. It is a bit like presenting an action plan at a shareholders' meeting. The shareholders might approve the plan in principle, but propose two or three changes. That is what just happened in the House. The House is prepared to adopt certain measures, but the opposition is calling on the government to table a budget because we want to know where the government is headed.

• (1225)

However, we have not received a response to this. The only response we have heard so far in the House is the Prime Minister saying he was taking note. I am pretty sure that, when he worked as a banker, if he had gone to a shareholders' meeting and said he was taking note of what they were saying, he would not have kept his job for very long. The reality is that he is not above Parliament. He is an elected member, as we all are, and the majority of elected members decide. He is not a dictator, is he? He was elected precisely to stand up to someone south of the border who is often described as a dictator. I am not saying that he is one, but it is important to keep a close eye on the situation. I find that saying he is "taking note" is pretty arrogant for someone who has just taken office and still has not told us exactly where he is going. Basically, he is asking us to write him a blank cheque so he can do whatever he wants. That is pretty much the message we got in the House, which is troubling for the future because, of course, he is serving as the Prime Minister elected to this place by Canadians. We live in a democracy. We are not talking about Louis XIV here. Still, we have no budget and no road map. We have a government that is flying blind and by the seat of its pants. We have a taxi driver who wants us to pay the fare before we even start the trip, and we do not even know where he is going to take us.

The second thing in this bill is the GST new housing rebate for first-time home buyers. That is not a bad thing. Almost everyone in the House actually agrees on it. At least, the Bloc, the Liberals and the Conservatives have all said there should be a GST exemption on first-time new home purchases. The only difference between the parties was the cap for that exemption. In the Bloc Québécois's election platform, we talked about \$750,000. If I am not mistaken, the Liberals talked about \$1 million or so in theirs. The Conserva-

tives went a little higher. What we see here is amounts ranging from \$1 million to \$1.5 million, with a full GST rebate on the amount up to \$1 million and progressively less as the home price goes up to \$1.5 million. There is no set amount between the two. We looked at the market in Quebec, where regular people are not buying million-dollar homes, although prices in some Montreal neighbourhoods are very high, and we think \$750,000 would have been reasonable. Nonetheless, we understand that the market in the rest of Canada is different.

This might be more appropriate for the market in the rest of Canada, especially in this inflationary context with very high rents and home prices and significantly higher interest rates that make it harder and harder for people to buy a first home. I was a first-time home buyer not that long ago, and lots of people I know had a hard time buying a home. Other people would like to buy a home, but they cannot.

Will eliminating the GST on new homes be enough? First, people have to want to buy a new home. As we know, new homes are often more expensive. It will not automatically help everyone. On the contrary, people might want to save money by buying an older home. Second, we have to wonder whether there might be a different or complementary method of helping first-time homebuyers. In the Bloc Québécois's election platform, we proposed that parents, who do not necessarily have the cash to help their children, should be allowed to use their RRSPs to enable their children to buy a first home using the home buyers' plan, or HBP. Under the plan, children would reimburse their parents over a period of 10 years, for example. It would have no effect on taxation, since parents will still have to pay tax on the money from their RRSPs when they retire later on. It is a mechanism with zero cost to the government that would have given younger generations access to home ownership. We find it hard to understand why a similar measure was not included in the current bill.

The third matter that I am going to talk about is the worst. It has to do with the carbon tax and it is really disturbing. I feel like Quebec has been bamboozled. The government agreed to axe the carbon tax because it was unpopular and the Conservatives did not like it. Then the Liberal government morphed into a Conservative government. For four years the Liberals walked around in orange suits only to hang them up and trade them in for blue suits. People voted against the Conservative Party. The government they ended up with has a Conservative Party agenda. We are in a tough spot. Our environment is in a tough spot. The problem is that Quebecers are the ones who are going to be penalized. We are already being penalized because the government took Quebecers' money to hand out cheques to the rest of Canada. The government owes us \$800 million. We have a fake \$3.7-billion carbon tax rebate that was given to Canadians. Quebecers have been—

• (1230)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments.

The hon. member for London West.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (Deputy House Leader of the Government, Lib.): Madam Speaker, since I have not yet had the opportunity to do so, I would like to congratulate my colleague on his re-election.

I heard my colleague's speech. We also know that an election just happened and that Canadians decided to elect a government that told them it would lower taxes for families.

Can my hon. colleague tell us, here in the House, that he and his party will support the measures we introduced to meet the demands that Canadians made of us during the election?

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, during the election, no one promised a government whose first priority would be to rub shoulders with oil and gas companies, to work on creating new pipelines and to invite the King. It seems to me that this government has strange priorities.

No one told us the government would take the Conservative Party's platform and implement it. That is what Quebecers voted against. I also think that is part of what Canadians voted against.

[English]

Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I noticed the member referred to the issue that the GST rebate on homes is only for first-time homebuyers. Our plan as the Conservative Party was to use this as a tool to help deal with the housing crisis, but giving only first-time homebuyers the opportunity to use the GST rebate is significantly more truncated and is not going to make a difference, especially with young people who cannot afford their first home to be a brand new home. By spreading it out over more people, we could build those homes, and it would free up more of the other homes that our young people need.

Does the member think that would be a good plan in light of the limitations in the Liberal plan?

Government Orders

• (1235)

[Translation]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, my Conservative colleague is asking an excellent question.

I cannot say that I have a clear answer to that question. The problem is that, if we get rid of the GST on new homes and for everyone, for first-time homebuyers and for other buyers, it might lead to higher prices. Often, people will offer the maximum amount they can afford in order to purchase a home, particularly in a context where there are bidding wars and where demand exceeds supply.

I am not totally convinced that this expansion would help first-time homebuyers. By limiting this measure to first-time home buyers, we are giving an advantage to people who do not yet own a home. I think that measure is well thought out.

We would need a more in-depth economic analysis to know if it should be extended to everyone else. That way, we would determine the impact of that decision on the market.

[English]

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, as my colleague knows, the federal Liberals pulled out of the national housing strategy in 1992. We know that Canada and Quebec only have 3.4% non-market housing. We also know that non-market housing has to be a critical piece for tackling affordability when it comes to housing. At 3.4%, we have one of the lowest rates in the OECD, and there is nothing in the bill for co-op housing, housing geared to income, seniors' housing and housing for the most vulnerable, the homeless and youth coming out of care.

Does my colleague see that the government is failing when it comes to dealing with the affordable housing crisis? All we hear from Conservatives and Liberals is that the free market and supply are going to solve the problems of non-market housing, but we know that is not true.

[Translation]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, that is also a very good question.

We specifically mentioned a target in our election platform. If I am not mistaken, that target was approximately 20% of non-market housing. If this goal were reached, it would lead to a significant number of non-market homes, which could greatly improve the situation and help many people who do not have the same financial means as others.

Government Orders

At the moment, the percentage of non-market homes is 3.5%. That is ver low and has no real effect on the rest of the market. The reality is that when there is non-market housing that is protected from speculation, there are people who are able to put a roof over their heads at a reasonable price. When that number becomes high enough, it ends up having an effect on the rest of the market. It leaves people wondering why so many people are able to pay a reasonable price while others take advantage of the situation and charge excessive prices.

Something really needs to be done about non-market housing. That is not to say that there is no place at all for the private sector. I think it is also important to respect the initiative of entrepreneurs who want to build housing. However, the government needs to provide a framework and invest to help those who cannot afford housing in the current market.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me begin by saying that I will be sharing my time with the member for Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie.

[English]

It is indeed an honour and privilege to represent the amazing people of the riding of Waterloo and to speak to a bill that is really important and that many constituents have been speaking about. I appreciate the opportunity to take part in today's second reading debate on Bill C-4, the making life more affordable for Canadians act.

In the government's Speech from the Throne, we outlined our bold and ambitious plan for the future, and central to that plan is bringing down costs so Canadians can keep more of their paycheques to spend where it matters most. To make that happen, we introduced the making life more affordable for Canadians act, which is before us today for consideration. The debate has been fruitful; it has been good.

This legislation, upon receiving royal assent, would legislate the delivery of our government's middle-class tax cut, providing tax relief for nearly 22 million Canadians and saving families up to \$840 a year in 2026. It would also provide for the elimination of the GST for first-time homebuyers on new homes valued up to \$1 million, saving them up to \$50,000. It would do so while also lowering the GST for first-time homebuyers on new homes valued between \$1 million and \$1.5 million. Last but not least, it would legislate the removal of the consumer carbon price from law following its cancellation, effective April 1, 2025. However, this does not remove our responsibility to take the environment seriously.

I want to take a moment to consider each of these aspects of the bill.

To begin, the bill would implement our government's middle-class tax cut. This means that with the support of this House and the adoption of this legislation, the lowest marginal personal income tax rate would be reduced from 15% to 14%, effective July 1. As we have made clear, this tax cut would make hard-working Canadians keep more of their paycheques to spend where it matters most. This means more for groceries, more for kids, more for housing-related costs, more for what matters most.

As we have also made clear, most of the benefits of this tax cut would go to hard-working Canadians who need it most. That is be-

cause the majority of relief would go to Canadians with incomes in the lowest two tax brackets, which is to say those with taxable incomes under \$114,750 in 2025. Within that group of hard-working Canadians, nearly half of the tax savings would go to those in the lowest tax bracket, those who earn \$57,375 or less in 2025. This means the tax savings for a middle-class tax cut would go where they will make the greatest difference. However, these tax savings would not just go out to those who need them the most. They would also go out when they are needed most, which is almost right away, starting on Canada Day. That is less than a month away.

We can deliver these tax savings to Canadians expeditiously, because with the announcement of our middle-class tax cut, the Canada Revenue Agency has updated its source deduction tables for the July to December 2025 period so that employers and pay administrators are able to reduce tax withholdings as of July 1. This means that individuals with employment income and other income subject to source deductions could begin to have tax withheld at the lower 14% tax rate as soon as Canada Day.

Just to start with, this middle-class tax cut is expected to provide \$2.6 billion in tax relief to Canadians over the next six months and \$5.4 billion in 2026, which would be the first full year when the tax rate is at 14%. Going forward, the middle-class tax cut is expected to deliver over \$27 billion in tax savings to Canadians over five years, starting in 2025-26. That is the first element in Bill C-4 and the first set of reasons it merits our support.

● (1240)

The next reason for lending our support to this legislation is that it would eliminate the GST for first-time homebuyers on purchases of new homes valued at up to \$1 million. The first-time homebuyers GST rebate would mean upfront savings of up to \$50,000 for Canadians on the purchase of their new home. The rebate would also mean that first-time homebuyers would pay less GST on new homes valued between \$1 million and \$1.5 million. In short, the rebate would be phased out in a linear manner for new homes valued between \$1 million and \$1.5 million. Just to explain, under this linear phase-out, a new home valued at \$1.25 million would be eligible for a rebate at 50% of the maximum first-time homebuyers GST rebate of \$50,000, which would still mean savings of up to \$25,000.

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By supporting Bill C-4, we would be providing a significant increase to the already substantial federal tax support available to first-time homebuyers through programs such as the first home savings account, the RRSP homebuyers' plan and the first-time homebuyers' tax credit. By doing so, we would be helping more young people and more families achieve their dream of home ownership.

We all know that a home is more than just a roof over our head. It is a place to build our life, a family and equity toward priorities such as retirement. As such, it is the largest and most important purchase people make. We often talk about it. Saving first-time homebuyers tens of thousands of dollars on that investment is the second good reason the bill merits our support.

The third reason is that it would completely remove the consumer carbon price from Canadian law. As hon. members are aware, one of the first things the Prime Minister did upon assuming his responsibilities was to cease the application of the federal consumer fuel charge, effective April 1 of this year. While this was effectively accomplished through government regulations, Bill C-4 would take a further step by completely removing the consumer carbon price from Canadian law.

At the same time, it is important to bear in mind that a price on pollution for large emitters will continue to be a pillar of Canada's plan to build a strong economy and a greener future. Canada's emission reduction plan contains a comprehensive suite of mitigation measures, strategies and investments, and that includes a price on pollution for large industrial emitters.

With the elimination of the consumer fuel charge, we were able to refocus the federal carbon pollution pricing standards on ensuring that carbon pricing systems are in place across Canada on a broad range of greenhouse gas emissions from industry. In doing so, we will ensure a system that is fair and effective.

We must take the environment seriously. Just yesterday, as I was leaving the house, I went outside, and it was an interesting experience. It turns out that the smoke from the Manitoba fires, and fires in other places, is actually right here in Ottawa. As I spoke to constituents and friends in Toronto, as I see what is happening around the world, that smoke is not only travelling across Canada but has also made its way to Europe.

That tells us that the environment is something that we have to take seriously. I want people in Manitoba and all communities having challenging times with natural causes to know that we in Waterloo are thinking about them. To see them having to be removed from their communities and their homes is something that is very difficult and something that this government will continue to take seriously.

I have shared three very good reasons for us to support the timely passage of Bill C-4. It echoes the ways and means motion, which received unanimous support in the House. These are measures that would benefit constituents in the riding of Waterloo and Canadians from coast to coast to coast. I hope to see a timely passage. I hope to see the full support of all members, because this is the House of Commons, and we have to represent our constituents first and foremost.

• (1245)

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a very simple question. It is not a partisan question. It is actually an issue that is affecting a lot of constituents. When the ways and means motion was introduced, it was effective immediately that day. If one had purchased, or had agreed to purchase, a newly built house the day before, even if they were not to be taking possession for a year or two from then, and paying the GST then, they would be cut off. They would still be forced to pay the GST, even though we missed it by one day and even though we would not be purchasing or even building the house for a year or so.

I was just wondering if the member opposite would work with her government to bring in some measures to help those people who had the misfortune of, perhaps, signing the deal one day before the Liberals actually tabled the motion, therefore being forced to pay the GST.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, the constituents within the riding of Waterloo have a diversity of views and a diversity of perspectives. This is a matter that has been brought to my attention, because we also have people purchasing their first homes in our community. I would assume that every member of Parliament who is engaging with constituents is hearing this. I actually welcome the opportunity to work with all members, including the government, to ensure that we are making life more affordable for Canadians.

My challenge with it, to be honest, and I have shared this with constituents, is that whenever we have a date, there is always going to be the people from the day before. What is always challenging is how we get it done. What I am hearing from the member is that we need to do things faster. The immediate passage of this would allow more people to benefit, and I hope to receive his support, see the question be called and for Canadians to actually benefit. Let us work on the ones from the day before.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague whom I respect. I had the pleasure of sitting with her on the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, and I know that she is a disciplined and principled woman. I would like to know her opinion on the following question.

On April 1, in the middle of the election, the Prime Minister abolished the carbon tax, so the tax is no more. If it had stayed, residents of the provinces, with the exception of British Columbia and Quebec, would have been entitled to the carbon tax rebate. Since this tax has not been collected, they are not then entitled to the refund. However, they got a cheque even though the tax was abolished.

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Does the member consider that to be a normal, fair and equitable way of operating? The people of British Columbia and Quebec did not receive a dime. Worse still, they contributed, through income and sales tax paid to Ottawa, to bankrolling that refund, an election gift to residents of the other provinces.

• (1250)

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, yes, the member and I have worked together a lot. She is a force. I think that the Bloc Québécois is a party that is always looking for solutions. The main difference is that we have to take into account 10 provinces and three territories in one country, Canada. That is the only way in which our perspectives are different.

I think that her question is reasonable. I am an MP from Ontario. I know what was done at the federal and provincial levels. I do not have any details on what was done in British Columbia and Quebec, but I believe that we need to collaborate on the environment. We must continue to do this work.

[English]

The issue that the member is speaking about, I think, is one that is from the past, and we have so much work to do, that we really need to look to the future to do better work.

Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate that the first carbon tax is being taken off. It is a retail carbon tax, which, yes, is also a consumer carbon tax. The truth of the matter is that the industrial carbon tax is also a consumer carbon tax, so I am wondering if the government has taken that into account as it is looking at these new homes that are to be built and looking at what the additional cost would be on each of those homes for the wood, the concrete and all of the utilities involved in building that home.

Will that offset what the Canadians would have had from the GST rebate because of the increased cost through that industrial carbon tax?

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, I think when we actually look at this legislation and what it will do to benefit Canadians, we really need to recognize the importance of having this legislation advance. The member will have opportunities throughout the whole process, and we are really trying to parse out, but things are getting more expensive. What can we do? We can try to make life more affordable and be there for Canadians. That is what the government is doing.

[Translation]

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba (Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have been meeting with my constituents on the ground for months now. Whether it was at our markets, in our schools or in our neighbourhoods, they had a lot to share with me. I remember Manon in particular, a mother who told me that she sometimes has to choose between paying her rent or stocking her fridge.

Today, I am pleased and proud to rise in this honourable chamber to applaud the introduction of this affordability bill. It is good news for our country, good news for our families and good news for Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie. This bill is a testament to our deep commitment to Canadians. Our commitment is to ensure that peo-

ple can live, not merely survive, and that they can feed and house themselves with dignity.

Our government has heard the call and has acted accordingly. Through our actions, we are delivering concrete solutions that will bring tangible results to the citizens of Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie. Cutting middle-class taxes, eliminating the GST on new, first-time home purchases valued at less than \$1 million and scrapping the consumer carbon tax will give families some breathing room. When people can breathe easier, they invest in their community. They buy local products and support our businesses, farmers and entrepreneurs. That is good for people, good for businesses and good for our economy.

This bill is also a step toward greater equality. It shows that no one should have to choose between the two basic needs of food and heat. It demonstrates our deep commitment to leaving no one behind and our belief that progress is only meaningful when it is shared.

In conclusion, this bill is a victory for families. It is the result of serious work carried out with a sincere desire to improve the lives of our constituents. It restores purchasing power to people, offers hope to those who had doubts, and paves the way to a more stable, fair and livable future. Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie deserves this stability. I will remain committed here and on the ground so that every measure is implemented in our daily lives, so that the abstract becomes concrete. I would like to thank everyone who worked to move this bill forward. I thank Canadians for their trust and perseverance.

• (1255)

[English]

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to welcome the hon. member to this place. I know he is a new member and that this is going to be the adventure of a lifetime for him, as it has been for me.

Does the hon. member know why, when the government is cancelling the consumer carbon tax for a whole host of reasons, which Conservatives have laid out over the years, it is not removing the industrial carbon tax?

[Translation]

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba: Madam Speaker, today, my colleague opposite has a golden opportunity to vote for a bill that will lower the cost of living for Canadians.

Will he and his party support us today?

[English]

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on his election and on his speech.

Right now we know that a big chunk of our country is on fire. We are over 2,000 kilometres away from the fires that are happening in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta, and here in Ottawa, the health index says the air quality is at nine. There is nothing in the budget to fund greener homes, to re-establish that program. There is nothing for heat pumps, nothing to create energy efficiency and lower costs and nothing that says the Liberal government understands there is a climate emergency taking place.

Is my colleague going to urge ministers and the Prime Minister to take real climate action?

We have been hearing from young people across the country who are asking for urgency. I have never seen anything like this in my life, where if a person walks outside, they will see smoky skies throughout the summer. It is occurring every year. When is the Liberal government going to take it seriously?

[Translation]

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba: Madam Speaker, today is an important day. We are going to introduce a bill that is very important for our country, for families.

Today, I hope that my colleague will be able to vote with us to support families and make life affordable.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie said that he met a woman named Manon who was having trouble making ends meet. I thought that was interesting.

We have a government that decided to request new funding for new spending. However, it does not have a budget. I am pretty sure that if Manon wants to be able to pay her rent and buy groceries, she has no choice but to make a budget, or nothing will add up.

In my colleague's view, what would Manon think of a government that spends money without having a plan or a budget?

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba: Madam Speaker, when I talked about lowering the tax rate and eliminating the GST during the election campaign, as I did with the woman my colleague mentioned, I heard the same comments everywhere I went.

Today, the Bloc Québécois and my colleague opposite have a golden opportunity to join us in supporting this bill.

I hope they will do so today.

• (1300)

[English]

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, from one new member to another, I would like to welcome my colleague to the chamber.

I am sure that, like any good first candidate, he knocked on many doors in his riding. I want to ask him what he was hearing from young people about housing in his riding and how they are trying to make that work.

[Translation]

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba: Madam Speaker, young people actually talked to me about the taxes that first-time homebuyers have

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to pay. During the election campaign, I told them we were going to get rid of the GST. I also talked to them about the practical things we are doing today.

Today, I hope the member will vote with us to support our bill.

[English]

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Langley Township—Fraser Heights.

I rise to speak to Bill C-4, the Liberals' so-called making life more affordable for Canadians act. After 10 years of the Liberals, Canadians are facing an unprecedented cost of living crisis. In the 10 years that the Liberals have been in power, housing costs have doubled, rent has doubled, mortgage costs have more than doubled and food prices have skyrocketed. Indeed, the recently released "Canada Food Price Report 2025" reveals that the average Canadian family will pay \$800 more in groceries this year compared to last year; this is as a record two million Canadians per month are lined up at the food bank and more than half of Canadians are \$200 or less away from insolvency.

In the face of this cost of living crisis, the Liberals act as though they were mere bystanders, but the fact of the matter is that a big part of the reason we are facing this cost of living crisis is the failed and costly policies of the Liberals over the past 10 years.

Let us look at the record. The government has presided over a firehose of reckless spending and money printing that has fuelled inflation. It is no accident that quite recently, inflation hit a 40-year high. It is a government that pummelled everyday Canadians with a punitive carbon tax that increased the cost of everything, including essentials such as food, fuel and home heating. It is a government that year after year increased payroll taxes and other taxes, and imposed costly new regulations. It is also a government that has managed to spend tens of billions of dollars building bureaucracy instead of the homes that Canadians need, completely failing to address the supply shortage within the housing market.

In the face of that disastrous record, here we are debating what the Liberals are selling as the solution to the cost of living crisis they bear so much responsibility for creating. The best that can be said of the bill is that it is an admission of failure on the part of the Liberals, combined with a series of half measures.

Take the carbon tax as an admission of failure. The bill would repeal the consumer carbon tax. If there is one policy that has been the legacy of the government over the past 10 years, it has arguably been the carbon tax. The Liberals said that the carbon tax was absolutely essential and that it was the best policy tool available to combat climate change, which they purport to be the biggest crisis of our lifetime.

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It is not only that, however; the Liberals also said that Canadians were actually better off paying the carbon tax. Why is that? It is because the Liberals claimed that Canadians received more money back in the way of rebates than they paid in the carbon tax. If that were true, then why would the Liberals be repealing that very carbon tax as part of their so-called making life more affordable for Canadians act?

The Liberals cannot have it both ways. Either Canadians were better off, or they were worse off, because of the carbon tax. This represents an admission of guilt on the part of the Liberals that for years they were misleading Canadians about the carbon tax and that Conservatives were right all along that the carbon tax was fuelling inflation and increasing the cost of everything, contributing to the cost of living crisis.

● (1305)

I have to say, with respect to the Prime Minister, that he likes to portray himself as someone who is very different from Justin Trudeau, but the Prime Minister was one of the architects of the carbon tax as an adviser to Justin Trudeau. The Prime Minister said that it was absolutely the right policy, and not only that but also that it represented a model for the world to follow. Now he has done a complete 180. This is an admission by the Prime Minister that he got it wrong all along and that the central, key policy of the past 10 years of the Liberals was a complete failure.

While it is an admission of failure by the Liberals, we say it is also half measures to repeal the consumer carbon tax. It is our position that the Liberals should repeal the industrial carbon tax. The Prime Minister's policy is to maintain that punitive tax and to continue to increase that tax year after year until 2030. It is a tax that undermines Canada's competitiveness. It is a tax that disadvantages key sectors of the economy at a time when sectors of the economy are grappling with 25% and 50% U.S. tariffs, tariffs that the U.S. ambassador said today are likely to remain in place for the foreseeable future.

We have a Prime Minister who wraps himself in the Canadian flag, claiming to be a great champion of the Canadian economy and Canadian workers, and here he is hitting key sectors over the head with a carbon tax hike on top of U.S. tariffs. The Prime Minister's policy, combined with U.S. tariffs, threatens to drive entire sectors, such as steel, aluminum and other heavy industrial sectors, out of Canada, and that will cost Canadian jobs. This is why Conservatives are calling on the Liberals to axe the tax on everything, for everyone, for good, including the industrial carbon tax.

Speaking of half measures, there is also the Liberals' so-called middle class tax cut. It is literally half measures insofar as it is half of the tax cut that the Liberals promised in the recent election campaign. We are two weeks into the current Parliament, and the Liberals are already breaking key election commitments.

So small, by the way, is the so-called middle-class tax cut that the savings that Canadians would realize would barely be enough to pay for a cup of coffee each week. It is hardly a middle-class tax cut; it is really nothing more than a gimmick. I would note that less than a cup of coffee a week is really next to nothing in the face of the average Canadian family's now paying \$10,000 more in taxes than when the Liberals came to office.

There are some half measures in the bill that we can support, but that is the best that can be said of the bill, which is half measures, an admission of failure and an admission of guilt for the past 10 years of the Liberals' carbon tax policy.

● (1310)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):

Madam Speaker, I am a little disappointed in the member, in the sense that I would have expected him to have been a little bolder in terms of whether or not he actually supports the legislation.

If the member reflects on the last federal election, it was virtually unanimous to the extent that everyone would concur that affordability was an issue. It was an election promise made by the Prime Minister to deliver a tax break to the people of Canada. Twenty-two million people are going to benefit from the tax break, yet for some reason, the Conservatives just do not want to say whether or not they will support the legislation. We need to get the legislation passed so Canadians in every region of the country, all 22 million plus, would benefit from its being implemented before July 1.

Does the Conservative Party support the initiative to get the legislation passed before the end of June?

Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, what Conservatives support is real tax relief for Canadians, which would be to abolish, axe completely, the entire carbon tax. That would mean a real middle-class tax cut, not a tax cut that results in savings that work out to roughly a coffee per week, and it would include a real cut in terms of GST on new homes, not the watered-down version copied and pasted from our Conservative platform.

Yes, we support relief for Canadians. They need it now, but this bill falls short.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's usual well-researched speech.

The platform that the Liberals announced during the election shows that the tax cut would cost the government about \$5 billion a year in lost revenue, yet at the same time they have massively increased, by a larger amount, the amount of money they are going to give out to their friends at McKinsey, GC Strategies and other high-priced Liberal-connected consulting firms.

I wonder if my colleague could tell us what he thinks of the Liberal priority of giving taxpayer money to the McKinseys of the world and not to the average Canadian family.

Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, it demonstrates that the Prime Minister represents a continuation of the same, with the current government, because that has been one of the defining features of the Liberals: to pad the pockets of their friends and of Liberal insiders. We saw that with McKinsey. We saw it with the \$400-million green slush fund that seized Parliament last fall, and we see the same with this budget.

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I am going to ask the member a similar question to the one I asked earlier with respect to Bill C-4. It seeks to amend portions of the Elections Act, which has nothing to do with affordability. I wonder what the member's thoughts are on that.

Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, I take the hon. member's point that it would have been more appropriate to have provided those amendments in the form of a separate piece of legislation.

With regard to the substance of part 4, the amendments to the Canada Elections Act, I do support those amendments: to have a uniform system in place with respect to privacy laws falling exclusively under federal jurisdiction, as they pertain to federal political parties.

• (1315)

Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, we have heard that the Liberals are going to be removing the carbon tax, called a consumer tax. However, I would like my colleague to speak to the fact that it is actually a retail carbon tax, which they are replacing with an industrial carbon tax, which would ultimately impact the consumer. Does my colleague think that it will impact the cost of homes? They are taking the GST off but will probably increase the overall cost.

Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, the bottom line is that the Prime Minister's commitment to increase the industrial carbon tax not only would undermine Canada's competitiveness, but the costs borne would be passed on to consumers. Canadians would in fact be paying more, not less, as a result of the Prime Minister's industrial carbon tax hike.

Tako Van Popta (Langley Township—Fraser Heights, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to the making life more affordable for Canadians act. This act was made necessary by a decade of economic mismanagement by the Liberal government.

Why are things unaffordable for Canadians? Well, inflation is up. Let us take a look at the cost of groceries, which is at 3.8% inflation year over year, according to Stats Canada's April figures, which is twice the aggregate inflation for the same period for the whole economy per the consumer price index. As to the cost of housing, in the 10 years of the Liberal government, so far housing costs have doubled for both renters and buyers. That is way above the consumer price index. With interest rates going up, it is becoming even more difficult.

What is not up is wages. Wages have not been keeping up with inflation. Canadians have been working harder than ever but are not getting ahead. As a matter of fact, we are in a de facto recession if we measure GDP on a per capita basis. Yes, our GDP continues to grow, very slowly, very gradually, but below the rate of immigration.

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More people are working, but not as productively as they should be. That is not their fault. The Liberal government has been mismanaging the economy for all these years, focusing more on distributing wealth rather than on creating new wealth. This has led to a decade of deficit spending, money printing, inflation, high interest rates and anemic economic growth. That is the challenge.

This is not just Conservatives talking. I want to quote the former Liberal minister of finance's 2022 budget, which, incidentally, was called "A Plan to Grow Our Economy and Make Life More Affordable". Here we are, three years later, with the same phraseology, but nothing has happened; nothing has improved. This is what she had to say in her 2022 budget:

But we are falling behind when it comes to economic productivity. Productivity matters because it is what guarantees the dream of every parent—that our children will be more prosperous than we are.

This is a well-known Canadian problem—and an insidious one. It is time for Canada to tackle it.

It is not just the Liberal minister of finance who was saying that. Just as recently as a year ago, Carolyn Rogers of the Bank of Canada had this to say about productivity:

[It] is a way to inoculate the economy against inflation. An economy with low productivity can grow only so quickly before inflation sets in. But an economy with strong productivity can have faster growth, more jobs and higher wages with less risk of inflation. That's why I want to talk about Canada's long-standing, poor record on productivity and show you just how big the problem is. You've seen those signs that say, "In emergency, break glass." Well, it's time to break the glass.

This is an emergency. It was an emergency then. It continues to be an emergency today.

The OECD, in a report that came out just last month, had this to say about Canada's economy:

The level of Canada's labour productivity lags its peers and the current trade tensions with the United States is likely to compound it. Revamping the country's productivity growth requires a combination of policy actions. Canada's natural disadvantage in having dispersed and relatively small markets has to be countered by making sure regulatory barriers are as low as possible, including those restricting domestic trade....

I agree with all of that. Getting rid of regulatory barriers is what we have been saying all along for the last two or three years on the Conservative side. We have said to get government gatekeepers out of the way; let free enterprise unleash it. Unfortunately, this draft bill does not talk about anything like that. It does not talk about reducing red tape. It does not talk about improving productivity. There are actions the government could take that would lead to permanent and sustainable affordability. That is what it is after, but it is not achieving that.

The bill does talk about lowering taxes and we do not disagree with that. Conservatives generally support lower taxes, less government, more free market initiatives and more competition, because free market competition makes us more profitable, makes us stronger, makes us more resilient and makes us more productive. That allows for higher wages for hard-working Canadians so they can afford to live.

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● (1320)

However, I want to look at this tax break in perspective. I did not do the math myself, but it has been said that it is going to result in roughly \$800 in savings for the average Canadian family. If I take the average Canadian family in my riding of Langley Township—Fraser Heights, which might have a mortgage on their house of half a million dollars, and that is completely conceivable with starter homes being around \$1 million, we can say that they have to renew their mortgage. Interest rates are up 2% since the last time they renewed or secured their interest rate. That works out to about \$830 every month. Would this family welcome a tax break of \$800? Yes, of course it would. It would help them for one month. The trouble is, there are 11 more months in the year, so the help really does not go very far at all. It is a half measure.

I am here to say that there is a better way for the government to do this to really make life more affordable, and that is to grow the economy and create a sustainable environment where wages can go up without creating inflation. This is what the economists have been telling us and what the former finance minister and the Bank of Canada recognize. The government does not seem to get that idea.

The best thing for the federal government to do to improve affordability for Canadians is to create an environment that encourages more private investment in innovation. However, the 10-year record of Liberal governments show quite the opposite. Here is what the recent OECD report says about Canada's investment environment: non-residential investment is dead last in the OECD; intellectual property investment is second to last; machinery and equipment, or in other words, improving our factories to be more innovative, efficient and productive, is dead last; real estate, on the other hand, is near the top. This is the Canadian story: Do not invest in innovative factories, new inventions and intellectual property; invest in real estate.

I do not blame real estate investors for doing that. Investment dollars are going to go where there is a good return on investment with a minimal risk. We have seen governments, both provincial and federal, tackling the perceived real estate market by sometimes making it more difficult and less attractive to invest in real estate, "Let us increase capital gains taxes." Other times, we see the government doing exactly the opposite, as we see it doing here today, making it easier to invest in housing, "Let us give homeowners a GST break."

The Conservatives do not disagree with that. We ran on axing the tax, including income tax, carbon tax and GST, on new homes, but we are not impressed with the half measures we see in this bill. We will be looking for other initiatives from the government to take big, bold steps to take serious action to improve Canada's economy and affordability for Canadians. Is this the government that is going to do it? The Liberals keep saying, "Well, it is a new government." I look at the benches on the opposite side and see many of the old faces. We are certainly hearing the old rhetoric. We are hearing old ideas being recycled, and I am not confident that this is the party or the government that is going to show us a big turnaround in Canada's economy.

● (1325)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a new Prime Minister, and it is, indeed, a new government. We have seen a number of initiatives that have been taken that make it very clear that we have our Conservative friends across the way feeling a little uncomfortable. One would think there would be some natural things that they would be voting in favour of. I can recall the last time we gave a substantial tax break to Canadians. A number of years ago, Conservatives voted against it. Now, we have another piece of legislation, Bill C-4, which gives Canadians a significant tax break.

Will the member commit that he will vote in favour of this legislation and possibly go further to even suggest that the Conservatives might vote in favour of the legislation?

Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, there the member for Winnipeg North goes again saying the Liberal government is a whole new government. No, it is not. It has the same old ideas, just recycled and repackaged, and somehow it is expecting Canadians to believe that this time, finally, it has the solutions.

If we talk about housing, housing prices have doubled in the 10 years of the Liberals' regime. What is so different today that Canadians can have confidence that it is going to be different? We are not impressed with the half measures of the bill.

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am in my correct seat today, so thank you for recognizing me.

I want to thank the hon. member for his great speech. I know he has had a long career in the law profession, and I think land development was the area.

Can the member comment a bit about what the trend lines are around new home building in his neck of the woods?

Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, new housing construction starts in my area, the Lower Mainland, are down. There might be a bit of a blip up right now. I am not quite sure exactly what the latest trends are.

A combination of bad legislation from both the federal government and the provincial NDP government has not been helping. We just wish the government would stay out of the way and encourage private enterprise to take care of the housing problem. I think it would happen in a balanced economy.

[Translation]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague is surely among the people who voted to ask the government to present a budget before the summer, because that is one of the things both the Bloc Québécois and the Conservative Party were calling for.

I know that the member has been in office for quite a few years. Does he think that when the House votes in favour of something, it has any value? Is that something the government should take into account, or does it not matter?

[English]

Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, this is the way Canadian democracy works. We get voted into this House of Commons. Canadians have once again said they want a minority government, but the Liberals are acting as though they have a majority.

The reality is that the Liberals need to work with us. They need to work with the opposition in order to get things done. They expect co-operation from us. We expect co-operation from them. What is the big deal in presenting a budget, as every government does every year? Why is the government not doing it?

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Madam Speaker, we saw half a trillion dollars of new spending without a budget. The Prime Minister speaks about new fiscal discipline, except that over the next four years, the plan is to borrow more and run even bigger deficits than Justin Trudeau's government planned to do. It seems to me that we have a continuation of the same costly policies of spending and borrowing that so greatly contributed to the cost of living crisis that Canadians now face.

Would the member agree?

• (1330)

Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, that is a very good summary from my colleague from St. Albert—Sturgeon River as to what the problem is with Canada's economy after 10 years of Liberal governance. It is spend, spend, spend. We were somewhat optimistic that the new Prime Minister, with a degree in economics, might understand the economy better than the previous—

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

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak to, yet again, a very important piece of legislation, which should come as no surprise to anyone sitting in the House. It was not that long ago that every member in this House was out knocking on doors and talking with Canadians from coast to coast to coast. There were a series of issues that came up. I can report, as I suspect all members of Parliament can, or at the very least I can assure the House that the members of the Liberal caucus can, that people were genuinely concerned about President Trump, the tariffs and the threat with respect to trade impacts, jobs and the economy. People were concerned about the issue of affordability. They were concerned about some of the issues relating to crime and having a secure Canadian border. These are the types of issues that not long ago were being debated at the doors with Canadians.

We have a new Prime Minister, who was just elected earlier this year as the leader of the Liberal Party. After he was elected as a leader, virtually his first action was to say that the carbon tax would

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be gone. That was very well received. Then we went into an election and heard the types of concerns I just highlighted.

I represent the residents of Winnipeg North, and I am so grateful that they chose once again to return me to the House. I want to express, in a very clear way, that their expectation, which I believe is very similar to that of Canadians throughout the country, is that there will be a high sense of co-operation here in the House of Commons with respect to what is happening in Canada today. I have now, on several occasions, challenged members of the Conservative Party in particular to recognize the last election and the issues that were being discussed at the doors, as the Liberals have been doing time and again, and to reflect on the types of legislation being introduced.

In fairness, I was very pleased to see that every member of the House of Commons voted in favour of the ways and means motion yesterday. It is a significant amount of money. Everyone inside this House recognized that and voted in favour of it.

Hon. Mark Gerretsen: A smart move.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, that is a smart move, absolutely. It was the right thing to do, but there is a lot more to it.

I want members to think about those other issues we were hearing at the doors not that long ago. If they look at the legislation, the best bill, although I will quickly refer to three, is actually Bill C-4. What is in Bill C-4? It is a direct tax break, reducing it from 15% to 14% for every Canadian worker who is making less than \$57,000 a year. That means 22 million Canadians are going to benefit from this aspect of the legislation. It is a significant amount of money. When we think of an average family of two, come 2026, we are talking well over \$800. That is a lot of money.

One would think that the members opposite, based on the election, based on what they were saying to the voters and on what the voters had indicated to every political entity inside this House on the issue of affordability, would want to see a leader who would take some action. This Prime Minister and this Liberal caucus recognize that. That is the reason why we have this bill in front of us today, because we believe we need to bring in this tax break for the 22 million Canadians who would benefit from it.

• (1335)

It is a simple question, which I have asked members opposite even today, and they waffle. It is as if Pierre Poilievre has not given them their instructions as to what it is they are going to be doing on it. Many of my colleagues think it would be a no-brainer that they would want to support the initiative.

An hon. member: One would think he would have the time to do it.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: That might have been recorded as a heckle. I will not repeat it, but yes.

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Madam Speaker, it goes further than that. The legislation would put into law getting rid of the carbon tax. Do members know how many times I stood in the chamber and heard the Conservative Party, in particular, say, "Axe the tax" and "Get rid of the carbon tax"? They wanted to get rid of the carbon tax. In fact, I can recall talking to them about how they actually flip-flopped when they had a change in leadership, changing to a different position and saying that they wanted to axe the tax.

Well, guess what? We had a leadership vote in January, and with that new leader there was a change in the policy. One would think that the Conservatives would support that, but again, they go off on some other line. It is a substantial aspect of the legislation, and yet, again, there is no indication of what they are going to do. I ask the Conservatives, but they just do not say what they are going to do on the legislation. If they believed in what they were talking about for the last little while, one would think that at least they would be saying, "Yes, that is a good thing and we are going to be supporting the legislation."

Those are two aspects of the legislation that the Conservatives are kind of holding back on, and there is a third one. Again, it is a significant tax break. Imagine a first-time homebuyer wanting to purchase a house. We would be providing a financial incentive in the form of a tax break for first-time homebuyers for a property costing up to \$1 million. Where do members think the Conservatives are falling on that issue? It is hard to tell.

Those are the big three things within the legislation. One would think the Conservatives would be strong enough to say, "Yes, Bill C-4 is an important piece of legislation, and we are going to vote in favour of it." I do not understand why they cannot say that. Of the three things, what aspect do they actually oppose? I cannot figure it out. Maybe when Conservatives get the opportunity to ask me a question, they could start off by saying, "We actually support the legislation", and then go on with the question, or "We do not support the legislation, and here is why", and then go ahead and ask the question. They should provide some clarity to Canadians.

Remember that it is not like we have a great deal of time. The tax break would take effect July 1. If we do not pass the legislation by July 1, we are compromising the tax benefits of Canadians.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member said to call for an election. Well, we had one just four or five weeks ago. I do not know whether Canadians want to see another election, but we will continue, moving forward, being a little more optimistic in that the last election made a very strong statement in itself. Canadians do have an expectation that Conservatives, New Democrats and Bloc members will work along with the government and support some critical initiatives.

There is a deadline with the piece of legislation. We need to get the legislation passed.

• (1340)

I would hope that my Conservative colleagues and friends across the way will give Canadians what they were asking for in the last election. The Prime Minister made the commitment to give them

that tax break, along with 169 other Liberal members of Parliament. I believe that we can do that. There is no excuse for us not to do that.

This is a new Prime Minister and a new government. We can take a look at the legislation, where we highlight the benefits of Bill C-4. We can look at that legislative agenda. I want members to reflect on those three priority issues that I was able to comment on at the very beginning of the speech. We can think in terms of the one Canadian economy act, Bill C-5, which was just introduced today.

I reflect on what Canadians were telling us during the election. They are nervous. I would think everyone inside this chamber would recognize that Canadians would be better off if we were able to tackle those internal trade barriers. That could make a huge difference in terms of future taxation policy, as an example.

I am talking about billions of dollars. In fact, if we were to take down every possible barrier, it is estimated that it could be up to \$200 billion. Imagine the economic and taxation benefits, in terms of potential future tax breaks. One never knows. We have to build that one economy.

Again, that is a commitment the Prime Minister made to Canadians. It is an election-mandated commitment. Today, we receive another piece of legislation to deal with that commitment, just like Bill C-4, where we made that commitment. Think about it.

Just earlier this week, the Prime Minister was in discussions, meeting in Saskatchewan with all the different first ministers. Four or five days later, here we are, on the floor of the House of Commons, being provided the opportunity to once again take on an issue of great substance and ultimately bring Canada together in a stronger and healthier way.

We look towards the opposition members of all political stripes. We had political parties of all stripes in Saskatchewan. We have Canadians of all stripes, everyone we can possibly imagine, virtually coming together and wanting to see a higher sense of co-operation on these election platform issues. That is one of the reasons the Prime Minister today is the Prime Minister today: understanding and being able to explain to Canadians the types of actions that are necessary to manage the economy and to bring us through, over the next two, three or four years, whenever the next election might be.

I could talk about Bill C-2. Again, when thinking in terms of potential budget expenditures, securing our borders, is a priority piece of legislation. It is a priority because Canadians mandated it from the last election in a very clear fashion. It is not as though the election was a year ago. We are talking about six weeks or five weeks ago. April 28 was election day, where they raised the issues of one Canada, tax breaks and concern related to our borders, dealing with things like fentanyl and automobile theft. Again, we have legislation that is there to deal with that.

Members opposite talk about safety in communities. We are talking about 1,000 new RCMP officers. We are talking about 1,000 new Canada border control agents.

We can bundle them together, take a look at Bill C-2, Bill C-4 and Bill C-5. All three of those bills come out of the election we just had.

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● (1345)

Members opposite want to talk about if we believe it is out of our platform, then there should be no reason we do not support it. One would think. The point is that we are not here to serve a political party per se. We are here to serve our constituents and, collectively, all Canadians. This is something Canadians made very clear, crystal clear. They want the legislation to get through. We can do that.

It is amazing what one can do with unanimous consent when it comes to legislation. We have seen it in the past, and there is no reason we cannot see it this time around. Trust me, Madam Speaker, there will be a lot more legislation coming, and it will be thoroughly debated, no doubt. It will go through the committee process and so forth.

The three big items this week that have been introduced have been mandated by Canadians in a very real and tangible way. Opposition members have their choice. We live in a parliamentary system, and if they feel so inclined, they could prevent legislation from ultimately passing.

However, I can assure members opposite that I like to think I am a very opinionated person, and I will be sharing my thoughts and reflections on opposition parties and what they do over the next couple of weeks with the constituents I represent. I suspect the same will be duplicated throughout the country, because Canadians are watching. There is an expectation there.

It is not like we have a legislative agenda of 25 bills, not yet anyway. We have the priority legislation that is coming directly out of the election in the anticipation that, by putting it together, we would get a high sense of co-operation coming from all members of the House and ultimately be able to see it pass.

My ask of all members today is to take a look at it almost as a package deal where Canadians are very, very supportive. Nothing prevents members opposite from approaching the appropriate ministers if they have specific concerns. For example, yesterday, in talking about the border bill, Bill C-2, there was a lot of misinformation on the Conservatives' benches in regard to the mail system and how we are going to make Canadians safer by making changes in the legislation to enable law enforcement officers to get a warrant, in essence, to go through a letter, something they could never do before.

There is a lot to go through; I recognize that. However, I challenge members to raise concerns. Let us get legislation in a position where we could ultimately see it passed. This is what I am hoping to see and what I am going to continue to advocate for.

I did want to comment on housing, because housing is a very big issue and it is incorporated inside the legislation we are talking about today. I want to emphasize the program "build Canada homes". I do believe the Prime Minister is very much focused on results. We will see tangible results, but we have to be prepared to see things ultimately passing through the House.

We will continue to work with different levels of government. Housing is a responsibility of the three different levels of government, not to mention the many different stakeholders that are out there. Ottawa will be there to support housing here in Canada.

● (1350)

Clifford Small (Central Newfoundland, CPC): Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary to the House leader just talked about how Canadians are tuned in. If they are tuned in, they are watching a rerun of a 10-year-old show, the same show from the same guy, who is bawling and blaring over there, never giving his colleagues a chance to speak.

The member spoke about the election. He was wondering what we heard at the doors. I will tell members what I heard. When I knocked on doors, people said they would not be voting Liberal. I wonder why that would be. Why were they telling me they would not be voting Liberal?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I am not a mathematician or an actuary, but I can tell members that 8.5 million people voted Liberal and for the Prime Minister. Never before has a prime minister or a party received as many votes, which, by the way, I think was about half a million more than the Conservatives. Again, I am not a mathematician. I will leave it for my good friend to figure out which number is higher.

At the end of the day, there has been more change on this side of the House than there has been on that side of the House. To top that off, the member's leader is a career politician who was here for Stephen Harper. That is nowhere close to a change.

Hon. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always great to hear my colleague from Winnipeg speak.

We have been hearing a lot of heckling from across the way. The Conservatives are always going on about stealing their ideas, saying it is not fair. The reality is that maybe if they had a better communication plan than the three-word slogans they come in here with year after year, they would be able to translate those ideas into actual action. Then people would be able to support them and vote them into office. That just does not happen.

I wonder if the parliamentary secretary could comment on how outrageous it is that the Conservatives, on the one hand, will not agree with legislation or support it, but on the other hand, will say we are stealing all their ideas. One would think that if we were stealing their ideas, they would be the first to stand up in support of them, if this was more than just about playing politics.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it is really interesting, and I appreciate that question because the Conservatives under Pierre Poilievre's leadership really believe in slogans. I made reference to it as bumper-sticker politics. The slogan has to fit on a bumper sticker. They have impressive email campaigns. I somehow got registered for one of them. I have no idea how that happened, but that is for another day.

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At the end of the day, my colleague is right. We can have all the slogans we want, but Canadians have higher expectations. They want to see an actual plan. They want a sense of comfort in knowing it. That is why I believe when they looked at their choices for leadership, they saw a former Bank of Canada governor, a former governor of the Bank of England and an economist, and compared him to a career politician who has never really worked outside of government. I think they made a good choice.

[Translation]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have spent a lot of time listening to speeches from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons since the beginning of this Parliament, and it is just getting started. I should also point out that we heard from him a lot in the previous Parliament, as well.

What fascinates me is how he always speaks with such conviction. He truly believes what he is saying. I find that interesting, because he has spent the past four years selling us the NDP platform, with his hand on his heart and the utmost conviction. Now he is selling us the Conservative Party platform, with his hand on his heart and the utmost conviction.

Can he explain how he manages to swing from one extreme to the other so easily and with such conviction?

• (1355)

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, there was no swinging involved. I like good ideas. At the end of the day, pharmacare was a good idea; at the end of the day, dental care was a good idea. I like the idea of having a school nutritional program. Equally, I like the idea of giving a tax break to 22 million Canadians. Equally, I like the idea of giving a tax break for first-time home builders. There is no swinging involved in that. I think it is recognizing at times there is a need for change. We have accomplished that.

We have a strong Prime Minister who has a plan to bring Canada to make it the strongest of the G7 nations. I look forward to the implementation of that full plan in the coming years, because I believe that we want to be there to build a stronger, healthier Canada in every region of our great nation.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. member spoke about slogans, and I reflect on the slogans used by the Prime Minister. One of the most absurd is his slogan to “spend less and invest more”. He is supposed to be the man with the plan, but he is the man with no budget who says that the Liberals are going to spend less but invest more, which means they are going to spend even more.

We see in the Liberals' spending that they are spending even more than Justin Trudeau planned. Canadians wanted change, but they did not want change in the direction of bigger government, more regulation, more waste, more spending and higher unemployment, and today we are seeing the effects of the Prime Minister's slogans and lack of a plan: higher unemployment across the board.

If the government has a plan, why does it not present it? Why does it not present a budget? If it has a plan, why can we not see it?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I believe that the member opposite was around, at least in the hallways of Parliament, when Stephen Harper was prime minister. Harper was elected that February, and it took him months to introduce a budget, not until May. There was a new prime minister and a new government, and it took him months to prepare a budget. We have a new Prime Minister and a new government, and it is going to take time to actually come up with a budget that is going to be able to work in through the plan.

I suggest to the member that the ways and means motion, which he voted in favour of just yesterday, has a great deal of detail with regard to how and where money is being spent. We cannot have it both ways or people would call us hypocrites.

[Translation]

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba (Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I agree with the comments from my colleague across the aisle. My colleague, the member for Winnipeg North, is indeed passionate about what he says. This is my first term, and I have noticed that. I am proud of his commitment to creating a strong Canada. He is driven by that passion. He speaks with ease, love and commitment.

Can he explain how eliminating the GST for first-time homebuyers will benefit families and young people?

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the compliment and the kind words.

By providing a significant tax incentive for first-time homebuyers, we would see more homes being built. We would also see, for the first time, a significant tax break for first-time homebuyers. It would be, indeed, a win-win situation and would make a difference.

On the issue of passion, I will say that in the couple of weeks we have been here, one of the things I have noticed is the amount of quality French that is being spoken by members of Parliament from the province of Quebec when they stand to advocate. It is really quite encouraging to hear so many members from the province of Quebec advocating in a very powerful way.

• (1400)

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the House to comment on the legislation that we are being asked to vote on and to consider the best interests of our constituents and Canadians.

I know this is a bill supposedly dealing with affordability, but if we peel back the onion, it is fairly meagre. There have been a lot of comments asking, “If this was in the Conservatives platform, why won't you support it? Are you going to support it? What's your position?”

I would say, if the Liberals are going to steal our ideas, they should steal all of them and go full on with them, not just with half measures. If the Liberals are going to take good ideas, they can take the full good idea. If they take half an idea, well, they will get half the result, or I guess, they get Liberals.

My apologies, I did want to mention that I will be sharing my time with the member for King—Vaughan. I am still learning the ropes, as members can see.

There has been a lot of discussion, in the first week or so, on this bill and from the parliamentary secretary, about this new government, the new Liberals. They are saying it, but there is almost a bit of a wily smile behind it when they say it, as though they do not quite believe it themselves. That is quite understandable when we consider that pretty much everyone in the front bench has returned from the Justin Trudeau government, including the member for Winnipeg North, who we are always happy to hear and see. I am beginning to understand that he is here often and speaks passionately all the time, and I appreciate that.

Kelly McCauley: Or he is here passionately and speaks often.

Jacob Mantle: That could be the case as well.

Madam Speaker, I am not sure the new government is really fooling anyone, even its own members. It has the same ministers talking about the same thing. Instead of coming to Canadians with a plan to actually deal with the mess that they themselves created, they have brought half measures, or crumbs. That seems to be the Liberal way, which is that the Liberals are going to overtax and over-regulate, and then give a little back and ask people to say thanks for it. That is not sufficient.

In fact, that is why we proposed, in our platform, and again, I encourage the Liberals to take the whole thing, not just half of it, to get rid of not just the consumer carbon tax but also the industrial carbon tax. It defies any understanding of basic economics to suggest that we can keep the industrial carbon tax, but that would not translate down into pricing that consumers pay. It is basic economics. If a producer has to pay more to produce their product, whether that is getting food to the table, refining gasoline or building concrete to build homes, and as members probably know, producing concrete is a large emitter of CO₂, so they are going to pay a lot, that is going to directly translate into the costs of building and homes.

The Liberals suggest that we can eliminate the carbon tax and that everything will be fine. By the way, it is astounding that, for 10 years, I was told that I was a bad person, or that I did not believe in science, if I did not believe that a carbon tax would change the weather. Now the Liberals seem to say, “What carbon tax? That was not our carbon tax. What are you talking about?” It is gone, and they are sorry they did a bad PR job, even though, in their view, it was good policy. They did a bad PR job, so they have to cut it, but they will keep the industrial carbon tax and hope that Canadians do not understand the difference and do not understand some basic economics.

Canadians will understand it because most Canadians have to budget. When they do their budget, they go through their lines and they figure out their costs, including what it is going to cost this

year, how much income they are going to make, what their expenses are, and whether their income is going to be satisfactory for their expenses or if they will have to cut down.

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Canadians understand those concepts. I am not sure why the government does not. There is no budget. There is no plan. The parliamentary secretary and anyone else who wants to discuss this bill needs to bring us a budget to talk about affordability, not half measures that do not go the full way.

On this new government, which really is not new, it is just the same members and the same ministers, it is almost a little bit worse. The new Prime Minister seems to be pretty close and pretty friendly with the guy south of the border. That is interesting. At least with Mr. Trudeau, we saw there was really no love lost between him and the president. I am not sure that is the case here with the current Prime Minister. The reason I say that is that we often hear that the finest form of flattery is imitation, and we have seen our Prime Minister imitating Mr. Trump's actions, whether it was his first action to eliminate the consumer carbon tax, which was signing a document. To this day, I am not sure what that document was.

• (1405)

As any first-year law student will know, the Prime Minister does not have the authority to pass law. Was he signing this to flatter the President? Was he signing it to imitate the President? I am not sure, but he continues to do that. The Prime Minister called him a “transformational” President. That is pretty high praise from a Canadian Prime Minister. We are often accused of being like the President, but it seems that the only one who is acting like him, following him and taking his lead is the Prime Minister.

Like many members, I knocked on many doors throughout my campaign, and of course, housing and the cost of living were top issues. I am from a northern GTA riding, the last GTA riding in York Region and Durham Region, and housing is pretty expensive in my area of the country. Having a GST cut that is only for houses that are \$1 million to \$1.5 million would not really do enough in my area because many homes are greater than \$1 million and, in fact, greater than \$1.5 million.

More than that, this proposal is only for new homebuyers; it is not for new homes. Let us not forget that there is a difference here. That is why I said that if the Liberals are going to steal our idea, they should steal the whole thing.

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It is not just me saying this; the industry has said it too. Bild, the industry association, has said that this proposal would affect only a small number of homebuyers. In fact, I believe it said that it would not substantially improve affordability. If the act is about affordability, but industry is telling us that this proposal would not do anything about that, then what is the point of it? If the Liberals are going to bring forward a proposal to affect affordability, it should at least achieve the objective they have set out for themselves. By their own measure, they are failing at that.

I would suggest that they go back to our platform and read it. I know they were reading it because that is clear. Maybe they could propose an amendment, or we could, to fix it for them and bring it in line with our platform. I know members are keen to learn what we have to say because we have good ideas. It is there; let us bring it in.

I will also say that many homebuyers are not necessarily first-time homebuyers. Many people start in a condo or a smaller home when they are first married before they have children, and when they move into another stage of life that needs a bigger home with more bedrooms, perhaps for more children, they buy another home. Those people are not first-time homebuyers, but they are still new homebuyers in the sense that they are moving their way up the property ladder. This proposal would not do anything for them because they would not technically be first-time homebuyers.

The bill does not go far enough. We are open to what the government has to propose when it is taken from good ideas that are ours. I would encourage the Liberal government to go back and look at those proposals, maybe amend the bill and bring it back. Then maybe we can have a debate on whether it is acceptable.

As to the carbon tax, I want to raise an important issue that was brought to my attention during the election. I have two great first nations in my riding. One of them is the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation. It is located on an island in the middle of Lake Simcoe, which is accessible only by ferry. When the carbon tax was implemented, the cost of diesel fuel to run that ferry increased. Even if someone believes that a carbon tax would change the weather, they have to believe that there is elasticity of supply, that if they cannot use one fuel, they can use something else to substitute it. Well, when someone runs a ferry, they cannot do that because it runs on diesel, and it is the only way to get to the first nation.

I would like the members opposite to comment on that. Perhaps, in reviewing this bill, and maybe we can propose some amendments to it, they will consider refunding communities like the Chippewas of Georgina Island, which have no alternatives and can only purchase diesel fuel. I think that would really help affordability for first nations.

• (1410)

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, this whole discussion around the carbon tax is interesting. I was in this place for 10 years listening to Liberals talk about how great the carbon tax was and about how it was either the carbon tax or the apocalypse. Well, if they really believed that, then they are now talking about bringing on the apocalypse, I suppose. However, they never believed that. It was always just something they said. The Liberals have also left in place the indus-

trial carbon tax. We see the continuation of policies, like the industrial carbon tax, that are leading to the high and growing unemployment rate.

In the Conservative Party, we are here to fight for jobs, for people to be able to get back to work. Liberals continue down this path of making it harder and harder for Canadians, especially young Canadians, to find jobs.

I wonder if the member could share a bit about his response to the unemployment numbers today: 7% and substantially higher in big cities in Ontario, especially Toronto. What is his response to these numbers?

Jacob Mantle: Madam Speaker, the numbers are out, and they are bad. We are going to hear that because, frankly, that is the truth. Especially around larger urban centres, there is high unemployment, especially high unemployment amongst youth; I believe the latest numbers show that is over 20%. That is troubling because when people cannot get their first job, they cannot get experience and they cannot build confidence, and that is going to be a problem going forward.

On that point, the highest unemployment is among youth, but what is interesting is that if we look at the youth vote, it actually all went toward Conservatives. Interestingly enough, for the first time in my life, I can say that the Conservative Party is the party of youth and energy, and that bodes very well for us.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am just looking for clarification from the member. Under first-time homebuyer rebates, I thought there was some consideration given for condominiums and, I think, even housing co-ops in the current legislation. Is he saying that is not the case? I am not 100% certain, but I thought I had read something that indicated it was. Does he know whether that is the case?

Jacob Mantle: Madam Speaker, I am happy to provide clarification to the member opposite. My comment on that was not about new homebuyers; it was about buyers in general. Many homebuyers start in a condo, and of course, they may benefit in the first instance but not as they move throughout different life phases. For example, someone moving from a small condo, which they had when they were first married and did not need more space, to a home, where they want to have children, would not benefit from this proposal.

This is unlike our proposal, the Conservative Party's proposal, where they would have benefited. That is why industry has said that the Liberal proposal will not significantly improve affordability. Those are not my words; those are BILD's words.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for an excellent, well-thought-out speech. One of the issues of this so-called significant tax cut, as we constantly hear the member for Winnipeg North call it, is that it only provides \$271 this year, according to the Liberals' own numbers from their campaign platform. That is less than one dollar a day. However, according to Dalhousie University, the average family will be spending over \$600 more on food this year.

I wonder if my colleague could comment on the so-called significant tax cut when the Liberals will not even cover half of the increase in food costs this year for the average family.

Jacob Mantle: Madam Speaker, not only are the employment numbers bad; food inflation numbers are bad. Again, do not take my word for it. Look at the "Food Professor", who put the numbers out this week. We saw things like the price of oranges up 26% and beef up 33% or 34% depending on the cut.

The costs are spiralling out of control, and the Liberals' approach is this: "Let us give a few breadcrumbs back, and we will ask you to thank us for it." I think Canadians will see through that and will see that it is really the job-killing regulation, the industry-killing emissions cap, that is putting people out of work so they cannot afford the groceries that are getting even more expensive.

• (1415)

Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by sincerely thanking residents, my family and the dedicated team in King—Vaughan for once again placing their trust in me to represent them in this House.

I rise today not just to speak to Bill C-4 but to speak for those who are not mentioned in it, for those who are too often left out of our national conversation. I rise for our seniors. As shadow minister for seniors, I must highlight how this legislation fails to address the unique challenges seniors face and why this omission fails to support those who built the foundation of our nation.

Bill C-4, the making life more affordable for Canadians act, is a missed opportunity. It offers tax cuts and housing rebates, but nowhere in its pages, not once, does it mention the word "seniors", not in the context of housing, not in the context of health care, not in the context of pensions and not even in the context of affordability. Their voices, contributions and needs deserve recognition and action.

Seniors are the fastest-growing demographic in this country. By 2030, nearly one in four Canadians will be over the age of 65. They are our parents, our grandparents and our neighbours. They built this country, and now too many of them are being left behind.

Bill C-4's attempt at affordability falls short. The Liberals blatantly neglect seniors on fixed incomes who are struggling with soaring costs for essentials like medication, housing and care. The industrial carbon tax, which inflates prices across the board and burdens all consumers, hits seniors particularly hard, as their fixed incomes are unable to keep pace. This oversight reveals a flawed approach of prioritizing certain demographics while ignoring the vulnerable elders who face relentless financial strain without adequate support.

Government Orders

Seniors face tough challenges today. Many live on fixed pensions that do not stretch far enough to cover rising costs for such things as medicine, rent or groceries. People with disabilities and seniors who cannot afford to feed themselves are increasingly turning to food banks. I have volunteered at seniors' homes for over a decade, and when I speak to seniors in my community, I hear day in and day out that they do not understand why their taxes and utility bills continue to go up.

In Canada, seniors face a variety of challenges that are often overlooked. Access to health care and long-term care remain significant issues, worsened by the growing shortage of family doctors and specialists. As a result, many seniors are left without regular medical support, leading to preventable health complications. This often forces them to seek care in emergency rooms, placing additional strain on already overburdened hospitals and tying up critical resources.

Chronic diseases, such as arthritis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes and respiratory illnesses, disproportionately affect seniors and severely impact their quality of life. Meanwhile, the rising costs of essentials, such as groceries and electricity, are particularly harsh for those living on a fixed income. Can we imagine having to choose between heating a home and buying food?

Perhaps the most heartbreaking issue is loneliness and social isolation. Many seniors spend their days in solitude. Studies have shown that approximately 41% of Canadians aged 50 and older are at risk of social isolation. Up to 58% have experienced loneliness. This is not just a statistic. Rather, it is a silent epidemic that has severe mental and physical impacts.

Let me talk about a senior couple in my riding, Philip and Angela. They are a retired couple in my riding. For months, they have been living in their car, not because they want to, not because they made poor choices, but because the rent on their modest apartment went up \$700 a month.

Government Orders

● (1420)

They sold their furniture, gave away their books and packed their lives into the trunk of a 2008 Toyota Camry. Now, every night, they park behind a grocery store, hoping not to be noticed. They take turns sleeping in the back seat. They wash in public restrooms. They eat cold meals from a can. This is not the Canada they worked for. This is not the retirement they expected, and yet Bill C-4 offers them nothing.

Seniors in the GTA are very upset. They are now looking at leaving their home and trying either to live with their children or find an encampment because they cannot afford to stay in their home. Anyone who has volunteered with seniors knows that when a senior is moved out of the environment they are accustomed to, they do not survive. This is the sad reality of the Liberal mismanagement of taxpayer money that has caused the inflationary situation we all face in Canada.

The bill is a patchwork of half measures. It is not a plan. It is not a vision. Conservatives pledged during the campaign that seniors who choose to work would be able to earn up to \$34,000 tax-free, which is \$10,000 more than the current threshold. RRSP flexibility was proposed to allow seniors to keep their savings in RRSPs until the age of 73 instead of the current mandatory withdrawal at age 71. This would give seniors more time to grow their retirement savings.

For protection of retirement benefits, we also committed to keeping the retirement age at 65 and protecting benefits like old age security, the guaranteed income supplement and the Canada pension plan. The Liberal government has stolen many of our policies but has watered them down. Why not take this one, implement it word for word and assist our seniors? The measures are framed as part of broader efforts to give seniors more control over their finances and to ensure that they are not penalized for going to work if they choose to.

What we need is bold action on housing; what we received was a tax cut that barely covers a week's worth of groceries. What we need is a national strategy to end homelessness; what we received was a throne speech that did not include a housing plan for seniors.

The Conservative Party believes in real affordability. That means building more affordable housing, especially for seniors, so they can move into comfortable, cost-effective communities. This not only improves their quality of life and reduces isolation but also frees up existing homes for first-time homebuyers. By creating dedicated seniors housing, we can build vibrant communities where seniors live with dignity and connection, while also opening doors for younger generations to enter the housing market.

A car is not a home. A parking lot is not a retirement plan. We must prioritize affordability to ensure that seniors have access to nutritious foods and a secure livelihood. This support can help reduce isolation and restore dignity.

I met a senior in my riding who skips meals to afford her medication; her pension is not enough. Stories like this are common, yet Bill C-4 offers no support and no hope. This is not just a mistake; it shows that the government's priorities are wrong. The only way low-income seniors are going to afford to live is a reduction of the

tax on affordability. As shadow minister of seniors, I say that the Liberal government must do better. Seniors are not asking for charity; they want fairness and dignity. After years of their contributing to Canada, the bill fails them. I call for changes to include real help for seniors or a new bill that puts them first.

I would like my colleagues to imagine this: We have worked our entire life and are looking forward to a well-earned retirement, only to find that we cannot afford it. We quietly struggle to make ends meet, not wanting to burden our loved ones with our hardship. What happens when our career has moved on without us, and our income no longer covers our basic needs?

● (1425)

This is the reality for far too many seniors. We must restore dignity to those who paved the way for us. Let us ensure—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): We are out of time.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, before, I was a little bit hesitant, but now I am 100% sure. In regard to the legislation, it does, in fact, provide tax relief for individual first-time homebuyers for condos and co-ops. That is something that was raised as a possible suggestion from the Conservative Party. That is why I say that, when we take a look at the legislation and the ideas that are within this particular bill, I would think the Conservative Party would feel comfortable in supporting them.

Does the member support the principles of this bill herself, and can she reflect on what the Conservative Party's feelings are on this legislation?

Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, I would like my hon. colleague to speak to Angela and Phillip and explain to them why they are living in their car. Their \$800 savings will not even pay for one month's worth of increase in rent. How do we explain this to the seniors who are living in their car and having to hide so they do not burden their families?

[Translation]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, like many Conservative Party members, my colleague has a great deal to say about the infamous carbon tax. The subject is clearly inevitable in the context of the bill, since it contains a section on eliminating the carbon tax for individuals.

In fact, the government eliminated the carbon tax for individuals, but it still sent cheques giving Canadians refunds for taxes they never paid. That means that these cheques were paid for out of federal revenues, meaning Quebecers contributed.

What does my colleague think about the fact that cheques were handed out to buy votes in the rest of Canada and that Quebecers paid for them?

[English]

Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for an excellent question. He has just proven a point that we have been stating on this side of the House all along. The Liberals do not have a budget or a plan. They have no idea how they are going to make life more affordable, and they need to review Bill C-4 to ensure that all Canadians can live in dignity.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from King—Vaughan for her excellent speech and especially for her advocacy for seniors. I introduced a private members' bill in the 42nd Parliament to eliminate the mandatory RRIF withdrawals entirely. It would help seniors. I want to note that every single member of the Liberal Party voted against that and actually voted against affordability for seniors.

To get back to the bill, one of the failures of Bill C-2 is that every penny of these tax cuts is coming from borrowed money. The Conservative plan was costed; we were going to reduce reliance on Liberal-friendly consulting companies instead of packing on the debt.

I wonder if my colleague thinks that, perhaps, instead of adding more debt, the Liberals should cut back the billions they are giving to their friends at McKinsey and other management consulting companies.

Government Orders

Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, that is an excellent question, and I do agree. The life expectancies of individuals have grown, from my time in the financial industry, from 73 years for men and 75 years for women to the late eighties, so the RRSP suggestion makes sense. We should give them more time to save money and reduce the opportunity for them to have to live on a fixed income later on in their life.

As far as the budget is concerned, why do we have all these individuals, who are employed by the government, to help us do our job when the Liberals have to spend billions of dollars hiring these consultants, and at the end of the day, we get nothing for it?

● (1430)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, can the member explain to me why it is that the Conservatives should have any credibility on the issue of seniors when Stephen Harper and Pierre Poilievre tried to raise the age of retirement, of OAS, from 65 to 67?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for King—Vaughan, a very brief answer.

Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, I will give a quick response.

My hon. colleague across the way has to know that the average age people are working in my riding is into their late seventies, because they cannot afford to live. How does he explain—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): It being 2:30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:30 p.m.)

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