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Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1400)

[*English*]

The Speaker: Today, the hon. member for Fredericton—Oronocto will be leading us in the singing of *O Canada*.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

BIKE DAY ON THE HILL

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, today is Bike Day on the Hill.

[*English*]

In a non-partisan spirit, I will give a shout-out to the former MP in this place who always led bike day, John Weston, who used to represent West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country.

I want to pay tribute to the wonderful volunteers in Saanich—Gulf Islands who have worked so hard to make sure we have paths for safe cycling. To Island Pathways on Salt Spring Island, to MAP, Moving Around Pender, and to all who share the vision of a Salish Sea trail to bring bicyclists all around the beautiful southern Gulf Islands, I give a huge shout-out of thanks, particularly to my dear friend Bob MacKie, who has led so many cycling campaigns, to Robin Jenkinson and certainly to the many more I cannot mention in the time I have left.

Cycling is good for health, good for the environment and good for our economy.

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ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

Alana Hirtle (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, In Cumberland County, Nova Scotia, the father-daughter team at Holdanca Farms is doing something extraordinary. Beyond some fantastic beef cattle they raise, John and Maria have been awarded the Canadian Cattle Association's Environmental Stewardship Award for their care of an entire ecosystem that includes more than

1,000 species across 500 north shore acres. These two farmers insist on long-term, intergenerational thinking, and they are providing us proof that when we commit to protecting things for generations to come, we can build things that truly last.

We need more of this energy. The climate crisis demands this kind of intergenerational thinking. The same is true for health care, housing and energy. In each of these things, we would do well to keep future generations at the centre of our deliberations in this chamber.

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[*Translation*]

ATLANTIC HALIBUT IN THE SAGUENAY FJORD

Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am incredibly proud to announce that the scientific research on Atlantic halibut in the Saguenay Fjord is now complete and we are expecting a final report by the end of October.

The spectacular images that have come out of this project have sparked global enthusiasm and have been viewed millions of times around the world. This exceptional visibility has fuelled the creativity of our local businesses, inspired the creation of new artisanal products and revitalized regional commercial activity.

I would like to acknowledge the outstanding contribution of Contact Nature, Promotion Saguenay, the Musée du Fjord and Professor Sirois and his team at the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, as well as the fishers and fish enthusiasts who carry on the proud tradition of fishing in the Saguenay Fjord. Through their efforts, this project has become a true collective success of which the entire region can be proud.

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• (1405)

[*English*]

CANADIAN BEER DAY

Tom Osborne (Cape Spear, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today marks the seventh annual Canadian Beer Day, a day to celebrate Canadian beer and our world-class brewers, large and small, that brew from coast to coast to coast. Celebrated each year on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, Canadian Beer Day brings Canadians together to celebrate the economic, social and cultural contributions of brewing across this country.

Statements by Members

Canadian beer is more than just a refreshing beverage; it is part of who we are as Canadians. This day is a toast to the family farmers growing the finest barley in western Canada, to the proud breweries of my home province of Newfoundland and Labrador and to the maltsters, warehouse workers, truck drivers, retailers and bartenders who bring it from field to glass.

Our brewers are at the heart of our communities, large and small, urban and rural. Together, they directly employ 24,000 Canadians and support more than 149,000 jobs across the beer value chain—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Riding Mountain.

* * *

125TH ANNIVERSARY OF FAMILY GARAGE

Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the historic accomplishment of a local business that has been serving the community of Treherne, Manitoba, and surrounding area for over a century. Metcalfe's Garage has successfully operated for the last 125 years and is now proudly the oldest family-owned Ford dealership in Canada.

The journey of Metcalfe's Garage began in 1900 with the vision of Thomas and Clare Metcalfe. The Metcalfes began serving their community by selling the Ford Model T, even teaching people how to drive after they purchased it. Five generations later, Metcalfe's Garage has remained a family-owned company with the same commitment to hard work and service to the community.

The story of Metcalfe's Garage inspires us all, proving that true success comes from putting the local community first. On behalf of the House of Commons, I want to congratulate the Metcalfe family and their amazing team for 125 years of work and service to our rural region.

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[*Translation*]

FRANÇOISE BOUCHARD

Marianne Dandurand (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this being Women's History Month, I would like to pay tribute to a trail-blazing woman in municipal politics: Françoise Bouchard, the outgoing mayor of Dixville. Originally from the Eastern Townships, Ms. Bouchard was the first female city manager, the first female municipal councillor and the first female mayor of her town. She made local history with her fierce commitment, her indomitable spirit and her quiet pride.

Since 1984, she has devoted no less than 40 years of her life to politics. At 84, she is now the oldest mayor in Quebec. Despite her venerable age, she has not lost her spark. During her last term in office, the municipality has been able to acquire unused buildings to lay the foundation for an ambitious project to set up municipal offices, build a community centre and provide accessible housing. Ms. Bouchard's accomplishments command respect. I thank her for everything she has done.

[*English*]

FIREFIGHTER AID UKRAINE

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the incredible work of FireFighter Aid Ukraine, an organization that embodies Edmonton's compassion and spirit. Started after Russia invaded Crimea in 2014, the FFAU has been a lifeline to the brave first responders in Ukraine. It has collected firefighter gear, life rescue equipment and vital medical supplies from Canadian and U.S. first responders and vendors, delivering over 450 tonnes of supplies directly to the front lines.

The volunteers have made countless trips to Ukraine and provided thousands of hours of hands-on medical and trauma training. They have even brought over bomb-sniffing dogs Fergus and Torch to assist in saving lives in Ukraine.

At the heart of this tireless work is the executive director, Kevin Royle. Along with board members Chris, Eva, Linda, Stuart, Nikki and Dennis, they reflect the very best of Edmonton selflessness.

I thank Kevin, the board and all the volunteers. It is because of people like them that Edmonton is known as the city of champions.

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● (1410)

CANADIAN WOMEN'S SOCCER PLAYER

Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to celebrate one of Whitby's finest, Olivia Smith, a remarkable athlete who at just 20 years old made history. This past July, she broke another glass ceiling in women's sports, signing with the Arsenal Football Club. She earned a world-record fee of one million British pounds, becoming the most expensive signing in women's football history.

Her journey began at age five at the Whitby Iroquois Soccer Club, and she is now blazing a trail in the U.K.'s top league. With nine goals scored this past season, she has already earned the women's young player of the year award from the Professional Footballers' Association. What a feat.

As a soon-to-be dad of three girls, I know that little girls and fans all across Canada, including in Whitby, are inspired by Olivia's every move. We are all cheering for Olivia.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, growing up in Oshawa, the nightly routine was simple: dinner at home, or at Teddy's if we were lucky, and then spend as much time outside as possible knowing it was time to go home when the street lights came on. However, now that crime has gotten so bad, the new nightly routine is for a person to lock their car, hide their valuables and turn on their security system if they have one.

Police in Durham Region and across the country are now urging Canadians to take part in what they call the 9 p.m. routine, asking residents to secure their property before bed. This is the reality after 10 years of Liberal soft-on-crime laws.

On Monday, despite pleas from police associations, victims and countless other law-abiding Canadians, the Liberals voted against our Conservative motion to strengthen Canada's bail laws and put public safety first. We need to scrap Liberal bail and keep violent repeat offenders behind bars because Canadians should not need a bedtime checklist.

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[*Translation*]

SERGE FIORI

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, June 24 is Quebec's national holiday. This year, it was also a day of collective mourning for an entire nation. Serge Fiori, the great Serge Fiori, Fiori the wise, Fiori the madman, Fiori the gentle, affectionate soul, our friend Serge Fiori is now among the angels, singing the most beautiful melodies they have ever heard.

Fiori of Harmonium, Fiori with Séguin, Fiori solo, Fiori the Quebecker left us in the midst of his nation's celebrations. Even in the depths of my grief, I thought his timing was apt. He left behind a people whose hopes he often sang about and whose sovereignty he supported. I still cherish the support he offered me.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois and in the presence of Mario Lefebvre and Serge Grimaux, his collaborators and close friends, who are my friends too, I again extend my condolences to his partner, Hélène Lévesque, his family and all those who loved him.

He went away before he could see the national dream become reality.

To Fiori, my friend: "It will be our turn, it won't be long."

When that day comes, we will think of Serge.

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[*English*]

LIVABLE CITIES FORUM

Shannon Miedema (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week, 400 community leaders from across Canada, including municipal governments, indigenous communities and community organizations, are gathered in Halifax for the Livable Cities Forum. Hosted by ICLEI Canada and the Halifax Regional Municipality, the forum's purpose is clear: to accelerate climate action in our communities by working together through creative and ambitious partnerships. Together, delegates are exploring solutions to the challenges our com-

Statements by Members

munities are facing all across Canada: safeguarding against climate impacts, building long-term climate financing and building affordable housing and transformative energy infrastructure.

Bringing this conference to Halifax was an initiative I was proud to be a part of in my past role. While I am sad to miss this event, I am honoured to celebrate it with my new colleagues here in the House of Commons. Building a Canada that is resilient, net-zero and equitable is only possible when diverse voices come together and are heard, something our government recognizes and values.

I commend the work of all those involved and wish them—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Long Range Mountains.

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● (1415)

FOOD PRICES

Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister asked to be judged by the prices at the grocery store.

Long Range Mountains families are working hard to keep food on the table, yet each visit brings shock at the checkout. The price of staples has soared because of the Liberal government's hidden taxes. Those baked-in taxes are clear: the industrial carbon tax on fertilizer and farm equipment, the inflation tax from money-printing deficits, carbon tax two and now the food packaging tax that makes everyday necessities even more expensive. Edward, a senior in the community of Irishtown, told me that he cannot afford a steak dinner even once in a while because it costs him over \$50. Canadians are spending \$800 more on food this year and local food banks are seeing record demand.

Conservatives offered a simple solution to stop the Liberal taxes on food and they shamefully voted against it. We will keep fighting for Canadians because we know they cannot afford another Liberal broken promise.

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AIRPORTS

Pauline Rochefort (Nipissing—Timiskaming, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week, the House of Commons welcomes the Canadian Airports Council to Ottawa. Included are representatives from my community's Jack Garland Airport in North Bay. From Jack Garland Airport, citizens in need of specialized medical services fly to Toronto. There are firefighters who jump on an airplane at a moment's notice to assist communities facing natural disasters. From North Bay, mining executives travel the globe to share leading-edge products and services.

Oral Questions

Airports are essential, so I give a very special thanks on behalf of all of us to the airport personnel who work to ensure this sector is thriving for the betterment of North Bay and similar communities across our vast country. We thank them. *Meegwetch.*

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PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA

Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised Canadians the fastest-growing economy in the G7. Instead, Canada now has the fastest-shrinking economy and the second-highest unemployment rate.

The Prime Minister said to judge him by grocery prices, and these are rising even faster. He promised to “build, baby, build”, but his anti-development policies are driving investment away. He promised nation building at speeds once thought impossible, yet not one single permit has been issued. He promised a trade deal with the United States by July 21 and still there is no deal. He promised elbows up on U.S. tariffs, which are now twice as high. He promised to spend less, and spending is up billions. He promised to invest more, but investment is leaving the country at an unprecedented rate.

Canadians need action, not more empty promises.

* * *

[*Translation*]**PATRO ROC-AMADOUR**

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on September 23, a fire ravaged Patro Roc-Amadour, in the heart of Limoilou. A true pillar of our community, this organization supports hundreds of families, children, seniors, and people living with disabilities every week.

The losses are staggering. Over \$100,000 in food has been destroyed, and essential services, such as meals on wheels, have been disrupted. The community rallied immediately. In Beauport—Limoilou, solidarity is not just a word, it is a way of life. Locals, volunteers and organizations have already come together to support Patro and help it get back up and running. This outpouring of generosity shows how strong our community is. When adversity strikes, we answer the call.

I urge everyone to give what they can to Patro Roc-Amadour so that it can reopen and continue to feed, support and bring together our community.

* * *

[*English*]**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, have you ever dreamed about winning the lottery? Well, Donald Trump hit the jackpot. Yesterday, the Prime Minister committed \$1 trillion of investment to the United States. That is on top of the \$500 billion that fled from Canada in the last five years and the \$50 billion that left just this year under the government.

Let us put this into perspective. That is the equivalent of doubling our national debt. Canadians are left with less investment, fewer jobs and fewer wages. When the Prime Minister said that he was going to “build, baby, build”, Canadians thought he meant Canada, but what he really meant was closing mines in Quebec and opening them in Pennsylvania, shutting down mills in B.C. and opening them in Washington, and shutting down auto plants in Ontario and opening them in Michigan. American tariffs have doubled and the Prime Minister is bragging about pushing \$1 trillion of Canadian investment to the United States. That is not a plan for growth. It is a plan for surrender.

Why is the Prime Minister giving Donald Trump \$1-trillion jackpot?

* * *

● (1420)

AGA KHAN

Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on October 12, Ismaili Muslims from Vancouver to Halifax, from Resolute to Laval and from around the world will celebrate the 54th birthday of His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan, his first since his ascension to the seat of the Ismaili Imam.

As our 50th imam, Mawlana Shah Rahim continues the legacy of his father as a strong partner to Canada. It is a partnership built on the shared principles of improving the quality of life of those less fortunate, supporting pluralism, fighting climate change, building resilience and ensuring we find ways to work together, across differences, here at home and around the world. His example to us is that life is a marathon, not a sprint, and that we must build carefully and thoughtfully for the long term.

For Ismailis, these values resonate in our commitment to building Canada. From coast to coast to coast, Ismailis are inspired by the example of our imam to serve our communities, to build economic prosperity and to be engaged members of Canadian society. On this occasion, we reaffirm our commitment to these values and to the important guidance we receive from our imam.

I invite all members of the House to join me in wishing His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan a very happy birthday.

ORAL QUESTIONS[*Translation*]**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we now know why President Trump wanted this Prime Minister in power so badly. He wanted a weak leader whose pro-tax and anti-development policies are sending billions of dollars and jobs to the United States.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister promised President Trump \$1 trillion over the next five years if we get the agreement that we think we are going to get. He is going to drive investment out of Canada, causing mills, mines and plants in Canada to close down. Families will lose their jobs.

Did the Prime Minister get an end to the tariffs on softwood lumber in exchange for this gift?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, now is the time—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[*English*]

The Speaker: Things are not getting off to an auspicious start today.

From the top, the right hon. Prime Minister.

[*Translation*]

Right Hon. Mark Carney: Mr. Speaker, we have another opportunity to give the Leader of the Opposition a quick economics lesson.

The economies of Canada and the U.S. are highly integrated. Yesterday, I also gave the U.S. President a brief economics lesson. What is at stake is Canadian investment in the U.S.

If we do not have a good agreement, this government will negotiate one.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister would know all about driving investment out of Canada and into the United States, given that he has already managed to drive \$54 billion in investments to the United States, killing 86,000 jobs in the process. These jobs represent families, who are now sitting around the table, wondering how they will pay their bills.

When he came to power, he promised to get rid of U.S. tariffs. Since then, however, the tariffs on softwood lumber have doubled.

I will repeat my question. After handing over a \$1-trillion gift, did the Prime Minister get an end to the softwood lumber tariffs, yes or no?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here is where things stand at the moment. Our agreement with the Americans is the best in the world.

We are continuing negotiations in major sectors, including softwood lumber. We will accept nothing less than the best deal for softwood lumber.

• (1425)

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we now know why the U.S. President wanted the Prime Minister in power so badly. He wanted a weak leader whose high taxes and anti-development laws are sending billions of dollars and thousands of jobs out of this country. There have been 86,000 jobs lost.

Oral Questions

Yesterday, the Prime Minister promised the President that he would increase Canadian investment in the U.S. by \$1 trillion if he gets the agreement that he expects to get.

In exchange for \$1 trillion in job losses in Canada, will the Prime Minister at least get an end to the U.S. auto tariffs that are killing jobs for our workers in Ontario?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have the best deal in the world with the Americans. That is my first point.

My second point is that the President of the United States and I had a meeting of minds yesterday with respect to the future of the steel sector, the aluminum sector and the energy sector in co-operation, which is why our teams are negotiating the terms of those deals.

We are also working, as the President himself said in the Oval Office, on the modalities of an auto agreement.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he just confirmed that he is selling out our auto workers.

Let me tell him what it means when investment leaves this country. He has forced a record amount out in his seven months in power. The 700 workers at the GM plant who lost their jobs in Oshawa can tell him about investment that has left. They are sitting around the dinner table wondering how they are going to pay their bills, while GM announces \$4 billion of new investment south of the border.

While the Prime Minister promises yet another \$1-trillion gift to President Trump, why does he not look those workers in the eye and explain why he betrayed them?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what this government is doing for the auto sector is an unprecedented investment in the Canadian auto sector. We look the Canadian auto workers in the eye. We have \$5 billion in the strategic response fund. We have \$10 billion for liquidity management. We have worker retraining. We are striking deals with countries around the world. We have the best deal already with the Americans, and it will be even better.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will go soft on him today, because I know he is recovering from surgery to have his elbows removed. Do we remember that promise? He was dancing around with his elbows in the air. We have not seen those elbows since the election, after which \$54 billion of investment went to the United States; 86,000 jobs are gone, and American tariffs on Canada have doubled.

As to the best deal in the world, why is it then, if we have the best deal, that Canada has the fastest-shrinking economy in the G7 and 86,000 people are without a job?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are three things that are true. The first is that I realized long before the Leader of the Opposition did, long before the last election, that our relationship with the United States would never again be what it was. Do we remember the last election? The second thing that is true is we have the best deal with the Americans, and the third thing that is true is we will get an even better deal, because we are negotiating.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians do remember the last election, when the Prime Minister promised to put elbows up. It was not a promise; it was the promise he ran on. Now those elbows have come down. The American tariffs have doubled. We have by far the weakest economy in the G7, 86,000 people have lost their jobs, and, pathetically, the Prime Minister went to the White House to offer a \$1-trillion gift, bowing before the president in weakness.

Speaking of the last election, where in his platform did he promise to give a trillion of our investment dollars to the Americans?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the Leader of the Opposition there is a thing called the private sector. The private sector makes decisions about investment. The private sector makes decisions about jobs. With the best deal in the world, we will invest in this country, and we will build Canada strong.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, wow. The Prime Minister was not scolded. That was the bar—to avoid getting attacked by the U.S. President with the whole world watching. That was the bar, and he certainly cleared it. Better yet, he got told that he was good and strong.

The Prime Minister was supposed to get more and speak less. We are getting the opposite of what we got with his predecessor.

Does the Prime Minister think a meeting and some nice words from the U.S. President are enough to resolve the trade crisis?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the U.S. President and I had a conversation on moving forward with an agreement for the steel, aluminum and energy sectors. That is why our teams are working on this issue at this very moment.

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that is not what we were told during the election campaign. It was supposed to be so much better. The truth is that the Prime Minister has come back empty-handed. He got zip, nada, zilch, nothing at all. To make matters worse, there are new tariffs on trucks and higher tariffs on softwood lumber. The great negotiator keeps striking out.

When is he going to hit a home run?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, on July 31, the President of the United States himself

signed the best trade deal in the world between the United States and Canada, which means that 85% of our trade with the U.S. is tariff-free.

We continue to work on the aluminum and softwood lumber sectors.

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the “best deal in the world” does not seem to be working for the aluminum or forestry sectors. Spouting nice words seems to be enough for the Prime Minister.

A gentleman named Jean de La Fontaine wrote *The Fox and the Crow*, which says, “Flatterers thrive on fools' credulity.”

Does the Prime Minister think that Quebeckers will be satisfied with the sly fox's words for much longer?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, right now, the people on our team, including the Minister of International Trade, are negotiating on behalf of the aluminum sector. This is about more than just words and figures. We are going to have an agreement.

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[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister assured Canadians that he would secure a victory, but there is none. The tariffs he said he would get rid of have actually doubled. He is now promising to ship a trillion dollars of investment to the U.S. with nothing in return. That is not a strategy. It is a clearance sale on Canadian jobs, paper mills in B.C. closing while Washington state cuts the ribbon, factories in Ontario going dark while Michigan lights up.

Why did the Prime Minister trade away Canadian paycheques for an applause line in Washington?

• (1435)

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, the Prime Minister is focused on protecting jobs and businesses, first by stabilizing supply chains through initiatives such as our strategic response fund, including on steel, aluminum, manufacturing, auto and agriculture, and by continuing to build supply chains while maintaining a strong domestic economy and the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7 and while negotiating a strong bilateral relationship and diversifying our supply chains.

We will build Canada strong.

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with that kind of answer, if someone who measures their wealth by a stock index, that is their guy, but if it comes from a paycheque, they are his sacrifice.

Canadians trusted the Prime Minister to fight for their jobs and to fight for their paycheques. Months after he vowed to get a deal, there is still none.

There are 86,000 fewer Canadians working. He doubled the deficit at home; \$54 billion of investment fled south, with the promise to make it a trillion.

In what world is a trillion-dollar gift to Donald Trump considered a win?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, businesses from all over the world are choosing Canada. That is why, once again, we are ranked as one of the best countries in the G20 for doing business. We are deepening our partnerships in Europe, in the Indo-Pacific and in Africa, to create opportunities here at home.

That is why we have just signed a historic deal with Indonesia, to create jobs and to diversify supply chains.

These are more than just agreements. They are the resilience of Canada's economic future.

We will build Canada strong.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a good thing that we do not need elbows to come home empty-handed. Yesterday, we found out why Donald Trump wanted this guy to be Prime Minister so bad; it is because Trump knew he would get everything he wanted from the Prime Minister.

In addition to keeping all the Trudeau-era policies that are already chasing away jobs and investments, the Prime Minister decided to offer a \$1-trillion gift of Canadian investment dollars flowing to the U.S.

That means mines built in the U.S., factories built in the U.S., sawmills built in the U.S., all with Canadian investment dollars.

In exchange for this generous sacrifice, did the Prime Minister get an end to all U.S. tariffs once and for all?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives. Members on this side of the aisle, and all Canadians, believe in this country. Canada is the place where we attract talent. Canada is the place where we build ships, we build cars and we build planes. Canada is the place where we have critical minerals. Canada is the place where we have energy. Canada is the only country in the G7 with free trade with all other G7 nations. We are going to build Canada strong. We are the true north, strong and free.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister said the Liberals believe in Canada. The Liberal Prime Minister will not even pay taxes in Canada. Once those investment dollars go to the U.S., they do not come back.

Let us just look at TC Energy. That used to be called TransCanada, until the Liberals had to drop the word "Canada" because they cannot get anything built in this country. They just put \$8.5 billion

to work in the U.S. The Prime Minister said during the election that anyone who worships at the altar of Donald Trump will kneel before him, not stand up to him. Yesterday, he knelt like a pylon while the president skated around him.

Did the Prime Minister get an end to U.S. tariffs in return?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have even more good news for the Conservatives. On November 4, we will present a budget with generational investment that is going to make Canada the strongest economy in the G7. We will invest in our people. We are going to build this country. We are going to empower Canadians. We are going to build Canada strong, and we are going to do it with all Canadians.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Prime Minister promised to fight for our workers, but under his watch, Canada has lost over 86,000 jobs. We have the fastest-shrinking economy and the second-highest unemployment rate in the G7. The Liberal decision to buy American to appease Trump has cost CAMI over 900 jobs in my riding.

The Liberal Prime Minister continues to sell out our workers. He is handing over their jobs to the United States and driving a trillion dollars' worth of investment down south. Why?

• (1440)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Listen, Mr. Speaker, for over a decade, Canadians—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am trying to listen.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Mr. Speaker, for decades, Canadians have watched as Conservatives fought against their interests. They have not just voted against Canadians' interests, but actively worked to fight against their families' prosperity. Whether it is beating back unionization, whether it is voting against school nutrition programs or whether it is fighting against the Canada child benefit, Canadians know who has their back, and it sure is not the Conservative Party.

[Translation]

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals do not want to talk about the \$1 trillion. That is how much money the Prime Minister promised President Trump that Canada would invest in the United States over the next five years.

Oral Questions

What did the Prime Minister get in return for that promise? He got a free meal at the White House. That is the result. Our workers are going to lose their jobs because their companies are going to move to the United States. Mines and mills are going to close their doors in Canada and reopen in the United States.

Lunch at the White House—is that honestly the victory the Prime Minister promised Canadians?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here is another lesson for the Conservatives across the way.

In Canada, we have pension funds. For example, the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec invests globally, makes profits and brings them back to Canada. Our firefighters, our nurses and our tradespeople benefit from this money.

Canadian investment abroad is a good thing for Canada. It is key to building Canada strong. That is what we are doing with the workers, with our steel and with—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière.

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we want a country where pension funds are looking to invest their money here in Canada to create jobs here in Canada, rather than doing what the Liberals are doing and sending \$1 trillion to the United States over the next five years, which will cost us jobs.

The Prime Minister came back empty-handed. I am not the one saying that; it is coming from *The Globe and Mail*, *Le Devoir*, *Le Soleil* and *Radio-Canada*. In fact, let me quote *Radio-Canada's* delicious description of the meeting between the Prime Minister and Trump: “so many flowers, so little fruit”. Apparently flowers are expensive in the United States.

Why is the Prime Minister sending our companies and jobs to the United States, rather than keeping his promise to end the tariffs?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is quite unusual for a Conservative MP to quote *Radio-Canada*. The day before yesterday, he wanted to defund *Radio-Canada*, but I digress.

Pension funds are investing in Canada, and the world is investing in Canada. We are among the best in the G7 for foreign direct investment. I have more good news. We will have projects to invest in, projects across the country. There will be ports and railways built with Canadian steel and Canadian aluminum, made by Canadian tradespeople.

* * *

JUSTICE

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, five premiers, including the Premier of Quebec, have written to the Prime Minister of Canada asking in clear terms that he withdraw the federal government's legal submission to the Supreme Court in the case against Bill 21.

The five premiers refuse to allow Ottawa to weaponize the courts for its political fight against the notwithstanding clause. To quote the five premiers, “the federal government's arguments represent a complete disavowal of the constitutional bargain that brought the Charter into being”.

Will the Liberals finally stop their constitutional power grab and withdraw this court submission?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the federal government did not initiate these proceedings, but we are going to participate in the case before the Supreme Court of Canada. It is very important that the federal government defend the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and defend human rights.

After several years, the case has made its way to the Supreme Court of Canada. It is unimaginable to think that the federal government would not weigh in on the issue. We will be participating in the court proceedings. We will defend the charter now and into the future.

• (1445)

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Justice was asked this morning about the federal government's attack on Bill 21 and the notwithstanding clause, he once again got off track. He defended his crusade by saying that democracy is under strain around the world, and he used the war in Ukraine as an example.

In his view, Quebec's use of the notwithstanding clause to protect state secularism is as dangerous for democracy as Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Come on. Will he immediately withdraw this flawed and offensive analogy?

[*English*]

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when a member chooses to misinterpret a quote for his political position, it is clear he believes his own argument is very weak.

The positions that we have advanced in the Supreme Court of Canada are that the notwithstanding clause does not allow governments, federal or provincial, to permanently damage the rights of Canadians, and that it does not permit governments to silence the courts when governments violate the rights of Canadians.

The provinces may have a different point of view. I invite them to participate in the court proceedings; that is a healthy way in a democracy to challenge ideas one may not like.

FINANCE

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's broken promises are hurting Canadians. He promised he was going to spend less. In fact he is going to spend more, a lot more. Trudeau left a deficit of \$42 billion; the current Prime Minister is going to supersize it well past \$60 billion. Deficits cause inflation, but it is Canadians who end up paying the price. In fact, 86,000 Canadians have paid that price by losing their jobs.

When will the Prime Minister stop his reckless spending?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one cannot make this up. This is coming from a leader who has never had a job outside the House and who could not even negotiate with the member for Carleton to keep his seat.

The world has changed, and we are going to change how we budget. On November 4, we are going to come forward with a discipline budget that is going to build. We are going to build and to invest in Canada.

I ask the leader opposite to negotiate his way to finding a way to support us.

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is just an incredible example of 35 seconds of saying absolutely nothing.

What is actually going on here is that we have got fancy banker-speak to try to say that debt is investment. Debt is debt; it does not matter how much lipstick we put on the pig, and it is Canadians who pay the price of this reckless debt spending.

Canada has the second-highest unemployment in the G7, and 86,000 Canadians just lost their jobs. All the member can do is think it is time to sell jokes at Yuk Yuk's.

When will the Prime Minister realize his reckless spending is actually hurting Canadians?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the member opposite has been, but for the last four months, we have been crossing the country listening to Canadians and getting feedback from Canadians.

On November 4, we will table a discipline budget that will spend less and invest more in Canada. We will build Canada's economy. We will become the strongest, most resilient economy in the G7.

I ask the Conservative Party to cut the rhetoric and get on board.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has broken his promise to Canadians. He promised the strongest economy in the G7 but instead delivered the fastest-shrinking economy and the second-highest unemployment rate. Eighty-six thousand more Canadians have lost their jobs, and a staggering \$52 billion of net investment has fled the country. What

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is the Prime Minister's solution? It is to send a further trillion dollars of investment to the U.S.

Why is the Prime Minister acting like an investment agent for Trump instead of keeping his promises to Canadians to deliver jobs?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader has been busy writing letters. We are busy cutting taxes; we have cut taxes for 22 million Canadians. We have cut the GST for first-time homebuyers. Interest rates have dropped. We are going to build homes at a pace not seen since the Second World War.

I ask the party opposite to get on board, stop fighting our initiatives and support us.

* * *

● (1450)

FINANCE

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they have had 10 years to deliver all that, and the Liberals have delivered nothing.

The Prime Minister has promised fiscal discipline but instead is playing fiscal shell games to hide his failures. He has broken his promise to deliver a declining debt-to-GDP ratio and has abandoned fiscal guardrails. The accounting sleight of hand the Liberals are offering cannot hide the truth: a deficit of well over \$60 billion. Canadians know that debt is debt and that deficits drive inflation.

How much higher is inflation going to go because of the Liberals' broken promises to rein in their out-of-control spending and deficits?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we consider elections job interviews. Canadians looked at the resumé of our leader and that of the Leader of the Opposition; it was not even close. Our leader has world-class business and economic experience, versus the Leader of the Opposition, who has none.

On November 4, we will table a discipline budget. We will spend less; invest more in nation-building projects, in defence and infrastructure; and build houses on a scale not seen since the Second World War.

We are tired of the rhetoric. The opposition should join us. Let us build Canada.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Bernard Généreux (Côte-du-Sud—Rivière-du-Loup—Kataskomiq—Témiscouata, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since this Liberal Prime Minister took office, federal spending has skyrocketed. Spending on consultant contracts went from \$19 billion to \$26 billion.

Since Mr. Trudeau left, and despite this Liberal government's promises, the deficit has increased from \$42 billion to \$62 billion. The result is more inflation, fewer jobs and a downturn in the economy. It is not surprising that the people in my riding are struggling and are \$200 or less away from not being able to make ends meet every month.

Does the Prime Minister realize that his broken promises are costing Canadians dearly?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, do members know what we have done since we took office? We lowered taxes for 22 million Canadians to increase the middle class's purchasing power. We passed legislation to unify the Canadian economy and unleash its potential. The Montreal Economic Institute says that will boost the GDP by \$215 billion.

It is not surprising that Quebeckers and Canadians chose a serious leader and a serious team with a serious and ambitious plan.

Abdelhaq Sari (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week, the Minister of Finance presented a budgeting framework that differentiates and distinguishes between recurring operating spending and capital investment. This budgeting framework also revises the budgetary calendar, so the budget will now be tabled in the fall, followed by an economic review in the spring.

People in the riding of Bourassa are eagerly awaiting the budget. However, we want to know specifically what this new framework will bring, both in terms of planning and in terms of implementing government policies.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, indeed, the world is changing and we must adapt. That is exactly what the Prime Minister said: We must "spend less so we can invest more". That is why, earlier this week, I presented a new approach, a new framework that will focus on capital formation and, at the same time, change the budget cycle.

This will give parliamentarians, including the opposition, greater clarity when reviewing public accounts. It will give businesses and various organizations that receive federal funding greater predictability for planning. It will provide more opportunities to align with the construction season. Everyone wins with this new formula.

* * *

*[English]***AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one day after the Prime Minister's visit to the White House, the U.S. commerce secretary has announced that there will be no relief on tariffs for finished automobiles in Canada. This is

after 700 Oshawa GM workers lost their jobs and GM sent \$4 billion to the U.S.—

The Speaker: I apologize for interrupting the hon. Leader of the Opposition, but apparently the interpretation is not working.

It is working now.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition, from the top.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, one day after the Prime Minister went to the White House, promising that he would fight for Canadian workers, we learn from the U.S. commerce secretary that there will be no relief for Canadian finished automobiles. This is after 700 Oshawa GM workers lost their jobs, with \$4 billion of GM money going to the U.S.; 900 CAMI workers in Ingersoll lost their jobs, with those jobs going to the U.S.; and 150 workers at Stellantis were sent home, while \$8 billion of Stellantis money goes to the U.S.

The Prime Minister failed to stand up for auto workers yesterday. Will he do so now?

• (1455)

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that the Prime Minister and the president had a very productive discussion yesterday on steel, on aluminum and on energy for the benefit of the Canadian economy. On auto, I remind my colleague of the president's words: "we want Canada to do well making cars, so...we'll get there."

I encourage the Leader of the Opposition to take a look at Ford Canada in my riding of Oakville and to realize that on this side of the House, we are building—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister refused to stand up for our auto workers, and today he refuses to stand up for our auto workers. How can he sit right there while the U.S. commerce secretary just came out and said the 25% tariffs will stay in place?

Despite the Prime Minister's concession after concession, like how he backed down on countertariffs, backed down on the DST and yesterday offered \$1 trillion of Canadian investment money, still he cannot win anything for our auto workers.

What does the Prime Minister say to the thousands of auto workers who are out of work because of his weakness?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we have at this point with the United States for the auto sector is the lowest tariff in the world: less than 10%. That is lower than Europe's, lower than Korea's and lower than Japan's. We have the lowest tariffs, and we are still negotiating, because as the president said yesterday, "[The Prime Minister of Canada is] a tough negotiator".

We will get a great deal for automotive.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, give me a trillion dollars, and even I will say something nice about the Prime Minister. How much is it going to cost to pay Canadian investment dollars to flatter the Prime Minister's ego?

It would make us laugh if it did not make us cry, but how will the workers in Ingersoll, in Windsor and in Oshawa who have lost their jobs after the Prime Minister promised to protect them ever trust the Prime Minister again after he betrayed them?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one thing that Canadians know, from Ingersoll to Windsor, Oakville and Oshawa, is that on this side of the House we will not let Canadians down. We have the strategic fund putting billions of dollars to support auto workers and the auto sector. We are supporting the agri-food business, and we will always be there for Canadian workers as well.

On this side of the House, we are about diversifying supply chains and supporting Canadians while we get the best deal possible for this country.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is really pathetic that the Prime Minister will not stand up for auto workers in the House of Commons, just like he refused to stand up for them yesterday. We have thousands of auto workers who have lost their jobs since the Prime Minister promised to protect them. These families are sitting around their tables, wondering what is going to happen to them. They are among the 86,000 Canadians who have lost their jobs, leading to the second-highest unemployment of any country in the G7.

We have record lineups at food banks, and the Prime Minister is giving away \$1 trillion in investment to the U.S., while people here cannot even pay their bills. Why will he not stand up now?

• (1500)

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives on standing up for Canadian businesses and Canadian workers. Every opportunity they have to vote in favour of Canadians, whether it is pharmacare, whether it is dental care, whether it is the Canada child benefit, they vote against it.

On this side of the House, whether it is the auto sector, whether it is energy, whether it is steel, whether it is aluminum, we will get the best deal for this country. We will always be there for Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think we are beginning to see how it is that the president has been able to bulldoze the Prime Minister. He will not even stand up when he is confronted by the Americans. Just over an hour ago, a report came out that the U.S. commerce secretary said that

Oral Questions

there will be no relief for Canadian-made automobiles going into the United States.

The Prime Minister has backed down on countertariffs, backed down on the GST and backed down on defence. Yesterday, he promised to push \$1 trillion of private sector investment out of our country.

How is the Prime Minister going to look those Canadian auto workers in the eye to tell them how he got nothing for them in return?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a sad day in the House when the Leader of the Opposition suggests that standing up for the defence of this country is backing down on defence, when the Leader of the Opposition suggests that spending more to defend our borders and spending to defend our fulfillment in NATO is backing down on defence.

We have the lowest tariff on auto—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at least the Prime Minister finally got up, but he did not address the question about auto workers. There are auto workers who are sitting at home right now who do not know how they are going to pay their mortgages. The Prime Minister looked them in the eye and said he was going to protect their jobs. Then he said he would put his elbows up. Then he said he would get a win by July 21. Then he said that he would have a deal. There has been no deal. There has been no win. Now, for these workers, there is no job.

Today, we learned that he is backing down again on auto tariffs. Why is it that he is selling out our auto workers at a time when they need him most?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Japan, the European Union, the United Kingdom and every other country in the world are paying higher tariffs than Canada has gotten on automobiles. We are not done. That is why we have not signed an accord on auto. That is why we are fighting hard for our auto workers. I put the president on notice yesterday about the consequences of not having that accord.

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Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the president has been warned: If he puts in another tariff, the Prime Minister is going to give him yet another \$1 trillion. This is the tough negotiator we hired, the guy who broke his promise to have a deal on July 21, the guy who broke his promise to negotiate a win and who simultaneously removed the countertariffs while he was giving speeches promising to have them in place. Yesterday, he offered more concessions to the U.S. president, knowing that the tariffs that are killing our auto sector would stay in place.

Why does he always back down and give our jobs to the Americans instead of standing up for Canada?

• (1505)

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important for the entire House to understand that we have a strategy with the United States. That means that our auto sector is paying less than a 10% tariff, when Japan, Europe, the U.K. and the rest of the world is paying 15%, which is bigger than 10%, or higher. We are not done yet, because we refuse to sign a deal that is not bettering the interests of Canadians. That is what we are fighting for.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he is already signing a deal that makes us worse off because he makes concession after concession while getting nothing in return. Yesterday, he announced that his policies will drive \$1 trillion of private sector money out of our country as part of the agreement that he is going to sign with the United States. That means factories and plants closing in Canada, most of all in our auto sector, which is on the verge of being wiped out after he promised to save it.

Can the Prime Minister tell me if he demanded that the president lift all tariffs on Canadian auto, yes or no?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our agreement yesterday, between the president and myself, is to focus now on steel, aluminum and energy, which are the building blocks of our broader competitiveness, including our auto sector. Those negotiations on auto continue from a position that is the strongest in the world, as 10% is less than 15%, which is less than 25%, which is less than 50%.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, zero is the paycheque that those workers who have lost their jobs are getting right now.

Seventh is last place in the G7 when it comes to growth or, in this case, negative growth. The Prime Minister has to get his excuses straight. He blames the tariffs for the fact that we have the second-highest unemployment in the G7 and the fastest-shrinking economy, and then he claims at the same time that the tariffs are really not so bad. Which is it?

Why is our economy so weak? Is it because of his diplomatic failings abroad or his disastrous economic policies at home?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have been saying all this year, long before the Leader of the

Opposition caught up, the U.S. has fundamentally changed its trading policy with everyone. It is a rupture. In that environment, Canada has the best deal. What we are doing is controlling what we can control, which is building Canada strong.

On November 4, that side of the House is going to have a chance to decide whether they are going to build alongside Canadians, a generational investment in an ambitious future for our country.

* * *

• (1510)

[*Translation*]

JUSTICE

Lisa Hefner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, hate-motivated crimes are not like other crimes. They aim to divide people, spread fear and destroy the social fabric that unites our communities. Too often, these unacceptable acts go undetected or under-reported.

Could the Minister of Justice explain how creating a specific offence for hate crimes would make it easier to identify, condemn and punish these attacks?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Hamilton Mountain for her question and for her work on the justice file.

A hate crime is targeted not at an individual but at an entire community. With this bill, we are creating a specific offence for hate crimes. We are adding the Supreme Court of Canada's definition of "hatred" to the Criminal Code. Once passed, the law will help condemn hate, punish the perpetrators and protect our communities. Our Liberal government keeps its promises.

Hate has no place in Canada. Canadians deserve to feel safe. I sincerely hope that all parties in the House of Commons will support this very important bill.

* * *

[*English*]

EMPLOYMENT

Matt Strauss (Kitchener South—Hespeler, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised to create jobs in Canada, but since he became Prime Minister, we have lost 86,000 jobs, which is a promise broken. He promised to increase investment in Canada, but since he became Prime Minister, we lost \$54 billion of investment to the United States, which is another promise broken. Yesterday, we all watched in shock as he promised another \$1 trillion of Canadian investment money to the United States.

I hope it is not the case that the Prime Minister plans to keep his promise to Donald Trump after breaking his promises to Canadians. How many jobs will it cost us if he does?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that member is new to the chamber, so maybe he does not know the record of the party he sits with. The Conservatives have voted consistently against the interests of Canadians. Not only that, but they fought against Canadians' rights. Whether it is labour rights, the right to retire at a decent age, or the right to raise our children with the resources we need, these Conservatives have voted against Canadians, and that is why Canadians do not trust them. On this side, they trust the Prime Minister to get the job done.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the other hand, the minister is not a new member, so she should know her own record, which is 86,000 job losses under the Prime Minister alone, and Canada has the worst youth unemployment rate in over 25 years. Job numbers come out again this Friday, and the situation continues to get grimmer. Witnesses at our parliamentary public hearings on youth unemployment were very clear yesterday that it is not a wealth distribution problem. It is a wealth creation problem, and the Prime Minister wants to send another \$1 trillion to the United States.

Why is the Prime Minister breaking his promises and continuing to ship jobs south of the border?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, youth would be disappointed to know that that member voted against their interests time and time again, whether it was for skills training, whether it was Canada summer jobs or whether it was for investments in research and innovation. I sure hope the nature of that question means he will vote for this budget, because we are going to invest in Canadians, and Canadians know that.

[Translation]

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, how can the Liberals applaud today? The Prime Minister himself has admitted to us that today is a very sad day.

Let us look at the broken promises. He promised to create jobs. As it turns out, 86,000 jobs have been lost. That is a failure. He promised to grow the economy. As it turns out, we have the second-highest unemployment rate in the G7. That is a failure. He promised to catalyze Canadian investments to protect our jobs. As it turns out, \$54 million in investments are leaving Canada and heading to the United States.

Will the Prime Minister ever keep his promises?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of good news to come, and there will be even more on November 4.

My colleague should know that the first measure our government put forward affected 22 million Canadians. I am sure that my colleague must be telling everyone in his riding that, thanks to the Liberal government, 22 million Canadians are now paying less tax.

Oral Questions

On November 4, we will have generational investments and even more good news from that day forward. We will build a strong country, a prosperous country. Together, we will build Canada strong.

* * *

● (1515)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the recent G7 Leaders' Summit, Canada clearly stated that it would be a leader in the global race for critical minerals. Critical minerals are an essential part of manufacturing electric vehicles, clean technologies and information technologies. Controlling critical minerals also means ensuring good jobs for the middle class and economic security for our country.

Can the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources tell us how the Canadian government is asserting its leadership in critical minerals for the benefit of Quebecers and all other Canadians?

[English]

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government's commitment to making Canada a leader in critical minerals is being put into action. This weekend, I was in beautiful Saguenay, where we announced that Arianne Phosphate has been approved for a \$735,000 NRCan research grant.

By investing in resilient and sustainable Canadian critical minerals and mineral processing, we are putting Canadians to work, securing Canadian sovereignty and seizing an opportunity to make Canada a clean and conventional energy superpower.

* * *

FIREARMS

Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' \$742-million gun grab continues to be mired in controversy after the minister admitted on leaked audio that it will not work. In Cape Breton, residents are angered by the program being launched, and the local police union was left in the dark and not consulted. Now we find out that the Liberal minister is the brother-in-law of the police chief overseeing the program.

Will the Liberals now admit that the only way they can get police forces to participate is to hire their family?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me just remind the party opposite that the Mass Casualty Commission in Nova Scotia recommended that governments take decisive action to take assault-style firearms off our streets. It is a critical part of the work of ensuring the safety and security of our communities.

I want to thank the people of Cape Breton for the pilot program. I know that the police chief and men and women in uniform are very much engaged in this process.

The pilot is working. I look forward to reporting back to the House on its progress. I also look forward to the expansion of the program nationwide.

* * *

NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, this weekend, eminent Arctic expert Professor Franklyn Griffiths wrote that Canada needs to consider the possibility that the U.S. President will without our permission send American warships through the Northwest Passage as a show of force. He asked a very pertinent question: What will Canada do? He asked whether the Prime Minister would be prepared to start by thanking the Inuit people of Nunavut for protecting Canadian sovereignty through the assertion of Inuit ownership of those lands.

Will the Prime Minister respond to that brilliant suggestion?

Hon. Rebecca Chartrand (Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our new government is strengthening Arctic security by investing in people, infrastructure and partnerships that protect Canada's sovereignty and support resilient communities. We are working with indigenous governments and territorial partners to ensure Canada's presence in the north is secure, visible and enduring. That means investments in dual-use infrastructure like ports, airstrips, bridges and clean energy. That reinforces defence priorities and lasting benefits to communities in the north.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1520)

*[English]***STRENGTHENING CANADA'S IMMIGRATION SYSTEM AND BORDERS ACT**

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-12, An Act respecting certain measures relating to the security of Canada's borders and the integrity of the Canadian immigration system and respecting other related security measures.

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

UKRAINIAN HERITAGE MONTH ACT

Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.) moved that Bill S-210, An Act respecting Ukrainian Heritage Month, be read the first time.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce Bill S-210. If passed, the bill would declare September as Ukrainian heritage month across Canada every year.

I would like to thank Senator Kutcher for introducing this bill in the other place and the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore for cosponsoring it.

Since 1891, Ukrainians have been coming to Canada. Most were very poor, but they carried with them something very important: a relentless work ethic and a resolve to preserve their Ukrainian heritage. Today, there are over 1.3 million Canadians of Ukrainian heritage. Ukrainian Canadians have made and continue to make an important contribution to our country that spans communities from coast to coast to coast.

It has never been more important for us to pass this bill than it is today. As we speak, Russia is attempting not only to conquer Ukraine, but to destroy the very heritage that this bill aims to honour, which generations of Ukrainian Canadians worked so hard to preserve.

Ukrainian heritage month would give us a special opportunity to honour Ukrainian heritage, honour the role that Ukrainian Canadians have played in Canada and honour the role that Canada has played in supporting Ukrainian Canadians.

Slava Kanadi. Slava Ukraini.

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

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PETITIONS**PUBLIC SAFETY**

Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to present a petition on behalf of the people of Riding Mountain.

The people of Swan River are experiencing an alarming increase in violent crime, which has threatened the safety and well-being of families across our region. A recent report by the Manitoba west district RCMP found that over an 18-month period, four offenders in Swan River were responsible for 239 offences.

The petitioners continue to suffer the consequences of soft-on-crime Liberal policies like Bill C-5, which repealed mandatory jail time for serious crimes, and Bill C-75, which forces judges to release repeat violent offenders right back onto the streets. The petitioners of Swan Valley want to see an end to the Liberals' reckless catch-and-release policies so that criminals can stay behind bars. That is why the people of Swan River are demanding jail, not bail, for violent repeat offenders.

I support the good people of Swan River.

STUDY PERMITS

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present e-petition 6522, which is signed by over 500 Canadians who are deeply concerned about recent federal policy changes that reduced international student study permits by over 40% and restricted post-graduation work permit eligibility without stakeholder consultation.

The petitioners warn that these cuts undermine Canada's ability to meet urgent workforce needs in health care, education, technology and the skilled trades. They note that universities and colleges, already underfunded, now face layoffs, program losses and reduced accessibility. The policy also destabilizes immigration pathways, delays certification for newcomers and threatens Canada's reputation as a global leader in education.

The petitioners call on the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to amend these caps, restore alignment with labour force needs, increase federal funding for post-secondary education, support affordable student housing and defend the vital role of higher learning education in Canada's economic future.

● (1525)

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Kanata, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to present a petition on behalf of the residents of Kanata.

This petition, to date, has over 1,000 signatures from individuals who have expressed concerns about the situation in Iran and are seeking government support for family members who are already lawfully in Canada. They share that the current situation has created severe consequences for families: years of waiting and uncertainty, an inability to plan for the future and being separated from loved ones. This results in emotional distress and financial hardship for families here that are trying to build stable lives in Canada.

The petitioners also share that many have been invited by the Canadian government to apply for permanent residency, but their applications have been prolonged by federal security screening. Their petition seeks to resolve these lengthy delays by issuing timely temporary resident work and study permits to immediate family members of Iranian nationals who are lawfully here in Canada.

I am happy to table this petition today to ensure that their voices are heard.

JUSTICE

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to present a petition on behalf of the residents of Saskatoon West. These are residents of Fairhaven, Meadowgreen, Parkridge and Confederation Park in Saskatoon who are concerned about crime in the city. Violent crime is up 10% in Saskatoon, with an increase in assaults, murders and robberies. Saskatoon has had 14 homicides in 2024, an almost 15% increase from the number of murders committed in 2023. As a result, these residents feel unsafe in their homes.

The petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to reform the catch-and-release bail system to prevent dangerous repeat and violent offenders from serving their sentences in their commu-

Routine Proceedings

nity; to establish new indictable offences, reporting obligations and limitations on weapons possession for previous offenders who break conditions; and to pass legislation so that an accused charged more than twice with certain indictable offences must be detained in custody while subject to a summons, an appearance notice or a release order.

I support this petition.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I will remind members that we do not endorse petitions.

The hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House today to present e-petition 45-1, initiated by one of my constituents, Ms. Jenny Perez, a passionate advocate for children's online safety. This petition has garnered the support of nearly 2,000 Canadians, including parents and concerned citizens from coast to coast.

The petitioners draw attention to the growing concern that smart phones are becoming a gateway to harmful content for Canadian youth. They note that the majority of children now own a device by the age of 12. They further raise concerns about algorithm-driven social media platforms, which are designed to maximize user engagement, often in ways that can be addictive and detrimental to the emotional and mental well-being of young people.

The petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to raise the minimum age for social media use to 16 through mandatory age-verification systems and meaningful enforcement measures, similar to recent actions taken by countries like Australia, and to strengthen the privacy rights of minors under the age of 18 by ensuring that social media companies are prohibited from collecting, storing and sharing personal data from youth, including data gathered through age-verification technologies.

CANADA POST

William Stevenson (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to present a petition on behalf of the citizens of Yellowhead.

Government Orders

A growing number of taxpaying residents of the Ghost Valley and Waiparous area, including Benchlands, the Summer Village of Waiparous, Ghost Country Place, Pearce Place and households along Richard Road, require access to a functional postal code in order to fully participate in modern daily life. Postal codes are essential for accessing critical services. Residents need them for claims for rural status, filing taxes with the CRA, opening bank accounts, registering children for school, shopping online, requesting supplies for delivery and reporting utility outages. The absence of a functional postal code creates unnecessary barriers for residents and undermines their ability to access basic services that other Canadians take for granted.

The government must provide a functional postal code for the communities in Waiparous and Ghost Valley.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today with a petition from the residents of Saanich—Gulf Islands who express concern about the electoral system. They cite a number of statistics on the level of public support across Canada in response to the distorted electoral results that have occurred due to the first-past-the-post voting system. The petitioners favour a form of national citizens' assembly to review our electoral process and give the citizens of this country a leadership role in determining the shape of electoral reform.

The petitioners call on the House of Commons to take action to move toward a citizens' assembly and ensure it completes its work within 12 months.

• (1530)

SOCIAL MEDIA

Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today, along with my colleague in the Liberal Party, to present a petition representing the voices of many parents across the country who are concerned about social media use and smart phone use by children, especially those much younger than 18 years old.

These parents have recognized that smart phones have become a direct gateway to harmful content for children. They are addictive. Algorithm-driven social media platforms are designed solely to increase engagement and push some harmful content at children. Parents face significant challenges in controlling their children's own use of smart phones and their activities online.

These parents are asking the government to raise the minimum age for social media and to secure privacy rights for youth under 18 so that social media companies cannot use any data collected from children under the age of 18.

ELECTORAL BALLOTS

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to present my first petition as the member of Parliament for Brandon—Souris.

It is e-petition 6573, initiated by constituent River Klassen and signed by hundreds of Canadians. It calls for action to address the morally bankrupt stunts of the longest ballot committee, which pre-

dominantly harm the ability of seniors and those with disabilities to cast their vote.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on the procedure and House affairs committee to address the recommendations in this petition.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

MILITARY JUSTICE MODERNIZATION ACT

The House resumed from October 6 consideration of the motion that Bill C-11, An Act to amend the National Defence Act and other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are resuming the debate from two days ago on a very important bill about a very sensitive subject. We must be serious and rigorous in doing this work, since it concerns misconduct in our armed forces, more specifically, sexual assault. That is why we need to take the time to do things right.

This is an important issue. Every time the army has been faced with an internal problem, it has been able to take control of the situation and deal with it properly. Two days ago, I was talking about some sad events that took place in the 1970s in Loretteville, where I live. Alcoholism was a serious problem for many of our soldiers at the time. People died as a result, and the army took the situation in hand and corrected the problem.

It was the same thing later on, in the mid-1990s. Sadly, members will recall that the internal traditions of the Canadian Army's para-trooper unit were resulting in inappropriate behaviour. Crimes were also committed when this unit was operating in Somalia. Once again, when the army was faced with an ethical issue, people acted appropriately, and things have improved since then.

From 2015 to 2025, we have been grappling with the issue of sexual misconduct by some of our military personnel. I say from 2015 to 2025 because it is important to remember that, during this period, three reports were produced on the same subject, and the conditions were the same.

The first report was tabled by retired Supreme Court Justice Deschamps in 2015. It contained 10 recommendations for addressing the scourge of sexual misconduct. Unfortunately, the government that was elected a few months later failed to act for years. Five years later, another investigation was conducted and it reached the same conclusions, namely that the problem had to be addressed. Subsequently, a third report recommended taking action.

All of this coincided with the sad episode involving Canada's number one soldier, General Vance, who was facing such accusations. What started as rumours became allegations; testimony was given, a trial was held and a decision was rendered.

It was time for the government to take action. We might even say that we wasted 10 years before doing the right thing in this case. Nevertheless, some progress has been made because of all the attention this issue has received. What the government is currently proposing deserves attention, of course. Fundamentally, we agree. That is why we are going to work hard on this bill in committee.

● (1535)

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate some of the comments the member has made not only just now but also when he introduced his comments the other day.

As the member just said, the principle of the legislation, which takes sexual harassment and assault out of the military court system and puts it into the civil system, is something that, it would appear when listening to all the debate, everyone inside the House wants to support.

If he supports the principle of it, would the member not agree to get into some of the details? This is not to prevent debate, but, in order to get into some of the details, it might be a good thing to see it go to committee, where we will have ample time for more debate.

After that, there will be more debate once it gets to third reading.

G rard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, obviously, as I said earlier, we agree with the principle of this bill, which addresses this serious issue.

With all respect to my veteran colleague, I just want to tell the member that he and the government should have done something 10 years ago. Unfortunately, they delayed and delayed. As said clearly by a colleague in the Bloc Qu b cois two days ago, who ex-

Government Orders

pressed the time frame of everything exactly, we have seen a cover-up by the government.

Yes, I welcome the comment by my colleague, but he should have done that 10 years ago.

[*Translation*]

Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is true that it has been 10 years. That was the timeline we saw with the Liberals.

My hon. colleague and I worked together on this file, and I remember studying this issue. With all due respect, I would like to ask him a question. Who appointed Mr. Vance 10 years ago? Was it not the Conservatives?

G rard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, on April 12, 2021, the Bloc enabled the Liberals to stop the work being done at the committee with respect to Mr. Vance.

The reality is that all parliamentarians are united in facing the challenge posed by this bill. We must tackle this sad and unfortunate reality head-on in order to fix the problems associated with sexual misconduct. This needs to be properly studied in parliamentary committee.

As we have seen over time, particularly on April 12, 2021, the committee was unable to do its work because members of the Liberal Party and the Bloc Qu b cois decided to shut down the proceedings.

[*English*]

Eric Melillo (Kenora—Kiiwetinoong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the great work of the member.

In sharing his comments, the member spoke a bit about the intent and principle behind this bill versus what the bill actually achieves. I am just wondering if he wants to add any more comments to that.

G rard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his hard work in his riding and here in the House of Commons. I remember pretty well when he got elected for the first time. I had some responsibility at that time to welcome him, and I was very proud to welcome him. I am prouder than ever to see that he is doing a very good job here in the House of Commons and also in his riding.

For sure, we all share the same principle of having to stop the sexual assaults and all that stuff in the army. Everybody agrees with that. With the colours that we defend here, we fight for the will of the people. The best way to address this issue will be in the committee, where we will study it correctly.

● (1540)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, just six months ago, we had a new Prime Minister elected here in Canada, with a new government. He has brought forward this legislation, so I think it is good timing.

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With that as background, would the member not agree that, in principle, if we support it, we should get it to committee stage, where it can be thoroughly discussed? Ultimately, we can get it back for third reading, when we can have a lot more debate.

G rard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, this should have been done 10 years ago.

[*Translation*]

Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saying that I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague, the member for Laurentides—Labelle.

Today, we are talking about Bill C-11, the military justice system modernization act. This is an issue that I have been following since the beginning of my first term. As the Bloc Qu b cois critic for the status of women, I have had to take a stand on this issue and study it at not one but two committees, namely the Standing Committee on the Status of Women and the Standing Committee on National Defence, which is why this reform is so important to me.

I will begin with a bit of background. Next, I will address the issue of women in the Canadian Armed Forces and the fact that they are victims of a closed system. I will then talk about the Liberals' inaction and the Conservatives' silence. I will also address the Bloc Qu b cois's position, and I will close with a few statistics.

Bill C-11 seeks to modernize the military justice system and remove the military's jurisdiction over sexual offences committed in Canada. This is a direct response to the 2022 Arbour report and the 2021 Fish report, which were released after decades of sexual misconduct scandals in the Canadian Armed Forces. Justice Arbour called out the military's culture of sexism and silence, where women were afraid to come forward.

The Bloc Qu b cois will support the principle of Bill C-11 so that it can be studied in committee, but we denounce the past inaction of Liberal and Conservative governments. We are looking forward to a more in-depth study of this bill because our goal is ultimately to ensure that justice is independent, credible and sensitive to the realities of victims. This topic was the subject of two studies at the Standing Committee on National Defence, where I witnessed Liberal filibustering that was quite striking. At the time, I was replacing my colleague, the member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verch res. This situation led to this file being submitted to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women for a study in hopes that the less partisan spirit of this committee would lead to the creation of a report, while everything was at a standstill at the Standing Committee on National Defence.

Since the Deschamps report in 2015, all reports have pointed to the same culture of misogyny and impunity. Some have even drawn parallels with the #MeToo movement of victims speaking out. Mr. Vance, Mr. McDonald, Mr. Sajjan and Mr. Trudeau are concrete examples of political leaders failing to bring about real cultural change in the armed forces. Despite the announcements and Operation Honour, victims continued to be betrayed by the chain of command. Ironically, in July 2015, despite the allegations against Vance, he was appointed chief of the defence staff and put in charge of this operation. That is just insane. The Bloc Qu b cois maintains that no credible reform can be achieved without an independent

military justice system. That is the main idea we heard during the two studies.

Women in the armed forces have been the victims of a closed system. Jonathan Vance is the symbol of this contradiction: He was leading the fight against sexual misconduct while being accused of it himself. Victims feared repercussions on their careers, and investigations were often biased or hushed up. That is what we heard from witnesses. What is changing with Bill C-11 is that sexual crimes are being transferred to civilian courts. This is a major step forward. It will end the conflicts of interest, as investigations will be conducted by civilian police. The bill provides for the independent appointment of key military justice actors, such as the provost marshal, the director of military prosecutions, and the director of defence counsel services. It also provides for the introduction of a liaison officer for victims, ensuring more compassionate support. Finally, it ensures that provisions on criminal offences and publication bans align with the Criminal Code.

However, women are still waiting for meaningful culture change, which includes respect, listening and transparency. They want mandatory training for civilian prosecutors on military realities and trauma. They are waiting for stable and predictable funding for victim services. They also want rigorous monitoring of the implementation of the Arbour report.

• (1545)

Madam Arbour said she was surprised when she was contacted and responded that she thought the work had already been done with the previous report. She finally tabled her own report in May 2022.

I would now like to address the Conservatives' silence and the Liberals' inaction. As I said earlier, the Conservatives appointed Mr. Vance, despite the allegations that had already been made against him. The Liberals were warned by their ombudsman, and they refused to intervene for years. In 2019, they even raised Mr. Vance's salary retroactively to 2018. The government finally took action, but only after pressure from the media and the public, particularly following a Global News article in February 2021.

In the meantime, women saw their careers destroyed, their mental health compromised and their trust broken. I remember the testimony of St phanie Raymond, a former CAF master corporal, who was so courageous throughout this whole affair. She appeared before the committee and shared her terrible ordeal.

The Bloc Qu b cois supports the principle of Bill C-11 at second reading. However, the Bloc Qu b cois is demanding that justice be independent and transparent. We also want a feminist and inclusive approach to implementation, as well as collaboration with Quebec and the provinces and territories in order to align services. This is important. We often say that, while it is good to identify the situation and have a Criminal Code, the implementation of everything that has to do with the justice system is the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces and territories. This is important to keep in mind. We must fight against sexual violence by listening and being respectful and fair. Quebec and the provinces are responsible for providing appropriate psychological and social support and social services for victims.

We must also be conscious of intersectional realities. Women, LGBTQ communities, indigenous people and people with disabilities often do not share the same circumstances. At the end of the day, what the Bloc Québécois wants is culture change. There is no other way to tackle an issue as serious as a culture of misogyny and toxic masculinity. The Bloc Québécois called for a complete culture change in sport, and we are doing the same thing now for the armed forces, because women deserve to feel safe in that space.

I have a number of statistics to share about sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces: 7.5% of women in the regular force were sexually assaulted in 2022, compared to 2.8% of men; 27.3% of women reported being sexually assaulted at least once in their military career; 64% of victims did not report the incident to an authority; 41% said they did not speak up because they feared retaliation, and others were convinced that it would not make any difference. About 86% of assaults occurred in the military workplace. In 2017-18, disciplinary action for sexual harassment was taken in only 20 cases, which is paltry.

Intersectional data is also available for LGBTQ+ communities. I would like to mention that some non-heterosexual military members report higher rates of assault and that 67% of members have witnessed discriminatory or sexualized behaviour, often related to gender or sexual identity. The LGBT purge left a dismal legacy: From 1950 to 1990, hundreds of soldiers and police officers were fired for their sexual orientation. I want to thank the members of the Fondation Émergence who came to my office here in Ottawa and filled me in on this sad story. I also want to acknowledge Martine Roy, an activist and former member of the armed forces. She said that the military justice system needs to be improved to make it fair and reliable, to strengthen support for victims, which is essential, and to give civilian authorities the jurisdiction to investigate and prosecute Criminal Code sexual offences committed in Canada. These are all important messages.

● (1550)

In closing, here are some more important facts: 19% of military personnel were exposed to sexualized or discriminatory behaviour in the previous year, 34% of them being women. The reported rate of assault has increased since 2016, rising from 1.7% to 3.5% in 2022. Only 21% of victims reported the incidents, down from 2018. Sixty-one per cent agree that sexual misconduct remains a major problem. Young people, indigenous women, people with disabilities and LGBTQ members are the most at risk.

Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Shefford for her very informed speech. She is always very well prepared for all the debates she takes part in.

I am pleased that she mentioned in her speech that the Bloc Québécois supports this bill in principle. As I said, my colleague always backs up what she says in her speeches with facts and figures.

Beyond supporting this bill in principle, does my colleague have any specific proposals for improving it?

Andréanne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, in my speech, I mentioned some proposals. What women are still waiting for is a real culture change, so there is some action that can be taken.

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We also want civilian prosecutors to receive mandatory training on military realities and trauma. It is all well and good to set up independent tribunals, but we must also proactively educate people to ensure that they are truly aware of the different realities faced by military personnel. I am thinking in particular of PTSD, a reality we can openly talk about now, as well as mental health. It is therefore essential to provide better training, as well as stable and predictable funding for victim services, which is something we are still waiting for.

Careful oversight is also needed. Some of the recommendations from the Arbour report have not been addressed in the bill. Perhaps an analysis should be done to determine what is in the bill and what is missing from it.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in her speech, my colleague did a good job summarizing the Bloc Québécois's position, which is what I will be standing up for at the Standing Committee on National Defence when this bill is studied there, probably soon.

In short, we are thinking that it is about time. We will not say it is too little, too late. It took a while, but at least there is something now. While it is far from perfect, we applaud the intent.

What does my colleague think about how long this took and the fact that General Vance was able to be hired, reappointed and even given a raise, by bipartisan consensus, when there were known internal allegations of misconduct?

Andréanne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, that question from my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton is important and essential. My colleague will be the one who will be able to propose improvements to this bill in committee on behalf of the Bloc Québécois.

As I said, issues related to purges and cases of assault have existed within the armed forces for decades. These situations have dragged on. Although the Conservatives knew about them in 2015, they still appointed Mr. Vance. Subsequently, despite what the Liberals knew, they kept him on and even gave him a raise.

If the media had not exposed the situation in February 2021, would the Conservatives or Liberals ever have voluntarily taken action, or would they have continued to sweep it under the rug and hide this culture that needs to change?

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important for all of us to realize that we have substantive legislation before us that would take cases out of military jurisdiction and put them in civilian jurisdiction. We have been waiting a long time for this. We have a new Prime Minister who was just elected a number of months ago, and he has made this a high priority.

Government Orders

Would the member not agree that we can continue to have the debates and discussions at committee, and that if there is a need for amendments, at least there is an opportunity to propose those amendments? After all, it will come back to the House for third reading, where we can continue to debate it. Would she not agree that timely passage to committee would be helpful in dealing with this issue?

• (1555)

[*Translation*]

Andréanne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, we still have to do the work in a reasonable and rigorous manner in committee, as the Bloc Québécois always does.

What we do know is that the media reported on this story in 2021, and it is now 2025. Things need to change.

Among other things, the Quebec government's report on rebuilding trust recommended the creation of independent tribunals and the transfer to the civil system. This was requested by many victims during their testimony. It is one way to restore victims' confidence in the system so that they feel truly listened to and so that they no longer believe that the armed forces system is about friends protecting friends.

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, it is my turn to address the House, and I do so as the Bloc Québécois critic for veterans affairs.

Because of my background in psychosociology, I see victims in a very specific light. The Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs is looking at various issues facing veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder. For instance, these men and women may attempt suicide or develop substance abuse problems in response to the trauma they have experienced.

Bill C-11, which we have been discussing for several days now, deals with a truly important topic. We must address it seriously and with empathy, and honestly, we need to consider the purpose of the bill from an intellectual perspective. As I was saying, we need to address this topic with the dignity and respect it deserves.

That is my hope today as I address all my colleagues. Bill C-11, or the military justice system modernization act, seeks to address gaps and systemic wrongs that directly affect the lives of many women and men.

For the record, I would like to highlight an important article published in April 2014 in *L'actualité* by Alec Castonguay and Noémi Mercier, which alerted us to cases of sexual misconduct. The article talks about Lise Gauthier, a 51-year-old woman from Sherbrooke who spent half her life in the Canadian Armed Forces. I would like to quote the first paragraph of the article: "Lise Gauthier does not have enough fingers to count the number of times that she was raped, assaulted or sexually harassed by her fellow soldiers."

On March 27, 2015, former justice Marie Deschamps released a scathing report on sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces. This report discusses the existence of a sexist culture, as my colleague the member for Shefford would say. I would like to think that this culture does not exist anymore.

The military turned a blind eye to these inappropriate behaviours for many years, starting in the backrooms. I think everyone knows about Jonathan Vance, who has been the subject of much discussion. He had just been appointed the future chief of the defence staff. At the time, the investigations went nowhere. The system was protecting itself.

In 2018, military ombudsman Gary Walbourne held a private meeting with the then minister of national defence, Mr. Sajjan. Mr. Walbourne tried to discuss a case of sexual misconduct involving Mr. Vance. The victim had decided not to pursue the matter out of fear of retaliation. It was hoped that Mr. Sajjan would intervene to protect the victim, who was Mr. Vance's subordinate. He could have easily derailed her career.

• (1600)

The crux of the matter is that the chief of the defence staff was at the centre of the military prosecution process. That does not even meet minimum ethical standards. He then became toxic toward anyone who had the misfortune of being in his sights or who spoke out about issues. To be clear, I would call it a military #MeToo.

The then minister of defence, a career soldier, wanted to protect chief of the defence staff, General Vance. What is more, he gave him a \$50,000 pay raise. He did not just turn a blind eye. He did worse than that. Let us put ourselves in the victims' shoes for a moment. They must have thought that something did not add up and that things did not make sense. How must they have felt knowing that their attacker was Canada's highest-ranking military officer and that he was untouchable, and then finding out that, on top of that, the minister was going to give him a pay raise? A person cannot be both judge and jury.

I think of all those who have chosen to enlist in the Canadian Armed Forces. We can only commend them for their decision with dignity and respect. Whether they are actively serving, reservists, or even retired from the forces, we owe them respect, and above all, we must protect their dignity.

It is always good to get back to the heart of the matter. Dignity is an intrinsic value of being human. It is what makes people worthy of respect, regardless of their circumstances, actions or social position. With that as our moral foundation, every person must be treated with dignity, never simply as a means to an end. These women and men were not treated with dignity.

Bill C-11 aims to close this appalling loophole where man and system are one and the same. Under this bill, the government would select the provost marshal of the Canadian Armed Forces, the director of military prosecutions and the director of defence counsel services.

This would transform the appointment process into a political process instead of leaving it in the hands of military leadership. These individuals would therefore be immune from any form of blackmail. This is what I want to draw my colleagues' attention to. Jonathan Vance, who had sexual relations with a subordinate, allegedly boasted about how the victim could not file a complaint because he had full control over military investigations.

As I said at the outset, we are currently studying suicide prevention at the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. We are talking about the trauma experienced by our veterans. I have one major wish. Now that we are closing this gap, it is essential to respectfully provide these people with all the necessary services and supports. They have serious needs.

• (1605)

Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am deeply grateful for the support of my colleague from Laurentides—Labelle. She listed the reasons why these sexual offence complaints need to be handled by civilian courts.

She talked about the importance of implementing policies that support military members and veterans who intend to file complaints. Would she be able to elaborate on the type of policy she would like to see proposed when the bill is studied in committee?

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Mr. Speaker, we simply need to look at how the complaints process works. Even here, in the House of Commons, we have a system that prevents us from being unethical and stopping anyone from reporting an incident and filing a complaint. The process will be specifically designed to allow the people who examine and analyze these situations to function as a wholly separate and impartial justice system.

[English]

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the Bloc for her work with veterans. When she is at the national defence committee, she always has a lot to contribute to the discussion.

I would like to ask the member whether she has some of the concerns Conservatives have, which are that the civilian criminal justice system has been undermined by the Liberals, and because of Bill C-75 and Bill C-5, when someone is charged with sexual assault, sexual exploitation or sexual human trafficking, they can serve their sentence under house arrest.

Would the requirements for lax sentencing given out by the civil courts, whether provincial or federal, undermine the ability to get justice for victims of military sexual trauma as we move cases from the military court to civilian courts?

[Translation]

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Mr. Speaker, I would rather not go into detail on that, because, on top of everything, based on what we are hearing at the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs in particular, there is a knowledge gap when it comes to the services available and the process for either filing a complaint or pursuing legal action. We need to take stock, to determine whether we have everything we need to support victims and decide how we will do that in a respectful and dignified manner, as I said earlier.

[English]

Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to me, what seems to underscore the very importance of the bill is the fact that certain issues could be separated from the military justice system and put into the civilian system. In some cases, for example, circumstances of sexual misconduct and other things of that sort could be directed directly to the Canadian Human Rights Commission without going through internal processes.

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I wonder what the member would say to that.

• (1610)

[Translation]

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the objective of this bill, all we need to do is think about a person who files a complaint against someone who has the authority to retaliate or make threats and change their life.

Essentially, we have been waiting 10 years for this problem to be addressed. This is a first step. I am certain that in committee, among parliamentarians, all members will be able to work out the best course of action for victims.

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MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Order.

I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed the following bill, to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-227, An Act respecting Arab Heritage Month.

[English]

It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, Canadian Heritage; the hon. member for Riding Mountain, Health; the hon. member for Nunavut, Indigenous Affairs.

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MILITARY JUSTICE SYSTEM MODERNIZATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-11, An Act to amend the National Defence Act and other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise on behalf of the great people of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford on Vancouver Island. I would like to take a minute to recognize a resident from Langford, Mr. Matt Gariepy, who recently retired from the Royal Canadian Navy after 23 years of service. I congratulate Matt.

Today I am honoured to speak on behalf of the brave men and women serving our country in the Canadian Armed Forces. As a veteran myself, I am proud to have worked with so many heroic men and women, and I share much respect for those who have served and continue to serve. I understand first-hand the support that all people in uniform need, and I have made it part of my mission to continue to listen and to ensure that their needs are met.

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Unfortunately, all too often, people in uniform are impacted by military sexual trauma, an issue that Bill C-11 looks to address. My Conservative colleagues and I wholeheartedly believe that we must address and provide realistic solutions to the issues of sexual misconduct, racism, sexism and other forms of harassment in the military. All military members deserve to have a safe and respectful workplace, especially given the amount of sacrifice we already ask of them and their families.

Deschamps, Fish and Arbour are three former Supreme Court justices who have released separate reports dealing with sexual misconduct in the military, the first of which was published in 2015, yet we are still waiting for a majority of the recommendations to be implemented. Less than half of them had been implemented as of the last public updates, and I am at a loss as to why the government has sat on its hands and ignored our military members again and again, especially those who are suffering from military sexual trauma. They deserve better than what the Liberal government has yet to give them.

Under the current system, victims and their families have no answers, and their cases continue to sit, awaiting proper action. It is 10 years and three separate reports later, and we are finally seeing the Liberal government start to implement legislation to help deal with the horrific travesties of justice, something the Liberal government should have dealt with years ago.

Though desperately late, Bill C-11 has the potential to meet one of the many outstanding recommendations that need to be implemented from the Deschamps, Fish and Arbour reports. The bill is something the Conservatives want sent to committee, where it clearly needs rigorous study. We need to hear from experts, including those in the legal community, and we need to hear from victims and those who have served or are still serving.

Unfortunately the legislation is not without issue. Conservatives already spoke to numerous stakeholders about the bill when it was in its previous form, Bill C-66, and there are many questions and concerns that must be addressed, which is why we support the bill in principle but believe it requires in-depth study at committee.

One of the concerns that has been brought forward is that the legislation would open the door to increased political interference with new Governor in Council appointments of the director of military prosecutions, the director of defence counsel services and the provost marshal. They would be moved from their current reporting structure under the judge advocate general, and while the intention of the change is well-meaning, meant to create independence from the military and the judge advocate general, it would ultimately give more power to the minister of national defence.

Not only would the minister have direct control over the key investigatory and legal positions in the Canadian Armed Forces, but the change would also allow them to issue guidelines related to Bill C-11 with respect to prosecutions. While the change would mitigate military interference, it would also open the door to direct political interference. Given the evidence we have seen first-hand of increased political interference from the Liberal government over the last decade, it raises concerns that this pattern may be even worse under the legislation. I am talking about cases like Vice-Admiral

Mark Norman and the former chief of the defence staff Jonathan Vance.

Moreover, the logistics around the lengths of the appointments and the process of how individuals would be appointed is unclear. There would be no consistency with the other Governor in Council appointments. We must address these issues before implementing the bill.

The bill indicates that investigations and prosecutions would be moved under civilian authority for sexual misconduct cases that take place within Canada, which we support, but what about the cases that take place abroad while on deployment? Those would still be investigated and prosecuted by the military police, who often already struggle to successfully investigate and prosecute under the current system, and now the concern is that those skills would only atrophy, as they would see fewer cases. This must be considered and accounted for in legislation to ensure that Canadian Armed Forces members can be properly served justice at home or while deployed abroad.

• (1615)

Additionally, while the military police can still start investigations of these cases on Canadian soil, they are to pass the investigation along to civilian investigators as soon as possible. This is a step in the right direction, but we need to ensure that these investigations are unhindered. This brings us back to the concern over political interference.

An unhindered civilian investigation will be vital to the success of cases in civilian court, so it is key that the bill outlines that process and includes the importance of unobstructed, independent investigation. There need to be tight protocols for the collection and sharing of information related to the investigations, and there need to be solid protocols for unrestricted access by civilian investigators. These are only a few examples of the key issues that will require rigorous committee examination of the bill.

The last concern I wish to speak to today is that of the capacity of the civilian courts to take on these cases. We have seen, over the last 10 years, the civilian courts become more and more overwhelmed because of the Liberals' soft-on-crime policies. The bill would only add to a system that is already over capacity. This may lead to prosecutors' refusing to try a case because of an unlikely probability of conviction. What recourse will this leave victims? Internal service code of discipline punishments may still be possible, but will they happen?

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I fear that this will just feed the mentality of excusing systemic military sexual trauma in the Canadian Armed Forces. Our service members do not feel safe or respected. They do not feel supported or honoured by the government. We must deal with the issue of sexual misconduct and harassment so that our forces can begin to feel that respect. Many military sexual trauma survivors are being released or quitting the Armed Forces, along with many others who face systemic issues in the military, which is having a huge impact on recruitment and retention.

We are short approximately 16,500 members in the Canadian Armed Forces. We are desperately short on the hard-working men and women who train up our troops to deploy on missions. Currently, there are over 10,000 undertrained and undeployable members in uniform. That is, over 10,000 men and women do not have the skills or necessary training to perform the jobs they have been hired to do.

This is both unsustainable and embarrassing for Canada as a nation. We must do everything we can to ensure that the supports our troops actually need and that they are asking for are implemented so that they can feel safe and respected in the workplace, be it on base in Canada or deployed in Latvia.

Over the last few days of debate, we have heard a lot about the big names who have been accused of sexual misconduct, such as the admirals and generals who have been charged. Of course, that is what we hear in the news. However, my concern is for the names that do not make the news: the young lieutenant who was repeatedly raped by his commanding officer; the corporal who has gone to her commanders only to be told the evidence is not there, or worse, have the evidence swept under the rug; the young sergeant who was pinned down and raped by her peers because she had received a prestigious award; or the master corporal who was raped by a fellow allied service member in Latvia, outside Canadian jurisdiction and where local authorities are not willing to prosecute. I have heard first-hand as Canadian Forces National Investigation Service members told a victim that they had all the pieces needed to get a solid conviction, but they have been told not to prosecute because it would reflect poorly on the military.

These are all examples of MST victims that I personally know. I have met them, and they have shared their stories with me. These are all examples of what victims are dealing with.

This is why we need to move cases to civilian court and why Conservatives generally support Bill C-11, despite its being 10 years late. We need to make sure these changes are implemented effectively through detailed examination in committee. It is good to see some common agreement in the House on some of the overall goals of the bill. I look forward to resolving these issues in detail in committee so that we can bring the bill back for third reading and see proper legislation in place.

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for sharing his personal testimony on this bill. I would like to confirm whether I understand correctly that the official opposition intends to support this bill at second reading so that it can be sent to committee for study.

I would also like him to explain what he expects from this study in committee. Can he tell us about one or two amendments that he would like to see made to the bill in committee so that he and his colleagues can support it at third reading?

[*English*]

Jeff Kibble: Mr. Speaker, we look forward to supporting the bill's going to committee. It would be very important to see that cases of military sexual trauma are treated equally for personnel deployed versus personnel in Canada.

It is going to take a lot of committee work to investigate to achieve a fair result, as well as to find a more effective way of avoiding outside influences, be they at the political level or the military level, so that civilian investigators and prosecutors are able to respond without bias and actually properly investigate these issues.

[*Translation*]

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this bill responds to the recommendations in the Arbour report, including recommendation 5, which essentially proposed completely removing from CAF jurisdiction the investigation and prosecution of Criminal Code sexual offences committed within Canada.

I would like to know whether my hon. colleague agrees with this recommendation, which is central to this bill.

[*English*]

Jeff Kibble: Mr. Speaker, indeed, that is one of the recommendations coming out of the three Supreme Court justices' reports. If implemented, then Bill C-11 would achieve one of those many recommendations that still need to be actioned. It would be nice to see that one achieved. We look forward to seeing the other recommendations completed also, to resolve these issues.

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend and colleague, the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, for his excellent speech, for his service to Canada as a member of the Royal Canadian Navy and for being there to hear the stories and support those members who have been victims of military sexual trauma. He got quite emotional in that, when we hear these stories and hear how the chain of command did not want to prosecute certain individuals because it might mess up those individuals' chances for career advancement, we can see why the bill is necessary. It is sad that it has been 10 years since we first learned about this, and the Liberals are bringing this forward only now.

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Could the member address whether or not the bill would deal with the issue of information sharing, when we transfer these cases to the civilian courts, between local police agencies and the courts with the Canadian Armed Forces so that the code of service discipline and the ethos that is supposed to permeate throughout the entire military will be properly enforced at the military level while individuals are seeking justice in the civilian system?

• (1625)

Jeff Kibble: Mr. Speaker, indeed, that is the purpose of one of the items to be investigated at committee: to ensure that information is transferred. I can speak personally to cases that military police have investigated in which items, documents, divisional notes and stuff have disappeared and made those investigations more challenging to complete. Something to be looked at in committee would be proper, full authorized access to records, statements, witnesses, etc.

I look forward to addressing that at committee. It is a key and important part of ensuring that these types of matters can be investigated fully by civilian authorities.

Chi Nguyen (Spadina—Harbourfront, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the much-needed modernization of the Canadian military justice system and the transformation of the culture within the Canadian Armed Forces.

Bill C-11 is an important step in renewing the Canadian Armed Forces and ensuring that our military institutions reflect the values of justice and dignity that Canadians and CAF members both expect and deserve. Canada's military justice system must not only reflect fairness, accountability and respect but also uphold the trust Canadians place in the institutions that serve them. Through Bill C-11, we also have a responsibility to protect them.

Bill C-11 represents change at a time when Canada is making significant investments in the armed forces, but we cannot invest in our military without investing in its people, especially women, victims and survivors of sexual misconduct.

Before my election to the House, I spent my career advancing systemic solutions, equity in political systems and policy reform to strengthen women's representation in public life. I worked to ensure that women and other under-represented groups have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives, particularly in spaces where their voices have traditionally been absent.

Bill C-11, the military justice system modernization act, is in many ways an extension of this work. The legislation is about giving every member of the armed forces the tools, the respect and the support they need to serve in an environment that values their safety and dignity.

The Canadian Armed Forces have a proud and essential role in defending our country and ensuring the safety of all Canadians. Members of our armed forces protect Canada at home and abroad, responding to natural disasters, defending our sovereignty and contributing to international peace and security efforts. Their service across Canada is a source of national pride.

For too long, incidents of sexual misconduct have had deep impacts on individuals, families and entire units. Independent reviews

from former Supreme Court justices Arbour and Fish made clear recommendations.

Bill C-11 would respond to them, ensuring that all Canadian Armed Forces are safe from harassment and from misconduct. The legislation strengthens the system by implementing Justice Morris Fish's call to shift sexual offences to civilian jurisdiction and by building on Louise Arbour's 48 recommendations to address systemic cultural issues.

First, the bill removes CAF jurisdiction over Criminal Code sexual offences committed in Canada. Civilian authorities would have the exclusive responsibility to investigate and prosecute these offences.

This is not a technical adjustment. It is a matter of principle. Sexual violence must be addressed with the full transparency, accountability and independence of our civilian legal system. Bill C-11 would enshrine in law that CAF would no longer have jurisdiction over such offences. Civilian police forces and authorities would have exclusive jurisdiction, ensuring greater clarity and fairness in how these cases are handled.

These issues are not unique to the military, but they have been compounded by a justice system that, at times, seems ill-equipped to address the complexities of misconduct, especially in a culture with power dynamics that are deeply entrenched. This is why Bill C-11 is not only about reforming policies; it is about continuing the cultural transformation inside the CAF. It recognizes that military justice must evolve alongside the needs and values of a changing society. We are committed to ensuring that the Canadian Armed Forces become a place in which every member, regardless of gender, background or rank, feels safe, respected and empowered to serve.

Another priority of the legislation is to rebuild public trust in the Canadian Armed Forces, in response to the decades of concerns raised by victims and survivors of the Canadian Armed Forces community.

When victims tell us that they have been harmed, we must listen. Our government is taking decisive steps to rebuild and reinforce that trust within the Canadian Armed Forces. The reforms in the bill would strengthen the independence of key roles within the military justice system, including the provost marshal and the director of military prosecutions.

These roles would be elevated to increase their independence, ensuring that decisions are made based on law and evidence and not on hierarchy or politics. To reinforce transparency, the provost marshal general would be required to submit an annual report to the minister detailing the activities of the military police and the provost marshal. This reporting requirement would reinforce accountability and ensure that Parliament and Canadians are kept informed of progress and challenges within the system.

Perhaps most importantly, the bill would enhance support for victims. It would establish the right to request a victim liaison officer, whose aid would be provided to victims throughout the transfer of cases, regardless of jurisdiction. This is a meaningful acknowledgement of the trauma that victims often endure and the need for compassionate, survivor-centred approaches. The bill would help ensure that no matter where a case is handled, the victim is never left to navigate the system alone.

• (1630)

As we debate Bill C-11 today, we must remember that while modernizing the military justice system is important, equally vital is supporting survivors of sexual misconduct.

Over the past decade, the sexual misconduct support and resource centre, or SMSRC, has been an essential part of the defence team's response to sexual misconduct. Through its work, we have been able to provide survivors and those impacted by sexual misconduct the resources they need to begin healing.

Let me take a moment to highlight some of the critical programs and services the SMSRC offers to survivors.

For anyone who has been affected by sexual misconduct, whether as a victim, a witness or even a supporter of a victim or survivor, the SMSRC provides 24-7 access to confidential, trauma-informed services. For example, the 24-7 support line is available to any member of the defence team or their family, offering anonymous, bilingual counselling and guidance about available options for support, including referrals to community resources.

Additionally, the response and support coordination program assigns a dedicated coordinator to support survivors at every stage of their journey, from initial disclosure through to legal proceedings, even helping survivors transition to civilian services if they choose. These supports are just one part of services for victims and survivors.

Bill C-11 goes even further to ensure the justice system within the CAF is truly aligned with Canadian values. One of the most important provisions of the bill is the transfer of jurisdiction over criminal sexual offences to civilian authorities within Canada. This provision aligns with Justice Arbour's recommendation to ensure that such cases are handled by civilian authorities, where they can be investigated, prosecuted and adjudicated independently of the military hierarchy. This move sends a strong message, not just to the survivors but to every member of the Canadian Armed Forces, that sexual misconduct will not be tolerated and will be treated with the seriousness it deserves.

This bill is not just about legal reform; it is also about ensuring that military culture evolves. Culture change is not easy, but it is possible. We have seen progress. We have heard survivors speak out. We have seen a growing recognition that the status quo is no longer acceptable. We must move beyond silence and build a culture of accountability, transparency and respect, not just within the CAF but throughout society on all of these issues.

I want to acknowledge the extraordinary role of gender violence experts such as Julie Lalonde, Farrah Khan, Pamela Cross and Emma Phillips, who have courageously pushed for our institutions to

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change and invited us all to have a role in changing our understandings of the persistent violence in our communities. This work is especially important as we seek to recruit and retain the next generation of CAF members.

Young Canadians want to join institutions that reflect their values. They want to serve in workplaces that are safe, inclusive and respectful. This bill would help us build exactly that kind of workplace, one where all members can thrive.

Bill C-11 is the legislative embodiment of this progress. It is the result of years of advocacy, consultation and reflection. It represents a clear signal that this government is serious about transforming the Canadian Armed Forces and our military institutions.

Bill C-11 is not the finish line. It is another step in a longer journey of institutional change. The reforms are not just about fixing a broken system, but about building a better one with a military justice system that reflects inclusion, respect and accountability. It would ensure that every member of the CAF, regardless of rank, gender or background, can serve with confidence knowing their rights will be protected and their voices heard.

I want to acknowledge the survivors who have spoken out, the advocates who have pushed for reform, the experts who have provided guidance and the members of the CAF who have called for a better system. Their courage and persistence made this legislation possible.

I urge all members of this House to support Bill C-11. Let us stand together in support of survivors, in support of reform and in honour of our CAF members, not only with words but through action.

I am proud to support this bill, and I urge my colleagues to do the same. Let us build a Canadian Armed Forces where every person can serve knowing they are safe, respected and valued.

• (1635)

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Mr. Speaker, sex assault victims, whether they be military-based or civilian-based, have an absolute lack of trust in the Canadian legal system. There is significant under-reporting, and inconsistent investigative measures are taken. When a matter does get to court, there are Crown attorneys who either display an interest or a lack of interest. There is revictimization within the trial process itself.

How does Bill C-11 address those deficiencies?

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Chi Nguyen: Mr. Speaker, as somebody who has worked in the gender violence space for many years, I know there is distrust of our systems among survivors, and there is work to be done in all of our legal systems to build back trust. There are some very strong elements in this bill that are based on the strong recommendations coming out of the reports from both justices that give us a pathway for that.

[*Translation*]

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to come back to the very essence of this bill. One of the recommendations in the Arbour report is recommendation 5, which I mentioned earlier. It proposes completely removing from CAF jurisdiction the investigation and prosecution of Criminal Code sexual offences committed within Canada. As I understand it, that was the only recommendation that required legislation.

Does my colleague believe that the bill fully responds to recommendation 5 of the Arbour report?

[*English*]

Chi Nguyen: Mr. Speaker, from my understanding, this bill would allow us to establish and move forward on the particular requirement that was noted.

Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, how is removing military jurisdiction over sexual offences a necessary step to rebuilding the trust of victims and survivors who have lost faith in the system? Can you explain that?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Questions should go through the Chair.

The hon. member for Spadina—Harbourfront.

Chi Nguyen: Mr. Speaker, why is this important? Part of what surfaced in the reports was the existence of the chain of command and it being a challenge in the culture of the military. The bill would allow for a different approach to justice, which was one of the recommendations put forth very strongly.

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleague across the way to answer the question, if she can, about why the Liberals are splitting the treatment of crimes committed on Canadian soil from those committed when our armed forces personnel are deployed off Canadian soil.

Chi Nguyen: Mr. Speaker, I will confess that I am not able to speak to that; I do not have the answer, unfortunately.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in principle, what we have heard from all sides of this House is support for the legislation. A previous Conservative speaker summed it up quite well in saying that the principle is there and we need to get it to committee. I agree with that member.

We have now exceeded the five-hour mark. If we allow the bill to go to committee, many questions, like the one just asked, could be answered, because there is just reason for them. I am sure if the member really wants an answer, we can provide it to him. If he wants to come across the way, I would be more than happy to talk to him off to the side.

I wonder if the member could provide her thoughts on getting this bill passed so it can go to committee.

• (1640)

Chi Nguyen: Mr. Speaker, it is really important legislation to pass so that survivors can feel safe. One of the other elements in the legislation that I think is really important is the annual reporting. The measures there are best practices in this space, and I think this is an opportunity for us to do the right thing.

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise in this chamber to put some words on the record about Bill C-11. This piece of legislation is of national importance. It is well overdue given the time that has elapsed since the recommendations came forward in the initial report, which I believe was commissioned by a Conservative government, on the heinous acts and actions within our Canadian Armed Forces. It is past time that we address these issues in a serious way.

The bill would impact my constituency of Brandon—Souris quite closely. I very proudly represent the hard-working Canadian Armed Forces personnel stationed at Canadian Forces Base Shilo, which includes the Second Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, the 1RCHA and the many other serving and civilian personnel who operate that base, which has a huge impact. There are over 1,100 employees in total, which is significant in western Manitoba. I am really proud to represent those folks, first as their member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba and now here in the House of Commons.

From a constituency service perspective, issues around sexual transgressions and sexual assaults within the military come to my constituency office far too frequently, as do the impacts of the lack of services that should be available to many who experience such devastating actions from their colleagues, their spouses or anyone else who chooses to perpetrate such deplorable actions. These are certainly not issues that I am a stranger to, sadly. That is a very unfortunate reality, but it is the reality, so I felt it was important to get up and put a few words on the record in support of the fact that we need to do better by the people who put their lives on the line for this great country under our proud Canadian flag.

It is very important to note that Conservatives have always said that members of the Canadian Armed Forces deserve a safe and respectful workplace and that those who have not experienced that while wearing the uniform deserve justice. We have heard lots of Conservatives raise personal examples, some very personal, of where that has not taken place recently or over the course of many years and, sadly, many decades. It is time to deliver a system that works better for victims and does not protect the bad actors in our system. We have so many systems now in this country that are focused on protecting the wrong people, and victims are left behind. This is just one example, but it is an important one that needs to be addressed.

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While we certainly support the recommendations and support addressing the system to ensure that there is justice for folks who have experienced this type of trauma within the Canadian Armed Forces, we believe that Bill C-11 requires careful study at committee. That is why we are putting words on the record now in debate. The government, which has taken so much time to deliver a bill on this issue, continues to question why the Conservatives are speaking to it. It is because we have important questions that the Liberals need time to answer. We know they are not the most expeditious when it comes to investigating concerns that are raised by Canadians, particularly by the official opposition, and when it comes to the legislation they put forward.

● (1645)

We are putting them on the record now so that when the bill gets to committee, we sincerely hope, the Liberals may have some answers. I just previously raised a question for a Liberal member who, to her credit, admitted she had no idea what the answer was. I asked why the bill would treat crimes differently on Canadian soil than when our armed forces personnel are deployed. I credit the member for her honesty, but members who are speaking to the bill from the governing party, which put forward the legislation, should likely know the answers to questions before they get up to deliver remarks in the House of Commons.

That said, a couple of the concerns we have are about the civilian courts and their capacity to handle the cases. We understand that they may be, and in fact likely are, more experienced in dealing with these types of cases, but the courts are already backlogged. Time and time again, cases of serious violent offences, whether they be sexual in nature or cases of violent behaviour, run up against the Jordan framework, where the perpetrators are getting off on their charges because the courts cannot get through the process fast enough to have cases heard and verdicts delivered.

If we would now be adding more cases into the civilian court system, what provisions would the Liberals be putting in place to ensure that the court system could handle the additional workload coming its way? The Liberal government has been silent on that front, which is a concern, because if the Liberals are promising that the cases would be heard in a more effective manner, they need to put the resources behind the bill and streamline the processes to ensure that the cases would not get thrown out because of the Jordan framework.

Why would the legislation cover only domestic cases? I raise that again because it is an important point. The military police would be dealing with fewer cases overall, so that speaks to a potential lack of training or a lack of experience in dealing with cases as time goes on, yet they would still be called upon to do cases overseas. What standards and what training and expertise requirements would the Liberals be putting in place to ensure that the military police keep their standards up and in fact improve them while investigating cases overseas?

This can be challenging at the best of times when there are different jurisdictions and in many cases different nations and citizenships that are involved when such cases take place on multilateral operations, such as the ongoing deployment in Latvia. Soldiers from CFB Shilo in my constituency just completed a six-month

stint in Latvia. Where does that leave the military police and their capacity?

Current crime stats are on the rise domestically under the Liberal government; we know that is a fact. We do not anticipate demand going down; in fact it would likely increase for civilian courts if they would be handling military penalties and cases. It could also mean that the Liberals' soft-on-crime policies under Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, where people who commit violent sexual offences are allowed to serve out their sentence on house arrest, may be allowed to do for military cases as well should they all move to the civilian system.

On a very small base, like the one in my constituency, there could be people living just down the street from their perpetrator on house arrest while their case goes through the court system and after conviction. We find that completely unacceptable in terms of the scope and impact it would have on the victims, who should be our priority. The Liberals have failed on the domestic civilian front, and we are very concerned they will fail again, as they have been failing, the victims within our Canadian Armed Forces.

I think we have raised some significant concerns that the Liberals have failed to provide any reasonable answer for, and that is why it is important that we thoroughly debate the bill, both here at second reading and at committee.

I want to be very clear that we want equal treatment for victims in the Canadian Armed Forces. We need to ensure that there is commonality across the board, and we want to make sure that victims are treated with the respect, the dignity and the justice they deserve.

● (1650)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and for his service in the Canadian Armed Forces. I am very grateful to him. I am also very pleased to know that he and his colleagues are going to support this bill. He asked a very sincere question.

I have a question for him too. Does he believe that the current military court system serves the interests of Canadian Armed Forces members who are victims of sexual misconduct, or does he believe that using civilian courts instead is a better option for those individuals?

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[English]

Grant Jackson: Mr. Speaker, I think Conservatives have been pretty clear that we believe the military system as it currently exists has failed victims within the Canadian Armed Forces who have experienced sexual trauma. However, we are concerned about the capacity of the civilian courts to handle additional work, when they are not getting through all the work they currently have before them. Many perpetrators of violent crimes, including sexual assaults, are getting off based on the Jordan framework.

While the current system is failing members of the Canadian Armed Forces, we do not want their hopes for better service to be dashed when military cases move into the civilian court system, because the civilian courts are currently not serving victims as well as they need to be either.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what does my colleague think about General Vance's statement that he had nothing to fear because he controlled the judicial process?

How did we get to this point, where a person in authority believes he is above the rules, above the law, and safe from punishment because judgments involving military personnel are under the control of the military high command itself?

[English]

Grant Jackson: Mr. Speaker, of course the situation my colleague raises is a terrible one to be in. I cannot imagine the feeling of being trapped in a system someone feels is protecting, or is protecting, their assaulter, the person who committed one of these crimes against them. It is a terrible situation that members of our Canadian Armed Forces who are the victims of these types of crimes have been subjected to. We need to do better by them.

Conservatives are certainly going to work hard. I know that my colleagues on the national defence committee are going to work very hard to ensure that if the bill proceeds, it does so in the most effective way possible to make sure that victims are protected and that they receive justice under the law.

Jeremy Patzer (Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, certainly we agree that moving the trials to the civilian courts would provide victims with, hopefully, a little more certainty that the proceedings could go ahead. However, there is a concern, because I do not see anywhere in the bill the Liberals' trying to address the lack of judges and the lack of courtroom space. I would hate for somebody to run up against a situation where they are not able to get to the end of a sentencing or a trial within a given time frame, and the charges are tossed because they were not able to get through the proceedings in a timely manner.

I am just wondering whether the member has any concerns about that.

Grant Jackson: Mr. Speaker, the member is exactly right; we are concerned about a lack of judges, a lack of Crown prosecutors across the country right now, and certainly in provinces. Time after time, cases are being pleaded down or in many cases completely thrown out because they hit the Jordan framework.

If the federal government is serious about ensuring that victims within our Canadian Armed Forces receive the that justice they deserve and that this country should be providing to them, they need to be stepping up with resources to scrap their soft-on-crime Bill C-5 and Bill C-75 laws and putting additional resources into our courtrooms to ensure that the cases are heard in a timely fashion so we actually deliver justice for victims in this country.

• (1655)

Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in strong support of Bill C-11.

Those who serve our country deserve a Canadian Armed Forces that is safe, respectful and free from harassment, discrimination and misconduct. When harm does occur, they deserve a justice system that is clear and fair and that puts victims and survivors first.

For far too long, members of the Canadian Armed Forces, especially women and other under-represented groups, have faced incidents of sexual misconduct and harassment that have shaken confidence in the military justice system. Survivors have told us again and again that the system was not working for them. This is unacceptable.

Bill C-11 builds on the brave testimony of survivors and on the tireless work of two former Supreme Court justices, Justice Arbour and Justice Fish, who both studied the issues closely. The bill responds directly to Justice Arbour's recommendation 5 and to several of Justice Fish's recommendations to strengthen the military justice system.

The legislation would remove jurisdiction from the armed forces to investigate and prosecute Criminal Code sexual offences committed in Canada. Those cases would now fall under the civilian justice system. This is a major change. Until now, there was what is called concurrent jurisdiction, meaning that both the military and civilian systems could handle such cases. In practice, that created confusion and inconsistency, and too often, victims were left uncertain where to turn.

By making civilian authorities the exclusive jurisdiction for the offences, we would be providing clarity, transparency and fairness. Just as with cases of murder or manslaughter, alleged sexual offences by armed forces members in Canada would be handled in civilian courts. This change ensures that very serious crimes would be treated with the seriousness and independence they deserve.

Bill C-11 would also enhance support for victims. It would establish a victim liaison officer, available to victims throughout the transfer of cases regardless of jurisdiction. Victims would no longer be left to navigate two systems on their own. Instead, they would have a designated officer to help them understand the process and have their voice heard.

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The legislation would also strengthen independence within the military justice system. Key positions such as the director of military prosecutions and the director of defence counsel services would be elevated to Governor in Council appointments. This step would remove real or perceived influence from the chain of command, giving members greater trust in the fairness of the system.

Bill C-11 would also address historical discrimination faced by under-represented groups in how cases have been processed and transferred. The bill would ensure that the military justice system remains aligned with the Criminal Code and the civilian justice system, creating greater fairness for all.

We know this is not happening in isolation. Since 2021, when Justice Arbour issued her interim recommendation, the director of military prosecutions has already ensured that 100% of Criminal Code sexual offence charges are being laid in the civilian justice system. The bill would take the next step by putting the practice into law.

Some people may ask why the legislation focuses only on offences committed in Canada. The answer is that this reflects the reality of jurisdiction. For offences occurring abroad, military police would still have to—

• (1700)

The Deputy Speaker: There is a point of order from the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned, just a couple of minutes ago in his speech, that Bill C-11 would provide officers to victims.

An hon. member: That is debate.

James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, this is not debate; this is fact. It is not in Bill C-11. Bill C-11 does not provide that support.

The Canadian Armed Forces is doing that through the Department of National Defence through the sexual misconduct support and resource centre—

The Deputy Speaker: Is there a regular practice of the House, tradition or custom that the member could refer me to on this point of order?

James Bezan: The standing orders say that members cannot be informing the House of what is not in the bill. They are making stuff up, so—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. This is not germane to the debate. I was listening to the member for Surrey Newton in debate, and I believe it was germane.

The hon. member for Surrey Newton.

Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize that this bill is not only about legal frameworks but also about cultural change. Our government is committed to building a Canadian Armed Forces that is inclusive, respectful and professional. That is why we are implementing all 48 of Justice Arbour's recommendations, of which about 20 are already completed, and the rest will be done by the end of 2025. The last recommendation is this bill. If this bill goes through, that will be the last recommendation by Justice Ar-

bour completed. We are also acting on Justice Fish's recommendations, prioritizing the ones that most improve independence, transparency and fairness. Bill C-11 reflects that commitment.

I know some will raise concerns about delays in the civilian system or the capacity of civilian police to handle these cases, but let us be clear that these cases are already being investigated and prosecuted by civilian authorities. Our police and courts are the right place for them. Others may point out that the military system could have moved faster to adopt these changes. I agree that change has not come quickly enough, but today, with this bill, we are locking in reforms that could not be rolled back because they would be enshrined in law.

Members of the armed forces make sacrifices every day to protect Canada and Canadians. They put service before self. They stand ready to defend us in times of danger. Our responsibility as parliamentarians is to ensure that they serve in an institution that protects them as much as they protect us. This bill is about fairness, about restoring trust and, most importantly, about sending a message to every member of the Canadian Armed Forces, especially every survivor of misconduct. We hear them. We believe them. We are acting to make the system better.

Legislation alone will not erase misconduct or rebuild trust. That work requires leadership, training, accountability and a deep cultural shift inside the forces, but laws do matter. They set the framework for justice. They signal what our society values, and they provide the tools for change. Bill C-11 is not the end of the journey, but it is a critical milestone. It states clearly that sexual offences do not belong in the military justice system. Victims deserve support, independence and fairness, and the Canadian Armed Forces deserve a justice system worthy of those who serve.

I urge all members of the House, regardless of party, to support this important legislation. Let us get it done.

• (1705)

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I first want to point out that the member erred in his speech. Conservatives supported the Deschamps report, and that was 10 years ago. It took 10 years since the Deschamps report, and the Jonathan Vance scandal, for the Liberals to finally bring this forward.

He also erred in saying that the sexual misconduct support and resource centre was opening up a section to help victims navigate the legal system in civilian courts because of Bill C-11. No, it was already doing that before Bill C-11 was brought forward. That again is something that was brought forward in the Deschamps report, as well as the Arbour report.

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Lastly, I would like to point out that this bill would give direction to the Minister of National Defence because of the cover-up by the Liberals with Harjit Sajjan, which the member for Waterloo helped cover up when she was House leader. She always defended Harjit Sajjan for refusing to investigate Jonathan Vance.

Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, some of the past incidents that have happened are awful and unacceptable. This is why we brought this bill forward. The members on the other side must be aware that this bill was brought forward in the previous Parliament as well, and because of the filibuster the Conservatives did, we could not get it passed. I ask the Conservative member to support this bill, so we can have it in committee and serve those people who deserve justice.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

I hear lots of members suggesting things that the member for Surrey Newton could say or what others could say. I will recognize members if they are in their seats and want to be recognized.

The hon. member for Repentigny.

[*Translation*]

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the former prime minister's entourage clearly knew that Mr. Vance was facing allegations. There was talk about serious suspicions of sexual misconduct cases. This matter is extremely serious and outrageous. I have young daughters and I feel disgusted.

The bill introduced in the previous Parliament was the same as this one and it failed to pass. Does the government truly intend to pass this bill quickly, as the gravity of the situation demands?

[*English*]

Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, we need to have a cultural change. I am reading the new defence policy, and on page 17, it clearly mentions all we have to do. This is the work that was complemented by the introduction of Bill C-66. That work can only be completed if we get this bill through. The sooner we get that done, the sooner we will be able to achieve what we all want to achieve, which is justice for the members who protect Canada and Canadians.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member made some really interesting comments, especially when it comes to the recommendations of Justice Arbour and the fact that this Parliament could achieve advancing all 48 of them.

I find that interesting because we come here to work and to represent our constituents. The constituents of the riding of Waterloo expect me to show up to work, and it seems that the Conservatives are almost irked that the government could accomplish satisfying those recommendations.

I would like to hear from the member what his thoughts are when it comes to the men and women in uniform, the fact that this should be a non-partisan issue and the ability to call the question and get this to committee, so that the committee can spend the time it needs to do the scrutiny to ensure that we do get it right. I agree that we need to get it right.

Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, out of those recommendations from Justice Arbour's report, more than 20 have been implemented. Every recommendation will be implemented by the end of 2025, including this bill, which is the last one.

As the hon. member said, let us get this bill passed and get it to committee so that we can focus on the other bills that Conservatives want to talk about.

• (1710)

Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-11, the military justice modernization act.

The Minister of National Defence has made it clear that Canada's new government is committed to ensuring the members of the Canadian Armed Forces have a workplace where all members feel supported, respected and included. Canadians have watched over the past few years as the Canadian Armed Forces has made significant efforts to organize—

The Deputy Speaker: I have a point of order from the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I am not commenting on the presence or absence of anyone, but, given the numbers of us here, it seems we could listen to a speech without the heckling.

The Deputy Speaker: I will remind colleagues that, if they want to take separate discussions out of the House, they are welcome to do so.

The member for Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam may resume.

Ron McKinnon: Mr. Speaker, Canadians have watched over the past few years as the Canadian Armed Forces has made significant efforts to modernize and evolve as a 21st century workplace. While much has been accomplished toward this goal, there is still much more to do. Proposed Bill C-11 is another critical step towards meaningful and lasting institutional reform.

Bill C-11 focuses on strengthening trust and confidence in the military justice system. This would be the next step in the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces' efforts to address recommendations from independent reviews from former Supreme Court justices Fish and Arbour. These reports, and the more than 100 recommendations that stem from them, remain extremely important to our larger cultural change efforts. Overall, these reviews have helped define how DND and the CAF are undertaking changes to the military justice system and cultural evolution efforts. They have allowed for an impartial evaluation process, highlighting both the efforts that have fallen short and the barriers that still exist, and have made recommendations to improve. That is why today I will provide an overview of these independent external reviews and the progress that the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces have made to address their recommendations to date.

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I will begin with the independent external comprehensive review, also known as the Arbour report. This review was launched in April 2021 and led by former Supreme Court justice Louise Arbour to examine harassment and sexual misconduct in the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, as well as policies, procedures, programs, practices and culture, including in the military justice system itself. The final report was made public on May 30, 2022, and the minister at the time welcomed all 48 recommendations. When the final report was received, there were 17 recommendations for which implementation could be undertaken immediately.

This included the implementation of recommendation number 48, appointing an external monitor to oversee the implementation efforts of the Arbour report's recommendations. The minister at the time appointed Madame Jocelyne Therrien as the external monitor who provides monthly progress reports to the minister on the implementation of the recommendations. She also provides biannual progress reports that are made available publicly.

The minister also announced the implementation of recommendations 7 and 9, changes to the military grievance and harassment processes, in August 2023. With the implementation of these recommendations, any CAF member who has experienced sexual harassment, sexual misconduct or any other form of discrimination based on sex or gender while performing their duties can now choose to bring their complaint directly to the Canadian Human Rights Commission without first exhausting internal grievance and harassment processes.

The Arbour report also outlined improvements for the military college system in recommendations 28 and 29. That is why, in December 2023, the minister announced the seven people appointed to the Canadian Military Colleges Review Board to review Canada's two military colleges. In March 2025, this board released its report, which included 49 recommendations covering a range of areas, including cost, governance and quality of training.

As we see with Bill C-11, which is being debated here today, we would also address the key aspects of recommendation 5 of the Arbour report by removing the CAF's investigative and prosecutorial jurisdiction over Criminal Code sexual offences committed in Canada. Since December 2021, all new Criminal Code sexual offence charges are now being laid in the civilian criminal justice system and no new Criminal Code sexual offence charges are being adjudicated in the military justice system. The Canadian Forces military police group is also leading a Criminal Code sexual offences operational framework working group with the Ontario solicitor general and Ministry of the Attorney General to develop a framework for the transfer of cases.

Bill C-11 also addresses several recommendations from Justice Fish's third independent review of the National Defence Act. Bill C-11 would address eight recommendations from this review. These amendments seek to, among other things, first, modify the process for the appointment of the Canadian Forces provost marshal, the director of military prosecutions and the director of defence counsel services; second, expand the class of persons who are eligible to be appointed as a military judge to include non-commissioned members; and third, affirm the judge advocate general's respect for the independent authorities in the military justice system

while exercising its superintendence of the administration of military justice.

• (1715)

These amendments seek to strengthen trust in military justice authorities operating independently from the chain of command and to bolster the trust and confidence of Canadians in the military justice system.

We are taking these recommendations seriously and moving quickly. We know that members of the Canadian Armed Forces are counting on us. As our government makes a generational investment in Canada's national defence, we know that we must invest in our people. The members of the Canadian Armed Forces are the foundation of Canada's national defence. Members have told us time and time again that they want to feel safe, protected and empowered to serve in a modern 21st-century workplace.

External reviews of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces have also told us that we need to modernize the military justice system. That is precisely what we are doing in Bill C-11, the military justice system modernization act. The legislative changes proposed in Bill C-11 would play a critical role in helping us address several important recommendations regarding sexual misconduct and would enhance trust in the military justice system.

I encourage all members of this House to come together to support this important piece of legislation.

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, I am going to pose the same question to the member that I did to one of his colleagues, because I did not get an answer.

The reality is that sex assault victims, whether they be in civilian court or military court, have a complete lack of trust in the system. They call it a system; they do not call it a justice system. There is under-reporting and there are problems with investigations. Some police services believe them; some police services do not. There are difficulties in obtaining additional evidence. There are difficulties with the Crown chosen to prosecute these files. There are issues with the overcrowding in our courts to begin with. We have to apply the Jordan principle. It is no small wonder that in Ontario alone there is an abysmal record of success in prosecuting sex assaults.

With all of the deficiencies that I just presented, which I presented to one of the member's colleagues, what does Bill C-11 do to address them?

Ron McKinnon: Mr. Speaker, while I do not dispute that those deficiencies exist, I think they are problems for another time and another bill. What we are focusing on now is the military justice system modernization act and how we deal with it in the military system. Let us focus on that. As we carry on and move into other areas, let us focus on those areas when we get to them.

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Doug Eyolfson (Winnipeg West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been numerous comments about our overloaded court system, the lack of Crown attorneys and delayed bail hearings due to the lack of Crown attorneys. Would the member not agree that these things are totally under the jurisdiction of the provinces and that we have to hold our provincial governments to account to improve them so that this bill can be more workable?

• (1720)

Ron McKinnon: Mr. Speaker, I 100% agree. We need to allow provincial governments to operate within their jurisdictions and do what they need to do. We can certainly support them to whatever extent we can, but let us focus on what we can do with this bill in the interim.

[*Translation*]

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we have to remember how this bill came into being. Despite the extremely serious sexual allegations involved in this case, the Liberal government's former minister of national defence flatly refused to meet with the military ombudsman 12 times, refused to look at the evidence and even claimed that he wanted to avoid interfering in the investigations.

My question is simple. Why should we expect the Liberals to behave responsibly this time by quickly passing a bill that they failed to pass in the last Parliament?

[*English*]

Ron McKinnon: Mr. Speaker, we brought this bill forward to be passed, and we count on the support of all members of the House to do so. It is clear that all members value the importance of this bill and the need for it to pass.

The bill that was introduced in the previous Parliament, as mentioned, was unable to be proceeded with because of the filibuster that went on, which basically brought Parliament to its knees. We intend and wish for this bill to be carried forward to fruition. We want to get it to committee and pass it with the necessary amendments and appropriate improvements.

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that for the first time, Oshawa residents sent a woman to be their representative in the House of Commons. I am thinking about that a lot as I listen to the folks across the way in the Liberal government say things like “cultural change”, “fairness”, “trust”, “inclusive”, “respectful”, “we hear them”, “support” and “independence”. These words are being used over and over again.

In civilian courts, as it stands, sexual abusers are let out on bail with the least onerous conditions. That would still be the case. How are we protecting women?

Ron McKinnon: Mr. Speaker, these are very important considerations that we have to look at seriously right across the board. However, what we are dealing with today is the military justice system modernization act, and I think that is what we should focus on.

Kurt Holman (London—Fanshawe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today as the member for London—Fanshawe to rise to give a speech on such an important topic.

As Conservatives, we honour the brave men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces. Their duty is to protect Canada. Our duty is to protect them. Bill C-11 is presented as an effort to do that. It continues the long overdue modernization of the military justice system, and it claims to deliver justice for victims of military sexual misconduct. However, Canadians expect results, not rhetoric. They want to see the bill achieve real progress for victims, for due process and for the discipline and effectiveness of the forces.

The bill would amend the National Defence Act so that most sexual offences alleged to have occurred in Canada move to the civilian system. It would align military law with recent Criminal Code updates, including publication bans and the Sex Offender Information Registration Act. It would create greater distance between the chain of command and three key justice actors by shifting appointments to the Governor in Council and by having them report directly to the minister. It would rename and rank-inflate the provost marshal to provost marshal general. It would set non-uniform terms for the director of military prosecutions and the director of defence counsel services.

On paper, some of this reflects previous expert recommendations made by legal scholars and victims' groups. Conservatives have long said that everyone who serves deserves a safe and respectful workplace free of discrimination, racism, abuse of authority and sexual misconduct.

There is no question that we support the goal of this legislation. Unfortunately, we know that the legislation, in its current form, does not address serious concerns with respect to the capacity, consistency or independence necessary to deliver real justice without creating new problems and inviting political interference.

Let us start with capacity.

Bill C-11 does not add a plan to ensure capacity or specialized expertise for military cases entering provincial systems. Since 2021, the government has been sending cases into the civilian stream. Victims and witnesses have waited, and many historical files were never taken up because of stale evidence or flawed investigations.

Civilian police and Crown offices are already stretched. The bill does not provide a clear path for historical files. A promise without a plan is not justice. Victims deserve timelines, trauma-informed supports and real prospects of conviction when warranted by evidence.

My second concern is consistency.

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The code of service discipline forms a comprehensive framework that upholds discipline, efficiency and morale. It would still apply to almost everything except sexual offences that occur in Canada. Sexual offences outside of Canada would remain under military jurisdiction. Why should the same allegation be treated differently?

This split risks undermining coherence. It weakens the feedback loop between criminal accountability and service discipline for conduct that can be directly tied to military duties and to unit cohesion. Instead, the bill should ensure that findings in civilian court automatically inform service discipline and career consequences. It should also define how the forces would protect complainants on base while civilian processes run their course.

The government needs to explain how military police would maintain their investigative competence if they lose domestic experience in the very file type where expertise matters most. It does not explain how the forces will coordinate with host-nation authorities in deployments at sea or on allied bases where civilians work alongside our members. If we do not plan for this now, we risk weaker investigations and a two-tier outcome for victims depending on geography.

Next is independence and the risk of political interference.

The bill would have key members of the military court system report directly to the minister. Independence from the chain of command is the stated goal, yet the bill would give the minister power to issue written instructions or guidelines in respect of prosecutions. It would vary term lengths in ways that look arbitrary. It would rank-inflate the provost marshal general. It would remove reappointments for two directors but not for others.

● (1725)

When appointments move to cabinet without clear and uniform safeguards, Canadians see the risk of political interference. They have seen it before. They have seen political interference and a pattern of delay that undermines confidence, leaving victims waiting. If the government wants trust, it should ensure clear, uniform and transparent selection criteria, fixed terms and public disclosure of any ministerial directives.

Fairness is also essential. Justice must work for both the complainant and the accused so that outcomes are credible, sustainable and trusted by all. A process that is trauma-informed for victims and procedurally fair for those accused produces stronger convictions and more legitimate acquittals.

When prosecutions move to the civilian stream, service members should have clear access to legal assistance so that every case is decided on evidence and law, not on personal means or uncertainty about representation. Ensuring both fairness and consistency is what gives victims true justice and strengthens confidence in the entire system.

Finally, in terms of culture and leadership, reports have described a long-standing culture of silence and a pattern of plea deals for minor service offences. That did not magically end with a new bill title. Trust requires leadership accountability. Trust requires that senior ranks cannot use their position to blunt investigations or to steer outcomes.

This House must make it clear that nobody is above the law. That includes ministers who ignored evidence, chiefs who were protected and senior officers who allowed plea-downs that erased the seriousness of the conduct. Policy language is not enough; implementation and oversight are everything.

As I said, there is no question that Conservatives support the goal of this bill, but we need to take a responsible approach for this important legislation. We will support moving Bill C-11 to committee because victims deserve progress, not more delay.

At committee, we will press for amendments in the following areas, among others: a civilian capacity plan with provinces and territories, including funded training, dedicated contacts for military files, service standards for charging decisions and public reporting on timelines and outcomes; a clear bridge between civilian verdicts and the code of service discipline so that automatic administrative reviews follow criminal findings; real independence safeguards, including uniform non-renewable terms for key directors, transparent merit-based selection criteria and publication of any ministerial directive with reasons; a legal assistance framework for accused members in the civilian stream, with eligibility rules and cost controls so justice is decided on facts, not finances; an overseas investigation plan that sets joint tasking with civilian partners, external reviews of serious cases and clear agreements for ships and allied installations; victim support in practice by expanding the sexual misconduct support and resource centre mandate to provide legal navigation, workplace safety planning and communication with civilian authorities; term and rank discipline that removes unnecessary rank inflation and focuses on capability and accountability rather than titles.

This is how we honour the courage of the people who came forward, including those who were ignored or punished for speaking up. This is how we protect current members who still worry about reprisal on small bases or in tight units. This is how we preserve discipline and effectiveness so that the forces can recruit, train and deploy with confidence.

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Victims want justice that is timely and real. Members want a system that is fair and predictable. Canadians want a military that reflects our values and can meet the threats we face. Conservatives will work in good faith to improve this bill. We will insist on independence with accountability. We will insist on capacity with timelines. We will insist on leadership that takes responsibility rather than hiding behind process.

Our men and women in uniform are the best of Canada. They deserve a justice system worthy of their service.

• (1730)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member said that victims deserve progress. I agree. We have a new Prime Minister, who was elected less than six months ago, and we already have before us Bill C-11. Every member, it would appear, supports this legislation in principle. Allowing it to go to committee does not stop debate; it allows progress, something the member himself is asking for.

Would the member not agree that we should allow the bill to go to committee, continue the debate there and then have it come back for third reading with more debate? Would he not recommend to his House leadership team that progress is important on this legislation, as the Prime Minister has asked for this to get passed?

Kurt Holman: Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned progress; I said justice. The Conservatives are looking for justice for victims.

On another note, the Liberals have had 10 years to tackle sexual misconduct in the military. Instead of reading the report by Justice Deschamps, which was on Minister Sajjan's desk, the Liberals, upon forming government, ignored the problem for five years, asked for another report and then, just to be sure, asked for a third report a year later.

I am not on the defence committee personally, but bringing the bill back to committee is the best way forward for Canadians.

• (1735)

[*Translation*]

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to hear my Conservative colleague speak. We remember that there were very clear allegations of sexual misconduct against Jonathan Vance at the time. However, he was still appointed chief of the defence staff, even though the Canadian Armed Forces had just been criticized for their handling of sexual misconduct and sexist culture. Instead of appointing someone with an unblemished record, the government at the time chose Mr. Vance.

I would like to know why this time would be any different. It is easy to say that the bill does not go far enough, but what exactly are you proposing to strengthen this bill?

The Deputy Speaker: I will remind the member to address his comments through the Chair.

[*English*]

The hon. member for London—Fanshawe.

Kurt Holman: My apologies, Mr. Speaker, but I heard only half of the translation.

With regard to Bill C-11 and the Conservatives suggesting moving it back to committee, I just want to remind my Bloc colleague that we support moving Bill C-11 to committee. We will press for amendments, such as a civilian capacity plan with the provinces and territories, including funded training, dedicated contacts for military files, service standards for charging decisions and public reporting on timelines and outcomes, and also victim support in practice by expanding the sexual misconduct support and resource centre mandate to provide legal navigation, workplace safety planning and communication with civilian authorities.

[*Translation*]

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. My hon. colleague seems to be saying that there are problems with the interpretation. He did not hear half of my question.

Is that because he was not wearing his earpiece or because there are problems with the simultaneous interpretation?

The Deputy Speaker: It is possible that the member did not hear everything that was said.

[*English*]

The interpretation is working in both languages. Sometimes members do not catch all of what the interpreters say.

[*Translation*]

As the hon. member is well aware, it can be difficult to interpret all the ideas and words that members use, depending on how quickly someone speaks.

[*English*]

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Oshawa.

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned that victims deserve justice. I wonder if he can comment on whether he feels that they will receive fair justice currently in the civilian courts when they are instructed by Bill C-75 to let people out on bail as early as possible and under the least onerous conditions. Until we fix that, we are not getting them justice.

Kurt Holman: Mr. Speaker, does focusing on fairness for the accused risk undermining victims? Not at all. Fairness protects everyone. A trauma-informed process that is also procedurally sound produces stronger convictions that stand and acquittals that are respected. Victims want justice that lasts, not verdicts overturned because the process was flawed.

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I will start by sharing that the NDP supports Bill C-11.

I dedicate this speech to the victims of abuse in the military, who deserve justice.

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Canadians who serve and have served in the armed forces and reserves deserve our respect and gratitude. Women, men, members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, indigenous people and racialized minorities have all served in our military. Too many of them have been subject to sexual assault. Too many have to endure racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia in the course of their service.

Members of the Canadian Armed Forces put their lives at risk to defend our sovereignty at home and abroad. They and their families sacrifice so much in order to serve Canada. The NDP is committed to ensuring their health, well-being, safety and protection. We advocate to ensure that they have supports and services while serving and when they leave military service.

The Canadian Armed Forces is important for our security and, indeed, our sovereignty. We are all shocked by the news stories of military sexual trauma, and we all want to see meaningful culture change in our military.

I begin by sharing a historical perspective on why we support the bill. In 2015, Justice Deschamps issued her report, with important recommendations. It took the Liberals years to respond.

In 2022, the Liberals accepted recommendations in a separate report by Justice Arbour. The Liberals told Canadians that they would begin transferring all criminal sexual offence investigations to civilian courts. This is another Liberal broken promise. Three years later, approximately half of the cases remain within the military justice system. Why? We do not know.

There were major problems with the cases that were transferred. Retired corporal Arianna Nolet was one of the first military sexual trauma victims to have her case transferred to civilian courts. Unfortunately, her case was stayed because of time delays in the back-and-forth between military and civilian police.

Since this incident, multiple other cases have been stayed because of delays, resulting in a lack of justice for survivors. The causes for the delays were twofold: First, civilian authorities were wary of taking over a case, and because of concurrent jurisdiction, they were not mandated to accept the case. Second, the transfer of case files by the military police was significantly delayed, causing commentators to speculate on whether the military police was unduly stalling the transfer.

New Democrats continue to advocate for better outcomes for survivors of military sexual trauma. My friend and colleague, NDP MP Rachel Blaney, was responsible for the landmark parliamentary study on the experience of women veterans. They gave first-hand accounts of the horrific treatments they endured while serving in Canada's military. The study culminated in a powerful report in 2024 entitled "Invisible No More." This report was the catalyst that finally pushed the Liberal government to act.

NDP MP Lindsay Matheson undertook a summer of consultations with survivors and subsequently introduced a private member's bill. Bill C-362 would have immediately ended concurrent jurisdiction and ensured that no future cases were caught in the tug-of-war over jurisdiction. Unfortunately, Lindsay's bill, Bill C-362, died on the Order Paper when Trudeau prorogued Parliament.

Given the state of Bill C-11 and the way it was tabled, some questions must be studied at committee. I will name a few. First, the bill does not adequately address incidents in the reserves, the navy, the cadets program or international deployments. Why are they not included? Do they not deserve justice?

• (1740)

Second, survivors feel betrayed by the federal government. Survivors tell us they need more pathways to justice. They say pathways to justice will be taken away. What consultations included victims, and in what way are their voices included in Bill C-11?

Third, the bill may have the unintended consequence of creating a binary between criminal behaviour and lesser forms of harassment, which may become more permissive and have fewer supports. What amendments will be needed to ensure victims of any abuse see the justice they deserve?

Fourth, since the sexual misconduct by senior leadership scandal, the NDP calls to make the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces ombuds an officer of Parliament are amplified. This position must have the power to compel documents and conduct systemic investigations. Will other parties support amendments to ensure greater civilian oversight?

Fifth, amendments are needed in terms of the new victim liaison officer. The commanding officer must not be the one to appoint the officer. Given that many cases directly or indirectly involve the commanding officer, we need to find an alternative to this proposal. The appointment must occur outside the chain of command. Further, parliamentarians need to review legal assistance for survivors and the independence of counselling services for members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Sixth, the Prime Minister warned of an austerity budget. Expanding the mandate of civilian law enforcement without a corresponding increase to their budget will create problems, and, indeed, potentially cost more. The November budget could include cuts to legal services and law enforcement agencies. This makes no sense. Will the budget further cut funding for the military police?

Government Orders

Seventh, given the composition of the Canadian Armed Forces, investigations may include victims, witnesses and others across multiple jurisdictions, and potentially in secure military locations. A local police unit does not have the resources for these cases. It may be logistically difficult to recruit and deploy civilian law enforcement on an ad hoc basis. How will cases be investigated by civilian police when incidents occur across jurisdictions, especially for incidents that may occur during domestic operations, including routine operations in the north and Arctic naval coastal patrols? What about incidents that happen abroad? What tools will civilian courts have in international deployments, navy ships, etc. that cannot immediately be accessed by civilians?

We need to ensure issues such as custody of evidence are considered to avoid having cases thrown out.

• (1745)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier, I referred to the principles of the bill in terms of transferring the process from military courts into the civilian court process. There are many different forms of support, and it seems to me that all members are supporting that particular principle. Discussions have also been taking place with our partners. After all, judicial responsibilities are not only federal; they are provincial, federal and municipal. All three play a very important role.

Does the member not believe, overall, that the transferring of sexual assault cases out of the military courts and into the civilian courts is a positive thing? Does she have confidence in the independence of the judicial system to make sure the victims are, in fact, being treated appropriately?

Lori Idlout: Uqagtittiji, I mentioned in my speech that there was a promise three years ago about that transfer, and more than half of the cases have not been transferred. We also need to question what would happen for processes that happen outside Canada as the bill relates only to offences happening within Canada. With the military police not investigating or prosecuting domestic offences, we must ask, will military police be trained and equipped to handle incidents abroad?

Tako Van Popta (Langley Township—Fraser Heights, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question relates to the culture of the Canadian Armed Forces tolerating sexual misconduct. The reports that are before us, by Arbour, Fish and Deschamps, all say that without changing the culture, the problem will not be solved.

Is the hon. colleague optimistic that Bill C-11 would push the Canadian Armed Forces to reform its conduct, which is the root of the problem?

• (1750)

Lori Idlout: Uqagtittiji, the biggest change we will need to discuss at committee is the appointment of a victim liaison officer. At this point, the appointment process would remain with the commanding officer, which is not the form of culture change we need to see. To support victims, who would be most impacted by this legislation, we need to make sure that support for them comes from outside of the system that keeps them victimized.

This reform has been a long time coming, with changes last being made in 1998. We need to make sure it does not take another 27 years before any unintended consequences can be corrected.

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I understand that my colleague would like some changes to be made to how things are handled abroad, outside Canada. Could she clarify whether the NDP intends to suggest amendments in this respect? If so, what kind of amendments would they be?

[English]

Lori Idlout: Uqagtittiji, we want to see amendments regarding investigations or incidents that happen abroad. As we know and as we have heard, even domestically some investigations have victims from one territory and witnesses from other provinces or even abroad. There should be better supports to ensure that these cross-jurisdictional issues can be streamlined.

[Translation]

Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to debate a bill that is very important for the military community and for Canadians, that is, Bill C-11, the military justice system modernization act.

This bill will have a significant impact on members of the Canadian Armed Forces as well as veterans. Indeed, Bill C-11 address the concerns that victims and survivors within Canada's military community have shared with us over the past few years. It includes a series of targeted amendments that aim to modernize the military justice system and strengthen support for victims and survivors.

The bill responds to recommendation 5 of the report from former Supreme Court justice Louise Arbour and the eight recommendations of the report from former Supreme Court justice Morris Fish. More specifically, the bill proposes to make six amendments. I will give a brief overview of all these amendments.

First, it will enshrine in law the fact that the Canadian Armed Forces no longer has jurisdiction over Criminal Code sexual offences committed in Canada. Second, it will enshrine in law that civilian authorities have exclusive jurisdiction to investigate and prosecute Criminal Code sexual offences committed in Canada. Third, it establishes a victim's liaison officer, who will be available to victims throughout the transfer of cases, regardless of jurisdiction. Fourth, the bill seeks to strengthen the role of key positions in the justice system to make them more independent. Fifth, it seeks to address the historical discrimination faced by under-represented groups in how cases have been processed and transferred. Finally, the bill ensures that the military justice system remains aligned with the Criminal Code and the civilian justice system.

Our government takes the well-being of Canadian Armed Forces members very seriously. That is why we have worked hard in recent years to implement all 48 recommendations from former Justice Louise Arbour's report. More than 30 of those recommendations have already been implemented. By the end of the year, with the passage of this bill, I hope we will be able to say that not just 47 recommendations, but all 48 recommendations made by former Justice Arbour have been implemented.

I would like to provide an overview of Justice Arbour's recommendations. Three years ago now, Justice Arbour submitted her final report on sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces to the Minister of National Defence. This report, entitled "Report of the Independent External Comprehensive Review of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces", contains 48 recommendations that focused on reforming the "institutional shortcomings and structural impediments" that allowed the problem to persist.

In recommendation 48 of her report, Justice Arbour called for the Minister of National Defence to appoint an external monitor to oversee the implementation of the recommendations in the report and other external recommendations that she accepts. The external monitor, Jocelyne Therrien, shared her fifth report in July. Ms. Therrien emphasized that we are making progress and are on track to meet the intent of the 48 recommendations by the end of 2025.

• (1755)

Indeed, in our efforts to follow up on recommendations 1 and 2, we have made significant progress in clarifying definitions and terminology.

In June of last year, the defence team announced that policies using the term "sexual misconduct" would be updated to replace it with "harassment of a sexual nature", "conduct deficiencies of a sexual nature" and "crimes of a sexual nature". In addition, "sexual assault" will be separately defined in the relevant policies.

In March of this year, CAF adopted the Canada Labour Code definitions of harassment and violence, aligning its harassment and violence prevention program with the public service workplace harassment and violence prevention program. This resulted in a unified workplace harassment and violence prevention policy that applies to both National Defence public service employees and members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

This change also addressed recommendation 3 of Justice Louise Arbour's report. Members of the Canadian Armed Forces who experience or witness harassment or violence in the workplace now have a simplified incident reporting system, informal resolution mechanisms and a simplified investigation process.

We have also made progress in providing a range of relevant services and supports to victims. In response to recommendation 14 of Justice Arbour's report, the sexual misconduct support and resource centre has expanded its services to include a full-time legal resource responsible for providing information and assistance to victims of sexual misconduct in a military context. The next step will involve providing access to civilian lawyers able to contribute their assistance in different parts of the country at no cost to victims.

Government Orders

Bill C-11 takes another step forward by improving support for victims and assigning exclusive jurisdiction to civilian authorities for investigating and prosecuting Criminal Code sexual offences committed in Canada. Our government remains steadfast in its ongoing commitment to addressing all forms of misconduct and unprofessional behaviour within the Canadian Armed Forces. It is imperative to ensure that victims and survivors receive the support and justice they deserve.

In conclusion, Canadian Armed Forces members are always there to ensure Canada's security and it is our duty to protect them from harassment and misconduct. The 48 recommendations made by former Supreme Court justice Louise Arbour clearly showed us the path to follow to change the culture of our institution, and the external auditor, Jocelyne Therrien, is ensuring that we respect this commitment, this new path.

In closing, I want to thank the members of the Canadian Armed Forces and the veterans for their service to Canada. I hope that all my colleagues in the House will support this bill so that we can ensure justice for victims of harassment and sexual misconduct.

• (1800)

[English]

Tako Van Popta (Langley Township—Fraser Heights, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reports that are before us, those by Arbour, Fish and also Deschamps, all say that the problem with the Canadian Armed Forces around sexual misconduct will not be solved until the culture there is solved, a culture that has found sexual misconduct acceptable or at least tolerated in the context of the military setting.

Why is the member optimistic that Bill C-11 is finally the solution to that problem?

Hon. Greg Ferguson: Mr. Speaker, I have come to know my hon. colleague very well, and I know he takes these issues very seriously.

It is not a guarantee that the culture will change, but it is clear that we must take every step possible. One of the first things to do is assure victims of sexual harassment or misbehaviour that the system is not stacked against them. The way to do that, as we saw in the report by Madam Justice Arbour, is to take them out of the system where they could be seeking justice from their superiors or where those working on a file could be trying to pursue a case against a military superior. That does not lend confidence to the system, so it is important for victims to have an independent system, which is what they would be guaranteed by criminal courts outside of the military service. That is the first step, and it is one step that would go a long way to changing the culture in the military.

Government Orders

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one thing that is important to recognize in the debate is that the legislation would reinforce and put into law what has been happening for the last few years: Allegations of sexual assault and harassment are being transferred over to the civilian judicial system. Passing the legislation would ultimately be a significant step toward putting into law what we have attempted to put into practice. Hundreds of cases have already gone through the civilian justice system.

It is also important that we continue to work with our provincial and territorial stakeholders to ensure that the proper resources are in order. I am thinking specifically of the timing of charges and court proceedings.

• (1805)

Hon. Greg Fergus: Mr. Speaker, this is a very important point the member for Winnipeg North raises in the House. Because the system has been in place and there has been action already on some of the reports that have been brought forward, which understand the scope and severity of the situation, these things have been acted on.

Now we are codifying this. Now we are making sure that the resources are put in place. Now we are making sure that training is provided and that our folks in the armed forces understand better how to transfer files to the civilian courts and provide support to the victims of sexual misconduct and harassment in our system.

These are very welcome changes, and it is wonderful to hear in the questions from different colleagues that there seems to be general support among members to make sure the bill gets to committee. I hope it becomes adopted as legislation before the end of the year.

Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government passed legislation allowing criminals convicted of sexual assault, including date rape, to serve their sentence under house arrest. Now the Liberals want Canadians to trust them with this new legislation. How can the Liberals be trusted to enact justice reforms to protect members of the Canadian Armed Forces against sexual misconduct, given their record of allowing sexual predators to serve their sentences at home?

Hon. Greg Fergus: Mr. Speaker, there are many elements to the premise of that question that I have some difficulty with, but there are two things that should give the hon. member some confidence. First of all, this legislation reflects directly the recommendations by former Supreme Court justices Louise Arbour and Morris Fish. Second, the member can take confidence in the fact that the person responsible for making sure the recommendations are being followed going forward, Madame Jocelyne Therrien, is following through on them. She can assure parliamentarians and, most importantly, members of our Canadian Armed Forces that these recommendations are being followed through on.

Tako Van Popta (Langley Township—Fraser Heights, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we are talking about Bill C-11, the military justice system modernization act. The effect of the bill would be to remove the military court's jurisdiction to try offences of a sexual nature

and move them to civilian courts, which would have exclusive jurisdiction.

Our proud Canadian Armed Forces has a deep-seated problem that the bill aims to tackle. This is not new information; it is something we have known about for a long time. Let me read what Justice Marie Deschamps said in her report 10 years ago, which was commissioned by the Conservative government at the time. It is a report on sexual misconduct and sexual harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces. She found “a disjunction...between the high professional standards established by the CAF’s policies on inappropriate sexual conduct...and the reality [on the other hand] experienced by many members day-to-day.”

In other words, everything looked good on paper, but in reality not so much; it was quite a different story. The judge heard from many witnesses and summarized some of the evidence in her report. That was 10 years ago. Here we are in 2025, finally acting on it. The Conservative Party has always supported all the recommendations of the Deschamps report, and it is a shame they have just not yet all been implemented.

Bill C-11 is before us now. Before I get into the details of the bill, the good, the bad and where improvements are required, I want to shed a positive light on our proud Canadian Armed Forces. We can be proud of our men and women in uniform. I want to share some examples of their great success stories.

In Operation Reassurance, Canada was serving as the framework nation for NATO's multinational battle group in Latvia, a key part of NATO's enhanced forward presence to deter aggression in eastern Europe. That is more important now than ever. Operation Unifier was Canada's military training mission supporting the armed forces in Ukraine. That is also very important at the moment. Of course, we also have Canada's participation in NORAD, the binational military partnership between Canada and the United States, still our best friend.

In all these missions, the Canadian Armed Forces has distinguished itself with high professional standards and effective performance and has gained the respect of our NATO partners. All of this has happened despite the fact that the Liberal government for the last 10 years has underfunded the Canadian Armed Forces and not met our NATO commitments. Our NATO partners are counting on us.

I want to take a moment to highlight some of the work that is being done in my local Conservative association, the group of volunteers at home that keeps me grounded and connected to my community. It also includes my advisers; they are currently working on a policy statement that they are hoping will advance all the way to the Conservative Party convention scheduled in Calgary for early next year. It is about funding the Canadian Armed Forces to meet our NATO requirements. I want to thank my team back home for working on this very important issue. I want to give a big shout-out to the current president, Reese Yearwood, and the past president, Wout Brouwer, both of whom have been working diligently on it.

Government Orders

I will now go back to Bill C-11. It is an enactment in response to two reports. I talked about the Deschamps report. There is also the Fish report of Mr. Justice Fish, from April 2021, which offers a sweeping critique of and reform road map for Canada's military justice system. The second report is by Louise Arbour from a year later, 2022. It delivers a scathing assessment of how the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces handle sexual misconduct and institutional accountability.

I will read a couple of quotes from each of the reports, because I think they are important. They are both very extensive reports. I did not read the whole of the reports, but I read big sections. I highlighted a couple of paragraphs to quote.

This is from Mr. Justice Fish's report:

My review has confirmed the factual findings of the Honourable Marie Deschamps, who in 2015 completed her independent review on sexual misconduct in the [Canadian Armed Forces]: the nature, extent and human cost of sexual misconduct in the CAF remain as debilitating, as rampant and as destructive in 2021 as they were in 2015.

● (1810)

Through all those years, there was not much improvement.

Louise Arbour writes, and this is a quote that really hit home for me:

The [Canadian Armed Forces] has a long history of recruiting among military families. I was quite struck to hear that many serving members of the CAF, including high-ranking officers, would not encourage their daughter(s) to enrol today. Indeed, the exposure of sexual misconduct in the CAF has caused as much damage as defeat in combat would have to demoralize the troops and shock Canadians.

We have a serious problem of misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces. It is long-standing. It is deeply entrenched in the culture. It is not easily resolved, because it is hard to change the culture of an organization.

That is exactly what Bill C-11 is attempting to do. We support it. The thinking is that taking the whole business of investigating and prosecuting crimes of a sexual nature out of the Canadian military justice system and putting it into the civilian justice system will encourage victims to report without fear of impeding their career advancement and without fear of being isolated by their peers or being labelled as troublemakers.

Will it work? It may. I hope so. It is hard to change the culture of an organization, which is the fundamental foundation of this problem.

This is what Judge Deschamps said about the Canadian Armed Forces' culture when it comes to sexual misbehaviour, noting the failure of earlier attempts to solve the problem.

This is what she said:

...cultural change is key. Without broad-scale cultural reform, policy change is unlikely to be effective. This requires the [Canadian Armed Forces] to address not only more serious incidents of sexual harassment and assault, but also low-level sexual harassment, such as the use of sexualized and demeaning language, which contributes to [a hostile] environment...

I would conclude from this that sending serious cases of sexual harassment to civilian courts is only the tip of the spear. There is a more fundamental problem that needs to be resolved.

Maybe a few high-profile cases will make a difference, as happened with General Vance, in terms of highlighting the problems. Maybe it will help, but this will not happen without full support from the leadership.

It is important to hear from leaders in the Canadian Armed Forces.

This is what General Jennie Carignan, current chief of the defence staff, has to say: "These reforms will enable our operational effectiveness and support a respectful culture that will ensure our institution continues to earn the trust of [Canadian Armed Forces] members and the Canadians we serve."

If she is optimistic, I am hopeful that the bill would steer us in the right direction. There are deep-seated problems. I would point out that there have been attempts before. I am thinking of Operation Honour. We had been optimistic that it was going to get to the root of the problem. In the end, that program was abandoned because it was not taken seriously by the leadership or by the rank and file.

We support the bill's going to committee. I would hope that the chief of the defence staff will come there and give evidence. If I have the opportunity, I will ask her questions about how this is going to solve a deep-seated cultural problem.

● (1815)

[*Translation*]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-11 is essential. Members of the Canadian Armed Forces always show up to protect Canadians and their safety. We also have a duty to protect them from misconduct and harassment.

We heard from our colleagues today during our debates. I think we all agree on the importance of this bill. A number of these colleagues have said they would like the bill to be studied in committee.

First, I would like to ask my colleague whether he agrees that Bill C-11 must be sent to committee as soon as possible so that it can become law by the end of the year or as soon as possible. If so, can he share his opinion with his party's leadership team to make that happen?

[*English*]

Tako Van Popta: Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party members are signalling that we are in support of the bill. It has many problems. I do not think it goes far enough to solve the institutional problems in the Canadian Armed Forces, but it is a step in the right direction. I think it is going to be a very intensive study at committee. There are a lot of questions to ask. We will need to have a lot of witnesses appear before the committee and answer what I think they will find to be very challenging questions.

[*Translation*]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how does my colleague explain the fact that we have always tolerated the absurd situation in which those responsible for adjudicating cases of potential misconduct in the military are the senior military officers themselves?

Government Orders

Does he consider this to be odd?

[English]

Tako Van Popta: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed odd, and that is exactly what this bill is trying to do: take the decision-making, investigation and prosecution out of the military justice system and put it into the civilian justice system, where it belongs. I recognize that there are problems with the civilian justice system, as a lot of my colleagues have pointed out, so this is not a silver bullet, but I think it would be a step in the right direction.

Jeremy Patzer (Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if my colleague can elaborate a bit on what the situation would look like for someone who committed an offence here in Canada but also committed the same offence overseas. I am wondering what that would look like and how this bill and the court system would handle it. Would it create a weird two-tier system that could be problematic for victims trying to receive proper justice?

Tako Van Popta: Mr. Speaker, that is a very thoughtful question. Our focus always has to be on victims of crime, to make sure they get proper support and that they have a sense that justice is being done. The court system should not just be a legal system; it should be a justice system. It should do justice.

It is an interesting hypothetical the member put to us. One of the reasons that crimes abroad need to be investigated abroad is that our civil authorities would have a hard time with investigations. I can understand why that distinction is being made, but it certainly would create complexities.

• (1820)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is encouraging, in a sense, that the Conservatives support this piece of legislation. I am wondering if the member sees the benefit of having the bill go to committee at this stage. We would have much more time at committee to deal with it, as opposed to holding it up indefinitely. Maybe that would allow for more debate on Bill C-10 or another piece of legislation the Conservatives oppose.

Would the member not agree that the sooner this bill goes to committee, the more opportunity there would be for other bills, especially if we want it passed before the end of the year?

Tako Van Popta: Mr. Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North often asks questions of that nature, saying, “Why not just hurry things through?” I think there is a big advantage, to members of Parliament and the people we represent, to debating important legislation like this in the chamber. If it had been hurried off to committee, I would not have had the opportunity to research it, learn more about it and speak to it, hopefully in a half-intelligent fashion.

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to stand with the brave military personnel who have suffered from sexual misconduct within our Canadian Armed Forces. Their courage in coming forward has exposed systemic failures that have persisted for far too long, and these failures demand our unwavering attention and action.

Let me be clear from the very onset that Conservatives unequivocally support victims of sexual misconduct. We believe they deserve justice, transparency and a workplace free from harassment, discrimination and abuse of power. This is not a partisan issue; it is about honouring the service of the people in uniform and ensuring their safety and dignity.

However, while victims deserve justice, they have been let down time and again, not just by individuals but by the very government charged with protecting them. The Liberal government has had a full decade to address the issues but has repeatedly failed Canadians and members of our armed forces. We must ask, why should Canadians, especially those in uniform, trust the government?

We saw one glaring example when the former minister of national defence, Harjit Sajjan, was complicit in covering up the sexual misconduct allegations against the former chief of the defence staff, General Jonathan Vance. When Sajjan was presented with evidence, he refused to accept it. Not only that, but Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was also complicit in the cover-up for three long years. These were years of silence and inaction while victims waited for justice. Let us remember that the Justice Deschamps report commissioned under the previous Conservative government was delivered in 2015, with clear recommendations to tackle sexual misconduct, yet the Liberals sat on the report, leaving it to gather dust while the problems festered.

Fast-forward to years later, and what do we see? The government finally brings forward Bill C-11, but only after a decade of delaying and only when political cover became necessary. The bill, while containing some positive changes, raises more questions than it answers and introduces concerns about political interference that could further harm victims and service members alike.

National defence is not just about tanks, planes and ships; it is also about people, brave men and women, who put on the uniform every day to protect our country. They deserve respect and protection. We must invest not only in their equipment and training but also in creating a military culture free from harassment and misconduct. How can we expect a culture of accountability and readiness when the government continues to neglect funding, equipping and modernizing our military?

I will remind the House that the Royal Canadian Navy is operating decades-old warships well past their prime. Our Royal Canadian Air Force flies 40-year-old CF-18s that are past their operational life span, while the government has dithered with their replacement. The Canadian Army lacks basic resources, from personal protective equipment to modern artillery. There have been reports of soldiers buying their own equipment, and training has been cancelled due to budget cuts. Meanwhile, Canada remains well below NATO's 2% defence spending target.

As far as recruitment goes, the Canadian Armed Forces is facing a shortfall of 16,000 personnel.

The first responsibility of the federal government is the protection of Canada and those who serve us. We face a rapidly changing global threat environment, from Russia's invasion of Ukraine to the instability in the Middle East and growing tensions in the Indo-Pacific. Our military must be strong, prepared and respected, and this includes having a justice system that is fair and trusted.

Conservatives fully support transferring jurisdiction of most sexual offences committed in Canada from the military justice system to civilian authorities, as has been recommended by the respected Deschamps, Arbour and Fish reports.

• (1825)

Unfortunately, this is not the reality. Our civilian courts are under-resourced and overwhelmed. Court delays are rampant, and victims of sexual assault often see their cases dismissed or delayed under the Jordan principle, which forces charges to be stayed if trials are not held in a reasonable time frame. This means adding further trauma and uncertainty to survivors. According to testimony heard at the status of women committee, only a tiny fraction of reported sexual assault cases ever lead to convictions. Even then, penalties are minimal.

Victims deserve justice free of political gamesmanship, and the accused deserve a fair and impartial process.

Let me remind the House about the handling of Jonathan Vance's case. Despite credible allegations, the government gave Vance a raise while investigating his wrongdoing. It was a clear signal to victims that their suffering was secondary to political expediency. Moreover, the defence committee, which should have been a forum for accountability, was suspended for months amid Liberal filibustering, preventing proper oversight and investigation.

The government's pattern of delay, of denial, of shielding high-ranking officials and of stalling justice cannot be ignored. We have heart-wrenching testimony from survivors describing gang rape, sexual violations and the pervasive culture of silence within the military. They have waited years for reforms that have only just now been proposed. Bill C-11 may be a step forward, but it is long overdue and still incomplete. Victims deserve better than being used as political pawns.

Conservatives call on the government to finally take responsibility, implement meaningful changes now, ensure the civilian justice system is fully resourced to handle these cases, protect victims from further trauma and provide them with real justice.

Adjournment Proceedings

To those who have suffered, we see them and we hear them. We stand with them. However, to those who have allowed this problem to persist for a decade with political games and cover-ups, the time for excuses is over. Our national security depends not only on weapons and strategy, but on the moral strength of our institutions. We owe it to every man and woman in uniform to uphold justice, integrity and respect.

Conservatives will continue to hold the government accountable for its failures and push for real reforms that serve victims, respect due process and restore trust in our Canadian Armed Forces.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1830)

[*English*]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to rise in this House once again and ask the government a question that it has not been all that forthright in answering: What, precisely, are its plans when it comes to its long-standing desire to censor what Canadians see, say and do on the Internet?

Not that long ago in this House, I asked the Minister of Canadian Identity what he was planning to do. Actually, I asked him if he would cop to the fact that he was the minister tasked with online censorship, given that there seemed to be some doubt and some examples of Liberal ministers clamouring over precisely who got to take up that honour.

I need to give a bit of a history lesson for those who have not been following this. For the last two Parliaments, the Liberals have tried to bring in draconian online censorship bills. They tried it in the 43rd Parliament and failed; they tried it in the 44th Parliament and failed. Now, both the justice minister and the Minister of Canadian Identity have said that this still remains a very live priority.

When it comes to online censorship, the Liberals are saying, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." What Canadians are saying is to take the loss and sit down. Canadians do not want the government to regulate online speech; they do not trust the government to do it.

We are already seeing with Bill C-9 that the Liberals reduced the threshold of what constitutes hate speech. We have seen them, in that bill, water down a definition that has been working in criminal law in Canada.

Adjournment Proceedings

Bill C-63 in the most recent Parliament, the online harms act, went far beyond this. Bill C-63 would empower the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal to prosecute Canadians for saying things that offended people online. The Liberals were bringing back a much maligned and, I am grateful to say, formerly repealed section of the Canadian Human Rights Act, section 13. That is what is at issue when we talk about so-called “online harms.”

I have no doubt that tonight the parliamentary secretary to the minister will talk about all the examples of why this is so necessary, but the reality is that condemnation of the Liberal government's online harms proposals has come from left and right. It has come from civil liberties groups on the left and right, and it has come from Canadian luminaries such as Margaret Atwood, who I do not believe would ever align herself with those of us on this side of the bench, because Canadian free speech advocates, Canadian artists, scholars and journalists all realize the importance of being able to speak one's mind without the government weaponizing a definition of hate to censor what Canadians do.

I bring this up now because when I asked the minister the first time around, he started talking about Google trying to give money to pacify the government when it comes to local journalism initiatives. The minister was mixing up the many online censorship bills the Liberal government has put forward. I realize there have been a lot of them; it is tough to keep on top of them. I was not asking him about Bill C-11, which forced the government to mandate YouTube algorithms and streaming. I was not talking about Bill C-18, which the government used to ultimately pull local news and all journalism off the Facebook and Instagram platforms in Canada. I was talking specifically about online harms, a term that the government uses to cloak what it is doing in something that may make someone who does not pay attention to these issues feel that it is a good thing. In reality, it has no other objective but to reduce what is acceptable and permissible in the bounds of debate and free society.

I am asking the government, once and for all, will it commit to taking its so-called online harms censorship bill out of the playbook and not censor what Canadians say and do online?

[Translation]

Madeleine Chenette (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages and to the Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure Canadians that they are absolutely right to trust our Liberal government to protect their rights.

Bill C-11 modernized the Broadcasting Act to ensure that digital platforms, which play such an important role in how Canadians get their music and stories online, contribute fairly to supporting Canadian content. This bill in no way gave the government control over YouTube algorithms.

In fact, our government asked the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or CRTC, not to impose regulatory requirements on online broadcasters for content by social media creators, including podcasts.

Even though my colleague does not see the connection with Bill C-11 and Bill C-18, I will explain them. Bill C-11 also requires the CRTC to regulate the broadcasting system in a manner consistent

with the freedom of expression enjoyed by users of social media services.

● (1835)

[English]

It is the same concern with freedom of expression that motivates Bill C-18's requirement that tech giants that act as gatekeepers of online news must negotiate fairly with the new businesses that inform Canadians. News outlets play a vital role in maintaining a healthy democracy.

The Online News Act was passed in December 2023 to support Canada's news sector and ensure that Canadians have access to reliable news and journalism. It aims to ensure that dominant platforms like Google and Facebook compensate new organizations when their content is made available on their services.

[Translation]

Google actively participated in the regulatory process and agreed to make an annual financial contribution of \$100 million, indexed to inflation, to support the Canadian information ecosystem.

To date, more than \$48 million was paid out to 231 news publishers, including small local and independent media outlets.

[English]

Unfortunately, even if OECD members have engaged with these platforms, they are still not accountable or transparent regarding how harmful content is managed, and that is the point. We know that social media platforms are being used to threaten, intimidate, bully and harass people. They are being used to promote racist, anti-Semitic, Islamophobic, misogynist and homophobic views that target communities, put people's safety at risk and undermine Canada's social cohesion and our democracy. Social media platforms are also used by predators and offenders to exploit children.

Conservatives like to pretend that any attempt at addressing online harms is an affront to freedom, yet we know for a fact that four in 10 Canadians are exposed to online hate on a monthly or weekly basis. Conservative politicians need to stop hiding behind false outrage and join us in ensuring that Canadians feel safe in their communities.

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HEALTH

Our Liberal government campaigned on a clear commitment to introduce legislation to protect children from horrific crimes, including online sexploitation and extortion, and give law enforcement and prosecutors the tools to stop these crimes and bring predators to justice. Canadians elected us to deliver on that.

[*Translation*]

Our Minister of Justice recently introduced the bill to combat hate, a legislative measure aimed at combatting the rise of hate by strengthening measures against hate crimes, intimidation, and obstruction.

We will never compromise Canadians' ability to express themselves online.

[*English*]

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for what I am assuming was intended to be a response to the question.

The Conservatives have zero objection to cracking down hard on online child sexual exploitation, and I hope the government will support the bill of the member for Calgary Signal Hill taking aim at that. However, the Liberal government, in Bill C-36 and Bill C-63, lumped that in with its Orwellian anti-free speech censorship laws to do exactly what the parliamentary secretary is doing right now, which is to say that if we do not trust the government to weaponize the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal with a lower murky threshold for so-called hate speech, we are therefore okay with child sexual exploitation, which we are not.

Will the parliamentary secretary clear things up right now and say that section 13 of the Canadian Human Right Act, under the so-called online harms guise, will not be coming back and censoring Canadian speech online?

[*Translation*]

Madeleine Chenette: Mr. Speaker, censoring Canadians is obviously a non-starter since our government is in the business of upholding their rights.

Bill C-11 and Bill C-18 were designed to restore a level playing field between the dominant digital platforms and Canadian producers and distributors of cultural and news content, respectively.

These legislative measures do not tell Canadians what cultural products to consume or restrict their access to a wide variety of Canadian and international media content. Right now, platforms are neither accountable nor transparent in how they manage harmful content, especially content that has a serious impact on children.

● (1840)

[*English*]

Our government strongly defends freedom of expression and freedom of press, two essential pillars of our democracy. Our government does not censor. We protect. We defend freedom of expression, advocate for and support Canadian media, and keep our children safe online.

Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question is very simple. It is a yes-or-no question. Can the Liberals confirm if Canadian Blood Services is currently honouring its commitment that all products made from its blood donations will stay in Canada, yes or no?

Maggie Chi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives try to spread misinformation, but the reality is very different.

First, Canadian Blood Services manages Canada's blood supply, outside Quebec, independently and at arm's length from the federal government. Héma-Québec operates the same way within Quebec. Both work with the provinces and territories; in turn, they determine how plasma is collected in their jurisdictions, including the role of paid plasma collection.

Health Canada is involved in only the regulation of the safety of blood plasma collection and products made from blood and plasma. It has no role in the day-to-day operations of Canadian Blood Services, no matter what the Conservatives insinuate.

Second, as the Conservatives are all very well aware, Canadian Blood Services has stated time and again that it does not sell the blood or plasma it collects from Canadians. For the Conservatives to imply otherwise will only spread misinformation and fear at a time when our provincial and territorial partners are working hard to increase their blood and plasma supplies.

Lastly, Canadian Blood Services has made it very clear that it is selling a waste by-product called albumin to Grifols. Canadian Blood Services has stated publicly and repeatedly that Canada already has sufficient albumin for the needs of Canadians and is therefore allowing Grifols to sell excess albumin.

What this means for Canadians is that Grifols takes albumin, sends it to a manufacturing facility outside Canada and turns it into life-saving plasma. Again, it is a waste by-product. Canadian Blood Services then buys it back at a significantly reduced rate, increasing the Canadian blood supply.

In fact, because of agreements such as this one, Grifols is opening the very first manufacturing facility in Canada for plasma products, in Saint-Laurent, Montreal. That will establish Canada's very first end-to-end domestic blood supply chain.

To state this clearly: Canadian Blood Services is not selling Canadian blood overseas. It is working to increase our blood supply. Selling off excess waste products has no impact on Canada's blood supply. Canadians can rest assured that if they have donated plasma to Canadian Blood Services or Héma-Québec, it is being used exclusively to make products for Canadians, and these products are not being sold abroad.

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Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, the member did not answer my question.

Surely, Health Canada would know this. Is Canadian Blood Services currently honouring its commitment that all products made from its blood donations stay in Canada, yes or no?

Maggie Chi: Mr. Speaker, again, the reality is far different from the complicated misinformation the Conservatives would have Canadians believe. Canadian Blood Services operates at arm's length from the federal government and is working to increase the supply of blood and plasma for Canadians. We will encourage Canadian Blood Services to make sure Canada's blood supply is always there for Canadians, and there is no evidence to suggest it is not working in the best interest of Canadians. It is disappointing that Conservatives would try to discourage Canadians from donating blood to Canadian Blood Services.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, in response to the throne speech, I asked if the minister would reverse the government's colonial approach or if indigenous rights would be violated. The Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations replied with promises about nation-building projects, a stronger economy and a stronger Canada.

I do not see how Canada can become stronger when the rights of indigenous peoples are being violated by the current government. Fundamental indigenous rights are being denied. Many indigenous people still do not have access to clean drinking water. Inuit children are going to school hungry. Families are sleeping in overcrowded or mouldy houses. Free, prior and informed consent is disregarded.

How quickly Bill C-5 was passed showed the true colours of the Liberals. They do not respect indigenous peoples. They prevented the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples. The Liberals only hold meetings with indigenous nations to win votes. When Bill C-5 was pushed through Parliament, thousands of indigenous people had been and remained evacuated from forest fires. While indigenous people coped with losing their livelihoods, the Liberals violated their rights to give free, prior and informed consent to Bill C-5.

The Liberals' goal of building Canada strong oppresses indigenous nations. Building Canada strong keeps indigenous people in poverty. It keeps indigenous people without infrastructure like housing, infrastructure to provide safe drinking water and infrastructure to generate economies based on indigenous strength.

In 2021, Canada adopted UNDRIP, which committed Canada to taking the necessary measures to ensure Canadian laws are consistent with UNDRIP. On free, prior and informed consent, it states that UNDRIP will provide all peoples with the right to "freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development".

The Liberals see FPIC as a barrier to economic goals. Their investments in natural resource development manipulate indigenous communities into economic development disguised as economic reconciliation. There is no reconciliation in taking land and resources from indigenous people without consent.

The Prime Minister had meetings with indigenous people after Bill C-5 was passed. This is not respect for indigenous people, especially when they specifically called for delaying the passing of Bill C-5.

The Liberals' indigenous advisory council is another Liberal ploy to deceive Canadians into thinking indigenous voices are being heard. A council of indigenous advisers is not a suitable replacement for consultation with indigenous rights holders. In what way will the advisory council's role respect rights holders?

● (1845)

Claude Guay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the chance to further answer her question.

Today, I speak in strong support of the government's unwavering commitment to consulting with indigenous people and fostering genuine opportunities for indigenous equity in major projects. Canada stands at a pivotal moment in its journey to reconciliation, one that calls for true partnership and meaningful action. This commitment is not just a promise; it is embedded in our legislation and operational practices, ensuring indigenous rights are upheld and indigenous knowledge is actively incorporated into assessments for all projects of national interest.

A critical feature of the newly created Major Projects Office is its indigenous advisory council. This council brings together 11 exceptional representatives from first nations, Inuit, Métis and modern treaty and self-governing communities from across the country. The council's expert advice shapes policy and improves operational practices, guaranteeing that indigenous perspectives and interests are truly embedded in major project decision-making. This is not just an advisory role in name only; its contributions will have tangible impacts on project design, execution and outcome, reflecting our dedication to nation-to-nation, government-to-government and Inuit-Crown relationships grounded in respect and recognition of rights, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

[Translation]

We know that reconciliation and economic transformation go hand in hand with the inclusion of indigenous peoples. That is why our government has doubled and expanded the indigenous loan guarantee program. Initially launched as a \$5-billion initiative, this program now dedicates \$10 billion to supporting indigenous peoples' participation in capital, not only in energy and natural resource projects, but also in infrastructure, transportation and trade projects. This program addresses persistent barriers to financing and encourages indigenous communities to participate in major projects, thereby opening new avenues to prosperity.

However, our work does not stop there. The Major Projects Office has made significant financial commitments totalling \$40 million over two years to strengthen indigenous peoples' ability to participate in major projects. From the earliest stages of project development, these targeted investments help participants hone technical skills, deploy clean technologies and support indigenous communities in their energy transition and sustainable resource development.

Advancing reconciliation is not only the right thing to do, it is also essential to Canada's long-term economic growth and environmental stewardship. Our success depends on building strong, respectful relationships with indigenous peoples, who are the original stewards of this land. We are therefore taking bold and historic steps to ensure that indigenous peoples have access to capital and are truly part of the prosperity that these projects generate.

• (1850)

[English]

Lori Idlout: *Uqaqtittiji*, it is clear that the Liberals have no concern for indigenous peoples and their rights. Their so-called consultations were nothing more than a publicity stunt to limit backlash. The Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Assembly of First Nations and

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Métis nations expressed their concerns regarding Bill C-5. However, it was still rushed through to become law.

At the same time, the Liberal government is projecting cuts to Indigenous Services Canada. Making cuts to Indigenous Services Canada programs and services would mean losing investments in indigenous peoples' well-being and support. How will the Liberal government support indigenous peoples' well-being?

Claude Guay: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will appreciate a few examples of indigenous-owned and partly owned projects that our government helped fund. Let us start in Saskatchewan with the Bekevar Wind energy project. This is one of Canada's largest wind farms. The Cowessess First Nation is a majority owner, and it is backed by \$50 million in federal support.

There is also the Oneida Energy Storage project. A leading example of large-scale battery storage, this facility is a partnership that includes the Six Nations of the Grand River Development Corporation, Northland Power, NRStor and Aecon Group. It stands out as one of the largest indigenous-partner energy storage facilities in North America. It received \$15 million from the federal government.

There are many more examples I can speak to, but let me be clear that we are committed to reconciliation, to duty to consult and to supporting indigenous equity and leadership—

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:53 p.m.)

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