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Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, October 20, 2025

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

• (1100)

[*English*]

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

The Speaker: In advance of the House's consideration of Private Members' Business, the Chair wishes to make a short statement concerning private members' bills and the royal recommendation.

Members will be aware that constitutional and procedural constraints govern certain financial matters in proposed legislation. Any bill proposing to spend public funds for a new and distinct purpose must be accompanied by a royal recommendation, which may only be transmitted to the House by a minister of the Crown.

Any private member's bill that requires a royal recommendation must receive it prior to the putting of the question at third reading. Otherwise, the Speaker will not put the question, and the bill would then be dropped from the Order Paper.

[*Translation*]

The Chair has examined the items in the order of precedence. I wish to inform the House that, on initial review, one bill appears to touch upon the Crown's financial prerogative: Bill C-222, an act to amend the Employment Insurance Act and the Canada Labour Code with regard to the death of a child, standing in the name of the member for Burnaby North—Seymour.

I encourage members who would like to make arguments regarding whether this or any other bill in the order of precedence requires a royal recommendation to do so at an early opportunity.

Furthermore, the Chair would like to remind members of the rules governing debate on private members' business items. For motions and bills at the second reading stage, the debate proceeds as follows.

The member moving the motion may speak for up to 15 minutes to start debate, followed by five minutes for questions and comments.

[*English*]

Any other member may speak to the motion for up to 10 minutes, with no period for questions and comments.

Finally, just before the Chair puts the question to the House, the member moving the motion also has a five-minute right of reply to conclude the debate.

If members have any questions about Private Members' Business, they can consult the table officers or contact the Private Members' Business Office.

I thank members for their attention.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC) moved that Bill C-225, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, but today it is a particular pleasure, a distinct pleasure, because today I believe I rise on behalf of all Canadians to report on an epidemic, something that touches all Canadians, which is intimate partner violence. This is a non-partisan issue. In drafting this bill, I deliberately made it as non-partisan as possible. I know sometimes things get quite partisan in the House, but this bill, in my view, and I say this with the greatest of sincerity, is a non-partisan bill to address the epidemic of intimate partner violence.

I have spoken with a number of stakeholders, a number of people who have experienced intimate partner violence. I received those notes, and to anybody who is watching or listening today, please know that we hear their heartfelt words. When a victim pours out their heart to us in a note, saying that they were a victim of intimate partner violence and feel heard in a bill, it is my view that we should heed these words and pass that bill expeditiously.

I know watching online today is the family of Bailey McCourt. For those who are unaware, Bailey was a young woman, a mother and a survivor of intimate partner violence. This summer, her former partner was convicted of abusing her, and within hours, he left the courtroom and murdered her. That allegation is before the court. Along with her was one of her friends, a relatively new friend, who survived.

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Bailey's family reached out to me a couple of weeks ago, and they asked that this law be known as Bailey's law. As politicians, we will sometimes attach a name to a law. I did not feel it was my place to do that, but when a victim's family reaches out and asks that this be done, it is not something we should easily ignore. I know Bailey's aunt Debbie is watching today, being the spokesperson for the McCourt family. I also had the opportunity to meet with Bailey's father Shane and stepmom Trish this past week during the break week. I hope I'm not paraphrasing inappropriately, but they provided unequivocal support for this bill.

People are watching. Canadians, victims and women's organizations are watching. I have received countless emails, correspondence and feedback from women's organizations. Why is that? It is because this bill would create the distinct offence of assault on an intimate partner. Right now, in the Criminal Code, assault does not distinguish between who someone assaults. The only distinction is if someone assaults a peace officer. We distinguish between assaulting a peace officer and assaulting someone in the general public, but we do not distinguish between punching somebody out at the bar and punching out an intimate partner, two very different things. One is a relationship predicated on trust, intimacy and sometimes dependence, as in financial dependence or the commingling of assets. The other happens randomly. When it comes to intimate partners, they are the most likely to experience a homicide, yet we in this House have stood idle, despite time after time this being brought up in the House.

The second thing this bill would do is create a charge of first-degree murder when somebody kills their intimate partner. Right now, first-degree murder is colloquially called "premeditated" in the United States and "planned and deliberate" in Canada. The other aspect of first-degree murder is that someone can be found guilty of first-degree murder when they commit a predicate offence, as in they kidnap somebody. The third is the killing of a peace officer.

This bill would make a fourth category, which is the killing of an intimate partner. We have to deter and denounce this conduct, and more concretely, this House has to speak out about the killing of intimate partners, with a loud voice. This bill would do that.

● (1105)

Third, this bill would create a risk assessment. Right now, generally, the only mechanism to bring somebody before the court who is accused of intimate partner violence is when they breach their conditions. An accused person may be escalating to the point where they are a risk to their intimate partner without having breached their conditions. This bill would allow a judge to compel a person to go to court for an up to seven-day risk assessment so we can intercede before there is another victim.

Doing this for seven days, I understand, is a deprivation of liberty, but in the grand scheme of things, based on the number of victims we are seeing, we have to intervene. This bill would permit a court to independently say, at the request of a victim or the prosecutor or through the court's own volition, that it is concerned about the safety of a victim and will make a determination on whether a victim will be safe pending trial, even if the person was granted bail.

Fourth, this bill would update the law of detention. Most people do not know much about section 490 of the Criminal Code, which was written probably 30 or 40 years ago, when people went to trial within three to six months. Right now, a police officer has to go to court every three months to renew the detention of something seized until charges are approved. I have been told this is the biggest time-waster that police experience in British Columbia. If somebody's computer is seized with child sexual abuse and exploitation material and the review takes 15 months, an officer will have gone to court four times, served the application four times and written four affidavits. In rural policing, they might be travelling two hours to deliver them.

These are common-sense and non-partisan issues. I have a rhetorical question. I am not sure who is going to be speaking on behalf of the Liberals or the Bloc, but I invite them to say at the outset whether they be supporting this bill. In fact, they can go one step further today and can allow debate to collapse. What that means is that we would vote on this bill forthwith.

I do not know why we would prolong the current law of intimate partner violence, or the lack thereof, for another day. Why would we let the status quo exist for another day? This House can resoundingly denounce the current state, where women far too often see intimate partner violence, period. There are men who experience intimate partner violence, although it is disproportionately women. This House can denounce it right here, right now. If we allow debate to collapse, we can get this bill to committee forthwith.

To whoever stands up for the Liberals, I invite them to take the first five seconds of their question to say whether they will allow debate to collapse and whether they will be supporting this bill. As I said, Bailey McCourt's family is watching; Canadians are watching.

When it comes to intimate partner violence, in 2023, there were 123,319 victims aged 12 years and older, and firearms were present in over 1,000 cases. The year 2014 marked the lowest rates of IPV since comparable data became available. I wonder what happened in 2015. I am trying to remember. Since then, from 2014 to 2022, police-reported IPV rates increased 19% for women and girls and 21% for men and boys. In that period, intimate partner sexual assault increased 163%.

● (1110)

I introduced a bill previously, Bill C-299, that would have raised the sexual assault maximum to life imprisonment. I was actually heckled by two members of the Liberal Party when I did that. How do we stand in the way of this? How do we stand in the way of the bill when we have an increase of 163% of sexual assault against intimate partners? They are the people who are most likely to die at the hands of their partner.

Intimate partner physical assault has increased 14%. I may sound like a broken record. It feels as though we could hear a pin drop in this place. Why are we waiting? Will the Liberals allow debate to collapse? If the Liberals are not prepared to do that, are they prepared to support the bill? Are they prepared to address this on a consent motion so that we can make the bill law as quickly as possible?

Most of my adult life has been spent in the justice system. I cannot tell members how many victims I have dealt with on this issue. There are people who live very good lives otherwise; everything appears perfectly normal, yet behind closed doors, these people are repeatedly victimized. This offence spans every socio-economic group. It does not matter whether someone is low income, working class or rich. They are at risk for intimate partner violence.

Fifty-five per cent of women who experience physical or sexual intimate partner violence feared a partner at some point. Being afraid of a partner can indicate intimate partner violence that is more coercive, more severe and more likely to reflect a pattern of abusive behaviours.

In my home province of British Columbia, the Union of BC Municipalities, also known as UBCM, had its convention in Victoria from September 22 to 26. The Union of BC Municipalities endorsed a motion for B.C. to declare gender-based violence, intimate partner violence and human trafficking an epidemic in the province and to update its action plan to combat human trafficking.

In this House, we are expected to hear from the people on the ground. We are expected to reflect that in the laws we pass. Often, in the laws we pass, there are poison pills that are put in, wedge issues and such things. There is no wedge here. There is simply a desire on my part and a desire from the people on this side of the House, and I can speak only for my colleagues, to get the bill passed as soon as possible. The Union of BC Municipalities is not specifically asking for this, but it is asking for action when it passes a resolution of this sort.

I have spoken with Angela MacDougall from Battered Women's Support Services. People from that organization attended the UBCM conference in Victoria to push for these actions: having a municipal, gender-based violence task force to stabilize frontline services; standardizing risk assessment, and this bill actually has a risk assessment built into it, a mechanism by which the court can bring somebody before it; launching a province-wide prevention campaign; and appointing a gender-based violence lead.

I am grateful to our deputy leader, the member for Thornhill, for seconding this important bill and speaking to this important bill. I reiterate that this bill should be passed. It should be passed quickly. It should go to committee as quickly as possible.

Victims are watching. Let us get Bailey's law passed. Will the Liberals do that? Will they agree to let debate collapse so that this can get to a vote and get to committee? Those are my questions because I know we have to address this and address it now.

• (1115)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to be in the House and to be able to represent the good people of the riding of Waterloo.

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I agree with the hon. member that we need to represent the people on the ground. We need to know that Canadians are watching. We need to represent the very people who sent us here.

The constituents within the riding of Waterloo have diverse views. Several are asking how Conservatives are coming to this moment when they voted against capacity funding for organizations serving women, and they feel right now that Conservatives want to see the books balanced rather than supporting the organizations needing that support.

Conservatives voted against pay equity, which could give those very individuals the member is referring to the opportunity to exist and be able to succeed. They voted against early learning and child care. They voted against the national action plan to end gender-based violence.

Constituents in the riding of Waterloo are asking when Conservatives will recognize that victims should have the opportunity to exist and that the federal government has a role to play. If this budget supports organizations serving women, will they stand with women or continue to play the partisan politics they are playing with the bill?

• (1120)

Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, I cannot believe the member just referred to partisan politics with respect to the bill. I will look her right in the eye and say that there is absolutely nothing partisan about the bill.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Then vote for the budget.

Frank Caputo: I would like to continue if the hon. member would give me a chance to speak about this.

Madam Speaker, there is nothing partisan about the bill. It is the most significant intervention on the law of intimate partner violence ever, yet the Liberals want to stand up and accuse us of partisanship. Good grief. This is so wrong.

I asked if the Liberals would support this. There has not been one word out of the member's mouth about whether they will support this. There has not been one word out of the member's mouth as to whether this debate would collapse. I say shame on the Liberals for not answering those questions.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola for his speech and for his concern and his leadership when it comes to these issues.

I should point out that the member for Rivière-du-Nord will be presenting the Bloc Québécois's position on this issue, while acknowledging the member for Shefford's leadership in such matters.

Private Members' Business

Quebec has already implemented several legislative measures to address family violence, particularly through initiatives such as the publication of a report on rebuilding trust and the creation of special tribunals for cases involving sexual and family violence. How will Bill C-225 ensure that federal criminal law reflects and supports the progress that has already been made in Quebec? Do we not run the risk of creating legislative overlap that could undermine the administration of justice in such cases? How can we ensure that this bill respects Quebec's jurisdiction?

[English]

Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's thoughtful intervention. I do not see this as a doubling up of efforts. At the end of the day, calling an offence what it is, the assault of an intimate partner, is not the doubling up of effort. Allowing the court more tools to bring somebody before it in order to perform a risk assessment is not the doubling up of effort.

I appreciate all that has been done. Obviously, I do not know every single thing or mechanism that has been done in the member's home province of Quebec, but I appreciate the words. I look forward to working with the members of the Bloc in the hope that they will support the bill as well.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I wonder if the member could provide his comments on what sort of consultation was done prior to his introducing the bill.

All Canadians are concerned about the issue. The concern I have is that this is just another American-style type of legislation being proposed without consultations having been done with Canadians, in particular, women's shelters and other stakeholders.

Can the member tell the House what consultations he has done?

Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, I will tell the House that my 10 years as a Crown prosecutor was a substantial base to start with. I spoke with people from women's groups, victims of intimate partner violence, police officers and countless people.

I am at a loss right now. This is quite possibly the most non-partisan bill that could have been authored. There is nothing partisan about the bill.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, the member for Waterloo said that I should keep drinking it. Shame.

An hon. member: That is not what she said.

Frank Caputo: Then what did she say, "Keep thinking it"?

Madam Speaker, it is the most non-partisan bill that could have been authored. The member from Winnipeg heckled when I introduced the bill on sexual assault. The Liberals are saying that this is American-style politics. I say shame on every single one of those—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The member for Waterloo is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, it is important, when it is a serious topic such as this, that we represent members accord-

ingly. He said what I said, then he said what I said again, and they do not match. I would just ask the member to stay focused on the topic and have a debate, and sometimes—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): That is more a point of debate.

The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola is rising on a point of order.

Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, if the member wants to clarify the record, why does she not tell us what she said, right here, right now?

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Anything that was said without a mic open is not open for debate.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Order, both members.

Resuming debate, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.

• (1125)

Patricia Lattanzio (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today in response to Bill C-225, a private member's bill introduced by the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, to speak about intimate partner violence.

I want to acknowledge the sponsor of the bill for bringing it forward and to note that addressing intimate partner violence is a priority for this government and a key commitment in our platform.

[Translation]

Bill C-225 proposes three sets of reforms to address intimate partner violence. First, it will create new offences and sanctions specific to domestic violence. Second, it will amend the Criminal Code with regard to the detention of seized property. Third, it will make changes to the bail process for cases involving intimate partner violence.

Although these proposals may seem well intentioned, they require thoughtful, evidence-based measures to truly protect victims, rather than ill-conceived changes that could negatively affect them.

[English]

Over the past several years, this government has taken bold and decisive action to protect victims of IPV and hold offenders accountable. In 2019, through Bill C-75, we strengthened the Criminal Code by defining “intimate partner” for all purposes, including ex-spouses; creating a reverse onus at bail for accused with prior IPV convictions; requiring courts to consider those prior convictions; and clarifying that strangulation is an elevated form of assault.

Bill C-75 also imposed higher maximum penalties for repeat offenders, emphasized denunciation and deterrence, and ensured consistent sentencing for abuse against spouses, former spouses, dating partners and family members.

It is therefore very concerning that the Conservatives have said in this House, time and time again, that they want to repeal this critical piece of legislation.

A former bill, Bill C-233, was introduced in 2023 by my friend and colleague, the member for Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle. It brought in critical tools, such as the electronic monitoring of IPV offenders, ensuring that courts could impose conditions to actively prevent repeat IPV.

Bill C-233 also provided an opportunity for judges to further their education on coercive control and IPV, thus ensuring that the judiciary understands the complexities that so many survivors experience.

[Translation]

Similarly, the government's Bill C-48 broadened the reverse onus for bail to target repeat IPV offenders, in direct response to victims' concerns that they were at ongoing risk when repeat offenders were released on bail.

[English]

Our government takes this issue seriously. The safety of women and girls is a top priority. Studies and inquiries, from those of Statistics Canada to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, show that IPV and gender-based violence remain pervasive. Coroner's inquest commissions, including the Renfrew county inquest and the Mass Casualty Commission, have recommended having new offences on coercive control, modernizing criminal harassment and addressing femicide. These recommendations are all being carefully considered for comprehensive reforms.

[Translation]

As a woman and a mother of two daughters, I am proud to say that I understand the personal responsibility that we have to protect women and girls in this country.

I would remind the House that our women's caucus is the largest in Canada's history. Each of the women in this caucus works tirelessly, every day, to advance laws that protect women and girls.

[English]

In stark contrast, the Conservatives have consistently voted against measures that protect women. They gutted essential wom-

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en's and gender-equality programs, leaving vulnerable women at risk. They opposed the national action plan to end gender-based violence, a plan that is now delivering \$539.3 million in crucial funding to women's organizations across the country, including \$1.2 million in the riding of the sponsor of the bill, the riding of the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola.

I know that the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola cares deeply about his community, and I respect him for that. However, when it comes to voting for the safety of women in his riding, he has consistently voted against these measures, following the instructions of his leader.

I also want to highlight the voices of survivors and of frontline organizations. Last month I met with women's shelters across Quebec. I was deeply moved. These organizations told me that the rhetoric around IPV must be less toxic, and they have asked us to work together in the House, as Parliament, to get it right.

As a woman, I am particularly concerned about Bill C-225's proposal to automatically classify all IPV-related killings as first-degree murder. Let me explain. The proposal means that a charge of first-degree murder, under Bill C-225, would also apply to women who, as victims, have endured IPV abuse, including possible coercive control, and who in turn have killed their abuser.

While Conservatives may argue that self-defence would still be available for these victims, they know full well that in IPV cases where women have not reported prior abuse to police, self-defence becomes complex. Bill C-225 would penalize abused women who kill their aggressors, with 25 years of jail. This approach risks penalizing victims instead of focusing on the culpability of abusers, overriding decades of jurisprudence that recognizes the cumulative effects of abuse. That is why we need laws that make practical sense, not measures that merely sound tough in name. This is serious. Our laws must protect victims, not punish them.

The government's approach is deliberate and evidence-driven. We recognize that IPV is complex and cannot be solved with isolated legal tweaks. Our criminal law must reflect the full spectrum of IPV, including coercive control, assault and strangulation. That is why our upcoming reforms, developed in collaboration with provinces, territories, survivors, families of victims, legal experts and frontline organizations, are carefully targeted to protect survivors and to hold offenders accountable.

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I offer my hand to my colleagues across the aisle and hope they will support our upcoming legislation that would, in the House, address these issues.

To all women, I say that the government has their back. We prioritize their safety. We listen to survivors. We work hand in hand with law enforcement. We invest in programs and legislation that prevent and respond to intimate partner violence, and the Minister of Justice is actively working with survivors, families and law enforcement to crack down on IPV offenders.

The government will continue to strengthen protection. We will enforce accountability, and we will modernize our criminal laws, because every woman and girl in Canada deserves to live free from fear. We will get this right.

• (1130)

[*Translation*]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin my remarks by reiterating my solidarity and compassion for all victims of violence, particularly victims of intimate partner violence. This morning, I am especially thinking of the family and loved ones of Gabie Renaud, whose partner is accused of murdering her. There was a demonstration in her honour yesterday, and hundreds of people came out to express their support for Gabie Renaud's family and loved ones.

This is the kind of tragedy that should never happen. It is the kind of tragedy that we, as legislators, must prevent if we can. I am very pleased that my colleague is bringing this issue to the House and that we can discuss it in committee.

I hope for calm discussions. Obviously, it is very difficult to stay calm when faced with situations like this one. People tend to get carried away and to want revenge. There is no other word for this crime: It is revolting. However, I think we need to take a step back. We need to look at the situation with wisdom and perspective in order to make decisions that will be applicable, first of all, and, second, that will promote societal harmony now, in 2025.

As I was saying, yesterday, I was in the mood to revolt, not only against these situations, but also against myself and this entire legislative body, because so far, it has not demonstrated that enough resources are being put in place to prevent such tragedies from happening. However, I think that we need to proceed in a balanced way. Unlike some people, I continue to believe that the presumption of innocence is essential in our society. I continue to believe that offender rehabilitation is a valuable goal that we must strive for.

However, I also continue to believe that we owe it to each and every person in this country to keep our streets and our communities safe. I also continue to believe that we can and must stand in solidarity with individuals who may be victims of controlling and coercive behaviour, violence or any other similar behaviour. We must stand in solidarity with them and help them every day. Every one of us must look at our families, our friends and the people around us, identify potentially problematic situations and intervene as best we can.

This brings me back to our work as legislators. Striking this balance between the presumption of innocence, rehabilitation and keeping our streets safe will not be easy. However, that is the challenge before us. It is a challenge that I accept, and I look forward to hearing from people and experts in committee. They will come and help us identify the major principles that need to be addressed and how to implement them.

We have been through this process before. The Assistant Deputy Speaker was there. No doubt she remembers that we addressed this subject several times in previous Parliaments. In the last Parliament, a bill was introduced by our colleague, whose riding I forget, but it is on Vancouver Island. He introduced a bill that touched on this aspect of coercive control, which we all agreed on. All of us welcomed it with open arms. It went to the Senate, but one thing led to another, and Parliament was prorogued. Unfortunately, the bill died on the Order Paper.

Now we need to take a look at this problem again. What our Conservative colleague is proposing today is not exactly the same as what was proposed back then, but it is still worthwhile for us to come together to reflect on this problem and find solutions.

• (1135)

A typical knee-jerk reaction is to present simple solutions. If everyone is put in prison, there will be no more crime. Obviously, I know that no one is suggesting that. However, there is this mentality that individuals should be put in prison as soon as there is a risk. The opposite mentality is that everyone is presumed innocent, regardless of the danger to public safety. I think we need to find a middle ground, a balance between those extremes.

I also think that when someone is charged with a violent crime for the third, fifth or 10th time, it should force the realization that rehabilitation programs have not worked for that individual. Different measures need to be taken than those that would be used for their first offence or first charge. Of course, we always need to be careful not to go overboard. I do not want innocent people to be detained. That should happen as little as possible. There are some such cases, there always have been, and there probably always will be, because to err is human. Judicial error is also human. However, we still need to be cautious in our approach.

We should take a prudent approach and find a middle ground between throwing everyone in jail and letting everyone out of jail. There are options available in 2025 that did not exist 20 or 40 years ago, like electronic bracelets. This creates some issues because it infringes on individual freedoms, yet imprisonment also infringes on individual freedoms. Should we use electronic bracelets more often? Maybe the answer is yes, or maybe it is no. Maybe we should do that in some circumstances but not others. That is the kind of question I would like to ask experts when this matter comes before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

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I think a little more imagination is needed in order to come up with solutions and to eliminate the problem. I would very much like to hear some actual statistics. We hear all sorts of things. As parliamentarians, we hear from our constituents. That is fine, and actually it is quite a good thing. We are accountable to them.

For example, some people are saying that spousal homicides have skyrocketed over the past five years. That may be the case. However, other people are saying that the number has actually gone down. Some folks are saying that we need to put more people in prison, while others say that prisons are already too full of people awaiting trial. According to some, there are more people in our prisons who have not yet been tried than there are convicted criminals. That makes no sense. How do we find the right balance? I do not know where the right balance is. What I do know is that I have to try to find it. That is my job and the job of everyone here. To do that, as I said, we will need to hear from experts who will help us understand these issues.

The case of Gabie Renaud strikes a particular chord with me. I am committed to doing everything I can to make sure that nothing like this happens again. I am extending an invitation to my government colleagues. Yes, we have a job as legislators, but the government also has a job. It needs to free up the funding required to fight crime. It is all well and good to talk about rehabilitation. When I say that I believe in rehabilitation, I mean that it is part of my values. I believe that this is what we should be striving for. Are we able to rehabilitate people today, though? Perhaps not as much as we would like. It takes money and organizations. Programs need to be set up.

Are we able to do that? If so, let us go ahead and do it. If not, let us acknowledge that and ensure that we do whatever it takes to find a way to do it. Rehabilitation falls mainly to Quebec and the provinces. Let us free up the funding necessary so that the people and governments that need to work on this are able to do so.

With regard to the presumption of innocence, there is a balance between the rights and freedoms provided for in all of our charters and laws. This is important, but we also need to work on it. The Supreme Court has set maximum time limits for holding trials. However, the provinces and Quebec do not have enough money to build courthouses, appoint judges, and hire court clerks and bailiffs.

Grand principles are all well and good, but they must be reflected in concrete measures. I therefore call on our government to free up the necessary funds and to work with Quebec and the provinces so that we can uphold the presumption of innocence and keep our streets safe.

• (1140)

[*English*]

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Madam Speaker, let me first just say that it is an honour and a privilege to formally second this bill, which has been presented by my friend, the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola.

We all come to this place to leave our mark and make a difference. I think this piece of legislation is one of the ways there could be a measurable outcome. This bill would certainly do all of that. I strongly support it, as all members in the House should, because it

would take meaningful and concrete action to protect people from the growing scourge of intimate partner violence, which has even been called an epidemic in Canada.

It seems like everybody has stories of their own experiences with intimate partner violence. We hear about it from a close friend or family member. We read about it online or on social media. In some cases, we have heard in the House that members have experienced it themselves.

I will never forget something that happened in my first month of being a member of Parliament, when I was so ill-equipped for this job, not knowing what was ahead. A woman sat across from me, veiled behind a brave smile. Her long sleeves were covering bruising, and her face was masked with heavy makeup in some places. She claimed, with a quiet confidence, that when she told me she had tripped, she knew I would understand what she was saying without my ever asking for any more details.

The story she eventually told made me realize that, in that moment, behind closed doors, every single word in her old life had been a weapon, and every single apology had been a trap. It all started with control, not fists. Then came the fear. Then came the silence, and for her, then came the isolation. The story she told me ended long after it first began. She ended up packing a small bag. It took all the courage she had. Her first step out of her door was her first step to freedom.

These are the stories of survivors, the ones we have to believe, the ones who have to be protected. We blur out the details of these stories not for effect, but to protect those who are still silently struggling, long after they have walked out the door. I just want to say to those who may be watching today, that if this is them, they should please talk to a police office, please talk to somebody they trust.

This does not always look like that textbook experience that happened to me in my first month on the job. Keira Kagan's story was different. It was a story from right within my own community, a story that happened among my own peer group. Keira was a bright, beautiful four-year-old girl. She had a smile that would light up a room and a sense of curiosity that made everyone around her know that someday she would go places, but tragically, she never got there. She will never graduate from school, start a career, start a family or have kids of her own.

Private Members' Business

Keira was killed five years ago by her father in a horrific act of domestic violence. Her life was stolen from her before it had hardly begun. The warning signs were all there. At least 22 different risk factors were identified in a report released after Keira's death. Her father was in a custody battle with her mother, Jen. He had a history of mental illness and domestic violence against Keira's mother and against other partners. He displayed misogynistic attitudes, threatened others and even committed acts of violence against pets. However, despite all of that, despite all the red flags, the warning signs and the cries for help, Keira was still released into her father's custody in what can only be described as a colossal failure of the system. She was killed just a few days later.

In the last Parliament, the House unanimously passed a bill called Keira's law, which expanded training for judges to include domestic violence and coercive control. The bill introduced by my hon. friend picks up where that bill left off by modernizing the detention of seized evidence, forcing those convicted of domestic violence to be released only by a judge and treating the murder of an intimate partner as first-degree murder.

● (1145)

Creating specific offences matters, such as the specific offences of the assault of an intimate partner and criminal harassment of an intimate partner, and these could have helped in the tragic story of Keira. The legislation would allow the courts to detain the accused of intimate partner violence at any time for a risk assessment, the kind of assessment that would be done before, not after, things go wrong. That kind of assessment could have saved Keira's life. We cannot and should not be complacent in fighting this scourge in the House.

In just 10 years, intimate partner physical assault has increased by 14%, harassment is up 38% and intimate partner sexual assault is up a whopping 163%. We could talk all day about the reasons this is happening, but nobody can deny that the lack of accountability in our justice system is a major reason intimate partner violence and crimes of all types are running rampant and are out of control in this country.

Let us take another case of somebody we have talked about in the House. Her name was Bailey McCourt. Bailey's partner, James Plover, was convicted of three counts of uttering threats and one count of assault by strangling in the case of intimate partner violence. He was released on bail, and he killed Bailey that very same day. She died in a parking lot, after being beaten with a hammer. If our bail laws had been fixed, James Plover would not have been allowed out on bail and Bailey would be alive today, to be the mother to her children.

Her family is watching right now. I spoke to her aunt in the lobby just a few minutes ago, and she is absolutely disgusted that this bill will not be supported by the other side. She is disgusted at the comments coming from the other side. The same could be said for the over 120,000 victims of intimate partner violence in 2023 alone.

Every case of this is not just a statistic that we talk about in Parliament as a number. It is not an excuse for the government to tell Canadians, when they ask serious questions about the government doing something on bail, that it is coming tomorrow, next week,

next month or someday. Even one case of intimate partner violence should be enough to make this place act.

Every preventable act should be a wake-up call to get people in the chairs in this place to do something about it. Instead, the changes Conservatives propose in this place on the bail system or on sentencing requirements to the Criminal Code are voted down time and time again, only to again be told that it is coming tomorrow. However, for Bailey, Keira and countless others, tomorrow never comes. Every day that we delay is another day for serial abusers to harass their victims without consequences, for more men and women to suffer physical and emotional trauma and for innocent lives to be put in danger.

Taking action someday, frankly, just is not enough. Someday will not put the bad guys in jail. The message now to anyone watching and everyone on the other side is this: They should act now before more preventable tragedies happen, because the only thing worse than a case of intimate partner violence is a case that we had the ability to stop.

This piece of legislation would save lives. It would prevent escalation of intimate partner violence. It would stop the warning signs when they first occur, and it would keep those with a track record of violence behind bars. Police unions have told us we need this. Advocacy groups, frontline workers, women and victim survivors have all told us they need this. They all told us to strengthen the penalties of intimate partner violence, to automatically make murder of an intimate partner first-degree murder, regardless of why or how it happened. They told us, most importantly, to put victims first, and that is exactly what my colleague's bill would do.

I can only hope that everybody in this place reconsiders, stands up, does the right thing, remembers exactly why we came here and supports this piece of legislation.

● (1150)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me start off by recognizing that I do not believe that there is a member of Parliament in the House who does not appreciate our need, as parliamentarians, to look at what happens to victims of intimate partner violence. It is a very serious issue. I believe that every member of Parliament, and it does not matter which political entity they are a part of, wants to do what they can to minimize the intimate partner violence that takes place in our nation.

Private Members' Business

To the families that have been affected over the years, as victims, families and friends of those victims, I would extend my personal condolences, thoughts and prayers. I can understand and appreciate the destruction it causes within a family unit. When I talk about the family unit, I am talking about extended families. It has a profoundly negative impact, and that is why I say, without any hesitation, that all members of the House of Commons, I would like to think, are very sensitive to this very important public issue.

Thinking of the victims, I would like to turn it around a little here and emphasize that there are many instances of intimate partner violence that go unreported. Unfortunately, and sadly, we have individuals in society who are constantly abused, whether physically or mentally, for years, as has been pointed out. I know that the person proposing the legislation is aware of this.

We can imagine, if we will, being a young woman who has been subjected to all sorts of mental and physical abuse in a relationship but who, out of fear, does not necessarily report it. There are reasons why that happens. If the legislation were to pass, that victim I just described could become a victim of the legislation. Ultimately, for the individual who I have described, if there is something that takes place that triggers the death of her or his partner, the legislation would automatically say that it should be first-degree murder. This is the impact that this would also have. We know for a fact that there are endless victims of domestic violence in our communities who do not report.

I know this first-hand. I have dealt with victims who are coming to talk to me, to share their experiences. We try, as much as possible, to encourage, to look for support groups, such as women's shelters, and to look at ways in which society and our system could support that victim in receiving some sort of justice. Often, it is not just the one victim. A lot of those victims of domestic abuse also have young children. They too, in essence, become victims.

That is why I say that, at the end of the day, I would like to think that there is not a member of the House of Commons who is not sympathetic and who does not want to see actions taken in domestic abuse. The member brought forward the legislation and said that there are two things that come to mind. One is to pass the legislation and to pass it immediately. I have often articulated the importance of passing government legislation. This legislation is actually programmed.

• (1155)

Could members imagine if I were to put on limits, saying that for every government bill, there would be only two hours of debate at second reading and then it would go to committee? This particular individual says this legislation should be going to committee, virtually without debate. It is just like how the Conservatives attempted to bring through an opposition day motion on the issue. I wish we could get that sort of sympathy toward government legislation dealing with the victims of crime, such as the bail legislation that will be coming out very soon, but I suspect we will not see it.

The member was critical of me many months ago because of some so-called reaction I had when he brought in legislation. That was absolutely bogus. He tried to bring forward an issue that had nothing to do with the content of the legislation and had everything to do with the behaviour of the member—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I have to interrupt the hon. parliamentary secretary.

The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola is rising on a point of order.

Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, there are a couple of things at issue. Number one is that the member cannot call another member—

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Debate.

Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, the member for Waterloo does not seem to want to give me the chance to speak today.

The member spoke about my conduct and what I said as “bogus”. Indirectly or directly, he cannot impugn another's character like that—

• (1200)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): That would be a pretty tough debate, which we are not going to have right now.

We are going to finish with the hon. member's intervention, and I am going to ask him to try to avoid using discriminatory adjectives to describe other members.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the point is that the member is trying to raise this as an important issue, and let there be no doubt that intimate partner violence is an important issue—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Hon. members will come to order.

We have to let the hon. parliamentary secretary finish his intervention.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the second part of what the member was asking for was to depoliticize it. This government has taken apolitical action, and we have seen nothing but political reaction coming from the Conservatives, day in and day out. In fact, in the example I was providing, the member used a false pretense on social media in order to generate negative feelings toward the legislation or toward me personally.

At the end of the day, we recognize that the issue is important. That is why we have taken many steps, whether they are legislative initiatives or budgetary measures, to support women. The parliamentary secretary for the department made it very clear that we, as a government, have invested tens of millions of dollars in fighting domestic violence and supporting women in our communities, yet time and time again, we get Conservative after Conservative standing up and voting against our initiatives. That is the reality. When a Conservative member stands up and says, “I have a bill”, I will emphasize time and time again how important it is that we, as parliamentarians, do whatever we can to support the victims of intimate partner violence. I will stand up all the time and advocate for doing what we can.

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I asked the member if he could tell us what sort of consultation he has done, and his response was that he was a Crown attorney. I was a critic for justice when I was an MLA. That does not necessarily mean that we do not have to do the proper consultation, whether it is with the provinces or the many different stakeholders, like women's organizations, shelters and abuse centres.

It is important that we look at that legislation. I hope to be able to continue my remarks—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member will have a minute to conclude his remarks when we next debate this bill.

The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

STRENGTHENING CANADA'S IMMIGRATION SYSTEM AND BORDERS ACT

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.) moved that 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, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak today to Bill C-12, the strengthening Canada's immigration system and borders act. Bill C-12 is important legislation that would keep Canadians safe by strengthening immigration and border security.

[*Translation*]

Security risks and the danger they pose to our national and economic security are constantly evolving.

[*English*]

This is true when it comes to transnational organized crime groups that seek to facilitate illegal border crossings and smuggle fentanyl, precursor chemicals, other harmful drugs and illegal firearms into our communities.

[*Translation*]

Our government is committed to ensuring that law enforcement agencies have the right tools to keep our borders safe.

• (1205)

[*English*]

We have listened to the concerns raised by stakeholders and by my colleagues during debate here in the House. This new bill, Bill C-12, would strike the right balance between the need to protect our borders and the concerns about Canadians' privacy.

Bill C-12 draws on the elements of Bill C-2 that were designed to combat transnational organized crime and those who seek to exploit our immigration system. These include stopping the flow of il-

legal fentanyl, cracking down on money laundering, bolstering our response to increasingly sophisticated criminal networks and enhancing the integrity and fairness of our immigration system.

[*Translation*]

It is essential that we take urgent action on this issue.

[*English*]

That is why Bill C-12 was introduced. It would enable Parliament to quickly advance legislative priorities where we see the most agreement, while taking the time necessary to debate the provisions remaining in Bill C-2 that we have raised concerns about.

Responding to these changes and cracking down on transnational organized crime groups and their illegal activities are essential to maintaining the safety and security of our country. Border security is a priority that we share with our neighbours to the south. Addressing it will further strengthen our relationship with the United States.

[*Translation*]

We can always do more, and we are doing more, but I want to assure members that the border is secure. Our law enforcement and border agencies identify, neutralize and mitigate threats on a daily basis, and we are building on those operational outcomes.

[*English*]

Last December, Canada launched several key measures as part of a comprehensive border plan. This plan is bringing meaningful operational and policy changes, but we need legislative change to advance the plan and further strengthen border security to keep our communities safe. The amendments contained in Bill C-12 would help law enforcement by giving them the tools to respond more effectively to the evolving security challenges.

There are two main themes to Bill C-12. The first is securing the border. The second is combatting transnational organized crime, illegal fentanyl and illicit financing.

Under the first theme, securing the border, we are proposing to amend the Customs Act to secure our borders against illicit drug trafficking, weapons smuggling and auto theft. We would obligate owners and operators of certain ports of exit and entry to "provide, equip and maintain" facilities for "any purpose related to the administration or enforcement of" the Canada Border Services Agency's mandate.

[*Translation*]

This includes examining and seizing goods destined for export.

[English]

This change would allow the CBSA to access premises under the control of transporters and warehouse operators to perform examinations in places where goods destined for export are reported, loaded, unloaded or stored.

Second, Bill C-12 would amend the Oceans Act to add security-related activities to the Coast Guard's services. This would allow the Canadian Coast Guard to conduct security patrols and collect, analyze and dismantle information and intelligence for security purposes.

Third, we are proposing amendments that would enhance the ability of the RCMP to share information collected on registered sex offenders with domestic and international law enforcement partners.

Fourth, related to immigration, the bill introduces measures to protect the asylum system against sudden increases in claims by introducing new ineligibility rules, as well as to improve how asylum claims are received, processed and decided. The bill also proposes to strengthen authorities to cancel, suspend or change immigration documents and to cancel, suspend or stop accepting new applications. This would give us the ability to respond to potential crises in the event that a large number of immigration documents are affected by the same issue.

Finally, the proposed measures would improve how client information is shared within Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, or IRCC, and with federal, provincial and territorial partners.

The components related to the second theme include, first, amending the accelerated scheduling pathway to allow precursor chemicals that can be used to produce illicit drugs to be rapidly controlled by the Minister of Health. This would allow law and border enforcement agencies to take swift action to prevent the illegal importation and use of precursor chemicals, and it would ensure strict federal oversight over any legitimate use of these chemicals.

Second, the proposed measures would strengthen Canada's anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing regime, including through stronger anti-money laundering penalties.

Third, the measures contained in the bill would enhance supervisory collaboration and support high standards of regulatory compliance by adding the director of the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada, or FINTRAC, to the Financial Institutions Supervisory Committee. FINTRAC would also be enabled to exchange supervisory information on federally regulated financial institutions with FISC.

I am happy to say that these proposed measures would complement ongoing efforts to secure our border from coast to coast, including the \$1.3-billion investment made in December last year to increase resources dedicated to border security.

Meanwhile, Bill C-2 will continue, with further study, to advance the elements that would facilitate law enforcement's access to basic and subscriber information, introduce the supporting authorized access to information act, expand the inspection authority of Canada Post, introduce new restrictions on third party deposits and large

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cash transfers, and clarify public-to-private information-sharing provisions to help better detect and deter money laundering. We heard the concern that it is important that we get this right.

As a result of our strong partnership with the United States, last year, nearly \$3.6 billion in trade and about 400,000 people crossed the Canada-U.S. border every single day. We want to make sure that this continues. Following both the former prime minister's and current Prime Minister's discussions with President Trump, Canada committed to a set of measures that would further strengthen security at the border and expand on our \$1.3-billion border plan.

In support of the plan, in February, a new intelligence directive on organized crime and illegal fentanyl was signed, and it will be backed by a \$200-million investment. This includes the creation of the joint operational intelligence cell, which builds on existing co-operation mechanisms between law enforcement partners and security agencies to better leverage information sharing to target transnational organized crime, money laundering and drug trafficking and improve border security.

The integrated money laundering intelligence partnership was established with Canada's largest banks. It is enhancing our capacity to develop and use financial intelligence to combat fentanyl trafficking and other organized crime.

• (1210)

[Translation]

Canada has also appointed its first fentanyl czar, who serves as the primary liaison between the Canadian and U.S. governments to strengthen our collaboration in the fight against fentanyl.

[English]

Additionally, we have listed seven transnational organized crime groups as terrorist entities under the Criminal Code and are constantly monitoring whether more should be added. Listing is an important tool that supports criminal investigations and strengthens the RCMP's ability to prevent and disrupt criminal activities.

[Translation]

Canada has also committed to providing surveillance at the border 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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[English]

Nearly 10,000 frontline personnel are working on our border. As we announced just last week, we will be hiring 1,000 new RCMP personnel and 1,000 CBSA officers to bolster these protection efforts. We will mobilize law enforcement officers with new and modernized equipment to make them even more effective for our communities.

● (1215)

[Translation]

This equipment includes state-of-the-art technology, drones, surveillance equipment, canine teams and helicopters.

[English]

All of this important work takes place every single day at border crossings right across this great country.

I would like to note that, while illegal crossings from Canada to the U.S. are already down by 99% since the peak in June 2024, we have also deployed new drones and helicopters to the border.

[Translation]

These tools are enabling us to stop more illegal cross-border activity.

[English]

The border plan makes investments in both agencies, allowing them to procure tools for better detection and to build even stronger collaborative relationships between the CBSA and the RCMP, and between law enforcement across the country and in the United States. Through our border plan, we are building our information and intelligence-sharing capacity among federal, provincial and territorial authorities as well as with the United States and other international partners, including our Five Eyes partners. Enhanced information sharing allows authorities to identify, monitor and collaborate with partners to intercept high-risk individuals and goods attempting to travel between countries.

Meanwhile, as too many families know, illegal fentanyl has a devastating impact on both sides of our border. While less than 1% of illegal fentanyl seized in the United States is linked to Canada, we are working to ensure fewer drugs and their precursor chemicals cross our shared border. To increase our fentanyl-detection abilities, we have trained and are deploying border detector dog teams that specialize in fentanyl detection.

With respect to immigration, under the border plan, we have already strengthened our visa screening and integrity to keep those who seek to remain in Canada illegally, or to cross into the United States illegally, out of Canada. We have increased our ability to remove bad actors from Canada. As well, the CBSA removed over 18,000 inadmissible people in 2024-25, the highest in a decade and an increase from approximately 16,000 the year before. The border plan provides \$55.5 million to support immigration and asylum processing and to increase CBSA's capacity to reach 20,000 removals over the next two years, including this year.

With our current focus on the border and our plans to introduce further measures to strengthen the criminal justice system in the future, Canadians can be confident that Canada has a strong border

and that we continue to build an even stronger one. We will always ensure that the actions we take will have appropriate safeguards in place to ensure due process for all.

We will continue to work with our U.S. partners to ensure that our border remains secure while we also continue to manage the fast and efficient movement of people and goods between our respective countries. These additional measures we are taking to further strengthen Canada's border will help sustain this partnership and friendship for many years to come.

[Translation]

As a final point, I would like to thank the RCMP and CBSA officers who work so hard every day to keep us safe.

[English]

I was able to visit several Canadian ports of entry this summer, and I saw first-hand the crucial work that our frontline men and women of the RCMP and CBSA do each and every day.

This is integral legislation. I hope that my hon. colleagues will support Bill C-12 today and ensure that we can provide law enforcement with the necessary tools to keep Canadians and our communities safe.

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

I listened with great interest to the minister's speech. Bill C-12 is obviously a reiteration of some portions of Bill C-2. Conservatives have been very vocal on problematic aspects of Bill C-2. The minister framed it as "we have listened to Canadians", as in the Liberals have listened.

Will the minister admit that the Liberals simply got it wrong with Bill C-2, based on Conservative pressure and otherwise from Canadians, and that this is their attempt to salvage a very flawed piece of legislation?

● (1220)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Speaker, Bill C-12 is being introduced with three major elements that were left out of Bill C-2, which are lawful access, postal services and the \$10,000 amount as part of money laundering. These elements are quite important to law enforcement. I have heard from law enforcement across Canada as to the need to ensure that there is a lawful-access regime. Canada remains the only country where lawful access is not entrenched in law.

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I had a meeting with Grand Chief Fiddler this morning. He talked about the need for inspection of mail coming into first nations communities. In some cases, we know that fentanyl and other illicit drugs go through.

Quite to the contrary, what we are trying to do here is ensure that Bill C-12 passes, with the expectation that we can work together on passing the elements of Bill C-2 that were left behind.

[*Translation*]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the minister on his speech.

The Bloc Québécois has long called for better border control, whether to combat the export of stolen vehicles, reduce the number of asylum seekers in Quebec, or fight fentanyl and money laundering.

We are pleased that Bill C-12 is doing away with the most problematic elements of Bill C-2 with regard to privacy violations. However, there is one major issue on which we are still looking for clarification.

The minister said he would add 1,000 RCMP officers and 1,000 border officers. The 1,000 RCMP officers were mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, but the 1,000 CBSA officers were not. The unions tell us that it would take at least 2,000 or 3,000 more CBSA officers for the agency to be able to truly fulfill its mandate.

I would like my colleague to comment on that.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech and his work.

[*English*]

I want to acknowledge the work my colleague has done for many years on a number of issues, including medical assistance in dying. I thank him for that.

I want to talk about the 1,000 new CBSA officers announced last Friday in Niagara Falls with my good colleague from St. Catharines, and the hiring, training and deploying of the new officers. We were delighted to be able to do that. It is a promise we made during the campaign, and it is a promise that we intend to execute.

I want to note that, as part of the work we have done, there is a retention component at CBSA that includes enabling CBSA officers to retire with as little as 25 years of service, along with increasing their stipend from \$125 a week to \$525 a week. These are substantial elements to ensure that we have proper retention and training of CBSA officers, and we look forward to the new men and women joining the CBSA over the coming years.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to talk about the minister's role with regard to the RCMP.

The RCMP is recognized worldwide as a first-class law enforcement security agency. Let there be absolutely no doubt about the degree to which it is apolitical. The leader of the official opposition is calling into question the leadership of the RCMP. That has to

cause concern among Canadians in terms of confidence in the RCMP.

I am wondering if the minister would take this opportunity to re-inforce the important role the institution of the RCMP has played in the past and will continue to play in the future, as well as talk about the irresponsible comments from the leader of the official opposition.

● (1225)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Speaker, that is a very important question.

The RCMP is an organization that is sacrosanct in Canada. It has defended Canadians for over 150 years. It is an internationally recognized leader in policing. In Canada, we have separation of the executive branch from police functions and judicial functions. The RCMP is an independent body that is accountable within its system. It is not accountable to a minister or prime minister, and it is not biased in any way.

For anyone in the House to suggest that the RCMP is acting in a partial way is outrageous and shameful. I call upon the Leader of the Opposition to retract those statements and ensure the public's trust is restored in the RCMP.

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have gone through Bill C-12. I appreciate the fact that the minister took the Conservatives' advice, listened to Canadians and took out the sections of Bill C-2 that were egregious and violated the charter rights and civil liberties of Canadians right across this country.

The government is talking about moving the Coast Guard to the Department of National Defence. However, part 4 does not name the Department of National Defence or the Minister of National Defence. It is rather open-ended on the Coast Guard still being under the control of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Minister of Fisheries since its creation under the Oceans Act.

Will the Liberals formally announce or put in place the legislative powers to make sure the Canadian Coast Guard is part of the Department of National Defence and under the control of the Minister of National Defence, not make some ambiguous statement within the clause itself?

Will they also ensure that, since the Coast Guard is going to be asked to take on the role of security, its members will be given the tools to defend themselves when they are doing interdictions, along with the ability to encounter ships at sea when they are doing border security? That is very important since, right now, they are unarmed. When doing surveillance, all they can be are eyes and ears. Even the Canadian Rangers are allowed to carry guns, whereas the Canadian Coast Guard cannot.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Speaker, let me confirm that the Coast Guard plays an integral role in protecting Canadians. The measures we are taking will enhance its role with respect to surveillance, making sure, particularly in northern Canada, that information is shared with law enforcement agencies as well as the Department of National Defence.

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As members are aware, we are investing 2% of our GDP in defence starting this year, something previous governments have been unable to do. I am very proud to say that the Coast Guard will play an integral role in that work.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I echo some of the questions the minister has heard from members on the opposite benches about similarities with Bill C-2 and whether Bill C-2 remains as it does on the order of precedence.

My question is about RCMP training. It is really critical. I want to know if the Minister of Public Safety has read the report of the Mass Casualty Commission that was compelled after the deaths of 22 Nova Scotians. These were preventable deaths largely due to RCMP incompetence. The commission recommended that we expand training for the RCMP to a three-year required course instead of the current 26 weeks.

In hiring 1,000 new RCMP officers, is the government looking at improving the training, and is it looking at the recommendations of the Mass Casualty Commission?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Speaker, concerning the new RCMP officers who would be onboarded, the commitment we have is that those RCMP officers would be mandated to do federal policing. They would receive training that is consistent and that is customized for federalized policing; it is something that Commissioner Duheme and his senior team have been working on with the depot to ensure that the officers have the right training to do their work more effectively.

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola. Before I begin, I want to acknowledge a few people from Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola.

I want to acknowledge the life of Dana Evans. I was very saddened to read about Dana's passing. She was mother to one of my friends in high school, Derek Luce, and his brother, Louie Luce. I did not know this, but she was born in Yakima, Washington, a place where I spent a great deal of time, and attended school in Ellensburg. I have a good friend from Ellensburg.

However, what stuck out to me most was that Dana Evans graduated from Thorp High School. I have a couple of friends from Thorp. It is basically a postage stamp in Washington; I always used to make fun of, to my friends, how small it is. Lo and behold, my friend's mom was born there. I have distinct memories of sleeping over at the house and of Ms. Evans being up early to make us pancakes and send us on our way, making sure that her sons and their friends did not get into too much trouble.

I would like to express my deepest condolences to the Evans family, Louie Luce and Derek Luce, and all others who are impacted by her passing. May perpetual light shine upon her.

I also want to acknowledge Les Consenheim, a resident of Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, for his outstanding contributions to democracy. He has been a huge help to me, and I am so grateful that people like him are so involved. He recently sponsored an event that I was at this weekend, where people bid on art based on volunteer hours. If somebody liked an art piece, they could volunteer, say 100 hours, to an organization. Among those organizations

was the Canucks Autism Network, an organization that is very close to my heart, for those who know me. I thank Mr. Consenheim for all he has done for the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola.

Let us start at the beginning. Bill C-2 was tabled as what I would call a panacea. It was meant to be a cure-all, a reaction piece and something to contain a number of Liberal promises or not so many promises, requests, bureaucratic lingo and things like that. I can still remember, even though I was not here, how the Liberals spoke about omnibus bills and how bad they were. They spoke about the big, bad Conservatives' passing big, bad omnibus bills, and they said that the Liberals would never, ever pass omnibus bills, yet here we are: One of many omnibus bills comes to us in the form of Bill C-2, with a number of problems.

Bill C-2, if memory serves, would enact or alter 15 pieces of legislation. It is about 120 pages long, if memory serves, and the Liberals told us to just pass it, just trust them. Given some of the rhetoric in the House today, it is somewhat comical that the Liberals would use this type of language: Just pass this, just trust them.

As members of His Majesty's loyal opposition, our job is to listen to Canadians and to closely scrutinize government legislation. In a 120-page bill, there are problems. I am going to highlight one of those problems, and I really hope that the member for Winnipeg North is listening closely to this one: the warrantless search.

The member has spoken to the House ad nauseam, no fewer than five or six times, about the fact that Canada Post could not open up mail without a warrant. They have a number of lawyers on the Liberal side. We have a number of lawyers here. However, the legislation actually speaks really clearly, so I am going to read the legislation into the record just so that we are really clear on this, and then I will speak about what we have been through with a number of bureaucrats.

• (1230)

Bill C-2, in part 4, proposes to replace subsection 41(1) of the act with the following:

The Corporation may open any mail if it has reasonable grounds to suspect that

The reasonable suspicion part relates to regulation, so if any regulation is suspected to be breached, Canada Post could open our mail.

If I am understanding it clearly, the intent of the legislation is to cover up a gap, in that mail cannot not be opened with a warrant. In other words, we want to make it so that anybody shipping something that is 499 grams or less could be subject to a warranted search, a search that is authorized by a judge.

I admire the member's zeal for sticking with this position, which is a position I thought was untenable, so let us go through that again. Bill C-2 states that the corporation may open any mail, so that includes letters, parcels or anything. I think we are all on solid ground and know what "any mail" means. It states that it "may" open it, so it would not be compulsory. The government would not have to open mail, but the legislation would be permissive; the government could open any mail if it had reasonable grounds to suspect.

The bill refers to the "Corporation", which is very interesting. The corporation legally has personhood, but the corporation is made up of people. Those people, generally, are not going to be peace officers. In fact, I do not know whether Canada Post has any peace officers in its employ. The legislation would not even require a peace officer, so theoretically it could be somebody in the mail room who has no training. We hear all about RCMP training and things like that. Somebody with no training could open up mail; they may, not shall, do so if they have reasonable grounds to suspect.

The member for Winnipeg North has told us so many times that a warrant would be needed. I went to a briefing with top officials from the government, and they told me that based on the provisions, a warrant would not be needed. Imagine that. The words are so clear that a warrant would not be needed, so let us just go through it one more time for clarity.

Bill C-2 states:

The Corporation may open any mail if it has reasonable grounds to suspect that

It does not state that the corporation may apply for a warrant. It does not state that the corporation shall apply for a warrant. It says that it "may open any mail".

Here is the real kicker: reasonable grounds. I have not practised law for about four years, but my recollection is that a search warrant is issued by a judge when there are reasonable grounds to believe, based on oath or affirmation, that an offence has been committed, that there is evidence of that offence and that the place to be searched will yield evidence of the offence. Those three characteristics are needed with reasonable grounds to believe.

Let us go back to the plain language:

The Corporation may open any mail if it has reasonable grounds to suspect that

Wait a minute. That is not reasonable grounds to believe, as is needed for a warrant, yet the Liberals have repeatedly stood up in this place and said that Conservatives are full of conspiracy theories and that a warrant would be needed, when it says right in the bill that a warrant would not be needed.

The member for Winnipeg North is very active in questions and comments, and God forbid that any member of the House would misspeak, so I really look forward to his addressing the issue in questions and comments. In fact, perhaps a page can run the document over to him, because it says it right in it, and the member can tell us whether he still believes this, or acknowledges perhaps that Conservatives were correct on the issue.

This leads me to Bill C-2 generally. Bill C-2 was a mess. The government went very far. We can all acknowledge that border se-

curity is an issue, but the legislation went very far, and we heard about it from Canadians. The Liberals have said that we need the legislation and need it done, and they have asked how we dare stand in the way of border security and things like that. However, as Conservatives, we played our role as opposition, and we did so very clearly.

We took issue, and people will notice that the matters with which we took issue are not matters in Bill C-12. I take great pride in what we have done, because that is what an opposition does. An opposition scrutinizes, considers and opposes, when and where it is appropriate to oppose.

• (1235)

Lo and behold, part 4, which speaks about the inspection of mail, is no longer in Bill C-12; it remains languishing in Bill C-2. It is by no coincidence that occurred, because we as Conservatives consistently raised the plain language in Bill C-2, which I think I will quote again:

The Corporation may open any mail if it has reasonable grounds to suspect that

Then it goes on to the regulations.

What other things are missing? Conservatives raised substantial questions about privacy concerns, parts 14 and 15, what is colloquially called lawful access. People have said I should know about the *R v. Bykovets* decision. I do know about the *Bykovets* decision very well. I think I was still practising law when it came out. That decision said there is a reasonable expectation of privacy in an IP address. As parliamentarians, we have to remedy the problem.

We have actually seen that when the Liberals want to remedy an untenable decision for the House, they have no problem doing it quickly. I will note that they have failed to do that on the issue of bail. There were three or four decisions on bail that they actually codified. That means they took the language from the decision and put it into legislation. They did not push back on it. Section 33.1, the defence of extreme intoxication, was struck out. There was legislation before the House within weeks of that happening.

The Liberals did not want a law on the books. They did not want a lack of law that said that extreme intoxication is an excuse for a general intent offence, that is, when someone does not legally have the ability to commit the offence. I believe it goes to the *actus reus* defence, but it has been a while. In any event, the Liberals responded with legislation very quickly.

The Liberals did not really care so much about bail, but now they say they are tough on crime. This is after former ministers of justice Virani and Lametti stood just across the aisle in the House to tell us there is no problem with bail. The Liberals have no problem responding when it is consistent with their agenda.

Government Orders

In Bill C-12, what the Liberals will not acknowledge is that it was robust opposition that led to elements that should be debated in Bill C-2's forming Bill C-12, as well as other very questionable issues in Bill C-2's remaining in Bill C-2. It also begs this question: What is going to happen in Bill C-2?

Perhaps we can have another debate on Bill C-2, and the member for Winnipeg North can stand up and speak about warrantless searches of mail. The Liberals could also discuss cash transactions, how much money should be permitted, and whether we should actually be telling Canadians how much cash they can or cannot use.

I just want to pause to acknowledge somebody who has done tremendous work when it comes to democracy and participating in democracy. That person is named Dawson McKay. He is a Crown prosecutor in British Columbia. I admire his passion for the rule of law and what is right, and I want to thank him for his contributions to democracy. He is somebody with a deep conscience, a deep desire to do what is right. I thank him for his work.

I would also like to thank somebody else, another prosecutor, Alex Whele. He works out of the Kamloops Crown counsel office in Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola. He is somebody I had the pleasure of meeting when he was in law school and was just thinking about becoming a prosecutor, and we spoke. I taught his now wife in the faculty of business back then. I am very proud to call Alex a friend. I am so grateful for his work in contributing to democracy. I am also proud of his work in contributing to public safety. I want to recognize that formally in the House of Commons.

• (1240)

We have spoken about the mail provisions, and we have spoken about Bill C-2 generally and how we got here. Now let us focus on Bill C-12, what is in it and what is not.

I know that my colleague from Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman will be giving a speech today. I am sure he will give it with his characteristic zeal and great detail, as he is so often known for in the House.

What is not in Bill C-12? There is no mandatory prison time for fentanyl traffickers. I believe we heard from the Secretary of State for Combatting Crime that the Liberals are “tough on crime”. That was actually said in the House. Really? Apparently, now the Liberals are going to come out with legislation. We have not even seen the legislation yet, but we are being told that we should support it. I would think the House would support a bill on intimate-partner violence, but that remains to be seen.

I am told the legislation has good stuff in it and speaks about sex offences and people who commit sex offences no longer getting house arrest. I have probably raised this issue 15 times in the House, and the Liberals have openly mocked our views when it comes to justice. I actually raised this issue with the minister of justice at one time, and I heard, “Do not worry. When somebody commits a serious crime, they will get serious time.” What happened to the mentality of trusting judges? The Liberals told us we should trust judges; they are appointed. Now they say, “Wait a minute. There is no more house arrest for sex offences.” They do not trust judges any more; they are tough on crime. It is something they mocked us for. I am worried that I am going to wake up with a stiff

neck tomorrow based on the whiplash I am getting from the government, which is now tough on crime.

What else do we not have in the bill? There is no mandatory prison time for gangsters who use guns to commit crimes. A person can get house arrest for a drive-by shooting. What is worse is that this was not the court's doing; it was the Liberals' doing. For Bill C-5, Mr. Lametti, then a minister, said he did not think that somebody had to go to jail for popping off a couple of shots into a bar after having a couple of pops.

Intending to discharge a gun, if done in a car, is called a drive-by shooting. If it is done otherwise, it is called a shooting with intent. There used to be a four-year mandatory minimum, which was constitutionally upheld in a case called Oud, I might add, for the Liberals who say that everything was always struck down under the Conservatives. However, it went from a four-year sentence to potentially house arrest. Now the Liberals are tough on crime, but not tough enough to put this into an omnibus bill to keep us all safe.

The Liberals have created what I would call a porous border, and that porous border is allowing firearms to get in like never before. What should we be doing? People will say to me that denunciation and deterrence do not work. They have been our sentencing principles in the Criminal Code from time immemorial, but they will say they do not work. I am starting to have serious questions about the fact that people can repeatedly commit crimes and believe they are untouchable. I saw this happen on so many occasions in my employment before I was blessed to be present in the House. When we let somebody operate with impunity when it comes to the criminal law, we will invariably have an outcome that they repeat the behaviour, because they have learned that there will be no consequences from it. Bill C-12 is silent on that.

I hope the Liberals will give credit where credit is due as to how Bill C-12 came here. We will scrutinize this legislation and we will go from there.

• (1245)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives try to give the impression that whether someone is a letter carrier or a mail organizer for Canada Post, they are going to start opening the letters of Canadians. I find that amazing.

Government Orders

I am going to sidestep that particular issue because we see a more serious issue from over the last number of days. The leader of the Conservative Party made very serious statements against the RCMP at the highest level. I think the member would agree with me that the RCMP is recognized around the world as a first-class institution. When his leader starts providing the types of comments he has put on the record, false comments, at the end of the day he is displaying a great deal of disrespect for the RCMP.

I am wondering if the shadow minister would agree that the leader of the Conservative Party crossed the line when he said that the RCMP is “despicable”. I think Canadians need to hear what the member has to say about the comments his leader made. Does he support those comments?

• (1250)

Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, what I find very despicable is that the Liberals, an hour ago, refused to support my private member's bill, Bill C-225. I hope they reconsider that.

On the mail issue, I hope the member reconsiders it. I am going to read the bill one more time in hopes that he will concede. We have had our back-and-forths in this House many times. Perhaps some of them have been draws when it comes to debate, but I will not concede this one. Let me just say it one more time:

The Corporation may open any mail if it has reasonable grounds to suspect that

The member made my argument for me by wondering whether a mail carrier would be able to do this. Obviously, Canada Post has a policy, but the legislation as written would actually allow it if that person were part of the corporation. I commend him for helping me with my argument.

[*Translation*]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to know what my colleague thinks about the fact that the Customs and Immigration Union estimates that we need an additional 2,000 to 3,000 officers in order to truly ensure better border control.

What are his thoughts on the fact that the Canadian Coast Guard, despite having a mandate to control and monitor the border, is not authorized to intervene and is not a part of DND?

[*English*]

Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, I have heard my colleague very often. My French is not the best, but I will say this:

[*Translation*]

He has a great voice.

[*English*]

I love hearing his voice because he speaks with such power in this House. I really appreciate that.

I have had several meetings with the union leader from the CBSA, and I will be meeting with him very shortly. This is a concern. The border officer issue is quite vexing to me because the minister made an announcement, which was reannounced and then maybe reannounced twice more, about having 1,000 officers, but then just the other day, the minister caught himself and said “personnel”. What does that mean?

I stand with the union in saying that our border is porous and we need more people there. I had the opportunity over the summer to visit the border and see this. Morale is low, and these people want and need change. They are working on the front lines to do their best. We need to support them to the best degree possible.

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to follow up on some of the comments made.

Bill C-12 has taken up the parts of Bill C-2 that we agree with and moved them over, but Bill C-2 is still sitting on the Order Paper. That bill, as my colleague mentioned, would give the power to Canada Post employees to do search and seizure, which is in complete violation of our charter rights. We know that through Bill C-2, the Liberals want to take cash and make it illegal to make deposits of over \$10,000. Last time I looked at the back of any currency in Canada, \$20 bills, \$10 bills and five-dollar bills say “Canada”. We are talking about legal tender, guaranteed by the government and the Bank of Canada, yet they want to make cash illegal.

I want to ask the member whether he believes the Liberals are going to turn away from Bill C-2 and the flawed policies they still have in it. Should we be making some suggestions about them? Does he think, through Bill C-12, the Liberals are going to empower CBSA officers to police the entire border, not just ports of entry?

• (1255)

Frank Caputo: Where should I start, Madam Speaker? My colleague proved his intellectual fortitude one more time with that brilliant intervention.

On the issue of enforcement at ports of entry, my colleague raises a very important point, something that I do not believe gets enough coverage in the House. If somebody commits an offence, despite the fact that border officers with the CBSA are police officers, which grants them specific powers under the Criminal Code, their mandate does not permit them to go beyond a port of entry. Let us say somebody had a kilogram of cocaine and it was dropped outside a port of entry. Even if it was in sight, the CBSA could not get it. This has been stated to the government time after time. If it wants to make meaningful changes, that is something we should be debating in this House.

When it comes to the member's comments on Bill C-2, I could agree more. It remains on the Order Paper and we need to scrutinize it. I wonder if the Liberals will pull back from it. They have obviously shown some willingness to do that given that Bill C-12 is now before us.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to hear that my Conservative colleague supports the Bloc Québécois's proposal to optimize the work of our officers by allowing them to leave the border crossing where they are posted to intercept migrants or goods. We know that border officers are armed and trained in self-defence. They have everything they need to better co-operate with the RCMP, which is often far from border crossings, especially in rural areas like mine.

Does my colleague agree that we should bring up this idea during our study on border security so that it can be one of the key recommendations in the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security's report?

[English]

Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, I have had a good experience working with my Bloc colleague, who is the critic for public safety. I hope we can maintain a good relationship working together to create the best possible legislation.

We should not shy away from asking the hard questions in this place. Sometimes they will be contentious. Sometimes the answers will be very easy and sometimes they will be difficult. I know somebody had an idea in mind when they restricted the CBSA's border mandate to not go beyond the port of entry, but we should not shy away from discussing these things.

In answer to my colleague's question, I would be happy to include this in a study. I think it is something we should be debating. We should not shy away from it. There are sometimes very tough questions. They are often difficult questions to ask because we have to consider the RCMP, which currently has the mandate. How far are they from the borders? There are going to be borders where they might have a 15- or 20-minute response time. That is unacceptable in my view. I think the time has come for us to have a robust discussion on that.

My colleague pointed out that CBSA members are armed. That was done under the Harper government. They are well trained, and I thank them for all they do to keep us safe. They do not always have the tools or the resources to do that, but let us give credit where credit is due. These people put their lives on the line for us every single day, and we as Conservatives and Canadians ought to be grateful.

• (1300)

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to speak when you are sitting in the chair.

I would like to congratulate the newly acclaimed mayors in my riding. We recently had an election in Quebec for cities and municipalities. I would like to congratulate Alain Dubuc, who was re-elected as mayor of Beauharnois. I would also like to congratulate Daibhid Fraser in Dundee, Deborah Stewart in Elgin, Mark Wallace in Hinchinbrooke, André Brunette in Huntingdon, Michel Proulx in Les Cèdres, Sylvain Brazeau in Les Coteaux, Peter Zytynsky in Pointe-des-Cascade, Sylvie Tourangeau in Saint-Anicet, Mylène

Labre in Saint-Clet, Daniel Pinsonneault in Sainte-Barbe, Shawn Campbell in Sainte-Justine-de-Newton, Jinny Brunelle in Sainte-Marthe, Martin Dumaresq in Saint-Étienne-de-Beauharnois, Yves Daoust in Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague, Jean-Pierre Ménard in Saint-Polycarpe, David McKay in Saint-Télésphore and Miguel Lemieux in Salaberry-de-Valleyfield. Eighteen mayors out of 25 have been acclaimed in my riding. I would like to wish them all the best and may they have a successful term for the coming year.

Today, we are discussing Bill C-12. With the exception of three parts, it is almost identical to Bill C-2, previously presented by the government with considerable fanfare. Viewers at home will recall that the bill's number, Bill C-2, reflects the fact that the government was intent on bringing this bill forward urgently at the start of this Parliament. That is why today, in mid-October, we are dealing with another bill that has the same objectives, but is now known as Bill C-12.

What does that mean? It means that this bill was initially intended to appease the President of the United States after he set a very high bar for Canada in terms of border security requirements. The Prime Minister promised to respond forcefully to the problem and to introduce a very strong bill to secure the borders, known as Bill C-2 at that time.

The Bloc Québécois has carefully examined Bill C-12 and we want the government to know that we support sending it to committee for study.

However, what worries me is that I heard the Minister of Public Safety say that Bill C-2 has only been postponed, and I have read that too. In other words, in order to be able to pass the other parts of Bill C-2 through Bill C-12, he removed the contentious parts that were preventing it from being passed unanimously, namely all the parts that violated privacy or anything that did not comply with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In its report, the Library of Parliament provided a whole list of Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms violations, including the section that protects the right to life, liberty and security of any person in Canada, and section 8, which provides protection against unreasonable search and seizure. Obviously, we have talked at length about everything akin to opening mail without a warrant and about section 15, which provides that every individual is equal before the law.

There was a risk of arbitrary discrimination. I could not find a single organization or agency that had anything good to say about the parts that were removed from Bill C-2. That is why we are discussing and debating Bill C-12 today. I could not find anyone to defend those parts because they represented a potential for intrusion. One very well-known expert witness told me that parts 14 and 15 of Bill C-2 would spell the end of privacy. If those provisions were not amended, it would have been the end of privacy.

Government Orders

The government clearly took its shot, but it wrote this in a hurry. What scares me is that if the Liberal government had won a majority, Bill C-2 would have been passed and rammed down the throats of Quebeckers, Canadians and the opposition, all because the Americans felt it was very important. However, they do not value privacy as highly as we do here in Quebec and Canada.

• (1305)

That is scary, because there is no guarantee that Bill C-2 will not be brought back to life. Parts of that legislation can still be found in Bill C-12. The minister has not given up hope of getting the highly contentious parts of Bill C-2 passed.

What matters is that the opposition did its job. The government realized that it did not do its job properly, that it had rushed things and had been too hasty in introducing Bill C-2, which did not at all meet the needs of Quebeckers and the people of the other provinces.

Bill C-12 was pared down, because it is better to have something than nothing at all. This bill does have some interesting parts, which we would like to explore. We in the Bloc Québécois do not simply oppose or criticize. As a political party, we truly want to improve things and propose ideas, especially when they are in the interest of Quebec. All the better if they are also in the interest of other Canadians.

When it comes to the whole issue of border security, the Bloc Québécois has long been calling for stronger action. We know that it took the President of the United States to tell us that our border is like a sieve. The Speaker of the House will surely recall that, at the time, we were very critical of the fact that the Liberal government opened Roxham Road and that we were told that we were racist and unwelcoming to refugees. Slowly but surely, Ontario came around to our way of thinking, as did the other provinces, and all of a sudden, the government managed to solve the problem and began welcoming refugees through the proper points of entry.

The Bloc Québécois also made suggestions about how to better monitor the borders and better protect citizens. The first was to create a department of borders. I asked the minister questions at the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security two weeks ago, but instead of answering me, he looked to the president of the CBSA to answer for him. That is rather unfortunate. He needs to be accountable. This is his responsibility, and he needs to answer the questions. Given the current context, we think it is high time that the government incorporated a border department into this department, where all security interventions are entrusted to a minister who is responsible and accountable.

We also proposed a measure that we believe could improve border security. We propose that border officers be given more flexibility in performing their duties. On Friday, I visited the school where Canadian border officers are trained. The training centre is located in Rigaud, in the riding of my neighbour from Vaudeuil. I had a wonderful time seeing first-hand the serious training provided to border officers and the highly-qualified personnel it produces in all matters related to border security. Why not let these officers respond to situations as they arise, leave their post, perform interceptions and call the RCMP to come and deal with packages, shipments or people trying to enter Canada illegally?

I fail to understand the government's resistance to this proposal, since not a single border officer would deny that it is a good idea. In times of limited resources, it is wise to use our resources as effectively as possible. That is an idea proposed by the Bloc Québécois.

The Bloc Québécois also continues to demand better control of firearms that are circulating illegally and are prohibited on our soil. I represent a riding that borders the Akwesasne reserve, Lake Saint-François, Lake Saint-Louis, and the U.S. border in New York state. We know there is trafficking of illegal arms. We are therefore asking for more patrols and more resources to be allocated to this part of the country, where we know there is a lot of smuggling and even human trafficking, which occurs more by waterways than by land.

• (1310)

We will continue to demand oversight to clean up the Toronto big banks and money laundering activities linked to criminal groups. We will also propose tougher penalties for border smugglers. The current penalties are a joke. We have even seen smugglers get caught and deported back to their countries, only to return to Quebec and resume the same criminal activities. Our border control system is clearly dysfunctional.

Obviously, we also want to take action in the fight against the fentanyl crisis, which, as everyone knows, is a public health crisis. In the Bloc Québécois, we agree that we need to invest in public health, which means increasing federal health transfers. The government must be more attentive to the needs of Quebec and the provinces in terms of support and funding, whether for rehabilitation centres, rapid access to emergency rooms, social worker services, supervised consumption centres, or harm reduction initiatives.

The Bloc Québécois believes that border measures to crack down on organized crime continue to be not only necessary, but extremely important. In addition, we must have seamless co-operation among American, Mexican and Canadian authorities so they can be more effective in their response and capture the criminals, who have had it easy for the past few years. These criminals have figured out the flaws in our system and learned how to take advantage of them.

Of course, Bill C-12 also deals with the issue of refugee claimants. If the bill is sent to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, we will have an opportunity to debate it there and get a better idea of the sections that amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

Government Orders

I must say that the Bloc Québécois has some questions about Bill C-12. Under the bill, rail companies will have to create a space in their marshalling yards, including a warehouse and offices, because right now customs officers are unable to inspect railway cars leaving Canada for the United States. To do that, rail companies such as CN, CP and CSX will have to build infrastructure in their marshalling yards. The big question I have is this: Are those rail companies going to have to cover 100% of the costs associated with setting up this infrastructure?

For example, it could cost millions of dollars to set up infrastructure that includes a warehouse and two or three offices for border officers, as well as a scanning system to detect if cars contain explosives or other important illicit substances that could threaten national security. I do not have the exact figure, but it could be more than \$30 million. I know this because it is what is required at the Port of Valleyfield for border officers to be present and for containers to clear through the port. Will the rail companies also be required to set up this very expensive infrastructure? Will they receive financial support? Will they have a certain amount of time to comply with the new requirements?

As is often the case in legislation, the devil is in the details, and yet the current text of Bill C-12 is lacking in this level of detail. In committee, we will have an opportunity to hear from many witnesses. For example, CN officials may tell us that this is not a problem, that they are willing to invest several million dollars in their marshalling yards to ensure that the agency has the infrastructure it needs to inspect the rail cars. I may be a pessimist but, given the times we are living in, I question whether a rail company would want to invest so much money in order to meet a government request. I suspect that enforcement delays may be much longer than what is anticipated in the context of the bill.

● (1315)

In terms of rail companies, allowing border agents to come into marshalling yards to conduct inspections is a new way of doing things. Practices are going to change as a result. Ultimately, with Bill C-12, the government is announcing a lot of changes today. A law can be changed, but it can take several months or even years before the law is implemented and practices on the ground actually change. There are bills that were passed two years ago that we still do not have regulations for. The Official Languages Act is a good example.

Bill C-12 also provides for changes to the mandate of the Canadian Coast Guard. As we know, the Coast Guard is responsible for patrolling various parts of Quebec and the provinces by water, but it does not have the authority to relay information to other authorities. It is not allowed. I do not know if it does so in practice, but it is not supposed to. This bill therefore corrects that by giving the Coast Guard the ability to help document information it deems suspicious.

Since the Coast Guard has been moved back under the military budget, what we are wondering is whether Coast Guard officers will be armed and how much they will be able to intervene. I did not see anything in the bill to indicate whether that might change. It is rather odd to be part of the armed forces but to not be allowed to be armed. That is another question. We can have that debate during

committee hearings when we study the bill more thoroughly. As long as we do not know the answers to these questions, if the Coast Guard's only mandate is to provide information and surveillance, then we have to wonder whether it will truly be integrated under the umbrella of the Canadian Armed Forces.

I think everyone knows that this is needed first and foremost for the Arctic, to safeguard the border and protect Canada's territorial sovereignty. However, as a member of Parliament representing an area near Lac Saint-François that also borders the Akwesasne reserve and New York State, what I am seeing is a decrease of at least 50% in maritime patrols in that area. The government talks about adding resources, but I think it is more a question of managing resources. The government is going to take resources away from the Coast Guard, give it a little more power and move its officers to priority areas, thereby neglecting other areas, including areas in my riding, which is a hot spot for gun smuggling, tobacco smuggling and human trafficking.

For the past year or year and a half, the government has been making one announcement after another. I think this is the fifth official announcement of plans to hire 1,000 border officers. Hiring 1,000 new officers takes a lot of organization; after all, border officers do not grow on trees. It takes at least 18 weeks to train them, not including the specialized training delivered at various campuses in Quebec and Canada. What is less clear in the bill is who will be training them. Do we have enough instructors? Are the 1,000 officers really going to be assigned to the border? It seems not. Instead, we hear that 800 border officers will be trained at Rigaud and another 200 will be assigned to intelligence or administrative investigation duties. These are some of the areas we will have to clarify when we ask questions in committee.

In closing, we obviously intend to take a serious and thorough approach to Bill C-12. We are going to help improve it, and we hope that the governing party will listen to our amendments and recommendations.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate many of the comments that the member put on the record this morning. A lot of the questions she poses are no doubt concerns that people will have going forward, as we debate the legislation.

Ultimately, my question for the member is with respect to a standing committee. The Bloc seems to support the principles of Bill C-12. Is there anything specific in the legislation that the member would like to see amended? The follow-up to that would likely be something in the neighbourhood of clarity. The Bloc supports the bill going to committee, is that not correct?

Government Orders

• (1320)

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, I think I said this, but perhaps my colleague missed the beginning of my speech. I said at the outset that the Bloc Québécois agrees to refer Bill C-12 to committee so that we can hear expert opinions on this bill. We will be able to hear from witnesses to determine whether we should propose amendments and whether we can improve the bill. The answer to my colleague's first question is yes, we will send the bill to committee.

As for the changes we might make, I would say that witnesses are very important to me. Before submitting amendments or ideas for amendments, we want to take the time to listen to witnesses and experts, who will help us make the right decisions and improve the bill, if necessary.

[*English*]

Eric Melillo (Kenora—Kiiwetinoong, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is important in this discussion that law-abiding Canadians should not lose their liberty to pay for the failures of the Liberals, but, unfortunately, Canadians are often finding themselves paying for the failures of the Liberal government. That is the case when it comes to trade.

The Ear Falls sawmill has announced an indefinite shutdown, affecting nearly 150 workers, citing U.S. tariffs as the reason behind this decision, which will absolutely devastate the community. This comes months after the Prime Minister promised to negotiate a win for Canada. Canadians are still paying for his failures. It is time for the government to step up and support workers in northwestern Ontario and across the country.

To that end, I would ask the member if she agrees with my initial premise that law-abiding Canadians should not lose their liberties to pay for the failures of the Liberals on borders and immigration.

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, I tend to agree with the first part of my colleague's question; it is true that workers are losing their jobs right now because of American tariffs. It does not seem as though the government is acting very quickly to support the small regions and medium-sized businesses that do not have the cash flow they need to cope with these changes. Quite frankly, we had very high expectations of this Liberal government based on what we heard during the election campaign. Unfortunately, we have been very disappointed.

Take, for example, the aerospace industry and secondary processing facilities. There have been closures and staffing cuts in my riding and across Quebec. Unfortunately, the government is not paying much attention to that and does not seem to be acting very quickly. The government is not very quick on the draw, as they say. It is not very quick to respond to communities' urgent and pressing needs.

The most problematic parts of Bill C-2, namely, the privacy invasions, were taken out of Bill C-12. Bill C-2 was completely unacceptable. Canadians, Quebecers, all organizations and everyone were against the fact that the government would allow such a major invasion of the privacy of Quebecers and Canadians. When the

government saw that its bill would not make it any further than this if it did not make amendments, it finally listened to reason and introduced Bill C-12, which removed the three most problematic parts of Bill C-2.

What concerns me is that the government does not seem to have given up on these three parts. I hope that people are listening today and that they will keep up the pressure on the government so that these three parts, which invade privacy, are never passed.

• (1325)

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my distinguished colleague from Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon for her speech, which was very relevant given the circumstances.

First, the reason why Bill C-2 was introduced so early on is that it was an urgent matter for the government. Donald Trump forced the government to improvise, and Canadians are under a lot of pressure in the climate of fear and insecurity that he is creating. However, with the new Bill C-12, the government is removing mail searches, privacy invasions and restrictions on cash transactions for charities.

How will the U.S. President react to that? Are we expecting the United States to retaliate? I am curious to hear what my colleague thinks will be the consequences of removing these two clauses. They were problematic, and I do not think anyone wanted to see them in a bill.

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, that is a very good question. We do not have the inside track, so we will talk hypothetically.

I agree that the U.S. President's team must be disappointed, given that the U.S. government did not get what it asked for. The Liberal government backed down on a number of decisions that were made in the House to please the U.S. government, in the hopes that it would have some impact on the tariffs that were imposed. Unfortunately, that strategy has not worked so far.

As we know, businesses continue to be impacted by the tariffs. I think that Bill C-12 is a first step. I am sure that, in private discussions between the U.S. the President and our Prime Minister, there is talk of trying again to get us to pass Bill C-2, which contains three parts, including mail searches and the serious violation of the privacy rights of Quebecers and Canadians. I think it is only a matter of time.

I urge everyone to be very vigilant because that is what the U.S. President really wants. I think that we can only conclude that the current Liberal government will do everything it can to satisfy the American administration.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola. I am just wondering what my colleague thinks about the remainder of Bill C-2. Does she have any advice for the government on what is clearly a flawed bill, a bill that Canadians have spoken out against in droves?

What are her thoughts as to what should occur with the remainder of Bill C-2, given the concerns regarding privacy and civil liberties?

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague with whom I have the privilege of serving on the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

I would say that, to calm things down a bit, the Minister of Public Safety should make it clear that the three troubling parts that were removed from Bill C-12 need to be scrapped for good. Bill C-2 should die on the Order Paper and there should be no strategies or negotiations to bring those three parts back for debate or to be passed.

I think the minister needs to be very clear. So far, I have to say that the minister is trying to have it both ways, which means that we are not quite sure where he stands on this issue. Sometimes, in one newspaper article, he says one thing, and in another article, he says something else.

I think the best solution would be for the Minister of Public Safety to clearly announce that the three parts that have been removed will not reappear in any form.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I indicated in my question, I appreciate many of the comments the member from the Bloc party has raised here this afternoon. I think this is very much a responsible approach to deal with the legislation that we have before us. I can assure the member that many of the concerns and questions she has raised will no doubt be talked about extensively during the committee process. Hopefully, the member will be able to get the answers she is looking for.

Obviously, we have a minister who is committed to getting the legislation through. I appreciate the frankness and the manner in which the Bloc appears to be supporting the legislation. Ultimately, we will have to wait and see what sort of priority the opposition, collectively, will put on this legislation.

It is important for us to recognize, right at the beginning, why legislation of this nature has become such a priority. Canada's new Prime Minister, along with the cabinet, members of the Liberal caucus and others, understands that things have changed a great deal over the past year. We have seen great emphasis put on the border between Canada and the United States. Border security concerns have been elevated to a degree I have not seen in my many years of being a parliamentarian. We have a prime minister who recognizes just how important it is that the government act quickly to address a

number of those concerns. That is the reason why Bill C-2 was introduced as early as it was. The Prime Minister was amplifying just how important border control is because of some of the crimes being committed in Canada. He has made it a priority in Bill C-2.

In listening to the many comments thus far, both from the Bloc and the Conservatives, I can appreciate that there are aspects of Bill C-2 they are concerned about to the degree where the legislation was not receiving the type of support that can see it go to committee in a quick fashion. In fact, I believe we had just over 18 hours of actual debate on Bill C-2.

There are some issues within Bill C-2 that are somewhat contentious, and concerns have been raised about them. However, just because they are not necessarily incorporated in Bill C-12, which we are debating today, it does not take away from the importance of other measures in Bill C-2. It is important that we recognize it is not just the government's opinion but also that of stakeholders, particularly law enforcement agencies. We recognize there are many aspects of Bill C-2 that address concerns Canadians justifiably want to see some form of action taken on.

To those who have been following Bill C-2, the government is not saying no. It recognizes that we need to get other aspects incorporated into Bill C-2 to move it more quickly through the House of Commons. We believe that the legislation we are proposing today deals with these concerns to a degree where we will hopefully see the bill get to the committee stage.

We need to take a look at the changing dynamic that Canada is facing today, compared to where it was a year ago. One only needs to look at the last national election in the United States. President Trump has made it very clear that he has concerns on a number of fronts with respect to Canada and Mexico. He wants to see specific actions taken in order to foster more co-operation, if I could put it that way.

- (1330)

I will use the issue of fentanyl as an example.

The United States says that fentanyl coming from Canada into the United States is a huge problem. I believe that what is being brought into the United States is less than 1%, but we still take it seriously. The Prime Minister has been very clear about the impact fentanyl is having not only in our communities but also in other nations. He recognizes the impact that drugs coming into Canada is having.

Back in late spring, the government attempted to address concerns expressed on many occasions about how Canada Post was obligated to deliver first-class mail, or size 10 envelopes, which are just standard envelopes. Canada Post was being used to distribute fentanyl in my province and in particular in northern communities. This is a legitimate concern that comes from stakeholders in rural Manitoba. The government responded by ensuring there are more checks in place to minimize the amount of fentanyl going through Canada Post. That is the goal. The Prime Minister, cabinet and the Liberal caucus want to see less fentanyl in our communities. Whether it is through Bill C-2 or Bill C-12, and our talking about the principles of these, this is what we are hoping to accomplish.

Government Orders

Stronger borders is another issue that has been of great concern in the last 12 months. Actually, it has been less than 12 months. Again, we have the newly elected Prime Minister. He was elected back in April. He has committed not only legislation but also budgetary measures to this. A budget is coming on November 4. We often receive questions about RCMP officers, Canada border control officers and the commitment the Prime Minister has made.

It is no small commitment. The Prime Minister says that we are serious about securing Canada's borders. This means not only bringing in Bill C-2, which would provide extra strength, but also factoring in 1,000 new RCMP officers and 1,000 new border control officers. This is a significant commitment that goes over and above the legislation. As a government, we recognize that we can bring forward legislation and that, in this situation, there is a need to put more boots on the ground. This is something that will be materializing. I suspect we will hear more about that on November 4, when we present the fall budget to Canadians through the House of Commons.

The legislative component is absolutely critical. The sharing of information is so important. Things have changed over the years. We all know that, through technology and the advancement of the Internet, there are things that can be done through the Internet with all the different types of weapons out there. I am not just talking about guns. Weapons can take many different forms. There is a need for legislation of this nature.

• (1335)

Bill C-12 has two pillars. The first is securing the border and the second is combatting transnational organized crime in terms of things like illegal fentanyl and illicit financing. These are the types of issues being dealt with in this legislation.

I want to recognize the efforts of our border control officers. There are interesting statistics, which we always like to talk about. Whether it is the RCMP or our border control officers, I do not think we give them enough credit for the fine work they do. When I say "we", I am talking about parliamentarians as a whole and, even beyond the House of Commons, provincial politicians. To give a sense of the type of work that border control officers do for us, I will provide some statistics from January 1 to September 19 of this year. These are all seizures by the Canada border security agents.

Regarding cannabis products, somewhere in the neighbourhood of 37,467,000 grams were seized. For hashish, it was 379,000 grams. For cocaine or crack, it was 2,702,000 grams. For heroin, it was 73,946 grams. There were 770,534 grams of other opioids and 22,237,913 grams of other types of drugs seized. With regard to firearms, something that is constantly discussed, 662 firearms and 11,119 prohibited weapons were seized. In terms of hard dollars, it amounted to \$29,961,000. In suspected proceeds of crime, the amount was \$2,919,000. This work was done in the first nine months of the year. That is why I say the work our Canada border control officers do for us is so critically important, as is the RCMP's.

I asked the Conservative shadow minister or critic a very specific question related to the RCMP. I want to raise this because I take it very seriously, as I know Canadians do. When I posed my question to the Conservative opposition critic, he chose to sidestep the issue

and not answer. It is the same question I posed to the minister responsible for introducing Bill C-12, and it is in relation to the RCMP.

I am offended because, over the last number of days, there has been a lot of news and social media coverage about a statement the leader of the Conservative Party made. The Winnipeg Free Press said that the leader of the Conservative Party called the leadership of the RCMP "despicable". That is a very important issue in this debate. The government says it is going to increase security at our border, reinforce the strength of the RCMP by investing in another 1,000 officers and that we should, collectively, support those two institutions.

• (1340)

As I indicated, the RCMP as an institution is recognized around the world as a first-class security and law enforcement agency. Let there be absolutely no doubt about that. A politician who says that the leadership of the RCMP is despicable, and goes on in great detail, does a disservice not only to the institution of the RCMP but to all of us who sit inside the House, let alone if it is the leader of Canada's official opposition making that statement.

That is why I posed the question earlier to my colleague across the way from the Conservative Party, who was appointed by the leader of the Conservative Party to take on the role of shadow minister: Does he support what the leader of the Conservative Party is saying? I respect, to a certain degree, that the member chose not to answer the question. I suspect that he understands why it was not an appropriate thing for the leader of the official opposition to say. I believe that the leader of the official opposition owes an apology to all Canadians on this issue. What is despicable, and I would add a few other words to that, is the damage that it causes when the leader of the official opposition makes comments of that nature. I would suggest that the leader of the official opposition owes a sincere apology inside the House to all Canadians for saying what he has said.

Bill C-12 would amend the accelerated scheduling pathway that allows precursor chemicals that can be used to produce illicit drugs to be rapidly controlled by the Minister of Health. This would allow law and border enforcement agencies to take swift action to prevent the illegal importation and use of precursor chemicals and would at the same time ensure strict federal oversight over any legitimate use of these chemicals. The legislation would also provide more strength in terms of the anti-terrorist-financing regime, including through stronger anti-money-laundering penalties.

Government Orders

With respect to the substance of the legislation, the Bloc member referred to the Coast Guard, saying that the Coast Guard would have expanded responsibility. I believe that the sharing of information that a Coast Guard can receive can be exceptionally valuable in terms of the security of our nation. As a result, I agree that there need to be checks in place related to privacy and actions that would not adhere to our Constitution, but at the end of the day, that is valuable information and I would suggest that this information, if accessed appropriately, can ultimately save lives and a whole lot more. That is the reason some of the initiatives Bill C-12 would bring in add more value to the legislation. It becomes a question of whether we want to see that sharing of information, either with the Coast Guard or with immigration.

• (1345)

If I had another 20 minutes, I could go into detail as to why we need to protect the integrity of the system and to be able to recognize that there is abuse within the system and that there is the potential for significant abuse. These amendments are absolutely critical for dealing with the issue of asylum, for example.

Many issues that I have, whether they are related to asylum or other issues related to security, can best be addressed in one-on-one discussions and debates and by the presenters who go before the standing committee.

We have had Bill C-2. We now have Bill C-12. I hope we will see the legislation pass—

• (1350)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon.

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Madam Speaker, I really appreciated the parliamentary secretary's constructive tone when speaking about Bill C-12 generally. We have a lot in common. We both agree that border security needs to be enhanced and that much tougher and more robust measures need to be taken to ensure security.

As he said, we agree that the Coast Guard should be given more powers and more tools for surveillance and communicating information. As for the other changes he is calling for relating to invasion of privacy and information sharing, it is not just the opposition parties that have a problem with that. Civil society as a whole stood up and spoke out, and many people have contacted members from all parties to express their concerns. If these parts of the bill are so important, as the parliamentary secretary said, then we need to talk about them, educate people and make sure everyone understands them. The debate needs to go beyond the House of Commons.

I am pleased with the parliamentary secretary's tone and I can assure him the co-operation of the Bloc Québécois throughout the process of studying Bill C-12. However, does he agree with me that, on the issue of resources, we must also listen to workers, RCMP officers and border officers, who are also asking for suitable tools, technology and infrastructure? Right now, we are seeing that more people are being hired but nothing is being said on the issue of providing support through more advanced technological tools,

for example. Could the parliamentary secretary expand on this issue?

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it was posed to the minister earlier, based on a report, that we look at expanding the number of weeks in the training of RCMP officers. I believe there is room for discussion in regard to the whole issue of training.

For example, when I listened to the question earlier, I was sitting with one of my colleagues and I thought to myself, and shared that thought, that it would be valuable to have, every four or five years, ongoing training opportunities that reinforce the changes that take place in society.

We need to approach the issue of the security of our borders and other forms of security with an open mind. That means, at the very least, being open to ideas. Let us have that discussion and let us, when we are in a position to take action, look at doing that.

I think the Prime Minister has been, very much, open to ideas and thoughts.

[*Translation*]

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba (Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie, Lib.): Madam Speaker, can my colleague explain how the new law will have an impact on Canada and the security of its borders?

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, if I were to encapsulate it, I would suggest to my friend and colleague, who posed a very good question, that it does two things. It complements budgetary allocations in a very real way because it puts in significant changes in law to ensure that there is more information sharing, as an example. It is also complemented in terms of the significant budgetary measures that we are taking. I mentioned earlier, for example, the hiring of 1,000 new RCMP officers and 1,000 new CBSA employees.

Those two issues will, in fact, make a profoundly positive difference for the citizens whom he represents and whom we all represent.

I would hope, for that reason in itself, that we would get more co-operation in seeing the legislation get through to the committee stage.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, many interest groups looked at the immigration provisions in Bill C-2 that are now contained in Bill C-12. They have raised concerns about the constitutionality of these principles. Several groups have actually done this. The minister suggested she thinks it is constitutional.

Statements by Members

My concern is that if we have all these groups saying it is unconstitutional when the minister thinks it is constitutional, and there are no other provisions to deal with the massive backlog of asylum claims, then how is the Liberal government going to functionally reduce the asylum claim backlog? What I am worried about with the bill is that the Liberals are just punting the problem to the courts and potentially past the next election date, as opposed to making a serious structural reform that would reduce the incentive for economic migrants to abuse Canada's asylum system.

Could my colleague comment on the fact that many groups have said it is unconstitutional when the minister has said it is constitutional, and this is likely an attempt by the Liberal government to punt the asylum claim system problem to the courts?

• (1355)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I find it a bit surprising that the Conservatives, while in opposition, are really concerned about constitutional issues and the charter when it comes to the government bringing in laws, because they sure were not concerned before. When the member sat around with the Harper government, they were not at all concerned about these issues. Court rulings have demonstrated that the government is very much aware of the issues facing the immigration system today, including asylum seekers and potential asylum seekers.

The legislation is very important in terms of protecting the integrity of the system. I understand the issue in great detail in regard to the immigration file and the issues around asylum. I understand why there is a problem. It is not just Ottawa. We can talk about provinces; we can talk about post-secondary institutions, and we can talk about unethical employers. It is a combination of things.

As the Prime Minister has said, we are going to bring stability to the immigration file. This is part of it. We have a new Prime Minister who has made that commitment, and that commitment will be fulfilled.

Hon. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the topic of immigration, I have heard the member speak about immigration quite a bit in this House. It is probably the thing I have heard him speak about most. The reality is that our country is a relatively new country. Other than those of indigenous descent, we have all immigrated here over about the last two hundred years. My father was eight years old when he immigrated from Holland with his parents, and he was able to thrive in this country because his parents chose to come to Canada.

Can the member talk to the importance of having a healthy immigration system in a country that is relatively new, such as Canada?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I truly appreciate the question. I have been consistent over the years, as I believe the Liberal Party has, in regard to the true value of immigration. Let us contrast that to the far-right leader of the Conservative Party. The far-right leader of the Conservative Party goes against, I would argue, many of the thoughts prairie MPs would have regarding some of the statements he has made publicly. This anti-immigrant messaging coming from the Conservative Party's leadership is very concerning.

As an example, I would challenge my Manitoba colleagues in the Conservative Party. We have a province that desperately wants to retain people who are on working visas and people who have working visas that are expiring. My Conservative colleagues from Manitoba know that, yet they sit on their hands and are quiet when we have rural communities in Manitoba advocating for something their leader is saying no to. That is irresponsible leadership coming from the Conservative Party, whether it is immigration or even the issue of the RCMP, and I'll save that for another time.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[*Translation*]

L'AURORE BORÉALE

Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with immense northern pride that I congratulate L'Aurore boréale for being named newspaper of the year at the 2025 francophone press awards of excellence in September. This tremendous honour clearly shows the heart and soul that the newspaper puts into every issue.

L'Aurore boréale was also recognized for its magnificent bilingual digital project entitled "The Yukon Celebrates its 125th anniversary", produced in collaboration with the Yukon francophone historical society. This project pays tribute to the rich and resilient history of Yukon's francophone community. The newspaper also won the award of excellence for its digital presence for the third year in a row.

To all those who contribute to this remarkable publication, I say bravo and thank you. They make the Yukon proud. May L'Aurore boréale continue to inspire, inform, and unite for many years to come.

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[*English*]

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Rob Morrison (Columbia—Kootenay—Southern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in Columbia—Kootenay—Southern Rockies, forestry is not just an industry; it is a way of life. From small family-run mills like Huscroft, Kalesnikoff, ATCO, Porcupine and Mardis in the Kootenays to the dedicated men and women working across the southern Rockies, the forest sector is the backbone of our local economy. However, once again, these hard-working Canadians are being left behind.

The Liberal government has failed to secure a new softwood lumber agreement with the United States, leaving our producers facing uncertainty and unfair trade barriers. Despite these challenges, our small mills continue to push forward, investing, modernizing and finding innovative ways to stay competitive, but they are doing it without the support of the Liberal government, which should be standing up for them. They are not asking for handouts; they are asking for fairness, stability and leadership that will fight for their livelihoods.

Conservatives will always stand by our forest families and the communities that depend on this vital sector.

*Statements by Members***GENDER EQUALITY**

Chi Nguyen (Spadina—Harbourfront, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past Saturday, we celebrated the 96th anniversary of the Persons Case, when the Famous Five fought to have women recognized as persons in Canada. Their courage reshaped democracy in this country.

Across Canada, women are transforming government, business and public life. We are delivering on the national \$10-a-day child care program, a national action plan to end gender-based violence, a permanent national school food program and, soon, free contraception for more choice and control. All of these initiatives have a profoundly positive impact on all Canadians, but especially on our mothers, sisters and daughters.

However, progress is not equality. In 2023, women's workforce participation lagged 6.6 points behind men's, a gap that if closed could add \$150 billion to our economy. Gender-based violence still costs Canadians \$7.4 billion every year.

Nearly a century later, the fight for equality is far from over. It is our turn to finish what the Famous Five so bravely began.

* * *

COURAGE IN LEADERSHIP

Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the world desperately needs more people who do not fold under pressure, but who are guided by grace and use their influence not for personal gain, but for justice, those who are willing to stand in the gap for others, to boldly speak the truth, to protect the vulnerable, to fight against injustice and to take risks to do what is right.

I believe these are the kinds of people we are all called on to be, people who are willing to step up and speak out even when it is uncomfortable or perhaps even risky. Too often we shrink back from those moments. We choose silence. We fear conflict. We act impulsively or we accuse.

There is a better way. We can choose our moments carefully, deliver our words with wisdom and clarity, act with courage and always be respectful. Courageous people do not wait for safer circumstances; they step forward in faith and trust God with the outcome.

We must remember that our influence matters. Our voices can be used to bring justice, freedom, hope and life, but only if we are willing to use them.

* * *

[*Translation*]**CINDY OUELLET**

Jacques Ramsay (La Prairie—Atateken, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this month, as we celebrate women who inspire, innovate and transform the world around them, I would like to highlight the stellar journey of a young woman named Cindy Ouellet, a top paralympian in wheelchair basketball and para nordic skiing, a demanding discipline in which she excels.

She has represented Canada at four summer games and once at the winter games. Although she trains for four to six hours a day,

she also holds a Ph.D. in biomedical engineering from USC, and she is currently doing her second doctorate in neuroscience at Université Laval.

Ms. Ouellet was diagnosed with bone cancer at the age of 12, and she is now studying so that she can soon help to create a new hip replacement. That is what is known as turning challenges into opportunities. Cindy Ouellet is living proof that women are excelling more than ever in multiple fields. Let us congratulate this athlete, scientist, leader and model of resilience.

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● (1405)

[*English*]**DIWALI AND BANDI CHHOR DIVAS**

Amarjeet Gill (Brampton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in the chamber to join families of Brampton West, millions of Canadians and billions around the world in celebrating Diwali, the festival of lights, and Bandi Chhor Divas. Though the traditions may differ with different cultures, their message is universal: hope, unity and renewal. At a time when many are struggling and the world feels heavy with pain, these celebrations remind us to look forward with optimism.

I am proud to join our Conservative leader and colleagues in celebrating Diwali here on Parliament Hill and across our beautiful country. Conservatives will always stand up for the values that unite us: faith, family and freedom.

To everyone celebrating Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas in Brampton West and across Canada, may this Diwali bring joy, peace and prosperity to all. Happy Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas.

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INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY CONSORTIUM

Vince Gasparro (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week, members of the Intentional Community Consortium are in Ottawa for their annual day on the Hill. Representing more than 60 agencies across Canada, the consortium advocates for affordable and supportive housing solutions for individuals with developmental disabilities across Canada.

Earlier this summer, I had the opportunity to visit one of its member projects, the Frankfort Family Reena Residence, located in my riding of Eglinton—Lawrence, with chair Gary Gladstone. This project will provide homes for an estimated 168 individuals and will include specialized units for complex health care needs, along with options for independent and shared living.

At a time when we need to build not only more housing, but also a greater diversity of housing, I would like to thank the Intentional Community Consortium for the important work it does to build stronger communities where everyone can live with dignity and care.

I hope members will join me and hon. colleagues from the Conservative Party and Bloc Québécois at a reception this evening from five to seven in the Speaker's lounge.

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PROVINCIAL ELECTION IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Clifford Small (Central Newfoundland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate premier-elect Tony Wakeham and the Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland and Labrador on their victory in last week's provincial election. I give a special thanks to all who put their names forward, regardless of political stripe. The willingness to be involved strengthens our democracy.

After 10 costly years of a Liberal government that too often collaborated with its federal Liberal friends to ignore our fisheries, stifle opportunity in our offshore oil and gas sector, and ignore rising crime, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador have chosen a new direction. Tony Wakeham ran a positive, solutions-based campaign that put working people, rural communities, resource development and health care back at the centre of the province's future. This victory is a clear message that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are ready for leadership that listens, acts and delivers results.

I look forward to working with the incoming PC government for all of us.

* * *

[Translation]

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR APPRECIATION WEEK

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, from October 20 to 26, Quebec is celebrating Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Week. I am sure that everyone in the House knows someone who deserves to be honoured today. I know that my colleague, the member for Mirabel, is thinking about his mother-in-law, who is an educator. Personally, I want to give a shout-out to Ms. Awa, whom I entrusted with my own little guy this morning. I appreciate her kindness and her warm smile.

For our little ones, early childhood education professionals provide their first real experience of school. Early childhood educators do not just keep watch over our little ones. They awaken their minds, they listen to them and they offer reassurance and encouragement. Day in and day out, our children are in good hands. However, the role of early childhood educators goes even further than that. Thanks to their dedication, caring and creativity, they are shaping tomorrow's society and contributing to its success. They are building the future.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, and especially on behalf of all the little munchkins whose lives they forever change, I offer my heartfelt thanks to early childhood educators.

Statements by Members

• (1410)

[English]

CANADIAN WOMEN'S TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPION

Jessica Fancy (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during Women's History Month, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary female athlete from my riding of South Shore—St. Margarets, Sarah Mitton of Liverpool, Queens County, Nova Scotia. Sarah is a history-maker, one throw at a time. Born and raised in Liverpool, she has become one of Canada's greatest track and field athletes.

A national champion in her junior years, Sarah burst onto the international scene by capturing gold at the 2019 Summer Universiade, or the World University Games. In 2022, Sarah made our country proud once again by winning gold at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham and setting multiple Canadian records in shot put. She also became the first Canadian woman ever to reach the world championship final in her event, a remarkable milestone. She went on to represent Canada at both the Tokyo and Paris Olympic Games, proudly wearing the maple leaf on the world's biggest stage.

While she competes among the world's best—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George.

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SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since 2015, 11 mills have closed in my region. That is over 2,700 jobs lost, with 2,700 families that cannot feed their kids, cannot pay their mortgages and cannot pay their hydro bills. Vanderhoof lost 500 jobs. Prince George lost 1,000 jobs. Williams Lake lost 1,070 jobs. Quesnel lost 150 jobs, and 100 Mile House lost 160 jobs.

British Columbia used to be the largest producer of softwood in our nation, but since 2015, over 30 mills have closed and thousands of British Columbians are out of work, with communities destroyed and families unable to put food on the table.

The Prime Minister promised a deal with the U.S. Instead, tariffs on Canadian softwood have tripled. Conservatives are calling on the Prime Minister to do what he promised, which is to get a deal on softwood and protect our hard-working loggers, truckers and mill workers. Forestry families matter.

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[Translation]

ITALIAN LANGUAGE

Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week was the Week of the Italian Language in the World.

Statements by Members

Canada and Italy share strong ties forged by a common history and decades of cultural, economic and political co-operation. As the son of Italian immigrants, I take pride in this rich relationship that shaped my life and the lives of millions of Italian Canadians who have made notable contributions to our country.

On behalf of the Canada-Italy Interparliamentary Group, I invite all my colleagues to join us tomorrow at 5 p.m. for a reception with the theme “Italophony: Language Beyond Borders”.

[*English*]

The event will take place in the Speaker's dining room in the presence of His Excellency Alessandro Cattaneo, ambassador of Italy to Canada. It will be an opportunity to reaffirm the deep and lasting friendship between our two countries, and yes, there will be Italian food.

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AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Harb Gill (Windsor West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for generations, families in Windsor have been the beating heart of Canada's auto industry, building not just cars, but hope, stability and opportunity for countless Canadians. However, that hope is being tested today.

While auto workers are wondering what the future holds, the Liberal government is refusing to release the Stellantis contracts, the very documents that could show whether the promises made to our community are being kept.

Canadians deserve accountability, responsibility and transparency. They deserve to know if their tax dollars are protecting Canadian jobs or simply adding to corporate welfare with no accountability.

Windsor has carried Canada's industrial future on its shoulder for over 100 years. Our people have done their part. They have built the engines, the factories and the future. Now, it is time for the government to show some integrity and do its part. It must release the contracts today.

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[*Translation*]

DIWALI

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba (Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, I want to mark the beginning of Diwali, the festival of lights celebrated by millions of people around the world, including here in Canada.

Diwali is a time of celebration, spirituality and renewal. It symbolizes the victory of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance. It is also a time to gather with family, share meals, light lamps and renew community ties.

I want to wish a happy Diwali to everyone celebrating it in my riding of Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie and across the country.

May this celebration be a source of peace, prosperity and light.

• (1415)

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is fond of giving Canadians so-called economic lessons as though he alone commands the keys to wisdom. Well, let me share with him a lesson from the unforgiving school of real life and reality.

When governments run huge deficits, they unleash the scourge of inflation. When inflation rises, it strikes at the heart of our communities. The Georgina Community Food Pantry now feeds twice as many families because those families can no longer afford to feed themselves.

We have four simple things the government can do to reform itself and reverse course in this upcoming budget: eliminate the industrial carbon tax on farms and fertilizer; get rid of the fuel tax on the trucks that deliver our food and scrap the industrial carbon tax; scrap the food packaging tax; and stop printing money.

The Prime Minister is fond of giving lectures, but unfortunately, he remains stubbornly unteachable.

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LOCAL NEWS IN COQUITLAM—PORT COQUITLAM

Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am happy to welcome a new local newsroom serving Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, New Westminster and Burnaby. It is called Freshet News, and its first edition went online on Sunday.

Local news is not a luxury. It is how neighbours learn what councils have decided, what local sports team won the game and what small businesses recently opened. The launch follows a community effort to save local news after local newspapers closed. Four veteran reporters stepped forward with a plan to build trusted coverage.

I thank Janis Cleugh, Cornelia Naylor, Mario Bartel and Theresa McManus for their leadership and service. Freshet News will value verification, reflect our diversity and ask tough questions to make public policy better. I welcome that scrutiny and will keep an open line. I congratulate Freshet News.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 10 budgets, the Liberals have doubled the national debt, doubled food bank line-ups and doubled housing costs. Every dollar the government spends comes out of the pockets of Canadians, whose fridges are empty.

Has the government learned the costly lesson that its deficits and taxes increase the cost of living? Will it get rid of its inflationary policies in its next budget?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will be speaking about these issues at length, but last week, the Leader of the Opposition put into question the independence of our judiciary and the integrity of the very police officers who put their lives on the line to protect him. Now he has an opportunity to set things right before the House.

The Leader of the Opposition has the next 30 seconds to make amends. Will he do so?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are trying to distract from their inflation by talking about their corruption. They now have four inflationary taxes that apply to groceries: the industrial carbon tax on fertilizer and farm equipment, the tax on grocery packaging, the tax on diesel fuel and, finally, the inflation tax. Canadians can no longer afford to pay their food bills.

Will the government finally get rid of these Liberal taxes so Canadians can eat?

[English]

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will have a lot of opportunity to talk about the imaginary taxes the Leader of the Opposition comes up with.

Last week, the Leader of the Opposition put into question the independence of our judiciary, of our prosecutors and of the police, the very police who put their lives on the line to protect him.

The Leader of the Opposition has the next 30 seconds to make amends, to apologize and to tell the people of this chamber, of the House, that he is sorry for what he said. We do not do that in Canada.

• (1420)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are trying to distract from their inflation and rising cost of living by talking about their corruption.

This will be the 10th Liberal budget. Already, the Liberals have doubled the debt, food bank line-ups and housing costs. Every dollar the government spends comes directly out of the pockets of Canadians who can no longer afford to eat and heat and house themselves. Their fridges are empty.

Oral Questions

Will the Liberals learn these costly lessons? Will they cap their inflationary deficits and get rid of their insane taxes on groceries?

[Translation]

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has a vivid imagination. I would like to point out, for the record, that the Leader of the Opposition had two opportunities to apologize to the RCMP, our judges and our judicial system, and he refused to do so.

As for the alleged inflationary spending, the Leader of the Opposition has yet to suggest a single way to reduce spending or identify what spending or support for Canadians he considers to be inflationary.

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[English]

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tragically, 3,000 auto workers in Brampton learned that the Prime Minister had sold them out and failed them in negotiations with the United States of America.

To make matters worse, the Liberal government and the Liberal finance minister forked over \$15 billion in tax dollars to the company that is moving their jobs south. Surely the government would have negotiated a jobs guarantee for every single Canadian Stellantis employee.

Will the Liberals release that guarantee and the entire contract so Canadians know where their dollars went?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course what Stellantis announced for the Brampton plant last week was completely unacceptable. Stellantis has made solemn commitments to the government and to their workers, and it needs to honour those commitments. That is why we will hold it to account.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Mélanie Joly: While my colleagues are just, right now, talking, we already know that, in committee, we said that we would agree to the production of documents.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, surely Stellantis would not be announcing that it is moving a 3,000-worker plant to the United States of America if the government had negotiated job guarantees in that contract of \$15 billion. To put this into perspective, \$15 billion is \$1,000 for every single family in Canada. That was supposed to create jobs.

I have a simple yes-or-no question: Is there an iron-clad guarantee of every single worker's job here in Canada in exchange for that \$15-billion handout?

Oral Questions

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be extremely clear. We will fight for these jobs, because Canadian auto workers are the best auto workers in the world, and we will make sure that Stellantis faces all consequences, including legal ones.

That being said, an hour ago I met here in Ottawa with the head of Canadian Stellantis, with the head of Unifor and also with the minister of economic development of Ontario. We are one strong team Canada, and we will make sure that these jobs stay in Brampton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is still no answer. It was the present-day finance minister, who is in charge of a half-trillion-dollar forthcoming Liberal budget, who was the one who signed the deal, and amazingly, barely two years after he signed it and forked over 15 billion Canadian tax dollars, the company receiving it is moving the jobs to the United States of America.

The Minister of Industry claims she might take legal action. She cannot do that unless there is actually a job guarantee, so will she tell us, yes or no, whether every Canadian Stellantis worker has a job guarantee.

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the government negotiates contracts, they are good ones, and my colleague will have the chance to see the contracts. That being said, we will make sure to put full pressure on the company. The jobs need to stay in Brampton. The jobs need to stay in Canada. Ultimately the future of the auto sector is bright, and we will continue to fight for it.

* * *

• (1425)

[*Translation*]

JUSTICE

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a preacher named Uthman Ibn Farooq is on a speaking tour in Canada despite his history of hate speech. For example, he thinks it is okay to capture women and use them as sex slaves. That kind of speech got him banned from the U.K. and even from Canada. However, he will have no trouble making the same kinds of remarks during his video conferences because they are protected under the Criminal Code.

The Criminal Code exempts hate speech from punishment if it occurs within a religious context. Is the government finally going to abolish this religious exemption?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague is well aware, hate speech has no place in Canada. The federal government has a number of tools at its disposal to fight hate speech. We will do everything we can to work and ensure that Canadians are not subjected to such speech.

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Université du Québec à Montréal quickly cancelled a lecture the preacher was scheduled to give on its premises, and this should be

applauded. However, fans of hate speech, misogyny, homophobia and the like will still be able to attend seven of his lectures across Canada, including in Quebec, in Brossard.

This kind of speech has no place in Canada or Quebec. However, the federal government protects it in the Criminal Code. When will the Liberals finally have the political courage to abolish the religious exemption that allows hate speech?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague pointed out, a lecture was indeed cancelled on the grounds that it constituted hate speech. We have a number of tools at our disposal. In the last Parliament, we introduced a bill to tackle hate speech, particularly online.

I will be working on this file as heritage minister. We will keep working to tackle hate speech in all its forms across the country.

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government talks out of both sides of its mouth when it comes to hate speech. Canada banned Uthman Ibn Farooq from entering the country because of his hateful comments. That is true. He is too dangerous for our country. We agree.

However, those same hateful comments are protected under section 319 of the Criminal Code. In Canada, hate speech is permitted if it is done under the guise of religion. If the preacher's comments are hateful enough for Canada to ban him from entering the country, would the government not agree that they are hateful enough to be banned from the Criminal Code as well?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in addition to the bill on online hate speech that we introduced during the last Parliament, Bill C-9, which is currently being studied in the House and will be debated in the coming weeks, contains a provision that specifically addresses the issue of hate speech.

The federal government is very proactive on this issue and will continue to be.

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[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's broken promises are costing Canadians. The Prime Minister said that he would lower grocery costs for Canadians, but in fact, food prices are rising twice as quickly now as they did under Trudeau, and it is because of the Liberal hidden taxes on food. It is not imaginary; the Liberal government's own analysis said its food packaging tax increased costs for Canadians by \$1 billion. A Deloitte study said that it would increase fresh produce costs by 34%.

Will the Prime Minister scrap his hidden taxes on food, or will he break another promise to Canadians?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is good news for Canadians. Last week, the Prime Minister announced that we are making the school food program permanent, so I take from the question of the member opposite. That means Canadian kids all across the country are getting good-quality food at school, saving families about \$800 a year at the grocery store, but I hope from the nature of the question that we can count on the party opposite to support the budget.

John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was the Liberals who voted against scrapping their hidden taxes on food, and now one in four Canadians does not know where their next meal is coming from. Bans of plastic food packaging and front-of-pack labelling will increase the costs of fresh produce 34%. The Liberals were warned that these policies would increase costs for consumers, and those warnings were not heeded. Four million Canadians are going to be forced to use a food bank this year, which is up 345% from 2015.

Will the Prime Minister scrap his hidden taxes on food so Canadians can afford to feed their families?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, most Canadians know, or ought to know, that there is not tax on food, and that in fact these are imaginary taxes.

What is not imaginary is the \$8,000 in Canadian families' bank accounts for children under six years old that will be deposited today, something the Conservatives have voted against time and time again. When they have an opportunity to make life more affordable for Canadians, they vote against the interests of Canadian families time after time.

• (1430)

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister told Canadians to judge him by the prices they pay at the grocery store, so let us do just that. Sheri, a senior in Cambridge, wrote to me this week. She sent a photo of her grocery receipt: \$197 for a few basics that will not last the week. The cause is Liberal hidden taxes like the industrial carbon tax on farmers who grow the food. These taxes are buried in everyday essentials. Runaway Liberal spending has turned the grocery aisle into a luxury lane.

With the budget coming, Canadians like Sheri want to know, will the government axe the hidden taxes and rein in the spending so they can afford to eat?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every time there is a chance to stand up for Canadian families, the Conservatives vote against their interests. Whether it is increases to seniors' benefits or whether it is ensuring that food costs remain low for Canadians, they voted against it. Canadians expect governments to work on their behalf, and they know they cannot trust the Conservatives.

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the same old answers. Let us talk about those so-called programs. Nine out of 10 kids do not get fed by the failed food program. The Liberals

Oral Questions

take food away from families to instead feed the government's constantly expanding bureaucracy. If those programs were working, then food bank visits would be going down, not up.

Since the Prime Minister took office, beef strip loin is up 28%, sugar is up 19% and apples are up 13%. These are not luxuries; they are everyday essentials being priced out of Canadian diets, which is forcing kids to go to bed hungry.

I will ask again: Will the government finally listen to the evidence and stop its reckless spending so families—

The Speaker: The hon. minister has the floor.

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we visit food banks, one of the things they ask is to make the school food program permanent, and we have listened. That is what responsible governments do. We work with partners to make sure we have programs across the country that reach hungry bellies, and that is what we are doing, saving Canadian families, on average, \$800 a year.

The Conservatives vote against families time and time again. They literally take food out of kids' mouths.

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CARBON PRICING

Kelly DeRidder (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are feeling the financial squeeze, not just at the pumps but across the board. While the Liberals claim that these are imaginary taxes, the truth is that there are hidden fuel taxes on buried regulatory fees and carbon pricing, quietly driving up the cost of groceries and transportation. These are not just line items; they are daily realities for working families in Kitchener Centre.

Will the Liberals axe their 17¢ fuel tax in their upcoming budget so Canadians can finally afford to live?

Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Conservatives continue to suggest that imaginary taxes exist on food, we are ensuring that there is real food for real bellies, that children in schools get fed.

Oral Questions

The Conservatives vote against feeding children, while on this side of the aisle we are ensuring that children have the food they need and that Canadians have the support they need. The Conservatives continue to suggest imaginary taxes and to work against Canadians' interests.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister wants to be judged by prices at the grocery store. We know that his taxes, such as the food packaging tax, are secretly driving up prices. These taxes are so sneaky that they are built right into the posted prices. They do not even show up on customers' receipts. What we have learned is that the packaging tax will cost \$1.3 billion until 2032.

Will the Prime Minister put an end to these hidden taxes on food so that Quebecers and Canadians can finally afford to eat properly?

Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opposition is talking about imaginary taxes. What we are doing, on this side of the House, is delivering results for Canadian families. We implemented a national school food program for children across Canada, and our government will continue to be there to help families and children.

• (1435)

Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we do not live in the same world. Food bank visits will soon reach four million. That is a 128% increase under these Liberals. In my riding, Les Frigos Pleins has provided more than 1,600 emergency food baskets just four months. That is almost half of what they did all last year.

The industrial carbon tax, food packaging tax and clean fuel regulations are measures that increase the cost of transporting, producing and marketing food.

The Prime Minister told us to judge him on grocery prices. Does he realize that the case has already been heard?

Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Teachers' Federation says that the school food program is fantastic news. It said, "The National School Food Program is here to stay...Thank you to the federal government for making this a priority."

We are there for families and children to help with the cost of living. This program puts more than \$800 in parents' pockets by helping with food at home.

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FINANCE

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois has made six budget-related demands, which can be summarized as follows: Quebec must be given the means to take care of Quebecers.

That means an unconditional increase in health transfers. Due to the cost of living, it means an OAS increase for seniors aged 65 to 74. Quebecers must also be reimbursed the \$814 million that the federal government stole from us to give out bogus carbon rebate cheques during the election. Those are our conditions.

Will the government agree to Quebec's demands?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, forgive those of us on this side of the House who are somewhat perplexed. First, the leader of the Bloc Québécois said that it was unthinkable to support the budget. Then there was a series of non-negotiable demands. We can therefore assume that the Bloc is prepared to support the budget. I think the Bloc Québécois should review the budget and then make its decision.

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this budget also has to tackle the major challenges of our time. One of those challenges is housing, which requires an unconditional, long-term transfer to Quebec for the construction of social and community housing. Another challenge is access to home ownership, which requires loans for first-time buyers to cover their down payment. Then there is infrastructure, which requires a new, unconditional transfer specific to Quebec.

These budget requests cannot be ignored because the challenges cannot be ignored. Can we count on the government this November 4?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member for Gatineau, I can assure my colleague that Quebecers already count on the government's support for housing. We have very robust agreements with all of Quebec. We introduced the first home savings account, or FHSA, which allows young people to save for a down payment on their first home.

We acted on all of these fronts without being prompted by the Bloc Québécois. With 42 members from Quebec, we are well aware of what Quebecers want in their budget.

[*English*]

Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every dollar the Prime Minister spends comes out of the pockets of hard-working Canadians. His finance minister was industry minister for the same Trudeau government that doubled the debt and promised that it would lead to more investments. The result is the worst per capita GDP growth in the G7 and more than a 10% drop in investments. Now the Prime Minister is set to double the Trudeau-era deficits.

Will the Prime Minister keep his promise and keep the deficit under \$42 billion?

Oral Questions

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the members opposite have been, but over the last week, we have announced a series of affordability measures, automatic tax filing and a school food program. We have cut taxes for 22 million Canadians; we have cut the GST for first-time homebuyers, and interest rates are down.

We were elected on this side to build the strongest and most resilient economy in the G7, and that is exactly what we are going to do.

Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if more government spending were the solution, then Canada would have the most prosperous economy in the G7. The result is that we have the slowest in the G7.

The Liberals can call it what they want. They can call it government spending, government investment or the fluffy kitten fund, but the result is the same. It comes out of the pockets of hard-working Canadians.

Once again, will the Prime Minister keep his promise and keep the deficit under \$42 billion?

• (1440)

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on November 4, we are going to table the most transformational budget in our country's history. We are going to spend less. We are going to invest more in nation-building projects, infrastructure and homes.

We were elected on this side to strengthen our economy. We have a leader who is serious about the economy versus a leader who has never worked in the economy. We were elected to deliver for Canadians, and that is exactly what we are going to do.

Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians were told that borrowing billions would make their lives better, but 10 years later, the only thing growing faster than the debt is the cost of living. This year alone, the Liberals have to refinance \$473 billion in debt, and that will only get harder if the government keeps spending as though the bill will never come due. We cannot spend our way out of inflation.

Will the Prime Minister keep his word and hold the deficit under \$42 billion in the next budget?

Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives keep talking about cuts they want to make to programs Canadians rely on. They keep expecting us to make decisions that would take food out of children's mouths and would ensure that seniors have no old age security. We know from their record that they vote against increases to seniors' benefits. We know they have a record of pushing the retirement age higher, cutting benefits and leaving seniors behind.

This is what they want us to do on this side of the House. We will not do that. We will stand up for Canadians.

Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when a family cannot balance its books, they lose the trust of the bank. When a government cannot do so, it loses the trust of in-

vestors, and that is dangerous when we have to refinance \$473 billion this year alone. If Canada looks reckless, borrowing will only get more expensive, and every Canadian will pay the price. Canada needs a budget that shows fiscal discipline, but the current finance minister is the same guy who, as the industry minister, helped Trudeau double our debt.

Will the Prime Minister show some fiscal discipline and commit to not exceeding his \$42-billion promise in the upcoming budget?

Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are investing in Canadians. We are investing in the future to ensure that Canada is at the top of the G7 countries fiscally, whereas the Conservatives want us to achieve their economic goals, which would ensure that children do not have food in their bellies when they are at school. They want us to achieve the economic goal that they are looking for on the backs of Canadians. These are real programs, not like the imaginary taxes that they keep referring to. These are things that Canadians really rely on.

We will ensure that all of us have what we need to position ourselves for the future.

William Stevenson (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been a CPA for 26 years. I have worked with Canadians as they navigate their personal taxes and finances under the fiscal mismanagement of the Liberal government.

Budgets do not balance themselves, as the Prime Minister knows well, with his background. There is no excuse to continue the fiscal disaster he inherited from his predecessor.

My question is simple: Will the Prime Minister keep his promise and ensure that deficits do not exceed the outrageous \$42-billion deficit of Justin Trudeau?

Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue and to the Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that this government was elected with a strong mandate to build the strongest economy in the G7. I know that we are on the right track. Do members know how I know? I know because the experts say so.

I know that the opposition members may not agree, but who said that Canada is fiscally sustainable? It was former parliamentary budget officer Kevin Page.

Who said that Canada is attracting the attention of global investors around the world? It was the CEO of our largest pension plan.

Who said that diversifying trade and investing in infrastructure will boost productivity? It was the Bank of Canada governor.

*Oral Questions***PUBLIC SAFETY**

Sima Acan (Oakville West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-12, the strengthening Canada's immigration system and borders act, which is before the House today, reflects our government's commitment to protecting Canadians by expanding border security resources, fighting transnational organized crime, stopping the flow of illegal fentanyl and cracking down on illicit financing at the border while supporting our frontline officers and reinforcing the integrity of our immigration system.

Could the Minister of Public Safety tell Canadians how this critical legislation enhances our ability to protect Canadians and keep our communities safe?

• (1445)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Oakville West for the hard work she does with the Halton Regional Police Service. I had the opportunity to visit her last week.

From January 1 to September 19, CBSA seized close to 2,600 grams of fentanyl, 77,000 grams of other opioids, 662 firearms and over 11,000 prohibited weapons.

Bill C-12 would enhance law enforcement's ability to do its work, as would the additional thousand CBSA and RCMP officers we will be hiring, to keep Canadians safe—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul.

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AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals signed a \$15-billion deal to subsidize Stellantis to produce electric vehicle batteries in Canada, promising that it would secure Canadian jobs. Now plant production in Brampton is relocating to the U.S. and 3,000 jobs are at risk here in Canada.

At the same time, Stellantis has announced \$13 billion of investment in the U.S., which will create tens of thousands of American jobs.

Under the Liberals, taxpayers are subsidizing a company that is moving billions of investment and jobs out of Canada.

How could the Liberals make one of the biggest corporate subsidies in Canadian history without a Canada-wide jobs guarantee?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the decision by Stellantis to move its production from the Brampton plant is completely unacceptable, and that is why, this morning, we were with the Conservative government from Ontario, with Unifor and with Stellantis, to make sure that we would be one strong team Canada. We need to make sure that the 3,000 jobs in Brampton come back.

I hope that I can work with my colleagues and with all the MPs in this place, because we need to be Canada strong on this.

Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that Canadians are paying \$15 billion for EV battery production. It is a 100% subsidy for those batteries, but there is no public

evidence that the Liberals have secured job guarantees for the broader Stellantis footprint here in Canada. There are thousands of auto sector jobs on the line here. Canadians deserve to know.

In exchange for 15 billion of their tax dollars, did the Liberals secure a guarantee to protect every single Stellantis job in Canada, yes or no?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleague is very interested in this issue, which is normal. Of course, this is my number one priority right now. She already knows the answer, which is that documents will be presented and produced before the committee. Of course, I gave access to the information. My goal is to make sure that we work together, because we need to fight as one Canada strong on this issue.

Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very interested to know whether the Minister of Industry knows about these contracts.

Perhaps she can answer this simple question: How many Canada-wide jobs did the Liberals guarantee for the \$15 billion that they gave Stellantis? How many jobs?

Can she tell us?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be extremely clear: The auto sector in Canada is the victim of unjustifiable and unjustified 25% tariffs by the American administration, period.

Meanwhile, the auto workers are trying every day to make sure that they develop the best product on the face of the earth. That is what we will continue to help them do while we are facing trade tensions with the American government.

We will work with Doug Ford's administration, with Unifor, as one Canadian team. We need to do it for the sake of our country and the sake of our workforce.

Kathy Borrelli (Windsor—Tecumseh—Lakeshore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after Stellantis was handed \$15 billion for an EV battery plant in Windsor, it has now sent 3,000 jobs from Brampton to the United States.

In my community, workers are now worried about their own jobs, how they are going to pay their mortgages and how they are going to feed their families.

Canadians deserve transparency about the multi-billion dollar contracts they paid so much for.

Oral Questions

Can the Liberals even confirm that their contract included a Canada-wide jobs guarantee for workers, or will they continue to cover up for their incompetence?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the decision by Stellantis is completely unacceptable, but we will make sure to hold it to account. That is why we will be sure to use the full force of the law should the company not bring production back to Brampton.

Meanwhile, the documents will be produced before committee. My colleagues will have access to them, and we will also make sure, obviously, that all forms of support for Stellantis are checked. Obviously, we need the workers to be back in Brampton.

• (1450)

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister failed to negotiate a win with President Trump, and Canadian auto jobs are on the line.

Stellantis was handed \$15 billion, and it has now announced it is moving 3,000 jobs to the United States. The current finance minister negotiated the deal and bragged about it. Now these auto jobs have left Canada for the U.S., and he refuses to be transparent.

The Liberals are hiding from the Canadian auto workers they sold out.

Is there a Canada-wide jobs guarantee, yes or no?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs, Internal Trade, and One Canadian Economy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just because our colleague, with great indignation, asserts a series of conspiracy theories does not mean they are true.

What is true is that our government is standing up for Canadian workers and Canadian businesses. The Prime Minister met with President Trump in Washington two weeks ago. We have engaged in a series of conversations and negotiations precisely to get a deal that is in the interest of all Canadian workers, including auto workers and those in other sectors of the economy in every region of the country.

That is the work we are doing every day.

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the result of that meeting of the Prime Minister and President Trump was the export of 3,000 auto workers' jobs from Canada into Trump's America. Talk about failure.

Meanwhile, this finance minister signed a \$15-billion deal for jobs with Stellantis in Canada. It was supposed to include money to retool those plants.

What we keep asking is simple: If there is actually a job guarantee in this contract, why do they not just tell us how many jobs will this contract guarantee for Canadian auto workers? If there is not, it is absolute negligence.

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs, Internal Trade, and One Canadian

Economy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our colleague knows very well, as my colleague, the Minister of Industry has indicated, that of course, all the information will be put before the parliamentary committee appropriately.

Just because our colleagues on the other side assert some falsehood with great indignation does not make it accurate. What is accurate is that our government is standing up with the province of Ontario, the government of Premier Ford, to defend these workers, to defend all sectors of our economy.

That is the work we do in Canada. That is the work we are doing in Washington. We will continue to do that work.

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is unbelievably cold comfort for the 3,000 auto workers and their families whose jobs vanished to Donald Trump's America after the Prime Minister's meeting with Donald Trump. They have to think, "How am I paying my mortgage? How am I going to put food on the table?" These are the kinds of answers Liberals give.

It is a very simple question. Fifteen billion dollars went to Stellantis, and in that \$15 billion, if the Liberals had a clue how to negotiate, they would have included a guarantee of Canadian jobs. We do not need to wait until these contracts are released; this member should know the answer.

Is there a job guarantee for Canadian auto workers, yes or no?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs, Internal Trade, and One Canadian Economy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand that our Conservative colleagues on the other side of the aisle do not like to work with Premier Ford and his government. On this side of the House, we will work with all premiers of every political stripe, and groups representing workers and businesses, precisely to defend those businesses from the unjustified tariffs imposed by the American administration.

We will do that work in Canada, and the good news is we are also doing that work in Washington, D.C.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

FINANCE

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Liberal government was elected exactly 10 years ago on one specific promise, namely that it would run small deficits and return to a balanced budget during its first term. That promise was supposed to generate investment here in Canada.

What remains of that promise 10 years later? The Liberal debt has doubled, and Canada has the worst economic growth per capita in the G7. Will the Prime Minister at least keep his promise and ensure that the deficit in the next budget does not exceed \$42 billion?

• (1455)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite will have to wait for the budget to see the numbers and the investments that it will generate.

During the election campaign, we said that we would spend less in order to invest more, and that remains our commitment. We are going to build Canada. We are going to focus on major projects and create jobs in every region of this country.

The member opposite is welcome to carefully review the document that we will be presenting on November 4.

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, allow me to translate what he just said. He is talking about generational investments. These are investments that will borrow from future generations of young Canadians.

For 10 years, the Liberals have been promising that their deficits are attracting more investments to Canada. The Minister of Finance is keeping all the deficit spending policies that have driven many Canadians to use food banks. Since the Prime Minister was elected, tens of billions of investment dollars have fled Canada.

Will the Prime Minister, yes or no, end this spending spree or, at the very least, honour his promise of keeping the deficit under \$42 billion?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what strikes me when members opposite rise and speak about inflationary spending is that they never identify the inflationary spending in question.

Are they talking about the Breakfast Club? Are they talking about the increased benefits for seniors? Are they talking about child care or day care?

What is inflationary spending?

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was thrilled to hear the Government of Canada's announcement on the Build Canada Homes initiative. This transformative program is a bold and critical step toward making housing more affordable for Canadians by accelerating the development of

affordable homes all across the country. I had the honour of attending one of the many announcements in Toronto and saw first-hand the excitement and hope this program is bringing to all of our communities.

Could the minister give the House an update on the great work being done under this housing initiative?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know Canadians urgently need more affordable housing, and Build Canada Homes is set to deliver that. We just announced, last week, the first Build Canada Homes project at Arbo Downsview, which is for 550 new homes. This project is a perfect example of how we are making real progress using innovative construction materials, prioritizing Canadian materials to build faster and smarter, and ensuring Canadians have access to affordable housing.

That is just the beginning.

* * *

FINANCE

Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while Canadians are tightening their belts to make ends meet, the government keeps running up record deficits. The Prime Minister's reckless spending and record-breaking deficits delivered the worst per capita growth in the G7, and investments in workers are down by 10%. Now the Prime Minister is set to double the deficits even beyond what Trudeau planned.

Will the Prime Minister assure Canadians that this deficit will not go over \$42 billion in the next budget?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the party opposite may not like this, but let us look at some facts. We have the strongest credit rating in the world with a AAA credit rating from S&P and Moody's, the lowest deficit in the G7, the lowest debt level in the G7, the lowest net debt-to-GDP in the G7 and the biggest potential in the G7.

The leader opposite said he was going to bring it home. He did not bring home the election. He did not bring home his riding and half his party want to send him home.

Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this kind of reckless spending is just breaking the backs of our children and grandchildren. For 10 years, the Liberal government promised that billions in deficit spending would lead to more growth and investment. Now the results are in. Canada has the worst per capita growth in all the G7. Billions in investments are fleeing this country every single month the Prime Minister remains in office.

When will the Prime Minister tell Canadians just how much more he plans to impoverish future generations?

• (1500)

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Conservative leader continues auditioning to be opposition leader, we are focused on building the strongest economy in the G7.

Canadians, on April 28, had a clear choice between two leadership styles, one with world economic and business experience, the other having never worked a day outside the House. Canadians made a choice. They went with our side to build the strongest, most resilient economy in the G7 and that is exactly what we are going to do.

[Translation]

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have been promising that their deficits will stimulate investment for 10 years, and what do we have to show for it? The lowest growth in the G7, a more than 10% drop in investment and a declining economy. Every dollar spent by the Prime Minister comes directly out of the pockets of Canadians. The people of Beauce deserve much better. After doubling the debt, believe it or not, the Liberals are now gearing up to double the deficit.

On November 4, will the Prime Minister keep his promise that the deficit will not exceed the projected \$42 billion?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs, Internal Trade, and One Canadian Economy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition had 45 minutes to think about whether he will apologize to the brave men and women of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police who work to defend Canadians every single day. His attack on the integrity of the national police is totally inexcusable.

Why does the Leader of the Opposition, who claims to support the police, not take a minute to apologize to the women and men who serve Canada in the RCMP instead of attacking their integrity?

HEALTH

Jake Sawatzky (New Westminster—Burnaby—Maillardville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all communities have been impacted by the toxic drug and overdose crisis, and those in British Columbia are no exception. Earlier today, this government announced support for 40 projects in western Canada that will give communities more tools to help people struggling with addictions.

Can the Minister of Health explain how this government is working with communities to fight the drug crisis?

Hon. Marjorie Michel (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no community can face the drug crisis alone. We have a whole-of-government approach, and the Department of Health is part of the solution. The projects we are supporting today will save lives. One such project is the Dr. Peter Centre in Vancouver, which has a proven track record of helping people struggling with addictions. From now on, this centre will be able to provide services in five regional offices.

Oral Questions

The drug crisis must not be addressed based on ideologies, but on various types of data-based action—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk.

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Gaétan Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Ring of Fire project in northern Ontario would be a game-changer for our region at a time when we desperately need it, yet the Prime Minister continues to delay by refusing to move forward with the project, which would create thousands of jobs and has billions of dollars in investments. The project did not make the cut on the Liberals' project list, and the work will not even start until 2028.

When will the Liberals get shovels in the ground and finally get the Ring of Fire project approved and under way?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised the member did not ask about Kap Paper; in fact, Ontario and Canada have worked together to give Kap Paper the breathing room to bring back its employees and keep those employees hired while the mill looks for new business opportunities. This is great news for members of his riding and people all across northern Ontario.

We are going to be there for industries that are hard hit, including pulp and paper, and including mining. We have the great honour of working on behalf of constituents.

• (1505)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in August, the Prime Minister promised \$1.2 billion to support the forest sector in response to Trump's tariffs and softwood lumber duties, which we are still waiting for.

Just \$50 million of that is earmarked for workers. That is not a plan. That is an insult. Almost 50,000 direct jobs in British Columbia alone are on the line.

Will the Prime Minister step up with a serious plan to protect forestry workers across Canada in their hour of need?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been clear that U.S. tariffs on Canadian softwood lumber are absolutely unjustified, and we are working every day to solve this problem.

Business of Supply

We have committed \$1.2 billion to this sector. Just last week, we put the \$700-million liquidity facility in place to help this sector. We will build Canada strong.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—COST OF DEFICITS

The House resumed from October 9 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:06 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Thornhill relating to the business of supply.

Call in the members.

• (1520)

(The House divided on the motion, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 41*)

YEAS

Members

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| Aboultaif | Aitchison |
| Albas | Allison |
| Anderson | Anstey |
| Arnold | Au |
| Baber | Bailey |
| Baldinelli | Barlow |
| Barrett | Barsalou-Duval |
| Beaulieu | Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt) |
| Berthold | Bexte |
| Bezan | Blanchet |
| Blanchette-Joncas | Block |
| Bonin | Bonk |
| Borrelli | Bragdon |
| Brassard | Brock |
| Brunelle-Duceppe | Calkins |
| Caputo | Chambers |
| Champoux | Chong |
| Cobena | Cody |
| Cooper | Dalton |
| Dancho | Davidson |
| Davies (Niagara South) | Dawson |
| DeBellefeuille | Deltell |
| DeRidder | Diotte |
| Doherty | Dowdall |
| Duncan | Epp |
| Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake) | Falk (Provencher) |
| Fortin | Gallant |
| Garon | Gaudreau |
| Généreux | Genuis |
| Gill (Calgary Skyview) | Gill (Brampton West) |
| Gill (Calgary McKnight) | Gill (Windsor West) |
| Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan) | Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley) |
| Gladu | Godin |
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| Lawrence | Lawton |
| Lefebvre | Lemire |
| Leslie | Lewis (Essex) |
| Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk) | Lloyd |
| Lobb | Ma |
| Mahal | Majumdar |
| Malette (Kapusking—Timmins—Mushkegowuk) | Mantle |
| Martel | Mazier |
| McCauley | McKenzie |
| McLean (Calgary Centre) | Melillo |
| Menegakis | Moore |
| Morin | Morrison |
| Motz | Muys |
| Nater | Normandin |
| Patzer | Paul-Hus |
| Perron | Plamondon |
| Poilievre | Redekopp |
| Reid | Rempel Garner |
| Reynolds | Richards |
| Roberts | Rood |
| Ross | Rowe |
| Ruff | Savard-Tremblay |
| Scheer | Schmale |
| Seeback | Shiplely |
| Simard | Small |
| Steinley | Ste-Marie |
| Stevenson | Strahl |
| Strauss | Stubbs |
| Thériault | Thomas |
| Tochor | Uppal |
| Van Popta | Vien |
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| Zimmer— 163 | |

NAYS

Members

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| Acan | Al Soud |
| Ali | Alty |
| Anand | Anandasangaree |
| Auguste | Bains |
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| Brière | Carney |
| Carr | Casey |
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| Church | Clark |
| Connors | Cormier |
| Coteau | Dabrusin |
| Dandurand | Danko |
| Davies (Vancouver Kingsway) | Deschênes-Thériault |
| Desrochers | Dhaliwal |
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| Duclos | Duguid |
| Dzerowicz | Earle |
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| Erskine-Smith | Eyolfson |

Routine Proceedings

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

PETITIONS

INVASIVE SPECIES

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition on behalf of the people of Keswick in my riding of York—Durham, specifically in the community around Young's Harbour, about a new invasive species that was discovered in Cook's Bay in Lake Simcoe last year called water soldier.

This petition identifies that water soldier is a threat to human health because of its serrated leaves. It is a threat to our native plant and fish species, and it is possibly a threat to our agriculture given its proximity to the Holland River.

The petition draws attention to the good work of the water soldier working group, which is chaired and led by the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. This week, it will be hosting an information session in my riding.

The petitioners call upon the government to do three things: one, list or identify water soldier as an invasive species; two, nominate a single federal department to take responsibility for this issue; and three, allocate sufficient funding to the water soldier working group so that it can undertake remediation efforts.

JUSTICE

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, businesses across British Columbia, mainly in Surrey and Abbotsford, are sick and tired of the catch-and-release policies of the Liberal government. The petitioners are calling for immediate action to address the extortion and catch-and-release policies that have hurt their businesses, hurt their way of life and hurt their profit line unnecessarily.

TENT ENCAMPMENTS

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of constituents from Saskatoon West regarding tent encampments in the city.

The petitioners note that what begins as a temporary set-up turns into a hub of criminal activity and public safety concerns endangering vulnerable individuals. Under current law, authorities have some authority to act, but ambiguity and weak enforcement have left cities throughout Canada hesitant to dismantle these camps. The government's reckless soft-on-crime approach and radical drug policies have allowed this crisis to spread unchecked across the country.

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| Fonseca | Fortier |
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| Gerretsen | Gould |
| Grant | Greaves |
| Guay | Guilbeault |
| Gull-Masty | Hajdu |
| Hanley | Harrison |
| Hepfner | Hirtle |
| Hodgson | Hogan |
| Housefather | Hussen |
| Iacono | Idlout |
| Jaczek | Johns |
| Joly | Joseph |
| Kayabaga | Kelloway |
| Klassen | Koutrakis |
| Lalonde | Lambropoulos |
| Lamoureux | Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles) |
| Lapointe (Sudbury) | Lattanzio |
| Lauzon | Lavack |
| Lavoie | LeBlanc |
| Leitão | Lightbound |
| Long | Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga) |
| MacDonald (Malpeque) | MacDonald (Cardigan) |
| MacKinnon (Gatineau) | Malette (Bay of Quinte) |
| Maloney | May |
| McGuinty | McKelvie |
| McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam) | McKnight |
| McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke) | McPherson |
| Ménard | Mendès |
| Michel | Miedema |
| Miller | Mingarelli |
| Morrissey | Myles |
| Naqvi | Nathan |
| Nguyen | Noormohamed |
| Ntumba | Oliphant |
| Olszewski | O'Rourke |
| Osborne | Petitpas Taylor |
| Powlowski | Provost |
| Ramsay | Rana |
| Robertson | Rocheffort |
| Romanado | Royer |
| Sahota | Saini |
| Sarai | Sari |
| Sawatzky | Schiefke |
| Sgro | Sheehan |
| Sidhu (Brampton East) | Sidhu (Brampton South) |
| Sodhi | Solomon |
| Sousa | St-Pierre |
| Sudds | Tesser Derksen |
| Thompson | Turnbull |
| Valdez | van Koeverden |
| Vandenbeld | Villeneuve |
| Watchorn | Weiler |
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| Zahid | Zerucelli |

PAIRED

Members

d'Entremont

Khalid— 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by 12 minutes.

S. O. 52

The petitioners are asking the government to amend the Criminal Code to provide clear and unequivocal authority for law enforcement to dismantle illegal encampments; ensure that police are empowered to act quickly and decisively to restore public order; end the failed policies of safe supply and decriminalization, which have only worsened the addiction crisis and undermine public safety; and finally, support real recovery by investing in treatment and rehab programs, not policies that perpetuate drug use.

● (1525)

DUTY EXEMPTIONS

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to present a petition today on behalf of Canadians who are asking the government to ease up on the restrictions under the customs tariff amendment made back in 1992, which restricted imports for personal use to \$20, after which duties and taxes have to be paid.

Over 200,000 Ukrainians who have come to call Canada home are in refuge because of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. Right now, with the cost of living in Canada, they are asking for more of their personal belongings from Ukraine to be shipped here. The European Union has recognized this and has implemented a 150-euro limit to allow them to bring in more goods from home as needed.

The petitioners call upon the government to increase the duty-free limit to \$150 to allow them to import more of their personal belongings so they can have them here in Canada. This will help ease the cost of living crisis caused by the Liberals.

INSECTICIDES

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is a honour to rise to raise an issue of deep concern to constituents. Petitioners are writing about the threat to our pollinators. It is a global threat that is here in Canada. The petitioners note that our government is not taking the steps that have been taken in the European Union, which is following the precautionary principle. Those governments and the European Commission have begun to implement a full ban on the use of one of the insecticides that is most toxic to pollinator. They are nicotine-based insecticides called neonicotinoids.

The petitioners are hoping that the Government of Canada will follow Europe's lead and ban neonicotinoids.

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to table a petition from Canadians and people from Courtenay—Alberni who are deeply frustrated with the chronic service failures at the Canada Revenue Agency.

Petitioners know that, across the country, especially among seniors, those without Internet and rural residents, people face serious difficulties accessing timely CRA services. In regions like mine in Courtenay—Alberni, there are no in-person options. The online portal cannot resolve complex issues, and many are left waiting hours on hold, only to have calls dropped or accounts locked. They cite that, since the previous Conservative government closed many offices and the Liberal government cut thousands of workers, services have deteriorated dramatically and Canadians often wait

weeks or months without help, while even MPs and their staff struggle to assist constituents.

The petitioners urge the government to increase staffing, restore in-person options, fix technical barriers and ensure complex cases are resolved promptly. Canadians deserve accessible, reliable service.

* * *

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 would ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that I have received two notices of requests for an emergency debate concerning the same subject. Members will be invited to rise and make brief interventions in the order that the requests were received.

Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising today to request an emergency debate on Stellantis' plan to shift production from its plant in Brampton, Ontario, to Illinois and what this means for Canadian workers, communities and our very economic independence. This follows the announcement of General Motors that it intends to lay off 2,000 workers at its Oshawa plant in January. In Brampton, 3,000 workers are affected.

It was shocking to hear news of Stellantis' betrayal. Make no mistake, this is a betrayal. It is a betrayal of the thousands of workers who are directly involved and the thousands more indirectly so. It is a betrayal of both provincial and federal governments and the taxpayers who had supported Stellantis in exchange for an explicit commitment to manufacture vehicles in Brampton. This decision will have major repercussions across the country.

● (1530)

[*Translation*]

Our economy is under under attack. Donald Trump has been clear that he wants to hurt our economy and extort companies to shift production from Canada to the United States. We cannot let that happen.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]*

We already have record unemployment, particularly among young people. We have a jobs crisis. These attacks will only make life harder for workers and for families. As Unifor president, Lana Payne, said, "If Stellantis can get away with this [after making a direct pledge to government], what's stopping the next corporation?"

The Prime Minister was elected on a commitment to stand up to Donald Trump, but instead, we have seen concessions and a piecemeal approach, which has led directly to Stellantis' decision. It is imperative that parliamentarians be afforded an opportunity to discuss this attack and to discuss how to mobilize all available resources to meet the threat we face. Workers and communities deserve no less.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, the leader of the NDP, for raising this issue as well.

I rise today to discuss the emergency in the lives of 3,000 Brampton area families who received the news, one day after the Prime Minister's meeting with the President of the United States, that their factory would be moving to the U.S. For these families, it is not just an emergency. It is a tragedy. They ask how they are going to pay their bills and feed their families or whether they might have to uproot their kids from their schools and hockey teams to move to a faraway place just to put food on the table.

This is part of a larger trend. There are 100,000 more people who are unemployed since the Prime Minister took office and promised to protect jobs. There is \$54 billion of net investment that has fled since he was elected while promising to bring investment back to this country. Our economy is the fastest-shrinking in the G7. These statistics might seem like they are just interesting to the economists and accountants, but in fact, there are human lives that are at stake.

This is particularly important to Canadian taxpayers, but because the federal government has contributed 15 billion tax dollars to the company that is now moving these jobs, that works out to almost \$1,000 for every single family in Canada. Families that cannot afford groceries or homes are paying to subsidize the export of our jobs to the United States of America.

In the past, a prior Speaker granted an emergency debate on the Oshawa GM plant back in 2018. There were 2,500 jobs that were at risk at that time. Now we have an even bigger number as part of a larger phenomenon. Therefore, I ask that the Speaker acknowledge the emergency in the lives of these 3,000 auto workers, and so many like them across the country, by granting an emergency debate.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I thank the hon. members for their interventions. However, I am not satisfied that the request meets the requirements of the Standing Orders at this time.

That being said, I know this is a topic of great interest to many members. I want to assure the House that I am open to reconsidering the request at a later date if the situation warrants it.

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

The House resumed consideration of the motion that 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, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's asylum system is deeply and fundamentally broken after 10 years of Liberal government. This was not the case 10 years ago, but today, Canada's once compassionate asylum claim system has been absolutely ruined, absolutely abused and absolutely made a mess of by the Liberal government.

Today, I rise to speak to Bill C-12. I will direct my comments to parts 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the bill, which would amend the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Act as well as the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. These parts are similar to the immigration provisions contained in Bill C-2.

A decade ago, Canada's asylum claim backlog sat at less than 10,000 cases. Today, that backlog sits at several hundred thousand cases, with thousands more claims being made every month. While there are many highly persecuted persons around the world who are legitimately seeking refuge in Canada, there are many claims currently in that massive backlog that are bogus. Those claims are taking years, not months or weeks, to process, and worse, even after being found to be a bogus claim, an applicant can appeal their process for years more and then not be deported for years after that, if they are deported at all. During this time, bogus claimants can draw social benefits that Canadians do not have access to, such as vision care.

In effect, over the last decade, the Liberal government has allowed Canada's asylum system to veer far away from the original principles of its design and turned it into a backdoor, skip-the-line, economic migration stream, which is not accounted for at all in federal immigration levels planning, including the impact on housing supply, health care access and jobs. The Liberal failure has had many negative impacts, which I will outline today, with the two most noteworthy being the destruction of the fairness and compassion of Canada's asylum system and, in turn, the inability of the system to prioritize the world's most vulnerable persons.

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When the Minister of Immigration claimed that the immigration provisions contained in Bill C-2, and now in this bill, would do something about this problem, she said it “would improve the flexibility and responsiveness of the asylum system”. However, in reality, the immigration provisions of this bill are structured to do one thing, which is to shift the responsibility for addressing Canada's deeply broken asylum system to the courts and away from the Liberal government that broke it in the first place, potentially past the horizon of the next election. As such, it is my assessment that the immigration provisions in the bill are likely to fail without substantive amendment and additional measures to both reduce the incentive for economic migrants to abuse the asylum system, to swiftly remove bogus asylum claimants from Canada, and to restructure this asylum system to ensure that the world's most vulnerable persons do not continue to be let down by the Liberal government.

I will now demonstrate to colleagues and the IRCC bureaucrats listening in the government lobby why this failure is likely to occur and what changes must be made. To begin, it is important to understand the extent to which Canada's asylum system is broken and how we got to this point because we cannot fix something if we do not understand what the problem is.

In 2017, the leader of the Liberal government tweeted, “#WelcomeToCanada”, in a tweet that was designed to encourage failed asylum claimants in the United States whose temporary protected status had been revoked by a due process to come to Canada instead, and come they did. After that tweet, well over 100,000 people illegally crossed the border into Canada and claimed asylum, many in spite of the fact that they did not have valid asylum claims in the United States, which is considered to be a safe third country.

Said differently, if somebody had a failed asylum claim in the United States, they never should have been allowed to claim asylum in Canada after illegally crossing the borders, but the Liberals opened the floodgates in 2017, even putting up infrastructure at the illegal border crossing most used, Roxham Road, and instructing RCMP officers to help people with their baggage. In many instances, scammers, unscrupulous consultants and even human traffickers exploited the system at the expense of the integrity and compassion of Canada's asylum system and the safety of all involved. The Liberals encouraged this for years.

• (1535)

I have been standing in this place for years now saying this and here we are. At that time, I remember the Liberals implied I was a racist for saying these things, and here we are with Bill C-12 in front of us because of this failure.

Well over 100,000 people have entered Canada illegally from the United States since 2015 and claimed asylum. Most have bogus claims, most are still in the processing queue, most have work permits and access to health care, and many have been put up for years in hotels at the taxpayers' expense.

At the same time, the Liberals lifted visa requirements from countries that have had a long history of high levels of bogus asylum claims, like Mexico, without any plan in place to prevent those claims from skyrocketing again. At that time, I raised many concerns about this issue, which fell on deaf ears. It is unfortunate, because since that time, over 60,000 asylum claims have been made

by Mexican nationals due largely to the visa lift. Most have bogus claims, most are still in the processing queues and many have abused the government's payment of hotel rooms for people. It is insane that we are here having this debate again.

Experts have raised concerns that there are likely many more asylum claims on the way from the record three million temporary residents the Liberals allowed into Canada over the past few years whose visas are about to expire. Social media posts have encouraged people to attempt to extend their temporary resident permits by making bogus asylum claims. The result is that Canada's asylum claim system is drowning in over 296,000 claims, with average processing times of 29 months or more. At current rates, estimates suggest it could take 25 years to clear the current inventory, while thousands more claims keep pouring in.

The prolonged uncertainty and volume created by this backlog strain resources and people with valid claims alike. This backlog is failing the world's most vulnerable, who have real claims of persecution.

Nearly \$1 billion has been spent by the Liberals on something called the interim federal health program, which provides benefits to asylum claimants that in some cases Canadians do not even have taxpayer-funded access to. Since the Liberal government came to power, the program has increased in cost by 1,200% because of the backlog in the asylum claim system. This is on top of the billions of dollars that have been spent on providing funding to house asylum claimants in hotels and affordable housing, many of whom are bogus, while Canadians struggle to afford rent.

A shocking number of claims do, in fact, appear to be bogus, with news reports revealing nearly identical stories in hundreds of applications under one immigration consultant who had coached them unscrupulously. They often originate from low-risk countries with high volumes of issued temporary visas, serving as a back door to extend stays after student or work permits expire. Loopholes abound: easy inland claims, fraudulent labour market impact assessments and consultants peddling fake persecution narratives for fast-tracked permanent residency. Lax enforcement and limited oversight of immigration consultants have massively exacerbated this problem.

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The determination process of these claims itself is inefficient, with inconsistent decisions that plague an already massively clogged system. Some experts suggest that the higher rates of acceptance in recent years are due to a desire by bureaucrats to rubber-stamp applications in an effort to clear the backlog. What does this type of action do instead? It incentivizes more abuse of the system.

Said differently, the Liberals' breaking of the asylum system is a direct affront to the principles behind the 1951 refugee convention, which aimed to protect individuals fleeing true persecution. It was never meant to support economic migration. Today, thanks to the Liberals, many of the claimants in Canada's system are trying to claim asylum for reasons far beyond what the scope of the Geneva Convention imagined or proposed, and most are likely economic migrants.

• (1540)

Now we find ourselves here with the provisions in Bill C-12. The provisions outlined herein would undoubtedly face, without question, charter challenges, and given the state of Canada's judiciary, they are likely to be struck down by the courts. Consequently, considering the Liberal government's history of not appealing court rulings on immigration matters, as evidenced by the events that precipitated the current federal bill, Bill C-3, this would probably result in a further clogging of Canada's already overburdened judicial system and the continued deterioration of the asylum system.

Advocacy groups have claimed that Bill C-12 may precipitate tens of thousands of court cases. The Refugee Law Lab, for example, in its report on provisions inherited from Bill C-2, highlighted potential infringements on section 7 of the charter due to the one-year bar on refugee claims, as well as section 15 on equality rights. This group has also suggested that it is already planning empirical research for litigation. The Canadian Immigration Lawyers Association suggested that the immigration provisions in Bill C-12 could be challenged because the Governor in Council powers for mass revocation of immigration status risk violating section 7 by enabling arbitrary politically motivated actions. Amnesty International and a coalition of another 300 organizations suggested that the bill should be challenged for potentially violating section 8 of the charter.

For Bill C-2, which has provisions similar to Bill C-12, the federal government's charter statement asserts that any engagements are justified under section 1 as proportionate for border security and safety. It also makes a bunch of other assertions and says that everything is fine.

Here is the thing. There is a massively vast gulf between legal lobbyists, who do not want any sort of boundaries on the abuse of the asylum system because they are financially motivated to make endless appeals by the big glut of people coming in and abusing the asylum system, and what the Liberals are saying would be charter-compliant. In fact, when I was at the immigration committee and asked some department officials what they thought about the charter compliance of the provisions in Bill C-2 that are now in Bill C-12, they were fairly silent on the matter, which told me everything I needed to know. This is the Liberals' "let the courts sort it out later" approach to a system that is massively broken. It will only lead to abuse of the system without massive amendment and oth-

er massive actions to reduce the intake of people and their incentivization to abuse the system. I can say one thing, though: This is definitely going to make lawyers and immigration consultants a lot richer.

After the Liberals established a reputation for not challenging court rulings, the ruling that precipitated Bill C-3, an unmitigated chain migration bill, was never challenged by the Liberals. They did not even bother to assert Parliament's supremacy on the laws that had been made in this place. They said, "No, this is good", and we have all of these other potential problems with Bill C-3. Now, after the Liberals have refused to challenge that ruling, they are trying to say that all of the lobby groups that are saying this bill is not charter-compliant are somehow going to magically accept that it is charter-compliant and will somehow solve the problems, which I find ridiculous.

The other thing is that the Liberals have gone out of their way to eschew the validity of section 33 of the charter. What have they essentially done with that? Even though their history says they are not going to challenge immigration rulings and they know that every legal group in the country is saying that this bill will need a charter challenge review, the Liberals have said they are probably not going to do anything about it. Mark my words: I cannot wait to come back to this in the House a few years from now, or whenever it may be if this bill passes, and say I was right. What the Liberals are doing is punting this issue to the courts while the system continues to get worse.

The Economist magazine recently published an article entitled "Scrap the asylum system—and build something better" that stated, "Rich countries need to separate asylum from labour migration." I agree. Bill C-12 is silent on several other measures that could restore order and fairness to Canada's asylum system right now. For example, the Liberals should immediately undertake a system-wide review of the benefits that asylum claimants receive, particularly bogus asylum claimants, those with claims that have been found to fail, with an eye to reducing the benefits that bogus asylum claimants receive, especially when they are benefits that Canadians themselves do not receive.

For example, did members know that bogus asylum claimants get taxpayer-funded vision care through the interim federal health program? I know a lot of Canadians who do not get that. Years of taxpayer-funded hotel stays for bogus asylum claimants while Canadians make ends meet serve as a draw for system abuse. These types of benefits must be reviewed, and where possible, they must be curtailed to prevent the abuse that further draws on the system.

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• (1545)

Why is Canada, at this juncture, still accepting asylum claims originating from the G7 and other safe third countries? The Liberal government needs to give its head a shake if it believes that someone who is arriving in Canada after having reached the safety of the United Kingdom, Germany or Japan is fleeing persecution in the spirit of the refugee convention and should be allowed to stay in Canada for years on a pending claim receiving taxpayer benefits like free hotel rooms.

Also, Canada's laws regarding the removal of people with no legal right to be in Canada need to be enforced. Canada needs timely removals and anonymized but publicly released departure tracking, and we need to know how this is getting done within the CBSA. While hearings and immigration tribunals must be conducted in a timely and efficient manner to ensure that claimants receive a fair process, those who do not have valid claims must be swiftly removed from Canada if our laws require them to be. Otherwise, we will just keep incentivizing people to abuse the system, because there is no disincentive for them not to. This could mean ensuring the detention of offenders attempting to enter Canada undetected when conditions are met. Peace officers must be empowered to carry out their duties as set out in the law, and national security warrants must be issued and executed in a way that Canadians expect them to be.

We have seen reports that the Liberals have allowed foreign nationals with known criminal histories into the country. New rules are needed to ensure that those with serious criminal convictions are rendered inadmissible to our country. The Liberals also need to get serious about closing loopholes and backlogs that further overload the system and cause frustrating delays up and down the immigration system. Applications failing the physical presence requirements, false information and endless rights to appeal need to be modernized to ensure the system works for the folks who it is intended to serve: the world's most vulnerable. The existing inventory of asylum claims should be reviewed on a last-in, first-out basis, while the criteria for making new claims must be tightly narrowed to prevent the system from being abused by economic migrants.

The Liberals could be pursuing new rules and engagement strategies for countries with high levels of asylum claims, particularly resulting from bogus asylum claims made by temporary resident visa holders whose visas have expired. Educational institutions that have profited off of massive and unsustainable numbers of foreign student visas could be made to pay fines and be held financially liable when their students on these permits make bogus asylum claims. When the asylum-claim backlog reaches a certain number of claims or approval rates, an automatic review of the system could be triggered to ensure that officials are not incentivized to rubber-stamp applications as opposed to making thorough and consistent decisions.

Asylum claimants could be made to prove that their claims were made in a timely manner, as opposed to having that responsibility fall on the government. We could reverse the onus. This would prevent fraudulent claims from being made long after someone arrived in Canada.

Additionally, there are many reports of unscrupulous immigration consultants aiding and abetting the abuse of Canada's asylum system. Shame on the College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants for rejecting a request to appear in front of our committee. We will be reinviting it. It is absolutely shameful what some of these consultants are doing. The fact that its executives left under mysterious circumstances and are not coming to our committee suggests that maybe it is time these consultants report to lawyers after all.

Also, the government should pause the acceptance of new United Nations-selected, government-sponsored refugees and use those spots to find room for highly persecuted persons who are already in Canada and who the government has already made promises to, like those waiting for news through the Hong Kong pathways program, or Ukrainians in Canada, who the Liberals made promise to and have failed.

The reality is that there are hundreds of millions of people who want to move to Canada, but we do not have the housing, health care or jobs to support them all. Our immigration system must be fair and orderly to make consistent and smart decisions and to prioritize, especially in the asylum system, the world's most vulnerable persons. The Liberals have moved us far away from that. In that context, with regard to the asylum system, careful decisions must be made to ensure that our asylum system prioritizes the world's most vulnerable, is immune to abuse and fixes the mess the Liberals have created.

In the 30 seconds I have left, I will say this. The Liberal immigration minister has not answered any of these questions. She has put this bill out, it has been massively denigrated by all sides of the public and she has not come up with a solution. I have solutions. I have put them out, and I hope the minister will respond to some of these things in her speech so I do not have to keep doing her job for her.

• (1550)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had to do some quick research. From when I was the critic for immigration, I remember this quote:

...that the European Union is the number one source region for asylum claims to Canada, that Canada gets 98% of Hungarian asylum claims filed worldwide and that about 95% of those claims are abandoned or withdrawn by the claimants themselves or subsequently rejected by our fair and generous Immigration and Refugee Board.

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This is from former minister of immigration Jason Kenney. The member had the opportunity to work with Jason Kenney directly, and not only did the Conservatives fail to rectify all the problems then when they brought in refugee reform, in terms of asylum seekers, but the member also has the tenacity to try to give the impression that what is taking place today is all to be blamed on the federal government. I am sure the member knows that is not the case.

Can the member explain what role the provinces play?

• (1555)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, hello, fifteen years ago called and wants its immigration debate back. Fifteen years ago the asylum system had fewer than 10,000 claims, thanks to our Conservative government.

What happened—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): There is a point of order.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it was not 10,000; I believe it was closer to 60,000 in 2012.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): That is not a point of order; that is debate.

The hon. member can resume her answer.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I get that the Liberals want to silence me, but, again, I got the information right off their website. Do they not know how to use the Google machine?

It was fewer than 10,000 when they formed government. Today it is almost 300,000, after they hashtagged “WelcomeToCanada” to every economic migrant in the United States. This is insane. I wish we had our former immigration minister back. This never would have happened. The bill never would have been here.

Now, today, the Liberals had better not punt the issue back to the courts, and they had better fix the system.

[*Translation*]

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Health studied the issue of the toxic drug crisis, and several witnesses told us that there needs to be better control of precursors, the substances used in the manufacture of drugs such as fentanyl.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about part 2 of the bill, which gives the Minister of Health additional powers with respect to precursors.

[*English*]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of things. I am speaking to the immigration provisions in the bill.

My colleague mentioned health. The impact that the government's completely bananas, unsustainable levels of temporary residents and letting the asylum system get out of control has had on our health system needs to be measured and be dealt with.

With regard to fentanyl, I will note that this week the Canada Border Services Agency issued a very important tweet about apprehending paper plates. I am wondering what it is doing with fentanyl precursors.

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's speech, and yes, eight years ago the government, through a deliberate choice of the then prime minister, blew up the asylum system, and the conflation of economic migrants and asylum seekers began.

We have been in opposition for the tenure of the government. The government then purports to table a solution in the bill to a problem we have spent eight years trying to explain, and we have been called horrible names, horrible things, over the years.

Could the member tell the House just how much credit the government deserves for at least finally tabling something to acknowledge the problem it created?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, in Greek mythology there is a character called Cassandra, who was fated to know the future and have nobody believe her.

I know that colleagues on this side believed me when I said that tweeting “#WelcomeToCanada” and then rolling out a literal actual red carpet at Roxham Road and instructing the RCMP to help illegal border crossers with their baggage was going to be a problem with the asylum system. The Liberals did not believe me, but here we are today.

The Liberals created this mess. The bill is going to punt stuff to the courts. I guarantee it will. I guarantee it is going to incentivize more response. They need to amend it. There need to be better solutions. They need to stop the incentivization of the abuse of the asylum system, so we can protect the world's most vulnerable.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I would love to dive into some of the refugee questions, but I know the member's knowledge of this place, and I wonder whether she would agree with me that the change from Bill C-2 to Bill C-12 still leaves us with an omnibus bill.

The member has chosen to focus on the refugee portions, which I appreciate. I am very concerned about the refugee portions of Bill C-2 and now Bill C-12. They are almost the same. They would get rid of the warrantless access to private information by Canada Post and Internet providers, but not the concerning parts.

When we have an omnibus bill like this, it means that one committee studies the whole bill. Would the member agree with me that it would be better to split the bill up so the committee on immigration could study and call witnesses only on the immigration portions of the bill?

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• (1600)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, where I will agree with my colleague is on what we have seen with the Liberals in their omnibus bills. They consistently want to push a narrative to Canadians that somehow they have to sacrifice their civil liberties in order for the government to fix messes of its own making.

I think that what the Liberals have done with the immigration provisions in the bill is to purposely design a bill to punt the issue off to the courts so the Liberals can somehow skate through while the system continues to get worse. That is not going to help.

I encourage people who have viewpoints on this issue, experts in the field, to either refute or support my hypothesis and also to come up with constructive ways to help parliamentarians modernize the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act so we can protect the world's most vulnerable people, restore order and fairness to the system, and stop the incentivization of abuse on our once fair and wonderful asylum system.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the point I am trying to get across to the member is this. At the end of the day, there were changes made under Jason Kenney because of a serious issue in 2012, 2011 and 2010, which happened to be at the same time the member's leader was part of the government. The then government had to deal with asylum claims that hit 60,000 in one year.

Now fast-forward, and we have a situation, because of a number of factors, some of which are beyond the federal government's control, that dictates that we again make changes. Would the member not agree that in order to protect the integrity of the system, yes, Bill C-12 would address the issue?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, since we are going through history, I will say that Jason Kenney, bless him, had to impose a visa on Mexicans because of the number of bogus asylum claimants there were. What did the Liberals do as soon as they came into office? They immediately reversed it. Now, after that, there have been over 60,000 asylum claims. Whose fault was that? Was it Jason Kenney who reversed the visas? No, it was the Liberals.

Come on. I am so tired of the Liberals' trying to say anything. They just try to absolve themselves of responsibility after 10 years of mess. No.

Conservatives have better plans and better ideas to restore order, compassion and fairness to Canada's immigration system. That is what we are going to do.

[Translation]

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, according to the Customs and Immigration Union, another 2,000 to 3,000 border officers are needed to protect border security properly. Does my colleague think that there is enough personnel to meet the bill's requirements?

[English]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I am so glad my colleague brought this up. It gives me the opportunity to talk about

the magical missing promise of more border agents. The Liberals keep getting up and saying that they promise 1,000 more border agents. They keep making this announcement, but they are not hiring anybody.

What an utterly inept and disastrous government it is. Canadians deserve something better. They deserve Conservative policies that restore order and fairness, actually deliver on promises, and will again make sure that immigration is focused on integrating people into the Canadian economic and social fabric at a pace that matches housing, health care and jobs.

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the speech with great interest. I have a quick question for the member. There are three million temporary residents in Canada right now. Would the bill solve that problem, or is there something else that needs to be done? What suggestions does the member have?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe that the Liberals brought in three million temporary residents in such a short period of time. It is absolutely bananas, insane, crazy. It broke the immigration system. The bill would not fix that. Wow, what a disaster this is.

• (1605)

[Translation]

Jacques Ramsay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the inimitable member for Davenport.

Our government is committed to taking all the steps necessary to keep our border secure. Bill C-12, the strengthening Canada's immigration system and borders act, is a crucial step in our ongoing commitment to keeping our communities safe, cracking down on sophisticated criminal networks and modernizing our immigration system. Today, I want to talk about aspects of this bill that will strengthen our borders even more and help us fight organized crime.

Earlier on, my colleagues seemed to suggest that an omnibus bill was a bad thing. I would respond that immigration is a complex problem that needs to be looked at in its entirety. That is why this bill takes a very broad approach, to ensure effective action.

Thanks to our \$1.3-billion border plan, we have already invested significant resources in our law enforcement agencies. Whether it is combatting the illegal trafficking of fentanyl and its precursor chemicals or other illicit drugs, fighting organized crime or stopping illegal immigration, our measures are working. According to data from U.S. Customs and Border Protection, seizures of illicit fentanyl and illegal border crossings have declined significantly after peaking in 2024.

Although the tireless work of our law enforcement agencies has led to considerable progress, our efforts continue. Bill C-12 is the latest example. It is a key step in the Government of Canada's border plan.

Thanks to these provisions, our law enforcement agencies will be able to better protect our borders, preserve the integrity of our immigration system, and combat the growing complexity of modern criminal organizations. This bill will also facilitate information sharing between our law enforcement agencies and their counterparts, improving integration and coordination in the fight against cross-border crime.

The bill gives additional powers to the Canada Border Services Agency, or CBSA, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to effectively combat this transnational organized crime. Our efforts to combat criminal networks must keep pace with the increasingly sophisticated nature of their operations. One thing this bill does is expand the CBSA's powers to inspect and detain goods destined for export in warehouses and transportation centres. That is a first. This measure will close a significant loophole that is being exploited by criminals to facilitate auto theft. We are committed to taking effective measures to curb auto theft.

At the same time, the bill also expands the role of the Canadian Coast Guard so that it can conduct security patrols and gather intelligence. Our coasts will now be protected. These new security activities will help the Coast Guard enhance collective security by conducting surveillance and intelligence-gathering missions in addition to its current operations. It will also be able to exchange information with its security, defence and intelligence partners.

Specifically, the bill would allow the Canadian Coast Guard to use its ships, helicopters, sensors, operations centres and land resources to collect, receive, share and analyze intelligence in order to strengthen our surveillance activities and our sovereignty. These actions will help protect Canada's vast coastlines and waterways, particularly in remote northern regions.

With its fleet and its wealth of maritime experience, the Canadian Coast Guard has all the tools it needs to make a significant contribution to Canada's security. It is already active from coast to coast, on the Great Lakes and in the St. Lawrence Seaway.

• (1610)

This change will be particularly significant in the Arctic, where Canada can and must play a leadership role in a region undergoing rapid change due to growing global interests, increased maritime traffic and complex security risks.

This bill also seeks to directly combat the opioid crisis. The trafficking of illicit fentanyl and dangerous precursor chemicals in our country requires the rapid implementation of meaningful measures. Bill C-12 will enable the Minister of Health and law enforcement and border agencies to take swift action to prevent the illegal importation and use of chemical precursors as they emerge. This is a meaningful measure that will save hundreds, if not thousands, of Canadian lives.

We are also significantly strengthening Canada's anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing regime to combat the illicit

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financing that fuels these activities. Bill C-12 increases administrative penalties and improves information sharing between federal financial institutions to prevent bad actors from profiting from their crimes. Its purpose is to crack down on criminals and individuals who seek to exploit our country's generous immigration system by importing new forms of crime.

It is a matter of integrity and fairness. Some folks may have reservations about these measures, but I can assure the House today that Bill C-12 strikes the necessary balance between security and the protection of rights.

We are equipping our agencies with modern tools, while ensuring that these measures comply with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Bill C-12 addresses a number of immediate priorities that will have tangible and immediate effects on the safety of our communities and the integrity of our border. It is a clear, deliberate and necessary measure to protect our country. It sends a strong message that Canada will not tolerate people using our borders to engage in illegal activities. Our immigration system will be based on fairness, integrity and order.

For all these reasons, I believe this bill deserves the unanimous support of all members of the House. Voting for this bill is a vote in favour of a more secure border, a stronger and fairer immigration system and, most importantly, safer communities.

I want to reiterate that Canadians deserve to feel safe and be safe. I invite my hon. colleagues to support this bill quickly and unanimously.

[*English*]

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 the south end of Vancouver Island.

If I may, I will take a moment to recognize a very special person, Winnie Sifert, who completed 40 years of service to the City of Langford, including as a city councillor. It was my honour to attend a park renaming in her honour in Langford.

My question is specific to part 4 and the Oceans Act. I was happy to hear the member opposite discuss that operations need to get more sophisticated. He said the Coast Guard has all the skills and equipment it needs, but it would now be tasked under the Oceans Act to conduct security and surveillance patrols. I was previously in charge of the regional joint operations centre, and I understand surveillance operations in the military intimately.

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Presently, those in the Coast Guard have only navigation radars and civilian radios, and other than for predator control, they are unarmed. How do the Liberals intend to have the Coast Guard conduct surveillance missions to collect, process and disseminate secure tactical data? Will the Liberals be arming the Coast Guard to complete these missions and properly train them, per this bill?

[*Translation*]

Jacques Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, first of all, it is important to remember that the Canadian Coast Guard falls under the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, but now it will also fall under a second department in accordance with the bill. We will therefore be able to assess the budgets needed to complete operations.

Having said that, we have full confidence in the Coast Guard. It has already proven that it is capable of doing the job with the tools that it has right now. If equipment is needed, then we will certainly make sure it is provided. This is part of the investments that Canada wants to make to keep Canadians safe.

• (1615)

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-12 is the new version of Bill C-2, with fewer irritants.

The reason we have Bill C-12 before us today is that there has been a huge backlash in civil society against Bill C-2 and the privacy violations it entailed, particularly with respect to the police opening mail. This led to the introduction of Bill C-12, which is much more balanced. Many of the irritants that bothered us, the Conservatives and civil society have been removed. That is why we are able to work on it again today.

I would like my colleague to tell me whether he thinks that this type of work, namely reintroducing a bill when the opposition parties speak for civil society, is one of the advantages of having a minority government.

Jacques Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, of course, the work done here helps improve bills. Naturally, we are listening. We in the Liberal Party of Canada are quite proud, actually. We pride ourselves on listening to civil society, putting opinions to good use and, as necessary, improving our bills.

We have not given up on the measures left out of Bill C-12 but retained in Bill C-2. We believe them to be necessary. We believe that we need to fight transnational gangs, illegal weapons smuggling and drug trafficking effectively. We are definitely prepared to do so in accordance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We are the party of the charter.

[*English*]

Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my downtown riding of Davenport, in west Toronto, the stealing of cars is a very big issue. Our government has put in quite a bit of investment to tackle it. We have seen great progress.

Could the hon. member talk about how the bill would continue to help us have the tools we need to make sure we keep our communities safe and that these cars are not stolen from our homes?

[*Translation*]

Jacques Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question. We are currently seeing a 20% to 25% decrease in auto thefts. At the

Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, we had an opportunity to hear all the stakeholders explain things to us. They told us that what was needed most was co-operation and collaboration.

Bill C-12 will ensure that all stakeholders have all the relevant information on a need-to-know basis to more effectively fight the national scourge that is auto theft. We need to take action, and we will be there.

[*English*]

Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as always, it is a true pleasure for me to rise in the House to speak on behalf of the amazing residents and constituents of my constituency of Davenport. I will be speaking today to 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.

Bill C-12 would make critical amendments that would keep Canadians safe and secure by providing law enforcement with the resources to disrupt increasingly complex criminal groups, by strengthening border security and by improving our immigration system while protecting privacy rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Of course, this legislation builds on a \$1.3-billion investment in border security.

Before I go further, I want to recognize that we are gathered today on the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

Whenever I am examining new legislation, I often ask myself a series of questions: Who is going to benefit from the bill? How will the legislation improve our immigration programs and services for newcomers? Will it improve government services and support? In reviewing the proposed amendments for the strengthening Canada's immigration system and borders act, Bill C-12, I believe the answers are yes, yes and yes.

I believe this legislation strikes the right balance. It would improve how the government serves Canadians, newcomers and those seeking Canada's protection. The bill would also strengthen our security and safety, would support our economic growth with a more efficient and effective system, and would improve communication and co-operation among federal, provincial and territorial governments.

Government Orders

The measures proposed in this bill are designed to improve our immigration and asylum systems to better meet the needs of our country and those needing our protection. It fits with our commitment to a more sustainable immigration system that is aligned with our capacity to absorb, employ and house newcomers.

Canadians want our country's asylum system to uphold our proud humanitarian tradition and continue to be a beacon of hope and opportunity to the world's most vulnerable. At the same time, Canadians do not want our resources to be devoted to people who attempt to shortcut our immigration processes or abuse the generosity of our communities for their own personal gain.

The legislation before us proposes a reasonable balance to managing claims for asylum, either at the border or in Canada, and would appropriately refer claims to the Immigration and Refugee Board for a decision. The bill would also improve the management of the asylum system with enhanced efficiencies in processing claims. For example, creating a single, online application process would make applications simpler and help with information sharing across the appropriate departments and agencies. This would make sure that cases are decision-ready when they are referred to the Immigration and Refugee Board. That would benefit asylum claimants waiting to know if they are eligible for Canada's protection.

Under the legislation, the federal government would change how it manages specific asylum claims, including claims made more than one year after someone's first arrival in Canada, after June 24, 2020, and claims made by those who irregularly enter Canada, make a claim 14 or more days later and effectively avoid returning to the U.S. under the safe third country agreement. People will always be able to submit claims, which would not change with this legislation, and claims would not be dismissed. The claims would instead be referred to our fair and comprehensive removal process, which includes the ability to seek a pre-removal risk assessment. This would help reduce pressure on the asylum system and protect it against sudden increases in claims, while ensuring fair and fast consideration of claims of risk.

These new rules would streamline the claims process. This would benefit asylum claimants, who right now are waiting way too long to have their cases reviewed and decided. Some of these people may have fled their home countries to live in a democratic and free country. They may have left to seek religious freedom. They may have come to Canada to live their preferred gender or identity. If they have made it to Canada and made an asylum claim, we want their claim to be processed in a timely and fair manner.

The measures in the bill would also support a closer working relationship between the federal government and the provinces and territories. Under the current legislation, the federal government shares some information, but gaps in our legal framework mean we often have to do so on a case-by-case basis.

● (1620)

It means that we would update sharing provisions to provide information on immigration, citizenship and passports to clients sooner. This would help all orders of government and our domestic partners to work together to get newcomers the services they need faster. I understand that this has been a request from our partners for some time.

We know that provinces and territories deliver so many of the important, on-the-ground services that newcomers, including asylum claimants, rely upon. In collaboration with the federal government and with our support, they provide much-needed access to health care and social programs. They are an important partner in the process of welcoming and integrating newcomers. Providing current and accurate information is essential for any productive partnership.

Finally, I would like to say that the bill would improve how we would work together to better protect Canadians. At the end of the day, a main priority of Parliament and all orders of government is the safety and security of our citizens and residents.

In recent years, we have seen human smugglers and organized crime groups attempt to guide people across our borders through irregular points of entry. The legislation, if passed, would propose that those trying to shortcut our immigration process by crossing irregularly into Canada and making an asylum claim would have their claims referred to the CBSA and not the Immigration and Refugee Board.

There have been concerns raised that people are using multiple identities or different names to access benefits in Canada. This is simply not acceptable. By improving our information sharing among partners, we would help clarify the identity of anyone seeking to defraud our systems. The legislation also proposes that only hearing-ready claims would be forwarded for review by the Immigration and Refugee Board. That would give national security and law enforcement the time needed to conduct thorough background checks, confirm identities and examine any potential links to criminal history or activities.

Together, these measures would reassure Canadians that our systems are effective and that our borders are secure. That would help improve trust in our immigration system. I see clear benefits coming out of the legislation, benefits to our country's immigration system, including supporting the more efficient work of the federal government and all levels of government, and improving services for Canadians and newcomers. It would streamline decision-making, reduce efforts to bypass our migration programs and rules, and improve collaboration across all levels of government.

Government Orders

Rest assured, the bill is a key part of the government's forward-looking agenda. I urge my fellow hon. members from all sides of the House to join me in supporting the important legislation today.

• (1625)

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I represent the Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay riding and we have one of the longest borders along the United States and, also, the most mountainous terrain. We are having difficulty, right now, getting enough RCMP officers and meeting the quota that we have right now. We are not able to meet the quota because not enough people are applying at Depot. We all know that they are not applying, so we cannot get enough for the needs we have right now.

How does the member believe that we are going to hire 1,000 more RCMP officers when we cannot get what we need right now?

Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, I think that is a very valid question.

I will say that, in addition to our wanting to hire 1,000 more RCMP officers and 1,000 more CBSA officers, we have put in an additional \$1.3 billion. I do think that if we could provide the right tools and the right package, if we could provide the right opportunities, we would have an easy ability to be able to fill those existing roles. It is an important job. I know that Canadians will want to step up and help protect Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as everyone knows, the debates we have here can help us develop and draft the best bill possible, but if we fail to ensure it is effective in the real world, it becomes a bad law. The Customs and Immigration Union tells us that we need somewhere between 2,000 and 3,000 more border officers to keep the borders secure.

Will my colleague join us in our efforts to make this happen and ensure that this bill rises above mere lip service?

[*English*]

Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, we were first elected over 10 years ago. My 10-year anniversary was yesterday and it continues to be the honour of my life to represent the amazing Davenport residents. When we were first elected, the Conservatives had decreased the amount of money that was going to our border officers by about \$1 billion. Over the course of a number of years, we brought that money back and, on top of that, there is \$1.3 billion in additional money.

We have introduced bills like Bill C-12, and we have done it in collaboration with a number of stakeholders, including CBSA officers. This bill is formed with much of their feedback in mind. We have every intention of continuing to support them so we can ensure that, if this bill is passed, it is enforced properly.

• (1630)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to pick up on the last question, the legislation is one very important aspect in terms of what the new Prime Minister has brought forward, but another important component is the budgetary

issue. There is close to a \$1-billion commitment and 1,000 new border security officers, not to mention the 1,000 new RCMP officers.

I am wondering if the member could provide her thoughts regarding why it is important, as a new government and Prime Minister, to provide not only legislation but also a budgetary response to the need.

Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to the debate this afternoon. One of the things we have to remind ourselves is that it is like the whole world has completely shifted. There is a new global environment. There are now increasingly sophisticated criminal organizations. There is now a renewed international focus on irregular migration and cross-border crime. There are a lot of new things happening. In these days when there are so many changes happening around the world, we have to be very effective with the dollars we have.

I am very proud that our government, over the last 10 years, has not only invested about \$1 billion in the border but has now made a number of legislative proposals to ensure the right legislation is in place to allow CBSA and RCMP officers to do their work. They have provided input into this bill. We have invested another \$1.3 billion to ensure they have the resources they need. This is good value for money and we are working very closely with our international partners.

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to stand here today on behalf of the citizens of Saskatoon West and speak to this bill, Bill C-12. I am going to speak mainly about the immigration aspects of this bill today.

The first thing that comes to mind when I look at this bill is to question why we are here. What is it that has caused all this to happen? The member who just spoke mentioned changes that she thought happened. In reality, they were not things imposed upon us so much as they were created by the Liberal government. There are many things happening in our immigration system, at our borders and with crime in our country that can be traced directly to actions by the Liberal government over the last 10 years.

If we go back to the previous Harper government, there were some very strong measures in place, such as mandatory minimums and consecutive police sentences. Police had the power to actually give consequences to criminals. Colleagues should know that crime was down. If they picture a *V*, when the Conservatives were in power before, violent crime was dropping, just like this side of the *V*. It was dropping significantly.

Government Orders

Mysteriously, when the Liberals took over, violent crime went back up. Why? It was due to all of the changes they made to the laws that were lenient on criminals. Those were some of the things that were done. It was not that they were imposed on us from an outside force. Those changes had real consequences for the people of Saskatoon West. Now here we are with the government trying to fix something that it created in the first place, so do not be fooled by what we are hearing today. This is a cleanup of a mess that was made by the government.

I want to talk about immigration. As I start, I want to just highlight something I have noticed online and in communications I have had with people, Canadian voters, which is a bit of a disturbing trend of attitude toward newcomers, immigrants, in our country. As I said, there are a lot of problems, for sure. Everybody knows that our immigration system has many problems. We have a lot of crime in our country in general. We also have problems at our borders. There are lots of problems in Canada.

Our immigration system is quite broken at the moment, for sure, but that does not mean it is the fault of newcomers to our country. I think that all of us in this room and anyone watching need to be reminded that unless someone is an indigenous person in this country, that they are an immigrant. We all come from that background. My grandparents were immigrants to this country, so I guess I would be a second-generation born in Canada, which makes me a third-generation immigrant in Canada. I am sure many of us have the same story.

It is really important to remember that what is happening in our country right now in immigration is not the fault of newcomers who have come here. It all started back in 2017 when then prime minister Justin Trudeau made his famous tweet that basically said, "Welcome to Canada". That told people all around the world that Canada wanted everybody to come here. Guess what happened? People responded. Many people came. They responded by selling their homes and leaving their families, by leaving everything behind and coming to Canada because Canada wanted them. The prime minister himself said that Canada wanted them. In reality, former prime minister Justin Trudeau did that without having any clue as to how he was going to deal with that, how many people were going to respond and what would happen to those who responded.

I come back to the broken system that we have now. If a person is feeling anger toward immigration in our country, that anger needs to be directed where it belongs, to the Liberal government that was in power and still is in power. The Liberal government had the chance to set the rules. In some cases it chose to not make rules. It set the numbers. It decided how many millions of people could come in as temporary residents. The government invited people in peril, like people from Hong Kong, Ukraine and Sudan, to come to Canada.

In fact, just this morning I was reading a story about a family from Ukraine who has been here for a number of years through the CUAET program and now the family members are having trouble getting their visas, getting anything moving forward. In the story it says the humanitarian and compassionate stream, which is where Ukrainian people would fit in, faces waits of up to 50 years. It also says that for caregivers it is up to nine years, for the agri-food

stream it is 19 years and for entrepreneurs under the start-up visa stream it is 35 years. These are ridiculous numbers. How can somebody who was invited to come to our country expect to wait 50 years to get permanent residency in our country? That is part of the brokenness that we see in this system.

• (1635)

Of course, the Liberal government created this mixed up immigration system. It used to be a very clean system in which we were looking for people with skills to bring to our country, in addition to family members and in addition to asylum seekers and refugee claimants. It was based on skills primarily, and now that has been changed to include all kinds of other political things in the numbers, so that people are admitted to Canada not just because of their skills but also because of other reasons that have nothing to do with their talents or their skills.

Of course we all know what has happened in our temporary resident population, whether it is temporary foreign workers or students. There were absolutely no checks on the number of students coming into our country, and as a result, people took advantage of the system. Colleges took advantage of the system. There were many unscrupulous immigration consultants who took advantage of the system.

Ultimately, regarding refugees and asylum seekers, the system collapsed. There were so many people coming in that the system just could not handle it. Even with some increases that were made by the government, we ended up with ridiculous wait times of four years or longer for asylum claimants in Canada. This is the system that the Liberals created in Canada, so anyone who feels any negativity toward immigration in our country needs to put that on the Liberal government. The Liberals are the ones who created it.

Michael Barutciski from the MacDonald-Laurier Institute said this: "The explosion in asylum claims post-Roxham is the result of two simultaneous policy decisions: (1) loosening the criteria for visa issuance and (2) allowing visa-free travel for potential asylum seekers...our quiet asylum crisis is largely a self-inflicted problem."

Of course, right on cue, the people looking to profit from these kinds of situations marched right in. There are fake immigration consultants or immigration consultants who bent the rules to make a lot of money from the situation. Human traffickers are literally bringing people into our country to work, to make money off their backs. That is human trafficking. Employers are taking advantage of temporary workers, and people were able to set up fake colleges and make lots of money off the backs of people coming into our country. At the end of the day, it was all about money. There was a lot of money to be made through the messed up system that was created by the government.

Government Orders

Now here we are with Bill C-12, which is trying to fix some of this, and it would fix the big mess that was created by the government.

Similarly, border security has become a big problem in our country. Everybody remembers Roxham Road. Roxham Road should have been a wall. People should not have been able to cross at Roxham Road, but instead it was convenient, because there was a road from New York and a road from Quebec, so people started crossing at Roxham Road, and the government could have simply stopped that. It could have put up a little fence. It could have discouraged people from coming across, but instead it put RCMP and CBSA officers there and essentially asked them to help people come into Canada.

They had a strange thing to say to them: “You are not allowed to cross here, but may I help you come into Canada?” How did that make any sense? They were literally helping people, carrying their luggage and bringing them across the border. Once in Canada, they were given pretty good treatment as asylum seekers. In fact, in that area it became very common for taxis to drop people off. They would come across the road, and a whole industry popped up on the Canadian side of the border related to newcomers coming into our country.

Essentially, our RCMP and CBSA officers became “welcome to Canada” greeters, and more and more people came. This is what happens when we have a broken system.

Even on other parts of our border, there is a tremendous lack of technology. There is technology today that can scan containers and find what is in them; it can see exactly what is there, yet we have very little of this technology. We have not invested where we need to invest, and we do not have the people to do the checks that need to be done. As a result, a lot of stolen vehicles are coming into our country through container loads. There are a lot of drugs, and also the precursor chemicals that are used to make drugs, coming in unchecked, because we are doing a very poor job of checking what is coming into our country.

Of course, there are guns. There are a lot of illegal guns coming across the border that are used in crimes in Canada, and we should be checking more of those things, which we are not doing, so there is a gap in our system that has not been corrected by the government but needs to be.

• (1640)

There is fairly unorganized enforcement of our border. There are a lot of agencies. There is the Canada Border Services Agency, CBSA; the RCMP; the immigration department, IRCC; the Immigration and Refugee Board, IRB; and the Coast Guard, among others, that patrol and monitor our border. It is not the members, the hard-working men and women who work for these organizations, who are the problem, but there is a lot of disorganization in these organizations. There is a lack of resources and even a lack of information sharing. These groups are not really allowed, because of privacy legislation, to share information from one organization to another, so we end up with a lot of duplicated work that is needed in order to solve crimes.

These are just some of the things that are missing in the system that we currently have, which is the system that has been created and fine-tuned by the Liberal government.

Last week, there was a very funny tweet, I thought. With all the problems of drugs and all the other things that are going on at the border, such as the illegal guns coming across and even human trafficking, what the Canada Border Services Agency is focused on, or at least last week was focused on, is this: “We’re taking action to protect our economy. CBSA is investigating whether certain imports of disposable paper plates, bowls, and platters from China are being sold at unfair prices in Canada (dumped) or subsidized.” This is the priority of CBSA today, with all the other things that are happening. It is embarrassing for me as a Canadian to see that.

Of course, surveillance at the border is not happening to any significant degree. The government made a big story about buying a couple of helicopters. Well, a couple of helicopters on a 7,000-kilometre border does not do a whole lot, and there is so much more than could be done with surveillance.

What happens? Organized criminals step in, which is the really negative aspect, because they see an opportunity to make money. International crime rings and cartels are using Canada as a base of operations for them to do all their nasty things and make a lot of money off us, and not just us, but off the U.S. as well. Drug smugglers are smuggling drugs into Canada and then into other countries from here. I spoke about gun smuggling, which is a huge market that happens at our border, as well as human trafficking. We should be severely focused on curtailing and stopping all of these things.

RCMP chief superintendent and director general, serious and organized crime and border integrity, Mathieu Bertrand, said, “We are aware that they [cartels] are a source of a lot of the illicit goods coming into Canada. These organized crime groups, whether they be in Canada or abroad, are using Canada as a trans-shipment point. Those groups...are very much involved in crime impacting Canada.” I think that says it all, which is that a lot of the source of the crime comes from our lack of properly defending our border.

Of course, money laundering is another thing that happens in Canada regularly because we lack the tools and the ability to really see what is happening in that world.

As a result of all that, there is surging crime in Canada. We have heard this story many times. I spoke at the beginning about violent crime's decreasing over the Harper years, and then, in the Liberal years, it has gone right back up again because of the actions the Liberals have taken. Crime is up significantly under the Liberal government. Gang murders have doubled, and violent crime is up over 39%. The actions taken by the government have weakened the laws and effectively protected the criminal.

For example, Bill C-5 eliminated mandatory minimum sentences. As we look at the crimes that are being committed in our cities, and I see it in Saskatoon all the time, we see that there are very few consequences, if any, anymore for committing crimes. This has emboldened criminals. It has emboldened gangs to get young people involved in crime, because they know there are no consequences for committing those crimes.

This is partly because of Bill C-5 where the mandatory minimums were taken away for significant offences such as human trafficking, drug trafficking, car theft and assault with a weapon. The list goes on. These are things for which the Liberal government chose to take away mandatory sentences, and as a result, there have been increases in these kinds of crimes. I guess the Liberals wanted to put criminals first and not put Canadians first. We need to restore mandatory sentences to put consequences for criminals back into the system.

The other bill that made a big change is Bill C-75. Bill C-75 basically promoted house arrest. It essentially made it very difficult to put someone in jail. As a result, people are out on bail. That is why we talk about people getting bail instead of jail. We want to make sure that people actually go to jail and not always get bail. This is part of the catch-and-release problem that we have in our country, where people get arrested for a crime, are charged with a crime, get out on bail and can repeat an offence. We see it very often in many cities in our country.

• (1645)

Repeat offenders simply walk free. They do not have any consequences. As I said, it just encourages them to keep doing what they are doing. It encourages gangs to keep recruiting new members, and it does not stop new members of gangs from committing crimes. That is why we want to bring back jail, not bail. We want to make sure that, particularly for repeat offenders, there are consequences to those crimes and that the offenders actually do spend some time in jail to slow the process of crime that is happening.

I just want to mention that we often hear the term “bail reform” from the government. I want to talk about that for a minute. We have to go back to what actually happened. Bail reform happened about 10 years ago, when the Liberal government came in. It implemented bail reform, and these are things I just described. Now, all of a sudden, the Liberals have finally woken up and realized that this is not working. Canadians have been telling them that for years, and they are finally realizing it. Now the Liberals want to do so-called bail reform.

Really what the Liberals are doing is fixing the mess they made with bail reform in the first place. What we are doing now is not bail reform; it is correcting the system, taking it back to the way it was, to actually having consequences for people who are committing crimes.

Of course drugs fuel crime, and that is part of the problem at our border. As I mentioned, drugs are flowing across the border shockingly freely. This has caused a big drug problem in our country. We all see it in our cities. I see it in Saskatoon. I am sure other members see it in their own cities.

Government Orders

Part of that is from the permissive harm reduction regime that has been promoted by the government. In fact, from what I have seen, it creates a cycle of dependence. In many ways, it is best compared to a palliative care kind of approach to dealing with people who have addiction issues, and it is not working. Safe supply has resulted in more deaths and more crime. The number of people on the streets who are involved in illicit drug use and in crime is just going up.

Instead of encouraging drug use by providing free needles, free hard drugs and all the other government programs, Conservatives believe drug users need a recovery-based system of care. We need to be compassionate with these people. They need help. We need to move them forward on the continuum of care so that they can actually get out of the situation they are in, not just allow them to remain there.

We need to bring home safe streets, schools and communities.

Just to sum up, we are talking about this today because of the failure of the Liberal government over the last 10 years. It is now trying to fix the mess it has created. It is trying to fix the broken immigration system, where we have backlogs that have exploded, where the focus on skilled workers has been lost, where the loopholes are wide open and where we have consultants, colleges and employers taking advantage of the system we have. There have been seven immigration ministers in 10 years. That is crazy.

The government is also trying to fix the chaos at the border. It has lost control of our borders. Illegal crossings are up, and enforcement is down. There are more shipments of stolen vehicles. Drugs and precursors to drugs are coming across the borders, and firearms are coming across the borders illegally. There is a surge of crime in our country, with violent crime and gang activity rising, and the soft-on-crime laws are allowing offenders to walk free.

We have a plan to fix immigration and to speed up processing for skilled workers. We want to secure the border by closing illegal crossings and restoring order to the border. We want to crack down on crime by reintroducing mandatory jail time, ending catch-and-release and backing our police to make sure that we keep our communities safe. That is our plan.

Government Orders

• (1650)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): 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 Saanich—Gulf Islands, International Trade; the hon. member for Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, Justice; and the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan, Housing.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to pick up on the immigration issue because now we have had two Conservative members stand in this place and be somewhat critical of the government on immigration policy.

It was not that long ago when Russia invaded Ukraine. Canada opened its doors, and I believe the Conservative party, at that time, supported us doing that. There were approximately 300,000 people of Ukrainian heritage who came to Canada because of the war in Ukraine.

Does the member believe that the federal government, or immigration, should allow for the extension of the work permits of those people who came from Ukraine?

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged that the member for Winnipeg North recognized that I was being very critical of the government, so he is listening. That is good.

With respect to the Ukrainian situation and the people who were invited to Canada from Ukraine, this is, I think, the core message. Canada said to people from Ukraine, “Come here. We will give you a safe place to stay and options”, so they came. Now, the government is saying that it does not know what to do with them. It does not know what to do, and they are going to be here, in some cases, 50 years to get the paperwork through because it did not plan this properly. Even though it knew there were going to be 300,000 people, it did not actually think there were going to be 300,000 people. That is basically what the government is saying: It does not know what to do with people. They are here, and that is great.

I think we need to be fair and compassionate with these people. We invited them to come to our country, yet the government has not made a pathway for them to process their paperwork. Now they are stuck in limbo for potentially 50 years.

[*Translation*]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear my colleague's comments on the practical implementation of these measures.

We all agree on the principle of strengthening border security. We may differ on how to achieve it, but we agree that it must be done.

However, border officers who testified before House committees repeatedly told us that there are not enough staff to carry out the necessary searches. For example, at the Port of Montreal, barely one container out of every hundred is searched.

I agree with the principles of the bill, but how are we going to implement it? Would my colleague support the government in investing more to increase border services personnel at ports and airports?

I also have a follow-up question: If his party wins the next election, can we expect additional funding to be allocated to border services?

• (1655)

[*English*]

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, one of the problems I have seen over the years from the government is that, when there is a problem, the solution is to throw money at it. It will add \$1 billion for this and \$100 million for that. We hear this all the time, over and over again. If there is a problem, the solution is money.

Yes, we do need more money. To hire more border guards takes more money, this is true. I would be in support of doing what we need to get our security up to where it needs to be, but that has to also come with the ability to train and hire people. That is not just about money. There are other factors at play there.

We also have to ensure that the laws in place are actually helping to achieve the goals we are trying to achieve. Having laws is great, but if we are letting offenders out on bail all the time, that does not help.

We need to have a cohesive system. We need the money, the training ability and the laws to work together.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the last very short period of time, I think it is three years, the Liberals have allowed three million temporary residents to come into the country, which is over 7% of Canada's population. We are hearing about the potential abuse of the asylum system by people who are on these visas. Their visas are expiring, and they are being counselled by unscrupulous immigration consultants to abuse the asylum system and make false asylum claims.

Can the member talk about whether he thinks the measures in the bill would be adequate enough to fix the mess the Liberals have made after the disastrous #WelcomeToCanada tweet in 2017?

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is very right that there has been a big mess created with temporary residence. There are over three million temporary residents in our country right now.

The bill would absolutely not solve that problem. There are fundamental issues with the way the immigration system is being run in this country. There are fundamental errors that have been made by the government in not monitoring certain numbers, for example, the number of students who were permitted to come into our country.

Government Orders

As a result, we have the problems that we all know about, including a lack of housing, difficulty in accessing health care and problems with jobs. Our youth unemployment rate is very high. These are all things that are connected together, and these are things that the government could have managed. It could have seen the implications and the consequences of the decisions it was making and worked together to mitigate some of those things. The government has not done that. As a result, we have this problem in our country today. No, this bill will not solve that problem.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, probing the problem that this is an omnibus bill, most of the debate this afternoon on Bill C-12 was related to its immigration and refugee parts, but there are multiple parts on different acts. I am hoping my hon. colleague from Saskatoon West would agree with me that it would be far preferable, given the complexity of immigration and refugee issues, if the bill were to be split apart and only the committee on immigration and refugees would study the sections about immigration and refugees, not the sections on the Coast Guard, the Oceans Act, trafficking drugs, and so on. What does he think?

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, I do not think Canadians really care who studies what. They want to see fixes. They want to see changes. They want to see improvements. From a technical perspective, the member is probably correct that how we deal with it in the House should be done according to who knows what about which area, but ultimately, the government needs to propose solutions that actually fix the messes it created.

While the bill would fix some of those messes, it certainly does not fix them all, so I am looking for more from the government. Canadians are looking for more. They want to see changes and improvements that would solve the problems they are seeing every day in their lives.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member sidestepped the question on Ukraine. I am a little confused as to whether or not the Conservatives actually supported Ukrainians coming from Ukraine during the war. Maybe he can provide a very succinct explanation. Did he support that number coming to Canada? I think it is a reasonable question.

The other thing is this: In the province of Manitoba, whether it be the chamber of commerce or the provincial government, many different stakeholders want to keep all the temporary workers currently in the province. I wonder if the member could provide a comment on that, if he does not know what to say about Ukraine.

• (1700)

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, on the question of Ukraine, these are people who are fleeing war. Their houses may not even exist anymore. We invited them to come to Canada. They are here. They came here. Part of that deal, at least in their minds, was that there would be a path to permanent residency. That has not been offered by the government. I think that, yes, absolutely, those people need to be treated fairly.

With respect to temporary people in general, we need to be very careful about how we manage temporary residents in our country. We have to make sure that the policies we have in place are good for our country and for the residents we invite to our country.

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that we need just a few more moments to touch on the fact that, as I watched this over the years, the Liberals are very good at creating chaos and then pretending, by throwing money at it, that they are fixing what they created. We are supposed to trust them after they created the problem in the first place.

I wonder if the member could touch on the matter of trust.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, my colleague said it very well. The government creates problems and then fans out money to try to solve them. Often those solutions do not happen. I think that is one of the reasons why Canadians have grown very weary of the government over the last 10 years. It is why there are such high levels of angst in our country. It is why there is a lack of trust in government in general. We all feel that. It is, I believe, because of the actions taken by the Liberal government.

It is important that we act well and make changes that are going to improve the lives of people. While the bill would do some of that, there is still much more to be done.

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to stand in this place to speak on behalf of the great people of Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman. I also speak as the shadow minister of national defence to reflect the concerns of the defence community, including the brave women and men who serve in uniform. I want to speak about some of the changes taking place because of the Liberals, as well as the lack of interest and investment in the Canadian Armed Forces.

I will be splitting my time with the great member for Oxford.

I want to give a big shout-out to the member of Parliament for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, the shadow minister of public safety; the member of Parliament for Calgary Nose Hill, our shadow minister of immigration; and the member for Saskatoon West, who just spoke. They have really put a lot of work into Bill C-12 on the immigration side, on public safety issues and on border security.

It is through their good work and the amount of exposure we, as Conservatives, have been able to give that we were able to mobilize citizens and civil society on Bill C-2 and look at all the violations of civil liberties being done by the Liberals. That bill was a big power grab that would erode charter rights, including the search and seizure to be done by Canada Post employees and the invasion of privacy rights online, through telecoms and banking changes. They would all violate the civil liberties of Canadians from coast to coast.

Government Orders

The Privacy Commissioner himself said that he was never consulted by the Liberals on the drafting of Bill C-2 and had a number of concerns about it. We should never bring forward bills that erode the civil liberties of law-abiding Canadians, and that is what the Liberals continue to do time and time again. They go after people, like law-abiding firearms owners, rather than going after the gun smugglers and those using guns in illicit crime. They always do the easy thing and make it sound like they are doing something, but at the end of the day, all they are doing is targeting law-abiding Canadians.

On Bill C-12, as Conservatives, we will do our homework. We will continue to look through this bill to make sure that Canadians' rights are protected, that the Liberals are not bringing forward any sneaky new laws trying to breach the rights of Canadians through this bill, especially civil liberties and privacy rights. We are concerned that there are things in here that are not going to do anything to improve immigration, improve public safety or strengthen our borders.

There is nothing in the bill on bail reform. There is nothing in the bill to give the Canada Border Services Agency the ability to police the entire border, not just ports of entry. There is an increase in sentencing provisions for those who are either smuggling in guns or trafficking fentanyl, and for other crimes that are being committed by transnational organizations. With the Liberals, house arrest is still allowed for some of the most serious crimes and offences, including for those who have breached the border.

I am going to spend the rest of my time talking about the Canadian Coast Guard, which is part 4 of the bill. We support the great people at the Canadian Coast Guard for the work they have been doing for a long time. We believe we should expand their national security and defence mandate. We do support the idea of bringing them in under national defence, but we want to make sure it is being done for the right reasons and that the Coast Guard is given the right tools to do the job that we are going to be asking of it.

We are concerned that the Liberals are only doing this for creative accounting purposes to try to increase their spending to meet the NATO 2% target, which they have to do in the next five months. Here we are in the middle of October, and we still do not have a plan or a budget from the Liberals on how they are going to get to that level. The estimates that we have to date show we are going to spend somewhere around \$44 billion on national defence. In reality, to hit the 2% target, the Liberals are going to have to spend \$61 billion. Where is that money coming from? What are they going to spend that money on?

We only have five months left, and we know that the Department of National Defence and Public Services and Procurement Canada have always had a hell of a time trying to spend money before the end of the year, and this money cannot just be shovelled out the door. There needs to be a plan on how that is done, and we do not think that is going to happen. That is why we will see some creative accounting through bringing the Coast Guard in under national defence. We are going to get some extra spending but not necessarily any new defence capabilities for Canada.

• (1705)

We would like to see, on every Coast Guard vessel, new sensors and weapon systems, so not only could the personnel do the surveillance that would be asked of them under Bill C-12, but they could also defend themselves if need be. As my colleague from Cowichan—Malahat—Langford said earlier today, the only things that are currently on Coast Guard vessels that have any fire power are shotguns for personnel use to protect themselves in case they run up against any predators.

Thinking about icebreaking ships in the Arctic and polar bears, they have a few shotguns with banger shells in them to scare off the polar bears. They have another rifle that shoots beanbags so that they can throw a rope and tether to another ship or come alongside another ship for those purposes. However, there is no actual capability to defend themselves if need be. As the bill says, we would give them some security patrol capabilities, or responsibilities without any new capability. That is something we are really concerned about.

I want to make sure that Canadians and the House understand that the Canadian Coast Guard to date has no interdiction or enforcement capabilities or mandate. Right now, if the Coast Guard vessel operators encounter somebody fishing illegally, they have to contact the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to bring on one of its enforcement officers to make the arrest and levy the fines. We know that if they encountered somebody in our waters who was smuggling guns or involved in human trafficking, they would have to bring on board RCMP officers to make the arrest. They do not have any of those available at sea.

The current Coast Guard budget is about \$2.4 billion to date. It has been able to include, in the defence allocation for NATO in the last fiscal year, only \$560 million out of that \$2.4-billion budget. Again, with a stroke of the pen, the Prime Minister is trying to take money from the Coast Guard and move it under the Department of National Defence without actually meeting the NATO requirement.

I will just read what the NATO requirement is. This is out of one of its fact sheets from June 2024, regarding the definition of NATO expenditures that has been in place since the 1950s. It states:

A major component of defence expenditure is payments for Armed Forces financed from within the Ministry of Defence budget... They might also include parts of other forces such as Ministry of Interior troops, national police forces, coast guards etc. In such cases, expenditure is included only in proportion to the forces that are trained in military tactics, are equipped as a military force, can operate under direct military authority in deployed operations, and can, realistically, be deployed outside national territory in support of a military force.

The Canadian Coast Guard is a civilian operation that has none of those capabilities or training at this point in time, and that is why we need to make some changes.

Taking aside the creative accounting in trying to find another \$20 billion, and the shell game, we look at the order in council that was done by the Prime Minister on September 2. He gave the powers, under the Public Service Rearrangement and Transfer of Duties Act, that the Coast Guard would be transferred from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans over to the Department of National Defence. That includes the Canadian Coast Guard and the Canadian Coast Guard support services group.

As we just heard from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, the Coast Guard would still maintain its responsibilities under the Oceans Act. Under the Oceans Act, “minister” means the minister of fisheries and oceans, and Coast Guard services are included. This is under paragraphs 41(1)(a) to 41(1)(e):

- (a) services for the safe, economical and efficient movement of ships in Canadian waters through the provision of
 - (i) aids to navigation systems and services,
 - (ii) marine communications and traffic management services,
 - (iii) ice breaking and ice management services, and
 - (iv) channel maintenance;
- (b) the marine component of the federal search and rescue program;
- (c) response to wrecks and hazardous or dilapidated ships;
- (d) marine pollution response; and
- (e) the support of departments, boards and agencies of the Government of Canada through the provision of ships, aircraft and other marine services.

We now know that the Coast Guard would have two masters: the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Department of National Defence. How is that going to work, and how do they capture all of this, with no paramilitary or border security role or mandate, out of the Oceans Act into Department of National Defence spending?

Even though, in part 4 of Bill C-12, on page 11, they would add 41(1)(f), “security, including security patrols and the collection, analysis and disclosure of information or intelligence”, the bill does not provide anything beyond that.

• (1710)

Conservatives support the move of the Coast Guard, but let us make sure that if the Coast Guard is under the Department of National Defence, we give it the tools, the capabilities and the training so that it can do the job that will be accounted for by the Liberals in their budget.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, interestingly enough, the member was part of a government that made cutbacks to Canada border control. If we contrast that to Canada's current Prime Minister, not only are we committed to bringing forward legislation that would help in securing our borders, but the Prime Minister and the government have also made it very clear that we are going to provide financial resources. A good example of that is 1,000 new Canada border control agents, people working in CBSA.

Does the member not agree that the contrast between the Conservatives and the Liberals is quite extensive, with the Liberals definitely showing goodwill in getting things done in protecting our borders?

Government Orders

James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, I would remind the member for Winnipeg North, who has spoken the most words in the House but says the least in every intervention he makes, that it was the Conservative government that moved CBSA officers from being civilian agents to being paramilitary. We trained and armed them.

The former deputy commissioner for operations of the Coast Guard, Chris Henderson, was at the defence committee a few weeks ago. He said that “my strong recommendation is to provide new legislation—the Canadian Coast Guard act—that would enshrine its national security role” and that the Coast Guard “should be given a law enforcement mandate to protect Canada's interests any time and anywhere in our huge expanse of maritime territory.”

The Liberals can talk about the 1,000 new border agents, which need to be given control over the entire border, but let us make sure we turn Coast Guard officials and agents into actual peace officers so that they can do the job of protecting Canada.

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[*Translation*]

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we all agree that we need better controls at the border and that this requires many new measures.

Bill C-12 is the new version of Bill C-2, which created a significant backlash in civil society because many people outside Parliament and in the opposition believed that, in an attempt to strengthen border protections, the government would be infringing on certain rights and trampling on the privacy of many people. It seemed a bit contradictory.

Government Orders

Earlier, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety told us that the government removed from the bill many of the elements that civil society and the opposition found unacceptable in order to table Bill C-12, on which there is a broader consensus. At the same time, we are being told that all the other measures that were unacceptable are not being removed, that the government is still interested in them and that the government is ultimately going to come back to Parliament with these measures, such as allowing the police to open mail.

Could my colleague please explain which measures were in Bill C-2 but are not in Bill C-12 and which ones he would like to see again in another bill?

• (1715)

[English]

James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, in Bill C-2, giving the power to employees of Canada Post to seize and search mail without a warrant is a complete violation of our charter rights. Everybody is entitled to jurisprudence, and that was undermined by the Liberals. In Bill C-2, they were also going after the seizure of information through Internet service providers and telecom companies, which we know is also in violation of privacy rights. Finally, under Bill C-2, the Liberals want to limit the use of cash to under \$10,000 a year. Undermining our legal tender in this country is ridiculous.

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, is the member concerned that our NATO allies will see right through the accounting trickery of shifting a budget for the Coast Guard from a civilian budget to the Canadian Armed Forces without actually improving or enhancing our defence preparedness?

James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt in my mind that the Liberals are strictly making this change to the Oceans Act in Bill C-12 to make sure they have the ability to declare that they have now given the security and border control mandate to the Coast Guard, which should be counted toward the 2% and now the 5%. They will not fool anyone at NATO with this trickery, as my colleague said. At the end of the day, according to their own definition, they have to have the ability to provide military tactical capabilities, which the Coast Guard currently does not have.

Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we marked a very dark milestone in Canada's history: 10 years of the Liberals. It is a very dark time. We used to have a country that was safe and secure, the envy of the world. It was a country that worked for Canadians, that protected Canadians.

The Liberals might say that they have a new government. I know they are heckling right now, but they might think that this is a brand new government. It is not. It has the same Liberal members of Parliament, the same cabinet ministers and the same failed Liberal policies.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Speaker, I know they are not happy with what I am saying, but their policies are what hurt Canadians every single day.

Under the Liberals' watch, we have had the fastest-shrinking economy, in which Canadians are now lining up at food banks. Crime, chaos and drugs are running rampant right across our coun-

try. There is a record amount of crime. Drugs are now being sold on our streets. Our kids are losing their lives.

Under their watch, in 10 years, 50,000 Canadians have lost their lives to drug overdoses, which is more than were lost in the Second World War. We have a homelessness crisis. Encampments are popping up in my riding in Oxford County and across our country from coast to coast to coast. Canadians are suffering from the Liberals' failed policies.

We had one of the best immigration programs in the world. It was the envy of the world. We brought in the brightest and the best, people who could achieve their full potential, who filled major needs in our country and were able to raise their family. However, under the Liberals' watch, they broke that too. They broke our immigration system, and then they started hijacking our institutions. They started censoring Canadians. They started telling Canadians what they could do, where they could go, what they could say and what they could see. It became all about control.

When the Liberals first brought in Bill C-2, they talked about public safety and immigration, but it was another attempt to attack Canadians' freedoms and privacy. The Liberals wanted to attack Canadians' way of life. It is because of the Conservatives, other parties and Canadians who raised their voices, who objected and said no to the Liberals' policies, that we have Bill C-12 in Parliament today.

I am a proud son of immigrants. My parents chose Canada in the early 1980s. They came for that Canadian dream. They worked hard and played by the rules. They were able to earn a decent living and raise a family under their watch. However, we do not have that system anymore. The Liberals have broken that system in almost all respects.

Let us take a look at the asylum system. We have over 300,000 folks lined up to get asylum. Many cases are bogus and fake asylum claims. It is a system that is now full of fraud and abuse, with an average wait time of almost 44 months to be processed in our country. This all started because of the Liberals' actions.

Members might remember that it was the government that put out a famous tweet when Trump was voted in the first time, which said that everybody is welcome. Can members guess what happened?

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Government Orders

Mr. Speaker, they think that is the best tweet ever. However, that tweet brought in over 100,000 illegal border crossers to Roxham Road. It put pressure on our system. Many of those cases were bogus, but we cannot fix stupid. That was a dumb move by the government and a dumb move by the former prime minister.

The Liberals are making policy based on tweets. That is how they run the government. Their failures have led to the trouble we are seeing today. I find it ironic when the Liberals put policy forward saying that they are going to fix the system, that it is a new government, but it is their own doing. They did this. They broke it.

● (1720)

This is going to continue, sadly. We have seen it at the border as well, the Canada-U.S. border, one of the longest borders, an important hub for economics and security. Some \$2 billion in trade crosses the border every single day. We have a massive economic opportunity. Most Canadians live 100 kilometres away from the border, so it is an important transportation and logistical hub for us, and we need a system that works for both Canada and the U.S. We can have strong economic ties.

On security, it is even more important to keep Canadians safe. Under the Liberals' watch, we have had record numbers of crime, some of the highest. Gun crime and homicides have gone up. If we look at the border, we have seen a massive rise in guns being smuggled in. While the Liberals might believe that lawful, law-abiding firearms owners are the problem, they are not. I have been a firearms owner for over 15 years. I love going to the range. I am a sport shooter. Folks like me, farmers and hunters are not the problem. The problem is the Liberals' weak, open-border policies.

Toronto police and law enforcement across our country have made it clear that 90% of the guns that come into our country are illegal guns. Criminals are not using guns from lawful gun owners. They are smuggling them in through the border. Those guns are now in our communities. They are being used for organized crime. They are being used to kill children. If we cannot secure the border and stop that from happening, we are going to keep losing Canadians.

We now have cartels operating in our country, seven, under the Liberals' watch, under their soft-on-crime and open border policies. They have failed to secure our border. We have seven cartels that are illegally moving around drugs, laundering money and pushing guns, yet the Liberals have the audacity to stand up in the House and say they are going to fix the problem. They are the problem. It is them and their failed policies.

It continues. Drugs keep being pushed in. Oxford County is on the 401 and 403, and it has become, sadly, a hub for drugs being brought into our community. I was talking with a family member who lost a loved one, a son, because he got addicted to drugs, illegal drugs that were brought into our community through the 401 and 403 corridors. They have had real-life consequences because of the Liberals' failures.

Human trafficking is another huge part of the crime we are seeing in southwestern Ontario. Again, the minister responsible for public safety just puts his hands up and says that he is not going to

enforce anything at the border. He was asked about hiring more CBSA officers. He said it was not his job.

We know what the Liberals do. They keep over-promising. They keep recycling the same photo ops. They keep announcing that they are going to hire new personnel, but when the minister was asked how many he had hired so far, the answer was zero. They have not hired any frontline officers. When asked when he would do it and why he had not done it, he put his hands up and said that it was not his responsibility. Well, whose responsibility is it? He is the minister responsible. He owes it to every single Canadian to do his job.

Sadly, it is the Liberals who have broken our system. Canada's Conservatives will always stand for law-abiding Canadians. We will invest in securing our borders. We will ensure that repeat violent offenders who commit crimes are locked up and put behind bars, and we will make sure that we fix the broken immigration system so that all Canadians can achieve their full potential.

● (1725)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite did it all while reflecting on the Conservative tough-on-crime policy and amplified the idea that Canada is broken. I would say to the member opposite that Canada is, in fact, not broken. We continue to work with provinces to deal with issues like bail reform, because it is a shared responsibility.

The hon. member sits right behind the leader of the official opposition, and the leader of the official opposition did something despicable over the last week. He called RCMP officers, in particular the head of the RCMP, "despicable".

The RCMP is an institution that is recognized around the world as positive. Does the member believe that the leader of the Conservative Party should apologize?

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Speaker, it is the Liberals' policies that have destroyed almost every single aspect of our country today. It is their failures, mismanagement, negligence and incompetence that have led our country to be in the state it is in today.

I am proud to say that my jail not bail act has the support of police officers and law enforcement from all levels. I am very excited that we are going to keep this conversation going.

We will always stand with law enforcement on this side of the House.

Government Orders

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during his speech, my colleague made reference to the tweet that resulted in the conflation of economic migrants and asylum seekers. When he mentioned this tweet, which single-handedly broke the asylum system, he was heckled by the Liberal benches. One member in the Liberal benches called it the best tweet ever, so it would seem that the Liberal government has learned nothing, certainly the members on its benches.

I thought I should bring it to this member's attention to see if he had any comments on it.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Speaker, it is this type of behaviour that has caused the crisis we see today.

The Liberals are making policy on Twitter and are making policy on a paper napkin, but it has real consequences for Canadians. The 100,000 folks coming across our border put pressure on our system, and it broke a system that was once the best in the world and actually helped those who are being persecuted.

What do we get with the Liberals? They heckle and mudsling and try to distract, deny and obstruct. That is the Liberal way, and in the last 10 years, that is the way they have been doing things. It will change under a Conservative government when that happens.

• (1730)

[*Translation*]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I raised the issue of investments earlier. There is a shortage of personnel to carry out public safety inspections at ports and airports. I am very interested in this issue. Implementing these provisions also presents a number of other challenges.

I wonder if my colleague can enlighten me. In his opinion, what measures should be put in place to strengthen border security, without necessarily passing a bunch of new legislation, but with a focus on concrete action to make it work?

[*English*]

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague raised a great point. The Liberal government is wasting over \$700 million in a gun-grab scam. That money should be put toward frontline officers at our borders and in the RCMP. Let us put the money where the boots are on the ground and where we can actually enforce and protect Canadians.

The Liberals, in the past, have put money in bureaucracy and have put money in nice office towers in Ottawa. That money should be put on the ground, where people can do their jobs. We need more scanners, CBSA officers and security.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Speaker, they are heckling again. They are heckling because they cannot handle the truth. It is their fault and we are going to fix it.

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combating Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by sharing a recent experience I had when I went to a Canada Post mailing facility. The Liberal government, in 2019, was the first government ever to put scanners in place at our mailing and courier facilities. This has resulted in many

weapons and drugs being seized that were coming into our country through the postal centre I went to. What our government did there was done at many ports as well, and we will continue to invest.

I am so happy to stand today to talk about Bill C-12, because this bill would strengthen Canada's immigration system and borders act. It is a crucial piece of legislation that would address the evolving and complex challenges of crime that our country faces. This bill is about protecting Canadians, securing our borders and equipping our law enforcement agencies with the modern tools they need to combat sophisticated criminal networks.

As hon. members will recall, this bill builds upon Bill C-2 and has been introduced so that we can accelerate key legislative changes. These changes are focused on four primary areas that would significantly bolster our fight against crime. Under Bill C-12, we would secure our borders against illicit goods, combat transnational organized crime, disrupt illicit financing and enhance information sharing between law enforcement agencies.

Our borders are the first line of defence against illegal goods and criminal activity. Bill C-12 introduces key amendments to the Customs Act that would modernize our border security framework. Under these amendments, the Canada Border Services Agency officers would be given new authority to access warehouses and transportation hubs to inspect goods that are being exported. This would close a critical gap in our enforcement and would prevent criminals from using Canada as a launching point for their illegal activities.

The Customs Act would be amended in order to obligate transporters and warehouse operators to provide access to their premises to allow for export inspections by CBSA officers. Furthermore, amendments would require owners and operators of certain ports of entry to provide facilities for export inspections, just as they currently do for imports. These changes would strengthen the CBSA's ability to detect and seize contraband for export, including illicit goods such as fentanyl and stolen vehicles.

The bill would also further expand our maritime security. The Oceans Act would be amended to allow the Canadian Coast Guard to conduct security patrols and intelligence operations. This would strengthen our sovereignty and surveillance capabilities, particularly in remote regions like the Arctic, to better detect threats to our country.

Finally, Bill C-12 would further our efforts to tackle auto theft by targeting vulnerabilities in the export process. This bill would help curb the flow of stolen Canadian vehicles out of our country.

I forgot to mention at the beginning of my speech that I will be sharing my time with the member for Trois-Rivières.

International organized crime networks pose one of the most significant threats to public safety in Canada. Bill C-12 directly targets these groups in several ways.

First, it aims to stop the flow of fentanyl. The bill would amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to accelerate the scheduling of precursor chemicals. This would give the Minister of Health the power to rapidly control chemicals used to produce illicit drugs, allowing law enforcement and border agencies to act swiftly and shut down illegal manufacturing.

• (1735)

Second, Bill C-12 includes measures that would disrupt illicit financing and money laundering. It would increase maximum penalties for violations of Canada's anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing regime. Money laundering supports and perpetuates criminal activity by allowing criminals, such as fentanyl traffickers, to benefit from their illicit activities. Strong and effective anti-money laundering controls are, therefore, a critical component of a secure Canada-U.S. border. This bill proposes a comprehensive set of amendments to help ensure businesses and professionals are effective in detecting and deterring the money laundering and organized criminal networks that support and perpetuate fentanyl trafficking and other economically motivated crimes.

Bill C-12 also aims to improve the capacity of law enforcement to respond to complex criminal challenges. It would enhance the RCMP's ability to share information on registered sex offenders with domestic and international law enforcement partners. Currently, registered Canadian sex offenders are required to report any international travel 14 days prior to their departure. Once reported, the RCMP conducts a risk assessment and provides notification to the destination country that the individual is travelling to, when warranted. As currently written, the threshold for sharing this information is high. Adjusting the legislative threshold would enhance the RCMP's ability to share this information with key law enforcement or government partners, including the United States, to prevent or investigate crimes of a sexual nature. Addressing these issues would strengthen the RCMP's ability to protect public safety both within Canada and abroad.

We owe it to Canadians to do all that we can to keep them and their families safe. The government has taken and continues to take action, and we know this legislation would help us to further reduce crime. Bill C-12 is a proactive response to modern crime, providing border agents and police with the tools they need to disrupt criminal networks. By passing this legislation, we will be strengthening our borders and protecting our communities.

Ned Kuruc (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot from the Liberal speakers today. A simple question is whether they are talking to Canadians in their ridings or are they stuck in this echo chamber where they believe that by talking to themselves, they will find the answers.

I was in the member's riding yesterday and over 1,000 people from Brampton came out to the crime town hall, and they have had enough. They lined up out the door to give their testimonies and

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complaints. They are sick of extortion, guns, crime, drugs and fentanyl, as the member mentioned. All the Liberals have given us lip service.

Is the member actually speaking to people in her city?

• (1740)

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, we brought forward several pieces of legislation that address crime. It is exactly because I am speaking to people in my community. I would ask the same of the member who was in Brampton the other day. One of the big issues we are seeing is organized crime committing extortions, home invasions and auto theft. This bill would help support those in law enforcement and give them the tools they need.

The reason we needed to amend the previous bill that was tabled is that the Conservatives fed into TikTok rumours and misinformation and did not allow us to bring forward lawful access, which would further help solve and investigate a lot of these serious crimes. That is what law enforcement is asking for.

[*Translation*]

Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in order for customs officers to be able to do their jobs properly, more officers need to be hired. The union says that the Canada Border Services Agency is short between 2,000 and 3,000 officers.

During the last election campaign, the Liberal Party platform said that it would hire 1,000 additional RCMP officers and 1,000 CBSA officers. The 1,000 RCMP officers were mentioned in the throne speech, but the 1,000 CBSA officers were not. Let me repeat that the union has said that it needs between 2,000 and 3,000 officers.

Will the government commit to hiring them?

[*English*]

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I have heard the union refer to this number. It is not a number that I was made aware of ahead of time. Of course, there are vacancies. We look forward and have every intention of filling vacancies for positions that are important. The 1,000 new officers would be above and beyond any current existing vacancies.

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Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to pick up on the question that was just posed, what I like about the legislation is that the new Prime Minister along with our new minister have done a fantastic job of presenting a comprehensive approach to dealing with the issue. I congratulate her on her appointment to cabinet. Not only do we have this legislation, but there are budgetary commitments for RCMP officers and border control officers.

Could she provide her perspective as to why it was important to have a holistic approach to deal with this critical issue?

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, when I travelled throughout the summer talking to members of law enforcement across the country, they made it very clear that of course when we bring in new officers, those officers will need resources, tools and systems in place.

I was really happy to see the finance minister announce today that the upcoming budget will have further investments on cracking down on financing crime. That is very important. We are facing astronomical losses through cybercrime and crime in the finance sector. Those investments will be coming forward in the budget along with these investments for the new officers in the RCMP and CBSA.

Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite mentioned security patrols and intelligence operations, yet the Coast Guard does not have the equipment and capability for that. It will take a significant amount of time for a cultural shift and to retrofit military-style equipment and systems.

Do the Liberals intend to equip and arm the Coast Guard to meet the mandate and tasking they are giving to it in this bill?

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, absolutely. That was a great question. This government is in place to do things differently, to do big things. That is why we have historic investments at our border and in our defence capabilities. This is one part of that piece of the puzzle.

• (1745)

[*Translation*]

Caroline Desrochers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to acknowledge that we are gathered on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

I rise today to speak to how the legislative changes proposed in Bill C-12 will continue to uphold our humanitarian tradition and due process, while focusing resources on those in need and improving confidence in our asylum system. Canadians expect a robust, efficient and responsive immigration system.

The changes we are proposing would strengthen and streamline Canada's asylum and immigration systems. They include new rules on which asylum seekers may be referred to the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, or IRB, as well as on how claims are received, processed and adjudicated.

Under this act, the federal government will no longer refer the following claims to the IRB: claims made more than a year after a person first arrived after June 24, 2020, and claims made 14 days or more after a person enters Canada illegally between border crossings.

The changes are intended to help protect our system from a sudden influx of applications, as well as from people who want to use the asylum system to extend their stay in Canada when other mechanisms fail. Let us be clear: Canada's asylum system is not a shortcut. We do not want to use this bill to turn away people who have a well-founded fear for their safety if they were returned to their country of origin. In these cases, applications would be referred to the removal process, which includes the possibility of requesting a pre-removal risk assessment, also known as a PRRA.

People can request a PRRA when they believe they have a well-founded fear of being returned to a situation where they would be exposed to persecution, torture or other serious harm, for example. This safeguard ensures that changes to our asylum system do not undermine our commitment to protecting the world's most vulnerable people.

The PRRA complies with Canada's obligations under international human rights and refugee conventions. It is a well-established mechanism that operates within a broader system today, offering individuals who are facing removal the opportunity to demonstrate that they would be at risk of persecution or harm if they were returned.

A request for a risk assessment may reveal information, such as conditions in their country of origin or personal circumstances, that makes their return dangerous. These may include, for example, political and economic upheavals, armed conflicts, or a country's changing social dynamics.

Similarly, personal circumstances, such as visibility in activism or family dynamics, can increase the risk of harm if these people return to their country. Risk assessments ensure that these factors are thoroughly examined before a removal order is issued. They are carried out by trained officers who carefully assess the credibility and significance of the evidence presented. It is a rigorous process, based on a thorough understanding of risk and refugee law.

The importance of such a process cannot be overstated. Without it, we would lack an essential safety net and there would be a risk of irreversible harm to individuals.

Canada's pre-removal risk assessment process gives people a fair opportunity to present evidence while ensuring that each case is reviewed thoroughly. This process is supported by a large amount of detailed data on conditions in the country and by agents trained to assess risk with a high degree of expertise and sensitivity to individual circumstances. This approach highlights the importance of the pre-removal risk assessment process in maintaining Canada's strong tradition of refugee protection.

• (1750)

The PRRA process also prevents legislative changes to our asylum system from inadvertently exposing people to harm. It is a safety net that lets decision-makers modernize and strengthen various aspects of our immigration framework, knowing that a loophole exists.

By simplifying initial asylum decisions, reducing backlogs and modernizing pathways to protection, the PRRA is an essential safeguard that gives us the confidence we need to innovate responsibly.

It is important to keep in mind that the PRRA is not a tool for delaying legal removals. Rather, it ensures that every individual is reviewed based on the most recent information and circumstances to take full account of any risks they face and to avoid putting anyone in danger.

All of us here in the House and in the Senate have a duty to ensure that Canada's immigration and asylum system mirrors our values of compassion and fairness, while meeting the needs of a changing global context and addressing the pressures confronting Canadians today.

The pre-removal risk assessment process reflects this balance. It reassures Canadians that, while we are taking urgent and necessary steps to strengthen our immigration system, we are doing so without compromising our commitment to protecting human life and dignity.

[*English*]

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just finished reading, over the past couple of hours, emails from people in my constituency, and elsewhere, who are concerned about their rights and freedoms being eroded. They are concerned that the bills the Liberals are bringing forward are being used to suppress their rights and also increase the power of the state. This was brought forward during the debate on Bill C-2; Conservatives are also concerned about this bill.

Can the Liberal parliamentary secretary speak to the fact that law-abiding Canadians feel like they are being criminalized and that the Liberals are not standing up against real criminals?

[*Translation*]

Caroline Desrochers: Mr. Speaker, perhaps my colleague could have taken the time to read Bill C-12. We understand the situation very well, and we have been listening to Canadians. We took certain things out of the bill for the moment, things that require further consideration and study. This will result in a better thought-out and more thorough bill.

However, there are some things that Canadians expect us to put in place right away. That is what we are doing with this bill. Cana-

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dians expect our streets to be safer, our Coast Guard to have the responsibility it deserves and our immigration system to be used properly.

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from my colleague; they were well-thought out. The question I have for her is more about a process issue. A lot of the questions and comments we hear from the opposition, particularly from the Bloc, have been fairly supportive about wanting to have more dialogue on the issue. Going through second reading into committee, members are afforded all sorts of opportunities to ask questions, debate, listen to stakeholders and so forth.

Can the member provide her thoughts on how important it is that legislation of this nature actually passes through the system?

Caroline Desrochers: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party is the party that listens to people, that listens to consensus, and is not afraid of going back to a project and making sure it is as strong as possible. That is why we are moving forward with Bill C-12 and removing the part that members across the aisle have asked us to study further, which is what we are doing, and we are moving forward with the project that brought consensus across the aisle with other parties. We need to implement this as soon as possible.

The other side continues to talk about crime. We are putting forward many projects to deal with crime and we keep getting blocked by our colleagues who say it is their biggest issue, but they are not at the table to make it better.

• (1755)

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola. I thank my colleague across the way for her intervention. She talked about blocking things on crime.

Earlier this morning, we had second reading of a bill on intimate partner violence, the most groundbreaking change in intimate partner violence that this House has ever seen, and the Liberals will not signal support for it. Bailey McCourt's family was watching and was appalled by the behaviour of the Liberals. I know that because they told me.

How, on one hand, can the member say they are listening to Canadians and, on the other hand, do something that is so blatantly contrary to Canadians' interests?

Caroline Desrochers: Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the opposition continues to say, as it continues to put forward slogans, we are actually taking action.

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We were elected to take action, and we have taken action. We will continue to take action to protect Canadians, to protect our streets and to protect against gender-based violence. We are doing that.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to rise on this bill and talk about what our government is working on.

The Prime Minister has already outlined seven priorities for our government, and one of them is being able to attract the best talent in the world to help build our economy while keeping our immigration levels in a sustainable way. Today, I rise to speak on that and to support Bill C-12, the proposed strengthening Canada's immigration system and borders act. This bill is about getting that balance right. It would strengthen our immigration and asylum systems, improve information sharing and ensure that our borders are ready for the realities of a changing world.

Immigration has for so long been part of our country's story. It has been part of our past and our present; it will continue to be part of our future. It fuels our workforce, builds our communities and keep our economy growing, but as the world changes, we need systems that keep pace; we need systems that are fair, fast and firm.

We live in a time when migration patterns are shifting. Conflicts are driving displacement, and technology is changing how people move across borders. Fraud has become more sophisticated. Organized crime and human trafficking networks have become more active. However, Bill C-12 would ensure that Canada's systems stay strong, credible and compassionate, and protect both our humanitarian obligations and our national interests.

The first set of reforms would modernize Canada's asylum system, making it faster, fairer and more transparent. Right now, multiple departments often handle the same files, duplicating work and creating backlogs. Bill C-12 would fix those issues by creating a single intake system for asylum claims, which means that we would have less red tape, faster decisions and no more confusion about who is responsible for what in getting through these systems.

Under the new system, only hearing-ready cases would go before the Immigration and Refugee Board, which means background checks and identity verification would be completed first. This would reduce unnecessary delays and ensure that decisions are based on full information for the people who are making those decisions. The bill would also provide the board authority to remove abandoned and incomplete claims. If someone stops responding or no longer wishes to pursue their case, officials could close the case and focus on those who truly need protection. Bill C-12 would repeal outdated measures, like designated country of origin regime, a policy that no longer reflects the realities of modern migration. Together, these changes would create a faster, more complete and efficient asylum system that would protect the integrity of the process and at the same time uphold Canada's humanitarian tradition.

The bill would strengthen the integrity of our borders and make it clear that those who deliberately delay filing a claim or who try to reset the clock by re-entering Canada would not be able to bypass our laws. It would introduce new eligibility rules; for example, claims filed more than a year after arrival may be deemed ineligible, and those who cross irregularly between ports of entry or avoid

the safe third country agreement would not be referred to the Immigration and Refugee Board. It would protect our asylum system from being overwhelmed and would allow Canada to focus resources on people who genuinely come here looking for protection. It is about protecting and compassion with order.

We, as a country, will remain open to those who are most vulnerable. Our borders will remain open to those who are truly fleeing persecution around the world. That is who we have been and that is who we will continue to be, but we must do so in a way that keeps our borders more secure and processes very credible.

Bill C-12 would bring our immigration system into the modern age of data and technology. For too long, different departments and provinces have worked in silos, and information gaps have slowed down processing, creating unnecessary duplication and adding unnecessary costs. Bill C-12 would enable secure, modern information sharing across federal departments, provinces and territories and trusted partners with strong privacy safeguards built in.

• (1800)

This would mean that newcomers could access housing, health care and settlement programs much sooner. It would mean that law enforcement and border officials could better detect fraud and identity theft. It would also mean fewer delays for people waiting to build their lives here in Canada.

All privacy protections would remain robust. The framework was reviewed by the Department of Justice and the Office of the Privacy Commissioner. Every agreement will be written, every safeguard explicit and every disclosure accountable under the law.

Bill C-12 would give the government tools to respond to major or unforeseen challenges, whether that means a humanitarian crisis, a surge in irregular migration or even a global emergency, as we have, in the past, experienced. It would allow immigration documents like visas, electronic travel authorizations and permits to be temporarily suspended or cancelled only when it is within the public interest, for example in cases of widespread fraud or security threats. This would not be an overreach; it is about remaining robust in protecting Canadians and remaining prepared.

We will ensure that Canada can act quickly and responsibly when a situation demands it. These powers would be exercised with transparency, oversight and respect for due process.

We have to act now because the pressures are real. The world has seen record levels of displacement. In 2023 alone, more than 110 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide. Irregular migration has increased, and the systems we built 20 years ago were not designed for the scale or speed we are seeing today. If we do not modernize, we risk losing both control and compassion.

Canadians have an expectation of their government to manage immigration responsibly, and that is exactly what we are going to do. We are going to uphold fairness for newcomers and confidence for citizens, and we are sure that Bill C-12 is going to accomplish exactly that. It would replace outdated frameworks with a smarter, more adaptive model, one that serves people and protects Canada's borders with integrity.

It is fair to say there are concerns about how these reforms would work in practice. Advocates have asked that we preserve strong pathways for people facing new risks after arrival. Those voices completely matter and we are listening. The committee review will be an important part of that process where we will listen, take up amendments and the advice we are hearing from experts and make sure this bill is ready and prepared to do exactly what the spirit behind it is.

Let us be clear. Bill C-12 would not weaken Canada's tradition of protection. It would strengthen it by ensuring the system is credible, efficient and able to deliver on its promises. A broken system helps absolutely no one in Canada, not claimants, not Canadians and not those who need urgent protections. A strong system, however, serves everyone better.

Immigration is not only a humanitarian issue in Canada; it is an economic one. Our economy has often depended on attracting skilled workers, entrepreneurs and families that contribute to our communities. However, when the system is backlogged, confidence drops and opportunities are lost along the way. Bill C-12 would ensure that the immigration system continues to be a driver of growth for everyone involved, while at the same time protecting the integrity that makes Canada's approach the envy of the world.

For employers, it means predictability. For newcomers, it means clarity. For Canadians, it means confidence that immigration remains both fair and beneficial. This is not just about processing applications or updating databases, but about modern governance and a government that learns, adapts and delivers for its people. Bill C-12 embodies that principle. It would make government work smarter, focusing resources on what matters most, removing duplication and strengthening our accountability. It reflects a new way of governing, one that combines compassion with discipline and policy with delivery.

● (1805)

To conclude, Bill C-12 is about making our system work better for people. It would make asylum claim processing faster and more efficient, it would strengthen coordination across all departments, it would improve the integrity of our borders and it would uphold what defines us as Canadians. I know that in this House, many colleagues came to this country to become Canadians and are able to serve the communities that have hosted them and given them a second chance at life because of our system and because Canadians trust our immigration system.

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How much better is it that we all work together in this House to strengthen the system that many of us, including me, are so proud of? It is a system that works and allows a child who was a refugee surviving a genocide to become a member of Parliament in this House. That is what we are talking about.

Canadians are good people. Canadians are compassionate people, and they want this system to work. The polarization around immigration is not beneficial for Canada. Canadians want us members of Parliament from all parties to work together to address issues when we see them, and I think this bill would do exactly that. It would uphold what defines us as Canadians.

This is a thoughtful and forward-looking bill that would manage immigration in a way that supports our economy and protects those who seek safety here and, at the same time, in a way that upholds our values and who we are as a country. It is about building a system that Canadians can trust and newcomers can count on. I invite the many members of this House who I know have been beneficiaries of the system to stand up for it, to work together to fix it, to stop talking down Canadians and our institutions, and to believe in this country, which many of us have called home for many years.

Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are pushing their so-called strengthening Canada's immigration system and borders act, yet illegal border crossings have surged under their watch, and the system has never been more out of control. Federal health care spending for asylum claimants has now ballooned to nearly half a billion dollars a year, covering vision care, home care and assistive devices, benefits that millions of hard-working Canadians are not even covered for. Meanwhile, hard-working and law-abiding families in Richmond Hill cannot find a family doctor and are waiting months for basic treatment.

Canadians are compassionate, but they also expect fairness. Why does the Liberal government believe that illegal border crossers deserve gold-plated health care that Canadian citizens themselves do not even receive? When will this unfairness finally end and when will the Liberals finally put Canadians first?

● (1810)

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if the member opposite was listening to my speech. I do not think he was, because it looked like he was reading a question he prepared way before I made it.

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Maybe I can ask the member opposite why he is so intent on attacking our systems. Recently, he put forward a motion to deal with DEI, for example. Perhaps he can start with DEI on his side of the aisle. When he works on that system, he can come back and tell the rest of Canada how we can deal with DEI.

[*Translation*]

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in her speech, my colleague said that this bill would do what it needs to do and that, among other things, it would ensure the integrity of the border. Good intentions aside, a bill is only good insofar as it can be effective on the ground.

We are reportedly 2,000 to 3,000 border officers short of the number we would need to keep the border secure. Will her government act now to ensure that the resources needed for this bill to be effective are coordinated before its passage?

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question. I have listened carefully to most of the speeches by the Bloc Québécois members, and I believe that they largely agree with us that we need to work to make this system better.

I was in Windsor last week to announce additional measures to hire more border officers across Canada. The Prime Minister is very focused on that.

I think that if my colleague has other points he wants to raise to move this bill forward effectively, that could also be done in committee, which would allow us to move forward.

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the many words that my hon. colleague put on the record.

The question I have for her is about recognizing that, through time, there is a need to make changes. Whether it was during the pandemic or in other situations, such as with the demand from post-secondary institutions to have more international students, at times there is a need to bring forward legislation. We have a Prime Minister who was just elected back in April. He made a solemn commitment to bringing in many of the changes we are bringing in today and have brought in in days prior.

I am wondering if the member could provide her thoughts on how this legislation is a reflection of what the Prime Minister has been talking about.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Mr. Speaker, this is an excellent question, because it dives deep into what I was talking about.

The many systems in this country that we trust and believe in, like the immigration system, evolve with time, and we have to be willing to evolve with them. This bill addresses an issue that we have seen change over time.

The member talked about the pandemic and different issues we have experienced, including with international students. This is something we have to continue to monitor. That is why we are here and why we were elected. We must legislate these bills and make sure they are up date and can evolve with time.

I talked about technology and how technology plays a role in this new bill. It is just another things showing that we have to grow and adapt to what is happening in the external world around us while keeping Canada as strong as it needs to be.

Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite stated that Bill C-12 does not weaken our system of protection. In the spirit of the Blue Jays in game seven and the “three strikes and you’re out” rule, I will ask my question for a third time. Will the Liberals equip, train and arm the Coast Guard to meet the new mandate in the bill, or will they change the mandate?

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Mr. Speaker, I know the member was in the room when I was making my speech, because I saw him standing a couple of times with his notes. He had his notes prepared before I made my speech.

In my speech, if he had listened intently, and in the answer I just gave to my colleague from the Bloc Québécois, I talked about the fact that we have increased the number of border agents. We are investing in hiring more. There will be more information for the member opposite through budget 2025 on November 4.

We are a government that is committed to hiring law enforcement to meet the needs we are asking of them. If we are going to ask them to do something, we are going to invest in them and make sure they have the right resources, the right tools and the personnel they need for doing that.

• (1815)

The Deputy Speaker: Before I go back to questions and comments, I will just remind all members who are back from a constituency week that we cannot refer to the presence of a member or lack thereof in the House. Whether a member was in the House during a speech or not, we cannot make reference to it.

[*Translation*]

The member for Rivière-du-Nord.

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that Bill C-12 is basically Bill C-2 with minor improvements. For one thing, the government has removed the infamous provision that allowed mail to be searched without a warrant from a judge.

Does my colleague agree with us that it was a good idea to remove that provision? If so, why did her government initially propose to allow mail searches without a warrant?

[*English*]

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Mr. Speaker, I can share a story with the member.

[*Translation*]

I am sorry. I will address my colleague in French.

What I wanted to say is that I had an opportunity a few weeks ago to speak with a member of the RCMP in my riding. He told me that he once worked in a community where there were no identified cases of fentanyl use. A week after a single package arrived, however, fentanyl was everywhere. By the time the RCMP member left the community, there were about 800 cases of fentanyl use. This shows that a robust mail screening system could have prevented these 800 cases in the small community where he was posted.

We initially presented that proposal because there was demand for it. Now, however, we are introducing a bill that proposes something else. That is not to say that we have lost all confidence. We have confidence that our law enforcement officers can reach their own conclusions about the work that needs to be done. As I said earlier, this kind of collaboration is how we can keep protecting our systems here in Canada.

Tim Watchorn (Les Pays-d'en-Haut, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to know why it is important to introduce the elements we are proposing in Bill C-12 rather than in Bill C-2, which was introduced initially.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Mr. Speaker, as I explained in my speech just now, we were asked to review our approach by stakeholders, and it was in light of the information they supplied that we split this bill. The spirit and idea of wanting to protect our borders are still there.

Last week, as I was saying, I was in Windsor to echo the announcement by the Prime Minister regarding the hiring of 1,000 new officers to work at the borders and ensure Canada's security. We said we would do that during the election campaign and we will continue to do that.

This bill is before us today so that we can discuss it. We will go to committee so that people can discuss it further, and we will reach a consensus that will result in a good bill that our workers want and that they will be able to have.

[*English*]

Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by saying I will be splitting my time with the member for Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

It is always a privilege to stand in the House representing the wonderful people of Abbotsford—South Langley. Today, I rise to address many serious issues affecting my community, something I wish I did not have to keep doing over and over again.

Bill C-12 fails to adequately address several key issues within our immigration system and at our borders. While the public safety minister claims that the legislation will make Canada safer, the bill ultimately falls short on delivering on those promises. In my community of Abbotsford—South Langley, a major border crossing and hot spot for illicit drugs and arms smuggling, this failure is very real with real consequences.

I have stood in this chamber numerous times to raise concerns about extortion and the rising wave of gun violence that is occurring, terrorizing our neighbourhoods and communities. We are calling for stronger border security, yet the Liberals have turned a blind eye, ignoring the urgent need to secure our borders, toughen crime laws and prioritize the safety of victims over the interests of gun

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smugglers, gangsters and violent criminals. My community members should not have to live in fear wondering if they will be the next victim of a drive-by shooting, or worry that their children might be hit with a stray bullet while sleeping in their bedroom or playing at the park.

Securing Canada's borders and being tough on crime means giving our citizens peace of mind that illegal firearms and harmful drugs are not flooding our streets. Why do the Liberals not understand these basic measures? The Liberals' track record says it all. They are not serious about securing our borders or keeping Canadians safe. According to Health Canada and the latest figures, there were a total of 49,000 opioid deaths reported between January 2016 and June 2024. Many were due to drug ingredients trafficked from China and Mexico.

The Washington Post reported in December 2023 that fentanyl super labs in Canada are producing mass amounts of drugs as well. The super labs that police are finding in Canada differ because they are synthesizing the drug with chemicals sourced primarily from China. In Langley, British Columbia, in my own community, police recently uncovered a super lab containing enough fentanyl and materials to kill 95 million people. Langley authorities also reported on how this super lab was capable of producing multiple kilograms of fentanyl on a weekly basis, yet this bill still lacks mandatory prison sentences for fentanyl traffickers. This is just disgraceful.

To make matters worse, with so many lives lost, the Liberals continue to push for safe consumption sites near schools. Conservatives urged the Liberals at the health committee to shut down fentanyl consumption sites located close to schools and children for their safety. However, the Liberals and the Liberal health minister refused to rule out approving even more sites near schools and day cares, despite admitting these locations have become hot spots for rampant fentanyl use.

In my riding, the Liberals are planning to slap a safe consumption site right across the street from a school. I have spoken with many parents, such as the parents from the Abbotsford Traditional School and those in the PAC that is also responsible for the school. They are genuinely concerned for their children's safety. They want to know what is happening in our communities. It is troubling. I find myself asking, alongside them, the same question, as this is truly concerning for our communities and children. Is this the Canada our children should be brought up in?

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If that was not bad enough, the Liberals' own public safety minister admits he will not even do his job to keep Canada safe. He has stated that he is not responsible for hiring a thousand new CBSA agents. Why are Canadians paying him? His role is to protect Canadians by securing our borders, and right now, he is failing at that. We are not expecting him to do the job interviews himself, but we expect him to follow through, do his job and hire agents accordingly. The fact is that fewer than a hundred agents have been hired. This is simply unacceptable.

• (1820)

To make matters worse, gun crime under the Liberal government has risen by 116% over the past nine years, and the Toronto Police Association reports that 85% of gun crimes involve illegal firearms trafficked from the United States, yet the Liberal government will still allow some of the worst criminals to receive house arrest. How exactly is this supposed to make Canadians feel safe?

Canadian agencies have identified 350 organized crime rings inside our country, including 63 linked to international groups from China and Mexico. The Liberal government allowed multiple ISIS terrorists into Canada, including one who was caught desecrating a body abroad and who was later charged with planning attacks in Canada.

In 2022, a senior Iranian official was banned from entering Canada due to human rights abuses and terrorism, yet several investigations into Iranian agents on Canadian soil remain open. We know the government has lost 600 foreign nationals with criminal records, and over 400 of those evading the government are convicted of serious criminality right here in Canada. The government has openly admitted it has lost track of how many people are living in Canada illegally.

In my own riding, a sergeant from the Abbotsford Police Department reported that in my community there have been 60 incidents involving border jumpers on just one road alone. It is obvious that in my community there is an urgent need for border security and that it remains insecure, yet this bill fails to adequately address these concerns and serves as nothing more than Liberal empty promises.

Conservatives are focused on making sure we prioritize Canadians' safety. Conservatives forced the Liberals to retreat from Bill C-2, which threatened Canadians' freedoms and privacy, as we believe wholeheartedly that law-abiding Canadians should never be made to pay for the government's failures on borders and immigration.

We will continue to defend Canadians' privacy and demand that the Liberals become tough on crime, end their soft-on-crime sentencing for serious violent repeat offenders, put a stop to drug trafficking that kills a record number of Canadians, secure our porous borders that risk this country's very own fabric and put criminals behind bars where they belong.

It is my duty to stand up for my constituents and to hold the government accountable. I will continue to fight for meaningful action to restore the safety every Canadian deserves. The minister opposite may claim the border is secure, but it is easy to say that when

the evidence and statistics my colleagues and I continue to raise are ignored.

• (1825)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-12, a substantial piece of legislation that would make our borders secure, is complemented by literally hundreds of millions of dollars of commitments, increases in the number of Canada border control officers and increases in the number of RCMP officers.

The member spent a great deal of his time talking about the need for bail reform. The good news is that bail reform will also be coming very soon.

The issue I have with the member and the Conservative caucus is that they have this persistence in not allowing things to get to the committee stage, specifically when dealing with crime-related issues. I am wondering if he can explain to those who might be following the debate why the Conservative Party is so resistant to allowing things to go to committee in a timely fashion, where Canadians and stakeholders could give direct input to members, who can continue to debate it at committee.

Sukhman Gill: Mr. Speaker, the truth is that Canadians are worse off now than ever. There is extortion happening in my community in Surrey, British Columbia, as well as in Abbotsford. It is happening repeatedly. The crime rates are higher now than ever. We need to make sure we can take care of our communities now and that we are bringing forward legislation that is not the watered down legislation of the Liberals. Conservatives are bringing forward the "three strikes and you're out" rule, which is what we need to implement safety on our streets and in our communities.

[*Translation*]

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Health spent a year working on the toxic drug crisis. All the experts said that cracking down on clandestine labs was absolutely crucial. One way to do this is to take action on the precursors, in other words, the substances used to make illicit drugs.

Part 2 of Bill C-12 gives the Minister of Health the authority to better regulate these precursors. I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on part 2 of the bill.

Government Orders

[English]

Sukhman Gill: Mr. Speaker, the truth is that the health minister has allowed drugs to be poured into our country. In my home riding alone, I can give the example of how there is going to be another safe supply housing site that is going to be opened up across from a school, which is going to allow illicit drugs to be smuggled around the area. This is what we see as concerning. This is what we see as the whole problem. We should not allow these safe consumption sites in our communities or in Canada overall.

What Conservatives are going to do is eliminate all of these challenges that the government is putting forward and make sure that we can take drugs out of the picture for everyone.

• (1830)

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

My colleague, the member for Winnipeg North, just talked about how Conservatives do not want crime legislation to go to committee, which is completely misguided. However, I find it quite rich that, earlier today, I spoke to a bill on intimate partner violence, which would bring the greatest change for intimate partner violence that the House has ever seen. In fact, the aunt of an intimate partner who was murdered saw the member's conduct, and I am paraphrasing, but she was disgusted by what was said and the notion of the Liberal argument on this point also made by the parliamentary secretary.

How can the Liberals say on the one hand that Conservatives do not want things to go to committee, but on the other hand, stand against a bill on intimate partner violence?

Sukhman Gill: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right. On this side of the House, we are really concerned. Families are reaching out to us concerned, now more than ever, as we are affected by intimate partner violence and by these big drug dens that are affecting our communities.

As of now, we want to make sure that we can be here to raise the voices of the people of our communities, because the government is just giving us big scenarios and big-mouth words, as the Liberals always do. They never deliver what the people from our community need.

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise again on behalf of the people of Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay to speak to Bill C-12, an act respecting certain measures relating to the security of Canada's borders and the integrity of the Canadian immigration system.

This bill is of critical importance to my constituents, especially those living in border communities along the B.C.-Washington State line. We have six crossings: Osoyoos, Midway, Rossland, Grand Forks, Cawston and Rock Creek. This is a very mountainous terrain and one of the longest sections of border between Canada and the United States.

Our entire riding is on the front lines of serious challenges: cross-border crime, drug trafficking and illegal weapons smug-

gling. Crime rates in communities throughout the riding of Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay have soared in the past decade. Sadly, the federal government has been slow to respond. Conservatives have long pushed for concrete measures to strengthen border security and disrupt criminal networks. For years, the Trudeau Liberals chose to look the other way.

Bill C-12 is an improvement, but only because Conservatives and Canadians pushed back against the original version, Bill C-2. I received so many emails about Bill C-2 from people who were extremely concerned about Liberal overreach again. As Conservatives, we have argued that this had much less to do with strong borders and, of course, much more to do with government overreach.

Let us be clear. If the Liberals had passed Bill C-2 unopposed, they would have granted themselves sweeping powers, including letting Canada Post open my private mail and other people's without a warrant, allowing warrantless access to Canadians' personal data, and forcing tech companies to re-engineer their platforms for easier government surveillance. Those proposals were not about protecting our borders. They were about infringing on law-abiding Canadians' privacy. That is a victory for Canadians and for democracy, but vigilance is still required.

Let us examine the government's track record. Since 2015, there has been a 632% increase in U.S. border patrol encounters involving people illegally crossing from the U.S. into Canada, many of whom are linked to drug and firearms trafficking. In Canada, 350 organized crime groups have been identified, yet instead of targeting gangs and smugglers, the Liberals have spent millions harassing licensed, law-abiding firearms owners with arbitrary bans that do nothing to make our communities safer. Meanwhile, gun crime is up 116% and 85% of gun offences involve illegal firearms from the United States from that porous border for the last decade.

Our border is dangerously understaffed. Mark Weber, national president of the Customs and Immigration Union, says the CBSA is short 2,000 frontline officers. As well, while the public safety minister keeps reannouncing plans to hire 1,000 agents, when asked why none have been hired yet, he said that he was not responsible for hiring. If he is not responsible for hiring, who is? What is the point of a minister who cannot deliver on his own promises? Even if hiring were to begin today, the CBSA is treading water.

Adjournment Proceedings

Thanks to sharp questioning from my colleague, the member for Oshawa, we learned from Mr. Weber that the agency trains just 600 officers per year, exactly the same as the attrition rate, when one does the math. In Mr. Weber's words, "I don't know how we're going to get our numbers up".

• (1835)

What about hiring 1,000 RCMP officers? The border communities in my riding do not have enough RCMP officers, due to a lack of people applying at Depot. How is the government planning on bringing 1,000 more, when we cannot even address the needs we currently have?

If the government truly wants to support border enforcement, here is one easy step: Please renew the lease of the Penticton Shooting Sports Association, which is in my riding. This facility has 400 members and has provided firearms training for law enforcement for 40 years. It is often the only option in southern British Columbia. The RCMP wrote a public letter supporting the club, and the Liberal member for Kelowna recently called in a public letter for its lease to be renewed.

The lease expires in a matter of months. We are asking the Liberal government to find a way for this 40-year-old club to survive. This can be a bipartisan, common-sense decision. Do not shut down critical RCMP, CBSA and prison guard training infrastructure. Support this very important community club.

Now I want to draw attention to a key section of the legislation, section 2, which would amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to give the Minister of Health a faster process to restrict precursor chemicals like deadly fentanyl. That is so overdue, but granting the power is not enough. Will the minister use it? Will she act quickly enough? People are dying on a daily basis in our communities.

Just this month, at the health committee, I asked why the health minister will not revoke the Health Canada exemption that enabled a pilot program of hard-drug decriminalization in B.C. Premier Eby has now called the policy a mistake, and a Liberal MP recently admitted that "it was a terrible policy decision." The exemption clearly states that the minister can end the program at any time. When asked why she has not, she deflected, suggesting that B.C. must request it. Let me be clear: British Columbians want it ended immediately.

A member from across the aisle just told a story about an envelope full of fentanyl that was distributed throughout her community, and said to think of all of the people who were hurt by it because Canada Post could not open the envelope. I want to know how many MPs in this room would like to join the pilot program and have fentanyl decriminalized in their hometown. The experiment has gone horribly wrong. It has increased drug availability and public disorder while failing to connect addicts with real treatment. Why do members think no other provinces have joined the program?

The minister should act today and end the program immediately.

In closing, Bill C-12 is a major improvement over its original form, but only because Conservatives held the government to ac-

count. There is more work to do, and we will continue to push for common-sense changes, such as strengthening our borders, protecting civil liberties, targeting real criminal threats and giving our border communities the tools they need to stay safe.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1840)

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in Adjournment Proceedings this evening.

I am pursuing a question that I initially asked on September 26, not that long ago. I raised in the House in question period a really extraordinary experience I had earlier in the week while meeting with very brave Guatemalan indigenous women who had come to Canada to ask for our help in dealing with a Canadian mining company.

It is not an unfamiliar story. We know that Canadian mining companies have, unfortunately, a record. It is not all of them; it is not a broad brush, but certainly Canadian mining companies have been associated in the global south with human rights abuses and abuse of the environment. In response to this, over the years, many people, particularly the former member of Parliament for Guildwood, the Hon. John McKay, have worked really hard to try to get legislation through to hold mining companies to account.

In any case, when I met with the women from the Xinka community of Guatemala, I raised their issues here in the House and asked if there was at that point any action on something that was created some time ago in response to the pressure coming from many sides, including from civil society and, as I said, from people within the House of Commons, with legislation that almost passed at different times. Something was created with some fanfare: the Canadian ombudsperson for responsible enterprise. The current position of the ombudsperson is vacant, and I asked at the time, in question period, whether there would be a person appointed to this position.

Adjournment Proceedings

There has been a lot of criticism, ever since it was created after all this effort, that the ombudsperson really has no useful tools to investigate complaints. The idea was that if Canadian activity of different kinds by Canadian corporations was occurring in places around the world where we were complicit in human rights violations and environmental damage, there would be a way for Canada to intervene to improve the situation and put pressure on Canadian corporations to do the right thing. In any case, we never gave the Office of the Canadian ombudsperson for responsible enterprise any tools to do the job. Now there is no one in that position to do the job.

We now have something called the national contact point, which is somewhat lacking and is not very descriptive. However, we now know that there is a Canadian national contact point for people to make complaints about the failure of Canadian enterprises to follow responsible, sustainable business practices or respect international norms to protect human rights.

The Xinka people who came to Canada complained that the Canadian silver mine Escobal, in Guatemala, was violating their rights. Where do they go with these complaints? The World Bank created an inspection panel many decades ago to hold to account those who took funds, investments and loans from the World Bank so that there was a way to track whether these dollars were being used responsibly and whether human rights were being respected.

I want to ask the hon. member questions that I initially put to the Minister of International Trade. Where are we on these multiple challenges? When will the government appoint a new Canadian ombudsperson for responsible enterprise, and will the office be funded?

• (1845)

Caroline Desrochers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for her dedication and engagement on this important issue.

The Government of Canada remains firmly committed to promoting responsible business conduct by Canadian companies operating abroad. Strong RBC practices not only drive business success, but also foster a better world for everyone, and Canada has been a strong global leader in that space for decades now.

Since the launch of the CORE in 2019, Canada has significantly strengthened its responsible business conduct policy framework. We introduced a ban on the importation of goods produced with forced labour under the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement. We also passed the Fighting Against Forced Labour and Child Labour in Supply Chains Act, transparency legislation that requires Canadian businesses to report annually on their efforts to prevent forced labour and child labour in their supply chains.

Through the responsible business conduct abroad strategy, Canada provides clear guidance to companies operating internationally. A key pillar of this strategy is the support offered by Canada's trade commissioner service, a network of over 1,500 dedicated trade commissioners working from offices across Canada and at diplomatic missions around the world. Those are my former col-

leagues. I worked very closely with them, and I know how dedicated they are to this issue.

This strategy balances prevention, regulation and dispute resolution. It includes advisory services for Canadian companies; legislation targeting corruption, transparency and forced labour; and access to effective dispute resolution, not only through the CORE, but also through Canada's national contact point for responsible business conduct.

Established as part of Canada's membership to the OECD, our national contact point is a top-tier dispute resolution mechanism that promotes the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises and helps mediate concerns related to Canadian companies abroad. Canada actively participates in the global network of 51 national contact points, sharing best practices and strengthening our collective approach to responsible business conduct.

We play a leadership role in this multilateral space, with the OECD serving as a vital platform for member countries to explore and implement new responsible business conduct initiatives in response to an evolving global landscape. All of these measures are designed to enhance transparency and responsible business practices that prioritize the rights and well-being of workers and communities impacted by Canadian companies abroad, while helping companies manage risks effectively.

In light of these developments and the shifting global context, the government is considering how all parts of Canada's RBC framework, including the CORE and the national contact point, work together. We are also closely monitoring international trends to ensure Canada's approach remains effective, relevant and aligned with our global commitments and peers. Looking ahead, Canada is committed to advancing our RBC policies, deepening their application across diverse industries, harnessing innovation and driving meaningful change through global partnerships.

• (1850)

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I am hoping no one in the government benches is surprised that I am very disappointed by this.

Adjournment Proceedings

To point to modern legislation and to say we are against slavery, forced labour and child labour is hardly to say that Canada is in the lead. Yes, the same member of Parliament I mentioned before, John McKay, was very involved in bringing forward the legislation against forced labour. So was a member from the other place, because there were a lot of very active senators on this point.

I have 30 seconds left to say this: Please answer my question. Will this government commit to continuing the Canadian ombudsperson for responsible enterprise? Will that position be filled, and will that office be given the tools required to investigate complaints, such as those of the Xince people? Will they have their rights to ensure that testimony is actually required and that we can investigate properly and call our institutions to account?

Caroline Desrochers: Mr. Speaker, as mentioned earlier, Canada is firmly committed to being a global leader in responsible business conduct through a mix of robust policies, initiatives and legislation. I want to take a moment to highlight the role of Canada's national contact point for responsible business conduct. As an OECD member, Canada is required to maintain a national contact point, and ours stands as a world-class, non-judicial dispute resolution mechanism.

Aligned with those of 51 other countries, the national contact point promotes compliance with the "OECD Guidelines for Multi-national Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct". It was established in 2000, and the NCP has facilitated constructive dialogue between companies and complainants and has helped resolve issues in a meaningful and impartial way. Notably, it handles complaints across all sectors.

We strongly encourage Canadian companies operating abroad to take full advantage of the government resources available to them through the trade commissioner service and to embed responsible business conduct—

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Elgin—St. Thomas—London South.

JUSTICE

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to rise on behalf of the people of Elgin—St. Thomas—London South to ask the government once again to address a critical issue facing communities not just in my riding but across the country, which is the rampant lawlessness that exists on streets across this wonderful nation. Specifically, we are talking about drugs and people who are responsible for unleashing vast quantities of lethal, toxic drugs, yet still find themselves able to partake in the revolving-door bail system the Liberal government has allowed to blossom over the last 10 years.

Just to set the scene, I want to give a couple of very staggering statistics.

We know that fentanyl accounts for nearly two-thirds of opioid fatalities in Canada. We know that since 2015, there have been tens of thousands of opioid deaths, with a 255% increase since the Liberals took office. We know the Liberal government has rejected Conservative proposals to treat fentanyl kingpins as the mass murderers they are.

When I first rose to ask this question of the justice minister, the public health officials in my riding had released an advisory saying that carfentanyl, a substance multiple times more fatal than fentanyl, was being found by authorities with greater frequency in the community of St. Thomas and the surrounding areas. People are dying, and the people responsible are walking free.

We cannot look at this issue in isolation from the other crime and justice issues that have been allowed to fester under the Liberal government. I have no doubt that the Minister of Justice has sent a representative to address these questions with a prepared statement. No doubt the government will talk about the forthcoming bail legislation it has been promising for months.

However, the more we learn about it, the more we learn that it does not deal with the root of the problem. It does not undo the principle of restraint that the Liberal government embedded in the Criminal Code in Bill C-75, which is a provision that law enforcement officials have told us has directly caused the early releases of repeat, often violent offenders and, yes, drug traffickers on bail. They have told us this, by the way, every week as we investigate this at the justice committee. This Criminal Code provision says that they must be released at the earliest opportunity and under the least onerous conditions.

There is no meaningful bail reform if the Liberal government does not commit to repealing the principle of restraint. That is the commitment that Canadians, who are looking at rampant criminality on their streets, deserve to hear from the Liberal government.

The reason this is so important is that crime has victims. Even non-violent crime, property crime, is a menace to communities. Businesses are dealing with the consequences of people addicted to drugs; those people absolutely deserve treatment and support, but this cannot come at the expense of looking at public safety as the first priority.

Therefore, my question for the government is this: Will it, once and for all, put public safety first and repeal the principle of restraint to fix Liberal bail?

● (1855)

Patricia Lattanzio (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address the concerns about public safety in our justice system.

Canadians expect the government to act decisively to keep communities safe, and that is exactly what the Liberal government is doing. After a productive summer and after working closely with provinces, territories and frontline law enforcement, the Prime Minister announced last week that our government will be introducing new bail and sentencing reform legislation this week.

The bill would aim to end conditional sentences for sexual assault offenders and introduce a tough reverse-onus bail provision for major violent crimes. This means that repeat violent offenders would now have to prove in court why they are not a risk to public safety and are worthy of obtaining a release, rather than have the Crown prove the contrary. The bill would also provide consecutive sentences for multiple offences committed by repeat offenders.

Canadians can count on us. We are delivering on our commitments by taking strong actions to keep violent and repeat offenders off our streets. Our government is assuming a responsible leadership, one where it listens to law enforcement, victims, survivors and provinces before drafting laws.

While our government is working in collaboration with police, prosecutors, survivors and families of victims to develop serious bail reforms, what is the Conservative leader doing? He attacks our brave men and women who put their lives at risk to protect them and all Canadians. Last week, the Conservative leader called the RCMP “despicable” and accused it of covering up supposed crimes committed by a former prime minister. That is dangerous and puts in question our rule of law. Even a top aide to Stephen Harper called the attacks made by the Conservative leader reckless and “Trumpian”.

It is time for the Conservatives to take bail reform seriously and rise above the politics of division. Instead of smearing institutions that keep Canadians safe, the Conservatives should join us in strengthening them. Conservatives like to talk tough on crime, but their record tells a different story. Let me remind the House that when they were in power, they introduced more than half a dozen crime bills, and every single one of them has been struck down by the Supreme Court of Canada. The most recent, the Hills decision in 2023 made it clear that their approach was not only unconstitutional but ineffective. In April, Canadians clearly rejected the failed Conservative divisive agenda at the ballot box, and they continue to do so today.

Our reforms are tough but fair, rooted in evidence and developed in collaboration with the provinces and territories, which are responsible for the administration of justice. We are not chasing headlines; we are building a safer, stronger Canada grounded in the rule of law. The new government is laser-focused on keeping Canadians, from coast to coast to coast, safe.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, it is rich for a representative of the party that claims it wants to rein in and regulate misinformation to peddle so much of it in such a short period of time. I have only a minute, so I will say that the law enforcement officials whom the parliamentary secretary claims to be respecting are the ones who have been sounding the alarm about what the last 10 years of Liberal policy have done to handcuff them and prevent them from doing their jobs as effectively as they want.

Adjournment Proceedings

The greatest respect in the House for law enforcement comes from Conservatives, who have been calling members of law enforcement across the country to the justice committee. They have all been saying the same thing, which is that the Liberal government has failed them and, by extension, has failed Canadians.

That is enough of the bloviating from the government about how it is going to be the saviour of the problem it created. Will it repeal the principle of restraint, yes or no?

● (1900)

Patricia Lattanzio: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite may have missed what frontline law enforcement had to say about the Prime Minister's announcement last week on our upcoming bail and sentencing reform legislation, which will be introduced by the Minister of Justice this week. Allow me to share with him the news.

The Toronto Police Association called our plan “a step in the right direction”. The Canadian Police Association, the association for police across the country, said that this “should be a moment for collaboration, not division”, urging all parties to pass the legislation quickly to strengthen public safety and rebuild confidence in our justice system.

What does the hon. member opposite know that police officers do not know?

HOUSING

Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to address some of the questions I had about a month ago regarding housing starts.

I watched a very interesting interview with the housing minister on one of our local political panels, which I think was this past weekend. He was asked a question about why he would not take the GST off all homebuilding. He stuttered and stammered and said the Liberals did not want to make big changes and that was a really big change. He said they were going to nibble around the edges. However, this party ran a campaign on building faster than the speed of light, building faster than anyone has ever seen houses being built.

Adjournment Proceedings

I went back to Statistics Canada, and I saw that in July, housing starts rose by 3%, and in August they dropped by 16%. The member across is shaking her head, but I can read it. It said that housing starts dropped sharply in August, with housing starts in Canada declining 16% in August 2025. I know the Liberals are not big on numbers and factual information, but that is what Statistics Canada said. It also said housing starts went up by 14% in September. If they go up 3%, down 16% and up 14%, that is not as fast as anyone has ever seen housing being built.

The Prime Minister talks about big, major projects and getting stuff built, but his minister is very concerned about moving too quickly on certain policies. I know imitation is the finest form of flattery, but the Liberals stole some of our campaign ideas, like taking the GST off houses costing \$1.3 million and below. That is a good policy. As our leader has said, we are happy if they steal our good ideas. We want to make Canada a better place for Canadians to live. The Liberals can take all the good ideas they want from our platform.

How does the parliamentary secretary to the housing minister reconcile her minister's inability to move quickly with the Prime Minister's desire to get things built faster than they have ever been built? Those two things do not go together.

Another thing I would ask is, how does the parliamentary secretary have faith in her housing minister, who, as the former mayor of Vancouver, left Vancouver, one of the highest-priced housing markets in North America, possibly in the world, in a dumpster fire? Why would he do any better for Canadians?

Caroline Desrochers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me start by saying that the facts are clear: Housing starts are up, not down. Housing starts are up 10% year over year. In Montreal, it is 32%; in Vancouver, it is 46%.

With that said, I will reiterate that the Government of Canada is committed to solving the housing crisis. We have put forward the most ambitious housing plan in our country's history, and we are creating positive change in Canada's housing system. I would like to remind my colleague that the last time the Conservatives were in power, they lost 800,000 affordable homes and built six.

We are building on our successes, making historic investments in new housing and working to lower housing costs for Canadians. As the member opposite should know, we just launched Build Canada Homes, a new agency to speed up the construction of housing at a pace not seen in generations, with a focus on affordable homes across the full continuum of affordability. To restore affordability and meet the demands of a growing Canada, we need a drastic increase in housing supply of all types. Through Build Canada Homes, we are building new homes to drive up supply and bring housing costs down.

We are also taking action to help first-time homebuyers, with such measures as the tax-free first home savings account and the homebuyers' plan to help Canadians save for their first home. In addition, we are eliminating the GST for first-time homebuyers on new homes at or under \$1 million and reducing the GST on new homes up to \$1.5 million. We expect the Conservatives to get on

board with this and help provide nearly \$4 billion in tax cuts to first-time buyers.

Together with our partners in the private and non-profit sectors, indigenous communities and municipal, territorial and provincial levels of government, we are removing the barriers to new home construction and increasing the supply of affordable housing. Through targeted investments and financial measures, we are helping to restore affordability for Canadians.

We need to build more homes, and we need to build them faster. One of the programs we have used to do this is the housing accelerator fund, which is removing barriers to housing development. We have signed agreements with more than 200 communities across the country to cut red tape and streamline the development process. We are also making significant investments in affordable housing through such programs as the affordable housing fund. As of June 30, over 50,000 new units have been committed through the affordable housing fund, and more than 30,000 of those units are under 80% of the median market rent, with rents expected to average \$717 a month. Another 175,000 units have been repaired or renewed through this fund, with 135,000 of those units falling under 80% of median market rent.

We are taking bold, decisive action to build homes across this country and to ensure that every Canadian has a place to call home. I hope the opposition will join us.

• (1905)

Warren Steinley: Mr. Speaker, forgive me if I do not trust a government that bought a pipeline, spent an extra \$38 billion to build a pipeline and had time extended on how long it took to build that pipeline. The Liberals have never seen a problem they did not think government could fix. I do not believe building a bigger government bureaucracy is going to build more homes for Canadians.

I do see, though, 30 mills closing and a shortage of lumber as a problem for building homes. I see 106,000 people out of work, many of them in the construction industry, as an issue for building homes. The softwood lumber industry is in crisis because the Liberals cannot get a deal done, and mills are shutting down. Therefore, we do not have the people to build the homes, and we do not have the material to build the homes. I have never seen a bureaucrat pound a nail. I do not think more bureaucrats are going to get homes built for Canadians.

Adjournment Proceedings

Caroline Desrochers: Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to solving the housing crisis. We are focused on delivering meaningful results for Canadians, not slogans, by creating transformative change in Canada's housing system. To lower costs for Canadians, we need a drastic increase in housing supply of all types, including affordable housing. To reach that goal, we are moving forward with Build Canada Homes, starting with 4,000 homes on day one and tens of thousands more to come.

We hope the Conservative Party will stop playing games and help us do the work Canadians sent us here to do. I encourage them to join us in supporting Build Canada Homes, so we can get more

homes built faster, and to support Bill C-4 so that we can deliver \$4 billion in tax cuts for young first-time buyers trying to get into the housing market.

[*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 7:08 p.m.)

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