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# House of Commons Debates

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Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 21, 2025

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

### AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA

**The Speaker:** It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsection 7(3) of the Auditor General Act, the fall 2025 reports of the Auditor General of Canada.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(g), these documents are deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

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[*English*]

### AN ACT TO IMPLEMENT THE PROTOCOL ON THE ACCESSION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND TO THE COMPREHENSIVE AND PROGRESSIVE AGREEMENT FOR TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

**Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-13, An Act to implement the Protocol on the Accession of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

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

\* \* \*

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

**Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, widely known as the mighty OGGO, entitled “Purchase and Sale of the Official Residence for the Consul General of Canada in New York City”.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

[*Translation*]

### EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

**Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-249, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (combined weeks of benefits rule and certain benefits).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to introduce this important bill. Employment insurance has been in need of a major reform for years. The Liberals promised to reform the system but then did nothing. This bill seeks to correct two completely unacceptable situations that are easy to fix.

When someone comes back from maternity leave and loses their job, they are not eligible for employment insurance benefits because their qualifying period is too short. This bill will remedy this ridiculous situation that mainly affects women.

This bill will also correct another situation. People who are eligible for EI sickness benefits are entitled to up to 26 weeks, while family caregivers, who are often women, are entitled to only 15 weeks. It is completely ridiculous that the person helping the sick person does not have access to the same number of weeks of benefits as the sick person.

My bill would quickly remedy these two situations, which mainly affect women. I hope it will receive the unanimous support of the House.

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

\* \* \*

• (1005)

[*English*]

### FLIGHT ATTENDANTS' REMUNERATIONS ACT

**Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-250, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (flight attendants).

He said: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to introduce the flight attendants' remunerations act.

I thank the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for seconding this bill and for his tireless advocacy for workers' rights.

*Routine Proceedings*

The legislation addresses a long-standing injustice in Canada's airline industry: the widespread practice of having flight attendants do unpaid work. Canadian flight attendants are currently expected to perform a range of essential duties without compensation when the aircraft is not in motion. This is unacceptable and must end. No one in Canada should be expected to work without pay.

The bill would require airlines to compensate flight attendants for all hours worked, including pre-flight, postflight and training time. It is about ensuring fairness and recognizing the critical role flight attendants play in keeping our vital air transport system moving and passengers safe.

I urge all members to support the bill and end unpaid work in the airline industry once and for all.

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

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CUSTOMS ACT**

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, BQ)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-251, An Act to amend the Customs Act and the Customs Tariff (forced labour and child labour).

He said: Mr. Speaker, only one shipment from all regions of origin combined has been seized and detained at Canadian customs due to the use of forced labour in the manufacturing of the products it contained.

In contrast, the United States has seized millions of U.S. dollars' worth of goods arriving from a single region of origin. One thing cannot be denied: The Canadian model is a failure. The Liberal government must be aware of this, since it committed to tabling a similar bill before the end of the year in the 2023 and 2024 budgets, and yet it did not do so.

I am therefore pleased to table this bill today, which will emulate the U.S. model in that the importer will bear the burden of proving that goods originating from certain entities were not produced using forced labour. That is what is in effect in the United States, and this system is working very well. We do not want our goods to be tainted with blood.

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

\* \* \*

[English]

**PETITIONS****PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to present a petition on behalf of the constituents of Riding Mountain.

The people of Swan River are experiencing an alarming increase in violent crime that has threatened the safety and well-being of families across our region. A recent report by the Manitoba West District RCMP found that over an 18-month period, just two offenders in Swan River were responsible for over 150 responses and offences.

Petitioners continue to suffer the consequences of soft-on-crime Liberal policies, such as Bill C-5, which repealed mandatory jail time for serious crimes, and Bill C-75, which forces judges to release repeat violent offenders right back onto the street.

Petitioners in the Swan River Valley want to see an end to the Liberals' reckless catch-and-release policies so that criminals stay behind bars. This is why the people of Swan River are demanding jail, not bail for repeat violent offenders.

I support the good people of Swan River.

● (1010)

**BRAIN INJURY**

**Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present e-petition 6620, which was signed by over 1,000 Canadians, who are calling for urgent federal leadership of brain injury awareness, prevention and treatment.

The petitioners note that brain injuries can occur in many ways, from accidents to illnesses and strokes, and they often result in serious physical, cognitive, emotional and behavioural effects. They further point out that brain injuries are frequently linked with other challenges, including substance use and homelessness, creating additional barriers for those affected. It is estimated that 1.6 million Canadians are living with a brain injury today, yet there is no coordinated national response.

The petitioners therefore call upon the Government of Canada to develop a national strategy on brain injuries to improve awareness and prevention, as well as to ensure better access to treatment, rehabilitation and recovery supports for Canadians living with the impacts of brain injury.

**CEPHALOPOD FARMING**

**Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, petitioners have asked me to speak on their behalf as constituents of Saanich—Gulf Islands concerned about a new and emerging industry, believe it or not, of cephalopod farming. That is, in fact, octopus and squid farming. The animals are bred in captivity, slaughtered for human consumption.

Canada currently has no legislation to regulate or govern this emerging potential industry, and certainly, in the wild, cephalopods are solitary, wild animals that are ill-suited to be raised in captivity and recognized as sentient beings. Therefore, the petitioners ask that the Government of Canada act in response to this threat, ban the importation of farmed cephalopod products and prohibit the breeding and raising of cephalopods in captivity in Canada.

## Government Orders

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

## AIRPORT WORKERS

**Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions that I would like to table in the House today.

The first pertains to people who are concerned about the working and living conditions of airport workers, who earn very low wages in very precarious conditions despite their years of service.

The Vancouver Airport Authority has declared that it offers a living wage and encourages all service providers to provide a living wage to their employees. The Greater Toronto Airport Authority has issued a document that states in its employment standards section that all airport employers are encouraged to provide wages that allow workers the ability to afford shelter, food and basic necessities.

Hundreds of people are writing to the Government of Canada calling for an increase in the living wage for airport workers.

## MONKEY IMPORTS FROM CAMBODIA

**Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by thousands of people who are concerned about the importation of macaques from Cambodia.

In 2022, the International Union for Conservation of Nature raised the classification of long-tailed macaques from “vulnerable” to “endangered”, pointing to their exploitation by the experimentation industry as a factor in the species' plummeting numbers and heightened risk of extinction.

In 2023, the U.S. stopped importing monkeys from Cambodia because authorities amassed evidence that permits were falsified. Meanwhile, imports of long-tailed macaques from Cambodia to Canada increased by 350% in just one year.

These thousands of people are calling on Environment Canada and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to order an immediate suspension of all endangered monkey imports from Cambodia.

\* \* \*

[English]

## 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, please.

• (1015)

**The Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[English]

## STRENGTHENING CANADA'S IMMIGRATION SYSTEM AND BORDERS ACT

The House resumed from October 20 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.

**Aslam Rana (Hamilton Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are gathered today on the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin and Anishinabe people.

I am pleased to rise in the chamber to speak about the ways we can and must improve Canada's asylum system through the legislative amendments proposed in Bill C-12.

Canada's immigration system has long been a source of pride and a key driver of economic growth. As global migration patterns evolve due to conflicts and crises, the government is committed to restoring balance and trust by building a more flexible and responsive system that safely manages the flow of people entering the country. The bill is an important and timely opportunity to address the mounting challenges Canada faces at our borders. I will go through some of these challenges and how the legislative changes in the bill would guide us toward a more secure and productive future.

The first challenge facing many countries is the sharp rise in the number of people seeking asylum. Millions of people continue to flee conflict, persecution and instability, driving one of the most significant global migration shifts in modern history. Migration patterns are also evolving as people move across borders and oceans in search of safety and opportunity. Canada continues to be a destination of choice for those looking to build a better future.

In 2022, Canada processed over 91,000 asylum claims. That number rose to over 143,000 in 2023 and to over 171,000 in 2024, nearly doubling in just two years. Our system has been strained by this increase. It has caused lengthy processing time and backlogs, as well as prolonged uncertainty for claimants.

The bill puts forward amendments to improve the efficiency of asylum claim processing so that claimants would receive the fast, fair and final decisions they deserve. The proposed changes touch multiple parts of the process, from initial entry to timelines for decisions and follow-up actions. The focus is on the streamlining of operations while maintaining fairness and security.

### *Government Orders*

To start with, the bill proposes using a single online application for all claims. Right now, applications can be different depending on where the claim is made, whether that is at an airport, a land border office or an immigration office in Canada. A single online application would allow information to be shared more easily across Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada; the Canada Border Services Agency; and the decision-making body, the Immigration and Refugee Board. The change would make the process more efficient for everyone.

Next, we propose to enhance due diligence and reduce backlogs by making sure a claim is hearing-ready before it is referred to the Immigration and Refugee Board to schedule a hearing. Ensuring that only hearing-ready files are referred to the board would allow cases to be scheduled more confidently, reducing the need to postpone or follow up on incomplete files. The change would also strengthen program integrity by minimizing the back and forth between organizations.

We also propose to improve the system by making it easier for the Immigration and Refugee Board to remove incomplete or unresponsive claims from caseload inventories. According to the bill, the board's refugee protection division would have the authority to determine that an application has been abandoned when a claimant fails to comply with certain requirements. It already has the authority to deem an asylum claim abandoned after it has been referred to it. It would now also be able to deem the claim abandoned if the requirements are not met before referral, such as in the case of submitting an incomplete application or failing to respond to requests.

- (1020)

Claimants would still have the opportunity to explain why their claim should not be abandoned. The right would be enshrined in the legislation. Similarly, we propose to give the minister the authority to determine that a claim is withdrawn, following the request by a claimant or their representative. Today, it needs to be referred to the Immigration and Refugee Board for a separate withdrawal process.

To assist with faster decision-making, we propose to officially transfer scheduling authority to the Immigration and Refugee Board. We would also mandate that in-Canada asylum claims can be adjudicated by the board only while the claimant is physically present in Canada. Likewise, admissibility hearings could also be held only while a person is here in Canada. These changes would help protect against fraud, reduce the need for postponements and maximize the availability of resources.

The bill next addresses how to mitigate sudden increases in asylum claims and reduce pressure on the asylum system, while deterring those who may look to misuse the system. Canada's asylum system is already under significant strain, and we need to protect against potential future surges and alleviate the backlog. The new provisions would provide protection for those in need, while discouraging claims from people seeking to use the asylum system to get around immigration rules or to extend their temporary stay in Canada.

That starts with creating an ineligibility rule for the claims that are not made within a reasonable timeline. The legislative changes would make claims made more than a year after the claimant first arrives in Canada ineligible to be referred to the Immigration and

Refugee Board. This measure would apply to anyone who entered the country after June 24, 2020, including people in Canada on a work or study permit. It is meant to discourage misuse of the asylum system by those seeking a shortcut around regular immigration processes.

There are several practical reasons for the amendment. The one-year time limit was chosen because a significant majority of people make a claim within their first year of being in Canada. The use of a one-year period is also a clear and easily communicated timeline for asylum seekers to understand the period in which their claim may be found eligible. The amendment would capture the claims of anyone who entered Canada after June 24, 2020, and it would apply whether the person has current valid status or has renewed their status, whether their status has expired or whether they were issued a new permit because the one-year starting point for the eligibility will be their first entry into Canada.

While irregular border crossings have dropped significantly since the Safe Third Country Agreement was expanded in 2023, we still want to make a targeted legislative amendment. Under this change, foreign nationals who cross irregularly into Canada from the U.S. and make an asylum claim after 14 days would no longer have their claim referred to the Immigration and Refugee Board.

Crossing into Canada between official border crossings is illegal and dangerous. We always urge people to use safe, regular pathways to enter our country, and always at ports of entry. People whose claims are found ineligible under the new rules would be able to apply for a pre-removal risk assessment to ensure that they are not being returned to a country or a situation where they would face persecution or serious harm.

A third challenge Canada needs to be better equipped to face is another major world event like the COVID-19 pandemic. When that started, people put their travel plans on hold, but Canada's inventory of applications continued to grow. The current laws allow us to act in certain cases with individual documents, but not on a large scale in response to wide-ranging emergencies.

We do not have the ability to cancel, suspend or change large numbers of immigration documents, which limits our management and response to unpredictable scenarios when needed. The legislation would allow the government to act on a large scale for immigration documents, like temporary resident visas, eTAs and permits. The government could also pause acceptance of new applications and suspend or cancel applications in our inventory when it is in the public interest to do so. Giving Canada more control over its immigration documents would allow us to respond to exceptional events in ways that protect Canadians and our public resources.

• (1025)

A well-managed and efficient asylum system does more than uphold our international obligations; it ensures protection for the world's most vulnerable people while helping Canada maintain stability and compassion in an increasingly unpredictable world. The government is committed to strengthening Canadians' trust in the integrity of our immigration system. We do that by making sure our system remains fair and compassionate for those who are seeking our protection, while being effective, orderly and reliable for the country as a whole.

The measures in Bill C-12 would help reinforce program integrity, speed up processing and offer greater clarity and certainty to people fleeing conflict and persecution when they need it most. We would be strengthening the system to reflect these realities and to prepare for the challenges of tomorrow.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's thoughts and expressions on the whole asylum issue. I think it is worthy of note that, whether it is with respect to the asylum issues in 2012 or those today, there is a time when we need to look at ways we can improve upon the system, and that is exactly what the legislation would do. It recognizes the need for change because of things that have taken place. Whether with respect to the pandemic or the wave of international students, there are some serious issues. By passing the legislation, we would be reforming the system.

I wonder whether my colleague can provide his thoughts on just how important it is that we pass the legislation because of the types of changes we need in immigration today.

**Aslam Rana:** Mr. Speaker, we are committed to ensuring that our asylum system is efficient and flexible in the face of global crises.

Let me be clear: Canada's asylum system is not a shortcut. That is why we introduced the measures: to reduce pressure on our system and protect it from a sudden rise in claims.

**Jeremy Patzer (Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I could not help but notice that, although we are debating the border bill today, the government already tabled a bill earlier in the current Parliament and has already had to basically withdraw it and present a new bill because it messed up the first one so badly.

I know that my colleague is newer to Parliament. I wonder how he feels so far about his own government's messing up so badly

### *Government Orders*

that, here in Parliament, Bill C-12 is already a redo of one of the bills it had already tabled.

**Aslam Rana:** Mr. Speaker, we introduced Bill C-12, the strengthening Canada's immigration system and borders act, to strengthen our borders and keep Canadians safe. The legislation would act on our government's commitment to ensuring that border and law enforcement officers have the tools they need to protect our communities. This includes measures to combat transnational organized crime and to protect the integrity of our immigration system, stop the flow of illegal fentanyl and weapons, and crack down on money laundering.

[*Translation*]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have a quick question for my colleague opposite about asylum seekers. We agree that Bill C-12 is a step in the right direction. It will help improve the system.

However, let us look at the past 10 years. The Liberals came to power in 2015, and it is now 2025. They have been in power for 10 years. During that time, the number of asylum seekers and the number of people crossing the border illegally has skyrocketed.

Is my colleague proud of his government's record? In Quebec, resources are stretched thin. The Government of Quebec has repeatedly said that it is overwhelmed; it is no longer able to teach French to all these people and integrate them.

• (1030)

[*English*]

**Aslam Rana:** Mr. Speaker, there is no ban on asylum claims. There is no ban at all.

While some individuals will be ineligible to claim asylum in certain specific circumstances, there are still safeguards in place to make sure legitimate claims are properly reviewed. Individuals will still have access to the pre-removal risk assessment. This process prevents people from being sent back to a country where they would face risks, such as persecution, torture or other harms.

**Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my hon. colleague for Hamilton Centre could provide any insight. I have asked previous Liberals speaking to Bill C-12 whether Bill C-2 is going to be withdrawn.

On the Order Paper, we now have two bills that are nearly identical. Both are unacceptable. Are there plans to withdraw Bill C-2?

**Aslam Rana:** Mr. Speaker, we are not taking that bill out. We are strengthening and further moving toward Bill C-12. There are some changes being made to Bill C-2, and we are moving toward Bill C-12.

**Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome my colleague to the House of Commons. This is the first time I have had a chance to hear him in debate.

*Government Orders*

I heard his speech, and then I heard every one of his responses, which were actually from his speech. This is called Q and A, questions and answers, where we actually engage to show how well we know the bill and what we want to do with it. This bill is a replacement for a bill that is already being withdrawn by the government. It is coming back to us, effectively asking what the Conservatives want.

Would the member submit that perhaps his government is putting words on paper for him to read in the House that are not going anywhere, that are just a waste of time? Does the member know how much it costs Canadian taxpayers to waste time in the House and to waste time putting bills on paper?

**Aslam Rana:** Mr. Speaker, Canadians gave the government a mandate to get things done, to put them first.

That is why we are moving forward with strong legislative changes to support border and law enforcement officers, to enhance the integrity of our immigration system and to keep Canadians safe through Bill C-12. We are confident that this bill will deliver.

**Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is important for the new member to know that, in the House, he has privileges as a new member of Parliament. He can speak, and he can also ask the opposition why their members are repeating the same lines 120-some times during question period for 45 minutes.

Perhaps the member wants to tell us why he feels Bill C-12 is really important for the people who elected him on April 28, asking him to represent them.

**Aslam Rana:** Mr. Speaker, the five provisions that remain in Bill C-2 are still extremely important.

Law enforcement has been calling for years for the lawful access and information provisions that are essential to keeping Canadians safe. Canada is the only country among its Five Eyes partners that does not have lawful access legislation. We must address this gap.

[*Translation*]

**Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to come back to a previous question. It has been pointed out that Bill C-2 had already been introduced. This is one of the bills that people were asking me about because they had concerns.

Was it these concerns or other factors that motivated this change? How did we go from Bill C-2 to this new version, Bill C-12, and what was the main reason for this change?

[*English*]

**Aslam Rana:** Mr. Speaker, this bill will strengthen the integrity of our asylum system, and claimants will have access to the pre-removal risk assessment that will take into consideration their situation to ensure those who need refugee protection will have access to it.

• (1035)

[*Translation*]

**Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder how come the Liberals have been talking and acting like Conservatives since they came to power. Asylum

seekers and refugees are human beings who are entitled to dignity, respect, and a transparent and honest process.

Can my colleague assure us that Bill C-12 complies with the international conventions that protect the rights of refugees and that Canada has committed to upholding?

[*English*]

**Aslam Rana:** Mr. Speaker, yes, we are taking significant steps to preserve the integrity of our immigration system while upholding our humanitarian commitment. As global migration patterns evolve, Canadians expect a strong, efficient and responsive immigration system. That is why we introduced the changes to ensure our immigration system can respond to the challenges that we face today.

**Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the immigration system is an important aspect of building a strong country. I am an immigrant. I came here from the U.K. when I was four years old, almost five years old. I would like to ask the member, why is building a strong immigration system so essential in this country?

**Aslam Rana:** Mr. Speaker, we will keep working across all parties to ensure we are responding to the calls from police and law experts, but first we will work alongside all parties to build Bill C-12 to ensure we are delivering for Canadians and upholding our commitment to secure our borders, enhance the integrity of our immigration system and crack down on organized crime. A strong—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Essex.

**Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise on behalf of the amazing folks of the riding of Essex. I will be sharing my time this morning with the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

I do not get a lot of opportunities to speak in the House because we have so many more Conservative members, but every time I do get a chance to speak, I always want to give all praise, honour and glory to our Lord and Saviour.

I would like to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to the dedicated men and women of the Canada Border Services Agency. These officers are the front line of our national security. Their work is demanding, and their commitment is unwavering. For all they do, they deserve clear policies, proper resources and respect, not vague directives and unchecked government powers.

*Government Orders*

As the member of Parliament for Essex, I represent a riding that sits at the heart of one of Canada's most vital economic corridors, the Detroit-Windsor border. In Essex, we understand the importance of secure borders. We live it every day. We also understand the opportunities and the challenges that come with living next to the border. That is why I stand today to speak to Bill C-12.

This legislation claims that it would enhance border enforcement and streamline immigration processes, but as someone who represents a border community, I must ask this: Would this bill truly serve the interests of Canadians, especially those of us living at the border? In its current form, the answer is no.

Conservatives have long called for improvements to border security and our broken immigration system. Bill C-12 may be a starting point, but it requires significant amendments. It must include clearer definitions of ministerial powers and ensure that exporters are not burdened with added compliance costs.

We know that economic prosperity and responsible immigration go hand in hand. When one system fails, the other suffers. That is why we support efforts to modernize enforcement and crack down on organized crime, fentanyl trafficking and immigration fraud. These are real threats, and we are glad the government has recognized them, but we must be vigilant in how these reforms are implemented.

Let us be honest. The immigration system did not break itself. It was broken by years of Liberal mismanagement. The backlog of applications, the lack of transparency and the inconsistent enforcement all stem from a government that has failed to plan, failed to listen and failed to act. Now, with Bill C-12, the Liberals are scrambling to fix the very system they dismantled, but instead of thoughtful reform, they are reaching for sweeping powers and vague regulations. That is not leadership; it is damage control.

We must acknowledge that this bill has serious shortcomings that must be addressed before it is allowed to impact the lives of Canadians. Conservatives believe in strong borders. We believe not only in protecting Canadians from illegal activity, trafficking and threats to public safety, but also in accountability, transparency and respect for individual rights.

My office regularly hears from constituents about the real-world impacts of federal decisions, such as delays at the Ambassador Bridge, astronomical fees on exports and frustrations with immigration and enforcement. Bill C-12 would grant sweeping new powers to the government, which would only add to these frustrations, with limited parliamentary oversight. That should concern every Canadian, especially those of us in border communities.

It is deeply ironic that the Liberals show little concern about violent repeat offenders who remain in Canada after receiving lighter sentences than their crimes deserve, yet they seek the power to cancel or suspend valid visas of permanent residents who have followed due process and contribute meaningfully to our country. The bill also fails to outline how new regulations would be enforced. This raises a troubling question: Is this legislation simply a way for the government to claim it is fixing the immigration system it broke without taking real action?

Conservatives believe in responsible immigration that prioritizes economic needs and family reunification. We support measures that streamline processing, reduce backlogs and help newcomers integrate successfully, but we oppose policies that put power in the hands of ministers without proper oversight. Furthermore, Bill C-12 contains provisions that could unintentionally harm Canadian exporters. There are implications of increased processing times, additional expenses and vague inspection requirements that could disrupt trade and burden businesses.

● (1040)

The people of Essex, and all Canadians, cannot afford to suffer the consequences of Liberal missteps, and the bill would impose further financial responsibilities on exporters by requiring them to upgrade their facilities to comply with the new CBSA inspection regulations. That is an unfair and unnecessary burden, especially during a time of financial uncertainty when every dollar matters, both for businesses and for individual Canadians, and especially when considering the Statistics Canada Q3 report for this year, which found that, following tariff announcements, exports to the U.S. dropped 15.7% and imports fell 10.8%. This clearly shows that businesses are facing mounting costs, increased input prices and uncertainty due to shifting border policies.

We cannot add to the pressures faced by Canadian businesses with more unclear border directives. Consider our greenhouse growers, who rely on timely border crossings to deliver fresh produce to markets in Michigan and Ohio. Any delay, whether due to increased inspections, unclear regulations or bureaucratic bottlenecks can mean lost revenue, spoiled goods and broken contracts. Our auto parts manufacturers, which are part of a tightly integrated supply chain with Detroit's automotive industry, depend on predictable and efficient border operations. More frequent inspections could slow down export processing across all sectors, not just for the high-risk goods the bill aims to target.

*Government Orders*

The new requirements for inspection facilities and associated delays could also increase warehousing costs, with the greatest impact falling on small and medium-sized exporters, 35% of which reported to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business in May of this year that they already experience border delays, with the average time spent at border crossings being up to two hours. These are real consequences for real people. If Bill C-12 introduces new compliance burdens or slows down processing, it could further jeopardize jobs and investment in our region at a time when hard-working Canadians are already struggling to provide for their families.

Conservatives agree that Canada's borders must be safe and secure, but we must also protect the economic backbone of our country: our exporters, our manufacturers and logistics providers. This is something our government should already know. A report from the Standing Committee on International Trade during the 44th Parliament identified regulatory complexity and inefficiencies at the border as major barriers to Canadian exporters. The report even recommended that inspection protocols should be streamlined to avoid further harming trade. That is why the bill needs amendments to prevent unintended harm to Canadian businesses.

Bill C-12 also touches on information sharing and surveillance powers. It is important to introduce tools that help law enforcement do their jobs, but we must be cautious about infringing on privacy rights. Canadians deserve to know how their data is being used, who has it and what safeguards are in place. Transparency must be a cornerstone of any security policy.

Conservatives have a clear vision for border security and immigration. We support investing in border infrastructure to reduce wait times and improve efficiency. We advocate for strong partnerships with our U.S. counterparts, especially in regions like Windsor-Detroit, where co-operation is essential. We believe in empowering local law enforcement and border officers with the tools and training they need, not just more paperwork.

That is why I urge the House to scrutinize the bill carefully, consult with stakeholders in border ridings like Essex and make the necessary amendments. Let us hear from our farmers, our truckers, our customs officers and our local mayors to ensure this legislation reflects the realities on the ground, not just the theories in Ottawa.

• (1045)

**Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have listened, over the last couple of weeks, to Conservatives talk about the importance of protecting our borders and the work that law enforcement does every single day. We are putting forward a bill that would do exactly that.

I am curious to know how my hon. colleague opposite feels about the comments that his leader has made about the RCMP.

**Chris Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, it goes like this. I used to be the shadow minister for labour, and I met with many labour organizations for two years. I would suggest to the hon. member that the RCMP and the CBSA need a whole bunch of funding; they need a whole bunch of support and help. They are very upset and confused and need direction, and that has to come from the government.

**Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that was a very thorough and informed speech.

I have a question. We have a Liberal government that has been in power in this chamber and governing the country for the past 10 years. It is now 10 years later, and the government is pretending, in my opinion, to be serious about border security.

I wonder if the member feels that after the government's first attempt with Bill C-2, Bill C-12 shows that the government is finally taking this seriously and is looking at improving security for our country, especially with the illegal guns coming across the border.

**Chris Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, I am so darn proud of the Essex and Windsor region and the Chatham-Kent region, but one thing I am not proud about is that we have the busiest corridor, from Windsor through to Montreal, of human trafficking.

We need to do a whole lot more at our borders to protect our borders. That is not even talking about handguns, which, quite frankly, are the reason we have so much crime in Canada. It is not due to legal firearm owners; it is due to the illegal guns that are smuggled in.

At the end of the day, it is about the lack of direction from the Liberal government after 10 years.

[*Translation*]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure my colleague knows what I am going to say because this has come up a number of times in the House.

Currently in Quebec, roughly 200,000 asylum seekers are waiting for their case to be processed. That represents roughly 40% of the total number of asylum seekers in Canada, while Quebec makes up roughly 20% of the Canadian population. In other words, the number of asylum seekers in Quebec is twice our demographic weight.

We know that this bill deals with the treatment of asylum seekers. Does my colleague think that the provinces should also help and take on their share of asylum seekers, instead of letting Quebec carry that burden?

• (1050)

[*English*]

**Chris Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, this is where I am at. I see veterans sitting on the streets of Windsor who do not have a home, do not have any food, have no place to live, have no clothes, quite frankly, but have served this country. We have to finally put Canada first. Regardless of wherever the asylum seekers need to go, what I am really focused on are the folks of southwestern Ontario and, of course, all Canadians. We have to take care of our own house before we can take care of everyone else.

*Government Orders*

I will always stand with the veteran who is laying on the street and has served this country, yet has nothing.

**Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today to speak to Bill C-12.

I hope all colleagues in this chamber had an amazing Thanksgiving. I enjoyed the week in my riding, but I am back in Ottawa to continue the important work we do here on behalf of Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

We are debating this bill today because this is the Liberals' second attempt in the same Parliament. Their first attempt would have allowed for a massive, sweeping violation of every law-abiding Canadian's individual freedom and privacy. In fact, that bill, which has not been withdrawn, as we found out from a Liberal member this morning, and is still on the Order Paper, would allow Canada Post to open any mail, including letters, without a warrant. It would ban cash payments and donations over \$10,000. It would allow for warrantless access to personal information. It could compel electronic service providers to re-engineer their platforms to help CSIS and the police access information, and it would allow the government to supply financial institutions with Canadians' personal information, apparently in an attempt to resolve money laundering and terrorist financing. These are Canadians' hard-earned rights that the Liberal government seems to not want to respect.

The Liberals tried to pass a power grab to access Canadians' personal information from service providers like banks and telecom companies without needing a warrant, and worse, they did not consult the Privacy Commissioner. It was only due to Conservative pressure that the Liberals backed down, it appears, with the introduction of Bill C-12. The Conservatives will always stand up for Canadians' individual freedoms and privacy. They are fundamental tenets of a democratic nation.

This new bill continues with the same old Liberal soft-on-crime policies that are causing crime and chaos in our communities. Liberal bail is still very much alive and well for those who traffic guns across our border and terrorize our communities. There are still no mandatory prison times for fentanyl traffickers. Astonishingly, there are still no mandatory prison times for gangsters who use guns to commit crimes.

In the last month alone in one of the municipalities in my riding, Richmond Hill, we saw two brutal executions in broad daylight on quiet residential streets, one of them with a firearm. The Liberals have let thousands of guns flood across our border that are used to commit crimes in our communities.

I think members of the Liberal government need to rethink the way they are trying to fool Canadians. Everything is not a political issue. The decisions we make in this House affect real people. In making the announcement the Liberals made on December 5, 2024, as they do every year the day before the anniversary of the Polytechnique massacre, to say they were banning firearms, they tried to capitalize on that anniversary for political gain. That does not resolve the problem, I say to my fellow colleagues across the aisle. Illegal guns are coming across the border. It is not law-abiding Canadian citizens, hunters or sport shooters who perpetrate these crimes. It is not people with licensed firearms who commit these

crimes. People who commit these crimes purchase guns from the back of a car, the back of a Honda, at the mall or in some aisle somewhere, for \$600 or \$700.

The Liberals are not serious about resolving the issue, and in Richmond Hill, in the last 30 days, there were two murders in broad daylight, one with an illegal gun that came across the border, which the Liberal announcements every year in the early part of December have not been able to resolve and will continue not to resolve. Instead of taking real action and implementing real consequences for those smuggling guns at our borders, the Liberals want to waste millions of dollars buying back guns from highly vetted legal firearms owners. This would do nothing and has done nothing to reduce crime in our communities.

• (1055)

Criminals are laughing at the Canadian government. When they get arrested by our hard-working law enforcement officers, under this bill, they would still be let out on bail, sometimes hours later, as we are told by police forces across the country. They would then go out and brutalize our communities over and over again.

When criminals are convicted, Liberal hug-a-thug policies allow many of these criminals to serve their sentences from the comfort of their own home. Wow. What a big penalty. We need jail, not Liberal bail for violent offenders, and only Conservatives will bring safe streets back to our communities.

This bill also touches upon immigration and, more specifically, our asylum system. Let me be clear. Over the last 10 years, the Liberal government has systematically dismantled our immigration system and obliterated our asylum system. Back in the days of Prime Minister Harper, when I had the honour of serving as the parliamentary secretary to the minister of citizenship and immigration, our asylum system was well respected around the world and operated with swiftness, integrity and fairness. In 2014, there were fewer than 10,000 asylum claims pending. Today, there are hundreds of thousands, due to the Liberals' failed policies.

Why has the government, for years, put asylum seekers, including many who make false claims, in hotels at taxpayers' expense? Canadians right across our country would love to hear the answer to that question. Why has the Liberal government, for years, given asylum seekers a more generous health care plan than the one Canadians receive? Numerous constituents in my riding would love the level of coverage given to asylum seekers. How is this fair to Canadian taxpayers and the Canadian people? This is billions of dollars allocated away from other services and infrastructure.

*Government Orders*

It is unacceptable that the Liberals, by their inaction and rhetoric, facilitated the flow of asylum seekers coming to Canada through other G7 countries. I would argue, as many people would, that the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany are safe, peaceful and democratic countries with functioning asylum systems. When individuals enter Canada through a G7 country, it makes a mockery of our system and undermines our commitment to processing genuine refugees efficiently. These are people who need help.

Canada's once well-perceived, respected and functional immigration system has been ruined by 10 years of abysmal Liberal policy. Millions upon millions of immigrants arrived through all channels without the proper health care, housing or jobs to support them. The Liberals' bringing in millions of new immigrants with not enough jobs available means that youth unemployment is at a staggering high. The Liberals' bringing in millions of new immigrants without the necessary health care capacity means that costs go up and wait times get longer. The Liberals' bringing in millions of new immigrants without the proper housing drives up housing costs, making housing unaffordable.

Both Canadians and immigrants suffer due to these policies. We cannot blame immigrants for the Liberals' failures.

Functionally, our system has lost most, if not all, of its integrity. There is very little enforcement of departures and very little tracking of individuals in the system, and the asylum claim backlog is mountainous. Furthermore, the reports of individuals with serious criminal convictions being let into the country under the government's watch represent a threat to public safety and raise questions about the thoroughness of all background checks being completed.

In closing, the seventh immigration minister in 10 years has offered no solutions. This bill would continue to clog up our immigration system and push the problems down the road. Luckily, Conservatives will end this chaos, fix our once proud immigration system, add more CBSA officers, end and reform the temporary foreign worker program and build an immigration system that Canadians can be proud of once again.

● (1100)

**Sophie Chatel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague referred to law enforcement officers. I would remind him that just steps away from this very chamber stands a memorial honouring RCMP officers who gave their lives to protect Canadians. What does my colleague think of the shameful comments made by his leader about the very officers who gave their lives for this country?

**Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Speaker, of course the Liberals are going to try to deflect from the debate in the House. We are talking about Bill C-12, which is a changeup from Bill C-2. We are talking about people being murdered in the streets. My colleague may not have heard what I said, but let me tell her that there have been two murders in my community in the last 30 days.

It is shameful that the government wants to politicize issues it should be focusing on: keeping these criminals off the streets, keeping illegal guns off our streets and keeping criminals in jail where they belong. Enough of this Liberal cover-up and continuing to support the Liberals' bail instead of jail policies. Every single Cana-

dian across this country expects people who commit crimes in this country to spend time in prison.

**Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after Conservatives forced the Liberals to back down from Bill C-2 for overstepping Canadians' freedoms and privacy, they have now returned with Bill C-12. Would my colleague not agree that Parliament must carefully scrutinize this revised legislation to ensure that nothing has been added that could once again put the privacy rights of law-abiding Canadians at risk?

**Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Speaker, I agree 100%. Legislation needs to be debated in this House and amendments should be taken seriously. The Liberal government has a record of ignoring amendments and ignoring good ideas when they come from other elected members in this House who happen to not be from its party.

This is what the House is all about. This is the House of democracy. The voice of every Canadian is represented here by one of the members who have the opportunity to sit in these chairs. Absolutely, legislation needs to be discussed and debated here and made better for Canada and Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am going to ask the same question I asked another colleague from the same party earlier, since I did not receive an answer. The question was simple, actually.

Among other things, the bill deals with border restrictions in order to address situations where asylum seekers are abusing the system. We know that some people are applying for asylum when they perhaps should not be. This would reduce the volume and ensure that cases are processed more efficiently.

The problem is that Quebec receives approximately 200,000 asylum seekers, or nearly 40% of the Canadian total, while our population represents only 20% of the country's population.

I would like to know whether my colleague believes that other Canadian provinces should do their part and accept a fair share of the number of asylum seekers Canada receives, based on their population.

● (1105)

[*English*]

**Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Speaker, I was born and raised in Quebec. I am proud to say that I was born in the great city of Montreal.

*Government Orders*

My response to the hon. member's question is simply that the 200,000 asylum seekers, growing by tens of thousands under the Liberal government, have created this problem in Quebec. I agree with my colleague that it is not fair to Quebec. It is not fair to any province in Canada to have to deal with this monstrous problem that has been created by the incompetent Liberal government.

Now, 10 years later, the Liberals are trying to magically bring in legislation as if they have finally found a solution. Had they listened to us 10 years ago, we would not have the problem we are facing today in Quebec, Ontario or any province across this country.

**Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey Newton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Bill C-12, the strengthening Canada's immigration system and borders act. This legislation would protect Canadians, secure our borders and uphold the integrity of our immigration system. I am proud to support this legislation, which would help keep Canadians safe.

There is no greater priority for our government than keeping our communities safe and our economy thriving. Our economy cannot thrive if we do not take strong measures to combat crime and ensure that our border is safe and secure.

We live in a time of evolving global threats. Transnational criminal organizations, rising auto theft networks and the flow of illegal drugs continue to devastate families and our communities. We also face new migration pressures driven by conflict, climate change and economic instability. Bill C-12 would respond to these realities with a balanced approach. It would equip our law enforcement agencies with modern tools to protect Canadians, while safeguarding their rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Before I go further, I note that I will be sharing my time with the member for Pickering—Brooklin.

Bill C-12 is built around two pillars. These are securing our borders and combatting organized crime, illegal fentanyl and illicit financing.

Under the first pillar, amendments to the Customs Act would empower the CBSA to examine and detain goods leaving Canada. This new authority would help officers intercept stolen vehicles, firearms and narcotics before they leave our ports. Across Canada, and especially in urban regions, auto theft is fuelling transnational organized crime. Criminals are exploiting export loopholes and shipping stolen cars overseas. Bill C-12 would close those gaps and give the CBSA the tools to act firmly.

The bill would also amend the Oceans Act to grant the Canadian Coast Guard a security mandate. This would allow the Coast Guard to patrol our coastal waters, collect and share intelligence and work hand in hand with the RCMP and CBSA. For the first time, our maritime borders would be integrated into our broader national security strategy.

Bill C-12 would further enable the RCMP to share information on registered sex offenders with domestic and international partners, strengthening community safety and aligning Canada with its allies.

Within our immigration system, Bill C-12 would make important reforms to ensure fairness and integrity. It would streamline asylum claim processing, prevent misuse and strengthen information sharing with the provinces and territories. The new measures would help manage sudden surges in claims while ensuring that those genuinely in need of protection continue to receive it.

I want to be clear that there would be no ban on asylum claims. People found ineligible under specific circumstances would still have access to a pre-removal risk assessment to ensure that they are not returned to danger. This strikes the right balance between compassion and credibility.

• (1110)

The second pillar of Bill C-12 directly targets organized crime and the illegal drug trade. Amending the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act would allow the government to rapidly control new precursor chemicals used in the production of drugs such as fentanyl. This flexibility would allow law enforcement agencies to act faster and prevent dangerous substances from entering our communities. In my home province of British Columbia, the opioid crisis has taken a devastating toll. Stopping the supply of illegal fentanyl before it reaches our streets is a crucial step in saving lives.

Bill C-12 also strengthens Canada's defences against money laundering and terrorist financing through amendments to the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act. It increases penalties for financial crimes and adds the director of FINTRAC to the Financial Institutions Supervisory Committee to improve oversight and collaboration. By cutting off the flow of dirty money, we would make it harder for organized crime to thrive. These measures would make a tangible difference in people's lives.

Since the start of this year, the CBSA has seized more than 2.7 million grams of cocaine, 2,500 grams of fentanyl, 662 firearms and nearly \$30 million in currency. This results in lives being saved and communities being protected.

Bill C-12 is the product of listening to law enforcement, provincial partners and Canadians who want a government that is both compassionate and firm. We listened to the concerns of stakeholders and colleagues in the House on Bill C-2. That is why we have introduced Bill C-12, which is tailored specifically to border security and combatting transnational organized crime, illegal fentanyl and illicit financing to ensure the safety of Canadians.

*Government Orders*

Bill C-12 does not cover bail reform, but the Prime Minister announced this past Thursday that our government will soon be tabling legislation to introduce amendments to the Criminal Code regarding reverse-onus bail for major crimes. This bill shows Canadians that their government is serious about security, serious about fairness and serious about protecting the values that define us. It modernizes our systems, respects privacy protections and ensures that our law enforcement and security agencies have the authority they need without compromising the rights of individuals.

In Surrey Newton and communities throughout the country, these issues are deeply felt. Residents want to know that stolen vehicles are not disappearing across the border. Parents want their children to be safe from fentanyl. Newcomers want to see a system that is efficient, fair and worthy of their trust. Bill C-12 delivers on all those priorities. A secure Canada is a strong Canada. This legislation keeps Canadians safe, reinforces public confidence and ensures that Canada remains a place where opportunity and safety go hand in hand.

I urge all members of Parliament to support this bill. Together, let us strengthen our borders, protect our communities and build a safer, more secure future for all Canadians.

• (1115)

**Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member is probably aware that, at the moment, there are about 600 foreign nationals in Canada who are due to be deported but cannot be tracked down by the CBSA. Clearly, the Liberal government has failed in its ability to keep track of foreign nationals like this, people with criminal records who should be deported. It is unable to find them. It does not know how to locate them. It is a clear failure of the government.

How is this bill going to fix that? Does the member have any confidence when he is speaking to Canadian citizens and Canadian voters that this is going to work, given the failures the government has seen, which he has been a part of for the last 10 years?

**Sukh Dhaliwal:** Mr. Speaker, I have worked with the hon. member for Saskatoon West on the immigration committee in the past. We both understand that we need immigration.

At the same time, we have to curb these criminals and the people who are trying to come to our country illegally. That is why we are putting Bill C-12 together, giving our CBSA officers and RCMP officers more tools and resources to deal with the situation. That is why, last week, we announced 1,000 new RCMP officers and 1,000 new CBSA officers to deal with these situations.

**Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in my community of Scarborough—Woburn, border protection is an important aspect. I am quite happy that the government has looked for ways to enhance our border security.

Has the hon. member had conversations in his community about border security? What does the bill mean for the people he represents in his riding?

**Sukh Dhaliwal:** Mr. Speaker, whether it is in Scarborough or in Surrey, people are concerned about security. Surrey is a border city when it comes to the U.S. border. This is exactly what they were asking for to strengthen our borders and make sure that CBSA offi-

cers have the tools and resources to deal with this, whether it is illegal firearms or drugs that are flowing into our country. They would be able to search those warehouses where they are stored and loaded.

Giving them those powers would make it better for people in Scarborough, as well as in Surrey.

**Michael Coteau:** Mr. Speaker, I know there are going to be some enhancements to border security and additional RCMP officers. For the member's province, I am sure this would have a very positive impact. I know that, for Ontario, it would be quite good.

Could the hon. member talk about some of those enhancements, like the new police officers, and how he thinks they would impact border security in Canada?

**Sukh Dhaliwal:** Mr. Speaker, last week, I, along with the parliamentary secretary, were able to announce 1,000 new police officers. Out of that, 150 police officers would be assigned to financial crime. That is a major issue that we are seeing in Surrey and other communities: cases of extortion and theft. These 150 new police officers would be able to deal with those issues effectively and make our communities safe.

**Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like the hon. member to comment on why the Liberal government refuses to shut down consumption sites that are close to schools.

• (1120)

**Sukh Dhaliwal:** Mr. Speaker, these consumption sites are working in my community of Surrey. I can tell the member that, since they came in, they have made a big difference in the lives of people. We will continue to support those—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Pickering—Brooklin.

**Juanita Nathan (Pickering—Brooklin, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today the House is debating important legislation: Bill C-12, the strengthening Canada's immigration system and borders act. Bill C-12 would strengthen our country's security by proposing changes to support border security and immigration, to fight transnational organized crime and to disrupt illicit financing. We urgently need to update many of our laws if we want to be able to address the complex security challenges our country is currently facing.

With Bill C-12, CBSA officers would have the capacity to inspect exported goods in warehouses and transportation hubs. Owners and operators of certain ports of entry and exit would be required 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.

*Government Orders*

Canada's coasts also face new security risks. That is why this bill would allow the Canadian Coast Guard to conduct security patrols. It would also be able to collect, analyze and share information for security purposes. Canada strictly controls synthetic drugs and the precursor chemicals used to produce them. Unfortunately, the illicit drug market is constantly evolving in an attempt to evade these controls. Bill C-12 would ensure the Minister of Health can rapidly control the precursor chemicals used to produce illicit drugs, including fentanyl.

Border security and immigration are top priorities for the Liberal government. Notably, this bill would also help us enhance the integrity and fairness of our immigration system. Canada's asylum system exists to protect people who are fleeing persecution or risks to their life or safety in their home country. The strengthening Canada's immigration system and borders act would, among other things, improve how we receive, process and decide on asylum claims to make the system faster and easier to navigate.

The amendments contained in Bill C-12 would also help law enforcement respond more effectively to evolving border security challenges. Border security requires a coordinated effort across the entire government, as information from various federal institutions may be required to thoroughly assess the situation.

Federal departments and agencies need to work together to share information in order to understand and respond to demands and to keep people safe. For that reason, Bill C-12 would enhance the ability of the RCMP to share information on registered sex offenders with domestic and international partners.

It would improve how IRCC shares information so that federal, provincial and territorial partners can make timely, accurate decisions to ensure the integrity and better delivery of public services. IRCC already shares applicant information with its domestic partners in limited circumstances, but this bill would create clear and direct legal authorities to allow for proactive and systematic information sharing and to reduce administrative burdens.

Any new use or disclosure of personal information under these new authorities would follow existing privacy laws, policies and best practices. Additionally, the proposed measures would strengthen Canada's anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing regime, including through stronger anti-money laundering penalties. It is well known that money laundering supports crimes like human trafficking, fentanyl trafficking, fraud, theft and other economic crimes. This is why we need new tools to keep pace with increasingly sophisticated criminal threats and techniques.

The measures contained in the bill would strengthen businesses' compliance to anti-money laundering obligations, including through a 40-times increase in administrative penalties. This would ensure non-compliance is not treated as the cost of doing business.

• (1125)

The bill would enable FINTRAC to exchange supervisory information on federally regulated financial institutions with other members of the financial institutions supervisory committee, and it would add the director of FINTRAC to this committee.

Because international organized crime networks represent the biggest threat to our country's security, we have already taken several important measures. First, our government established the integrated money laundering intelligence partnership with Canada's largest banks, which is enhancing our capacity to develop and use financial intelligence to combat fentanyl trafficking and other organized crime.

Second, we have listed seven transnational organized crime groups as terrorist entities under the Criminal Code. Listing is an important tool that supports criminal investigations and strengthens the RCMP's ability to prevent and disrupt criminal activities. We continue to monitor this and will add more to the list as needed.

Finally, Canada appointed its first fentanyl czar, who serves as the main interlocutor between the Canadian and U.S. governments for enhancing our collaboration in combatting fentanyl. While less than 1% of illicit fentanyl seized in the U.S. is linked to Canada, we are working to ensure fewer drugs and their precursor chemicals cross our shared border. To increase our illegal fentanyl detection abilities, we are training and deploying new border detector dog teams that specialize in fentanyl detection.

We have also taken into account stakeholders' concerns and have introduced Bill C-12 to advance these legislative priorities as quickly as possible. Bill C-12 draws on elements of Bill C-2 that are designed to combat transnational organized crime and those who seek to exploit our immigration system. This streamlined bill would balance the need to protect our borders with concerns about Canadians' privacy.

Bill C-12 would complement ongoing efforts to secure our border from coast to coast to coast and keep Canadians safe. We must act with urgency on all these issues. Now is the time to update our laws to continue to address increasing and more complex security challenges. I wish to reassure this House that there is no greater priority for our government than to keep Canadians and our communities safe. That is why we are taking strong measures to combat crime and ensure our border remains safe and secure.

I hope that my hon. colleagues from all sides of the House will join me today in supporting Bill C-12.

*Government Orders*

**Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this country has been built by immigrants. Outside the indigenous community, we are all from immigrants at some point in time. Immigration is part of our past; it is part of who we are today, and it will be a big part of who we are in the future.

I know that constituents in Pickering—Brooklin share many different immigration stories. How important is it to get the immigration file right in this country, and what does that mean to the member?

• (1130)

**Juanita Nathan:** Mr. Speaker, as my colleague said, immigration is an integral part of our system. We have all been immigrants at some point in time, and Pickering—Brooklin is vastly made up of immigrants from all countries across the world. It is important that we get this right, and we have to spend time and debate the bill. I am hoping that all members of the House will understand how important it is for asylum claimants and immigrants to come to this country, and we are taking significant steps to preserve the integrity of our immigration system while upholding humanitarian commitments.

Without immigration, families cannot come together, and grandparents are not able to visit their grandchildren and be part of the milestones in their lives, so it is important for us to have an immigration system that—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Scarborough—Woburn.

**Michael Coteau:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talked a bit about some of the pieces that will have an impact on businesses and our border and will enhance our system overall, with more compliance issues.

Would the member care to expand on some of those pieces that will be important for building a stronger border and immigration system in Canada?

**Juanita Nathan:** Mr. Speaker, definitely. The 1,000 RCMP officers are an important piece in this big puzzle that we are trying to solve as we mitigate our border security. The dog teams are a very important part.

The reason I am saying this is that even if 1% of fentanyl is crossing Canadian borders, it is still a big deal for Canadians. Even though we are 10% of the U.S. population, that 1% represents a huge problem in our communities and for businesses.

As a former youth worker and a community worker, I know how this affects our communities in our everyday lives. We must do everything we can to protect our borders. We have to mend fences before we can start building.

**Jagsharan Singh Mahal (Edmonton Southeast, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, among other things, there are frailties in the proposed Liberal Bill C-12, and I want to ask a question of the member who is taking part in this debate about the bill.

There is no answer to the safe supply of fentanyl. It is still going to continue, which poses a threat of AMR, something being studied at a committee I am currently working on.

There is no minimum mandatory sentence for traffickers in regard to fentanyl. There is no minimum sentence for gangsters.

How would you respond to those questions on what is lacking in the Liberals' proposed Bill C-12?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Just as a reminder, we do not use "you". Members speak through the Speaker.

The hon. member for Pickering—Brooklin.

**Juanita Nathan:** Mr. Speaker, this is why we introduce a bill. It goes through first and second readings, and then it goes to committee, which debates it and adds or takes away whatever is needed so that all Canadians can be protected.

It is important to note why Bill C-12 is even here. All of this was actually part of Bill C-2. I want to ask my hon. colleague whether Conservatives will be supporting making the bill better and having it go through.

**David Bexte (Bow River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak to Bill C-12 today.

Conservatives have forced the Liberals to back down from Bill C-2. That bill would have given the government broad powers to access Canadians' personal information from banks, telecoms and other service providers without a warrant. The Privacy Commissioner confirmed that the Liberals did not consult him before proposing these sweeping powers.

Law-abiding Canadians should not lose their freedoms because of the Liberals' overreach. Now the Liberals have introduced Bill C-12. Conservatives will examine the legislation carefully. We need to ensure that it does not infringe on Canadians' privacy rights. We will hold the government accountable to protect individual freedoms and ensure transparency in how it exercises its power.

Bill C-12 is a broad omnibus bill. It includes changes to border security, crime prevention, privacy laws and immigration. For example, it amends the Customs Act to allow the CBSA to use facilities free of charge for enforcement. That is good for the budget.

Bill C-12 also amends the Oceans Act. It enables the Canadian Coast Guard to conduct security patrols and share information with law enforcement and intelligence partners. It increases penalties for money-laundering violations and expands FINTRAC's authority. That is laudable. However, it also allows for more information sharing between government departments, raising serious concerns about privacy protections. We will not allow the Liberals to quietly erode Canadians' rights in the name of administrative efficiency.

Some of the most troubling parts of Bill C-2 have been removed, such as part 4, which allowed Canada Post to open any mail, including letters, without a warrant, as well as part 11, which banned cash payments and donations over \$10,000. Those were egregious overreaches. It was due to pressure from the Conservatives that, thankfully, those parts were removed. However, my Conservative colleagues and I believe this still falls short on many issues facing everyday Canadians.

For example, crime is rising across Canada. Since 2015, violent crime has increased by 37% in my home province of Alberta. Nationally, homicides are up nearly 28%. Gang-related homicides have risen 78%. Firearms-related violent offences have more than doubled, rising 116%. Extortion is up a whopping 400% in Alberta, and sexual assaults have increased by 75%. These are alarming trends. The Liberals' soft-on-crime policies are making our communities less safe.

Bill C-75, passed in 2019, introduced a principle of restraint on the granting of bail and prioritized early release for offenders in lieu of public safety. This has led to catch-and-release practices for serious criminals, including those trafficking fentanyl and firearms. Bill C-5, passed in 2022, repealed mandatory prison sentences for crimes involving firearms and reinstated house arrest for serious offences, such as sexual assault, kidnapping and human trafficking.

These changes send the wrong message to Canadians and put people at risk. Conservatives proposed Bill C-325 to reverse those changes and strengthen sentencing. The Liberals and the NDP voted against it.

While Bill C-12 does well in filling in an important loophole by banning precursors of fentanyl, it fails to address sentencing for fentanyl dealers. Tougher penalties for traffickers and producers are essential if we are serious about stopping the spread of this and other deadly drugs.

The fentanyl crisis demands urgent action. From January 2016 to June 2024, over 49,000 Canadians died from apparent opioid toxicity. Nearly 80% of those deaths involved fentanyl. Emergency visits for fentanyl poisoning have more than doubled since 2018. This is unacceptable. Earlier this year, the Prime Minister downplayed the opioid crisis during a campaign stop in Kelowna, calling it only a "challenge". That is deeply offensive to the families of the more than 49,000 Canadians who have died from overdoses in under 10 years.

We are seeing the impact in communities across the country. Just this week, in Medicine Hat, police and ALERT carried out a major drug bust, seizing 598 grams of fentanyl, as well as other illicit drugs and cash. That amount of fentanyl alone represents nearly 300,000 fatal doses.

• (1135)

Across Canada, fentanyl superlabs are producing massive quantities of this deadly drug, and police in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec have seized tens of kilograms of fentanyl and thousands of kilograms of precursor chemicals. These operations often include stockpiles of weapons and explosives and pose a serious threat to public safety, yet the government's response still falls

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short. Without tougher sentences and stronger enforcement, fentanyl will continue to devastate families and communities.

The Liberals have also refused to back down from supporting safe consumption sites near schools. My Conservative colleague from Riding Mountain called on the government to shut down these sites near children. The health minister suggested more might be approved, even after admitting that these locations often become hot spots for fentanyl use.

Law-abiding Canadians deserve better. They deserve strong protections for privacy and freedom. They deserve laws that keep our communities safe and hold criminals accountable. They deserve a government that takes the drug crisis seriously, not one that shrugs it off as a mere challenge.

Bill C-12 also touches on immigration and asylum, areas where Canadians' compassion has been abused by the government. Canadians are generous and fair-minded, but that must never be taken for granted or exploited.

The Liberals have exploited Canadians for the past decade on this matter. A decade ago, Canada's asylum system was in control. The backlog accounted for fewer than 10,000 cases. Today, that number has exploded into the hundreds of thousands, and many of these claims are bogus. This is unacceptable.

Let me be clear that it is wrong to jump the line. It is unfair to take advantage of a system that was built to protect people fleeing real persecution. There are Nigerian Christians who face death for their faith. There are Ukrainians fleeing war. In decades past, Canada opened its doors to Vietnamese boat people escaping communism. These are the people our asylum system should protect.

My own father fled Communist East Germany with nothing but his hands, his family and the hope that Alberta would be a place where his children could live freely and safely. He came to Canada the fair and legal way. He never cut corners or skipped the line.

When false claims flood the system, it is real refugees and hard-working Canadians who pay the price. Our housing crisis worsens. Emergency rooms are overwhelmed. Many Canadians still do not have a family doctor. Classrooms are overcrowded. Teachers are struggling and students are falling behind. All across the country, essential services are stretched beyond capacity, and we need a system that protects the most vulnerable, not one that rewards abuse.

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Our asylum system was designed to help those fleeing persecution, in accordance with the 1951 UN refugee convention. It was never intended to become a back door for economic migration, but that is exactly what is happening under the Liberal government.

Social media posts are now encouraging temporary residents to claim asylum as a way to stay in Canada after their student visas or work permits expire. This is a dangerous trend. It undermines the credibility, the capability and the fabric of our immigration system and hurts those who truly need Canada's protection.

Bill C-12, in parts 5 through 8, proposes several changes to our immigration and refugee system, but these changes do not go nearly far enough. The bill would largely shift responsibility away from the government and onto the courts, and it would permit certain actions through regulation instead of legislating clear, enforceable rules. Without strong enforcement mechanisms, meaningful change will not follow.

The bill also includes a proposed change to the safe third country agreement, but it fails to explain how or when it will be negotiated with the United States. In the meantime, Canada continues to accept asylum claims from G7 countries that are safe, democratic and fully capable of protecting their own citizens.

• (1140)

The Liberal government's record on immigration and refugee integrity is clear: The backlog has soared, the rules are weak and the system is being abused.

Conservatives believe in a compassionate and rules-based immigration system, one that prioritizes those most at risk, treats Canadians and newcomers with respect and restores integrity to the asylum process. Future performance is best demonstrated by past behaviour, and the Liberal government has not shown us anything promising in the last 10 years. Only Conservatives will stand up for Canadians' individual freedoms, their safety and the integrity of the systems that make this country strong.

• (1145)

**Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member brought up several concerns about asylum seekers. Some pretty substantial changes are being proposed in this bill in order to strengthen our asylum processing system. Is the member prepared to join Canadians in supporting a bill that would bring more integrity to the asylum system here in Canada, yes or no?

**David Bexte:** Mr. Speaker, this is exactly what Canadians are expecting, but they do not trust that the government is going to follow through on accountability and responsibility measures to ensure that is the outcome that will be achieved.

We are absolutely in support of stronger mechanisms, stronger controls and better accountability. I hope that a committee will be able to address enforcement and get those institutions corrected.

**Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one thing my colleague mentioned in his speech was the social media posts that advertised how people could get into Canada through the asylum process. Does the member think the government has designed a system that is so easy to manipulate that there are advertisements on social media? Who might be profiting from that system?

**David Bexte:** Mr. Speaker, it is really disturbing to see this kind of thing. I hazard to speculate on where the sources might be, but it is very obvious that a lot of agencies and people will benefit from advertising this kind of behaviour and will profit from this kind of behaviour. I would not want to say that this was deliberate, but we need to establish a system that ensures abuse like this does not take place and cannot be tolerated.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member would apply the same principles to 2012, when the leader of the Conservative Party was around the caucus table and thousands of Hungarians were coming into Canada, 95% of whom did not have legitimate asylum claims. In fact, that is what led the Conservatives to reform the system back then. Fast-forward to today, when we have things such as the pandemic and the international student issue, which has been driven in good part by post-secondary institutions in the private and public sectors and by the provinces.

Would the member not agree that at times there is a need to make changes? Today, he has an opportunity to make a change by allowing Bill C-12 to go forward. Would the member not agree this is the responsible thing to do because at times there is a need for change, like today?

**David Bexte:** Mr. Speaker, I will not agree with my colleague. We do not believe that the changes would go far enough. Yes, change needs to happen, but the bill would not go far enough.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** What would you do differently?

**David Bexte:** I would do more.

Mr. Speaker, I would keep the Crown accountable. I would keep the bureaucracy accountable. We would keep the system working for the benefit of the people and would ensure fair treatment of refugees and that people fleeing persecution and abuse worldwide have a safe haven in Canada.

**Michael Ma (Markham—Unionville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, during his speech, my colleague mentioned the opening of private citizens' mail without a warrant. Perhaps he can explain to fellow Canadians what that would mean to them regarding violations of privacy.

**David Bexte:** Mr. Speaker, mail is one of the most sacrosanct private communication methods we have in society. There is a presumption of privacy in our mail, and the bar must be exceedingly high to have a judicial review on any attempt or ability of the government to interfere with it or surveil it.

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I am very concerned. Any weakening of privacy conditions is problematic and prone to abuse.

• (1150)

**Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome my hon. colleague to the House. This is the first chance I have had to address the new member for Bow River. I will miss his predecessor. We always had a good time in this place.

I just want to correct one aspect of my hon. colleague's speech. This is certainly not a point of order; it is debate, but he did say that only the Conservative Party will stand up. I just want to make it very clear that the Green Party also vigorously opposes Bill C-2, which is still on the Order Paper, and Bill C-12. Somehow, the Liberal members of this place have claimed they built on Bill C-2 to come up with Bill C-12. They subtracted some parts of Bill C-2 that were offensive, but not all parts that are offensive, and the legislation is substantially the same.

I double-checked our parliamentary procedure, but I wonder if the hon. member for Bow River thinks that both bills should be in front of this place at the same time.

**David Bexte:** Mr. Speaker, I am not a scholar of the Standing Orders. I understand that two items cannot be debated at the same time, but from that perspective, I cannot comment.

I would like to thank the member for correcting me on the notion that Conservatives are the only ones who stand for the right thing to do. Every member of the House has the potential to cross the aisle and join the Conservative Party.

**Hon. Mark Gerretsen:** They would not take me.

**David Bexte:** Well, Mr. Speaker, there may be some we would have to be more selective with, just like a very good asylum system.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the candid answer. Let me give the member a real challenge.

The leader of the Conservative Party attacked the RCMP last week. What he said was despicable. If we reflect on the institution of the RCMP, it is world-class and recognized around the world, yet the leader of the official opposition said the things he said, disrespecting the RCMP. We even have Conservatives challenging him on what he said.

Does the member believe, as I do, that the RCMP deserves the respect of all members of this House and that the Leader of the Opposition owes an apology to Canadians for what he said last week, which was so disrespectful toward the RCMP?

**David Bexte:** Mr. Speaker, the RCMP indeed had a reputation globally of being absolutely top-shelf, but like any institution, it is subject to the potential of management weaknesses—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**David Bexte:** Mr. Speaker, there are very good analogies all over government and all over private industry, but we have seen management weakness in previous governments and even in the most recent Parliament. That is what has brought us to this place today.

I think all of us could ask for the best performance possible from our institutions globally.

**Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let us get back on track to the topic at hand.

In Bill C-2, there was a failure to group the different topics that were in it. Bill C-12 is a step in the right direction; however, serious amendments are required to the bill.

Can you just highlight, in your opinion, some of the more poignant issues that Bill C-12 needs amendments for? We are hopeful that the government will listen to the amendments that Conservatives intend to bring forward.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I would remind the member for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner not to use “you”. He must speak through the Speaker, so “the member” is the way it should be worded.

The member for Bow River.

**David Bexte:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from my esteemed colleague, whom I highly respect.

Bill C-12 is going in the right direction. It has merit, but on the reinforcement of accountability measures and the punishment and treatment of people abusing the system who are outright criminals, we need to ensure there is no more bail and that we fully follow through on all of these things. Otherwise, society will never step back.

• (1155)

[*Translation*]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today, the House is debating Bill C-12, a reincarnation of Bill C-2. Bill C-2 sparked a great deal of criticism regarding privacy rights, so the government was forced to go back and make revisions. It has returned with a new version of Bill C-2, now called Bill C-12.

The main difference we see is the removal of the controversial elements of Bill C-2 involving invasion of privacy, most of which were found in part 4 of the bill. They would have allowed Canada Post and customs officers to open people's mail. These provisions drew heavy criticism.

Generally speaking, we in the Bloc Québécois were already open to working on Bill C-2, sending it to committee, and working collaboratively on moving it forward. With Bill C-12, we have even more reason to want to see this bill advance. We are keeping an open mind and are willing to work with all members of the House and with the witnesses who will testify in committee. I will not have the opportunity to sit on that committee, but I wish I could.

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Without going into a comprehensive analysis of the bill, I will nonetheless raise a number of points that merit our attention. The first is part 1, which makes amendments to the Customs Act to expand customs officers' law enforcement powers, including access to facilities. It is that access to facilities that I wish to discuss.

Often, when CBSA officers inspect goods, they are goods coming into the country. Goods leaving the country, however, are usually not inspected, and this causes all sorts of problems, as the media recently reported. These include auto theft, a crime that is plaguing Ontario, Quebec and, presumably, the rest of Canada as well. Resources are an issue, of course, but there is also the matter of facilities for doing the work, especially in rail yards. If they want to pull a rail car out for examination, for example, they need a place to put it. There will now be an obligation to provide facilities so customs officers can do their job. Without facilities, without dedicated areas for the inspection of goods, this was becoming problematic.

One of the problems raised by customs officers was that they needed to get a warrant every time they wanted to open a container. The process was becoming difficult, complicated and time-consuming. The bill includes measures that would make it easier for them to open containers as needed and inspect the goods inside without the many authorizations required in the past. We see that as something positive.

However, this provision raises the challenge of resources. We can provide customs officers with all the extra authority, infrastructure and facilities we like, but if there are not enough officers to do the work, we have a problem. The Liberals, incidentally, made that promise during the last election campaign. They promised 1,000 more customs officers and 1,000 more RCMP officers. Although one of these two promises—the one concerning the RCMP—made its way into the Speech from the Throne, we are still waiting to see whether it had any tangible impact on RCMP staffing.

As for the CBSA, the wait continues.

Also, will the 1,000 additional employees mentioned in the government's election promise be enough? The answer is no. The Customs and Immigration Union says that 2,000 to 3,000 people are needed. The election promise covers one-third, and we do not even know whether the government is really going to try to keep the promise, because we have no indication that it is really going to give the CBSA what it needs to do a reasonable job.

We know that it takes resources to secure the borders and deal with illegal immigration, arms trafficking, drug trafficking and auto theft. Unfortunately, that is not in the bill, because bills do not prescribe the hiring of staff. If it could be done, however, perhaps it should be, to ensure that this government hires the necessary staff to do the work that needs to be done at our borders.

● (1200)

Another point that we would like to address with respect to this bill is part 4, which amends the Oceans Act to allow a minister other than the Minister of Fisheries to be responsible for the Coast Guard. Essentially, this would transfer the Coast Guard from the Department of Fisheries to the Department of National Defence. We completely agree with that. Transferring the Coast Guard to the

Department of National Defence was actually in the Bloc Québécois's election platform.

From an accounting standpoint, it would make it possible to increase defence spending, enabling Canada to fulfill some of its commitments in that area and enhancing coordination between the two services. We know that the Coast Guard is not armed, and this occasionally limits its scope of intervention. Placing it under the Department of Defence would, at a minimum, enhance coordination and information sharing with the Department of Defence, particularly when it comes to interventions that require the presence of National Defence or individuals who are better equipped to face a possible threat. For that reason, we think part 4 is very positive.

I will now turn to part 7. Obviously, I will not go through all the sections. Part 7 of the bill grants more powers to immigration officers to suspend, vary or cancel a visa or document under conditions to be prescribed in regulations. Immigration officers will be given more powers to suspend or vary visas, but the details will be prescribed in regulations. That is all interesting, but we would have preferred to see more details. Bills always provide more certainty than regulations do. Governments always want to have more flexibility, but we do not necessarily agree. We will see how this goes.

The bill also adds an interesting provision that would allow the minister to personally suspend, refuse to process or cancel permanent or temporary resident visas, work permits, electronic travel authorizations or study permits.

We think that is quite interesting, because we know that there have been many allegations of fraud in relation to permits and visas. The problem is that if people obtained documents, visas or resident status fraudulently, we should not simply allow them to run loose without taking any action. We should not just say that now that they have a visa, there is nothing we can do. That is more or less what is happening now. With these kinds of powers, the minister will be able to share information with Public Safety and cancel these fraudulent visas and permits so that the government can take the kind of action that is long overdue. We applaud this step, though we wonder why it was not taken sooner.

We now turn to part 8, which is the most substantial part of the bill and the one that has got the most people talking. I think this is the part that will probably have the greatest impact. Part 8 addresses the Bloc Québécois's concerns regarding the safe third country agreement.

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Under this agreement, a person wishing to claim asylum must do so in the first safe country they reach after leaving the country where they were in danger. However, we know that what often happened at Roxham Road was that people were leaving the United States and coming to Canada to file a claim for refugee protection because they believed that they had a better chance of being allowed to enter Canada or that they would receive better treatment in Canada. That led to a large influx of asylum seekers that Quebec had to take in, since Roxham Road is in Quebec.

We found that problematic because we felt that if someone were really in a life-threatening situation, they would not cherry-pick the country they want to settle in. They would go to the first country they could move to to be safe, and this is perfectly legitimate. We felt that this was a problem, but part 8 closes some loopholes. With the safe third country agreement, if a person could come to Canada and hide here for 14 days, they would not have to go back to the United States or another country and could file their claim in Canada.

The new measure in the bill means that people will be sent back to their country after the 14 days. That means it is in their best interest to turn themselves in to the authorities quickly rather than go into hiding. We see that as a fairly positive thing. For the first 14 days, a person caught during that period would simply be sent back to the United States. Obviously, Canada does not have extradition agreements with all countries. This would not apply in those cases. Furthermore, people whose lives are in danger could still report that.

• (1205)

Will this bill fix all the problems? No. Will it help solve some of them? Yes, absolutely. We wish the government had listened to us much sooner, because we know that Quebec—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** I must interrupt the hon. member. His time has expired.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government.

[*English*]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate how the Bloc's approach to Bill C-12 very much recognizes the need for the change. I think, as immigration has generally flowed over the last number of years, at times we need to make a change. I know that the Province of Manitoba did what it could to assist the Province of Quebec with some of the asylum claims.

When we look at the legislation as a whole, and I posed a related question to one of the member's colleagues, we see that many of the issues that have been raised in the debate are, I think, worth having more discussion on to get answers to some of the specific questions being posed.

My question for the member is this: Would he not agree that a wonderful forum for that is at the committee stage, given that everyone is in principle supporting the legislation?

[*Translation*]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Mr. Speaker, I agree that the study by the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security will probably improve the bill and help us to understand it better. Witnesses will come and tell us what needs to be done differently. However, the question we need to ask is this: Why did it take so long before something was done? The government has been in power for 10 years. We have been complaining about this situation, about the government's lax approach at our borders, for years.

Every time we raised the issue and proposed measures like the ones now set out in this bill, the government called us every name in the book, claiming that we were being unwelcoming. However, Quebec currently takes in 40% of asylum seekers in Canada, even though it represents only 20% of the country's population. That amounts to twice its demographic weight. This is a serious problem.

**Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like the Bloc Québécois member to clarify his party's stand on part 7(a) of the bill's summary, which reads as follows:

...authorize the Governor in Council to make an order specifying that certain applications made under that Act are not to be accepted for processing, or that the processing of those applications is to be suspended or terminated, when the Governor in Council is of the opinion that it is in the public interest to do so;

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Mr. Speaker, I cannot really comment specifically on part 7(a). Earlier, I spoke in general about part 7, which the Bloc Québécois saw as a positive because it seeks to combat certain fraudulent claims that might have been made or certain massive claims that might be made to bog down the system.

If the bill prevents fraudulent claims and attempts to bog down the system, then I think that is a good thing. Obviously, we will see whether further amendments are needed after hearing what the witnesses have to say in committee. After asking many of his colleagues the same question today, what I would have liked my Conservative colleague to tell me is whether the Conservatives agree that we need a fair distribution of asylum seekers across the country.

**Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the member clearly showed that the government has been slow to act, particularly with regard to part 8, which deals with temporary migrants.

As my colleague rightly pointed out, during the previous Parliament, when the Bloc Québécois highlighted the issues with foreign students and asylum seekers, the government did terrible damage to our reputation. We were called all sorts of names.

When we made sensible proposals on immigration, the Liberal government took such an ideological stance that it could not listen to us, and now it realizes that our proposals were just common sense, to quote another opposition leader.

I would like to hear my colleague's opinion on that.

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• (1210)

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Mr. Speaker, the real problem is that asylum seekers are supposed to be people who are coming here because they fear for their safety, because they are in danger in their own country.

However, we have seen that the asylum process increasingly became a completely separate immigration stream used to get around the regular immigration process. This was tolerated by the government and suited its purposes. When we spoke out about this situation, members on the other side of the House called us every name in the book. It was very problematic.

What is unfortunate is that we could have resolved this situation 10 years ago. Everything in this bill, or most of it, helps to address the problem. The system became bogged down and all sorts of crises were created, including the housing crisis, the homelessness crisis and the public service crisis, just because this government did not want to deal with the problems.

[*English*]

**Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today on Bill C-12.

Bill C-12 touches upon immigration and border security, issues that matter deeply to the great people of Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford.

The bill is actually a direct result of Conservative leadership, our commitment to holding the government accountable and our pushing back against some of the divisiveness we saw in Bill C-2. Let us not forget that, after the election, Canadians were very clear with everyone across Parliament that we needed to work together and that they wanted to see leadership from the Conservative Party to put the best interests of Canadians forward. I think that what we are seeing here today, which is actually quite historical in the context of government legislation, shows to Canadians that, while we are willing to compromise, we are also standing firm in our principles about what is acceptable and what is not acceptable.

We supported the tax cuts the Liberals put forward. We supported measures to improve interprovincial trade, and today, we are supporting some long-standing measures in Bill C-12 that would improve public safety.

The bill before us today covers everything from border measures and money-laundering rules to sweeping surveillance powers buried deep within it. Excuse me. That was in the previous bill. In the previous bill, there were provisions on Canada Post and sweeping new surveillance powers. These are not included in the legislation, which many Canadians are thankful for. In fact, many of my constituents wrote to me, explaining that they did not want me to support a bill with such measures.

In the new bill, in what we can see today, there are measures for the Canada Border Services Agency that would grant authority to inspect outgoing shipments in the same way that border services agents inspect imports. That is an important change. Canada has long monitored what comes into the country but not always what leaves. These new powers could help stop illegal exports, arms trafficking or the flow of fentanyl precursors across our borders.

According to Health Canada, between January 2016 and June 2024, more than 49,000 Canadians lost their lives to the opioid toxicity crisis. In the first half of 2024 alone, fentanyl was involved in nearly 80% of accidental opioid deaths, a 39% increase since national tracking began. In the last two years alone, police have dismantled major fentanyl labs in Langley, Falkland and the Hatzic valley in my own riding.

Strengthening CBSA's ability to track and intercept illegal exports, particularly precursor chemicals used in fentanyl production, is a necessary step if we are serious about disrupting the flow of deadly opioids, which are taking lives unnecessarily in our country.

The bill would also amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to allow the Minister of Health to quickly schedule new precursor chemicals used in fentanyl production. Conservatives support this because we have been calling for tougher and faster action in response to the opioid crisis for years. These are warranted powers for the minister. It would also give law enforcement officers clarity and legal protection while handling controlled substances during investigations, which makes sense from an operational perspective.

The bill would expand the Coast Guard's authority to share information with security and intelligence partners, and it modernizes how departments handle immigration and refugee files. It strengthens penalties for money laundering and terrorist financing by reforming FINTRAC, our national financial intelligence agency. Real reforms are needed to fix what the previous government broke, to rebuild trust in a fair, secure and efficient system.

I will note that it is a Liberal government that is fixing the problems of a previous Liberal government, but there are still problems with the bill. The Liberals have left too many details to regulation. Rather than writing clear, enforceable laws, they have chosen to permit future decisions through regulation, decisions that can be quietly changed by cabinet behind closed doors, with no parliamentary oversight. That means that the real power, in some cases, may remain in the hands of the ministers, not in the text of Canada's Criminal Code and accompanying legislation.

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• (1215)

There is a lot of public interest in how refugee and immigration claims are being handled, and people want to know how the system is being managed responsibly. This is a pattern we have seen time and time again with the government. Whether it is how they spend, how they tax or how they regulate, the Liberals do prefer a regulatory approach over clarity, and secrecy over accountability. That is why the Conservatives will support Bill C-12 to committee, but we need to insist on a couple of things that I believe should be looked at closely when the bill is brought to the committee stage.

The first is FINTRAC. We need to ensure Canada's financial intelligence agency has the proper tools and oversight to effectively tackle money laundering, transnational crime and the illicit flow of fentanyl that undermine both our economy and our border. From this bill alone, we cannot tell if it does a good enough job. We need to study that in detail at the committee stage.

Second, we need to look very closely at the broad discretionary powers included in this bill. For example, it gives ministers wide latitude, particularly on immigration and refugee files. Committee study must examine whether these powers could be misused and how to include clear safeguards, because Canadians deserve a fair, transparent and accountable system.

Third, there is the CBSA's authority to inspect outgoing cargo. While these powers are essential for stopping criminal gangs and fentanyl traffickers, we must also ensure there is a balance. Trusted exporters, through the trusted exporter program, should not be burdened unnecessarily, and inspections must be targeted and reasonable. Again, we need to see this carefully addressed at committee.

From my first reading of the bill, I believe that by focusing on the three amendments, or things to be studied closely, we can hopefully strengthen the legislation to give our law enforcement the necessary tools to improve public safety and work toward improving trust in government institutions across our country.

In British Columbia, I have seen containers ready for export to Asia full of stolen cars. I have seen the devastating impacts of fentanyl, which is destroying lives. Billions of dollars have been laundered into Canada's economy and, in some cases, it is driving up the price of real estate and increasing crime in our community. My hope is this bill takes some measurable steps to improve all the things Canadian society sees wrong with the way our institutions handle these critical issues.

**Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member said this was a historical moment, and it is a historical moment.

That is one of the most positive speeches I have heard from the opposition in a long time, with a constructive approach to building good government policies and strengthening bills. He talked about the police being effective. He talked about being very supportive of many of the measures. It is a huge contrast to what we usually hear in the House, where Conservatives are trying to disrupt and divide, not bring Canadians together.

I am very thankful for the member's speech. I think it was a positive speech. I think the member opposite has a bright future in his

riding as a very positive Conservative. It is exactly what Canadians are looking for.

• (1220)

**Brad Vis:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Scarborough—Woburn for his genuinely nice comments about my compartment in the House of Commons.

I will note and re-emphasize that, in this Parliament, Conservatives have heard what Canadians had to say, and we are working to improve the lives of all Canadians. We ran on a platform that included strong taxation measures. We ran on a platform to improve public safety. We ran on a platform to improve border security.

Imitation is often the best form of flattery, and I am thankful the Liberals have listened to the Conservatives and adopted many of our sound policies to improve the lives of Canadians. That is what collaboration in the House is all about.

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

I know that my colleague comes to the House with great passion and a very rich sense of a desire to do well by his constituents, and Canadians for that matter.

The bill we are debating here today is a rehashing of Bill C-2. I wonder if my colleague could comment on what he saw as the issues of Bill C-2, as well as how we got here and why.

**Brad Vis:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola on his incredible work and his adopting some of the greatest parts of Canada into his new riding, especially the Fraser Canyon.

The member has been working incredibly hard, and he was leading the charge in many respects on getting to Bill C-12. Why did we need to get to Bill C-12? Bill C-2 included provisions that would allow our law enforcement agencies to look at our Internet data, our Internet traffic and our mail without a judicial order. For many people in Canada, that was a step too far.

As I mentioned in my speech, we need to improve public trust in our institutions. Bill C-2 did not do that. Bill C-12 is a step in the right direction.

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[Translation]

**Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we talked a little bit today about part 8 of the bill, which includes some of the demands that the Bloc Québécois has repeatedly made concerning asylum seekers. However, there is something missing from the bill, and I would like to know where my colleague and the Conservative Party stand on it.

Do the Conservatives agree that Quebec has welcomed more than its share of asylum seekers and that there should be a mechanism to ensure a better distribution of asylum seekers across Canada?

[English]

**Brad Vis:** Mr. Speaker, I think the member from the Bloc Québécois raises a very valid point on asylum seekers.

Many Liberals were celebrating 10 years of Justin Trudeau the other day. One of the worst legacies of Justin Trudeau was his policies on the border. Justin Trudeau said to the world, “Hey, come to Canada.” Frankly, we had a de facto open border policy under his reign. It destroyed public trust in immigration, and Quebec was burdened with the brunt of that.

That is why Canadians do not trust our institutions as much as they did. We were not operating under an orderly and fair system. It was a free-for-all, and people were abusing the generosity of Canadians. That has to stop. The province of Quebec, and the rest of Canada where we saw this, has legitimate concerns with the poor failures of—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Markham—Unionville.

**Michael Ma (Markham—Unionville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals say that they want to secure our border, but they have filled Bill C-12 with nothing but half measures that fail to target the core issues. They will be unable to combat transnational organized crime when they value the well-being of repeat offenders over law-abiding citizens. They will be unable to get a handle on our asylum system when they value economic migrants with bogus asylum claims over legitimately vulnerable people.

The Liberal half measures in Bill C-12 stem from their continued inability to both set up and enforce disincentives against bad actors. Fundamentally, the Liberals take the maxim of the three wise monkeys to heart: See no evil, hear no evil and speak no evil. The Liberals do not see the criminals. They do not hear the vulnerable. When they choose not to see the bad actors and not to hear the downtrodden, they by all means speak half measures into being.

Let us first address how Bill C-12 would fail to secure our borders, from a crime angle. I have a simple question: Do hard drugs like fentanyl just magically appear in our country? No, of course they do not. Some group has to produce them, and some group has to distribute them. The drug dealers should not be the only central target for the legislation.

The problem is that lax Liberal laws have altered our Criminal Code to put criminals first. Law-abiding Canadians live in fear, while repeat offenders serially reoffend against Canadian society, knowing there will be no consequences for their crimes.

The Liberals cannot just paper everything over with Bill C-12 while we still live in the madness legislated into being by Bill C-5 and Bill C-75. They are building bridges to nowhere, upheld by pillars of sand. How much longer must the Conservatives bring up the failures of these two bills?

Bill C-75 forces judges to apply a principle of restraint that puts repeat offenders back on the streets. Bill C-5 repealed mandatory jail time for serious offences, like extortion with a firearm or trafficking hard drugs like fentanyl. Thus, not only are we letting criminals with many offences roam free; we are also letting the ones who have performed the most serious offences at the highest frequency roam free. This is the pro-criminal world that the Liberals have legislated into being.

How do we stop the Liberal madness? The first step is clear: Put law-abiding Canadians above the well-being of repeat offenders. When we put hard-working, law-abiding and tax-paying Canadians first, at the top of our hierarchy, the policy suite to serve them unfolds naturally. We must disincentivize the crime that harms our law-abiding society, by locking up the repeat offenders rather than letting them roam free.

It is not hard to understand how disincentives work. When a toddler touches a hot stove and burns their hand, they will learn not to touch the stove again. Through this feedback loop, the child will learn not to repeat the mistake. Human behaviour is like a river flowing down a mountain. We can either dig grooves to enhance the flow down one path, or we can build dams to block the flow down another. The Liberals have been allowing the river of crime to flow unimpeded. We Conservatives plan on setting up some more dams.

Having addressed the failure of Bill C-12 to secure our borders on the drug front, let me redirect attention to how Bill C-12 would fail to do so on the asylum front as well.

• (1225)

Canada's asylum system was set up to protect truly vulnerable people, like those from Hong Kong or Ukraine. We cannot resettle every economic migrant claiming asylum to get a free hotel stay. However, this is our current state of affairs. We have made the asylum route a lucrative one and have incentivized it. We give hotel rooms to people with bogus asylum claims, while hard-working Canadians struggle with housing, health care and jobs amidst a general cost of living crisis, and while legitimately vulnerable people from Hong Kong and Ukraine have been left in limbo on their path to permanent residence, despite already being in Canada.

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All that Bill C-12 would accomplish is to shift the burden to the courts, which is another half measure among half measures, as the Liberals choose not to see the bad actors and choose not to hear the vulnerable.

Let me bring my Liberal colleagues the voices of the vulnerable. I was shocked to discover that on October 9, the estimated time for processing individuals under the Hong Kong pathways to permanent residence was revised to being upwards of 10 years. My constituency staff have seen the processing times for cases of applications that have been situated in the IRCC pipeline for years jump from 25 months to 48 months after the October 9 threshold. For those who submitted their application this summer, processing times went from 25 months at submission to 10 years after October 9. In the best of cases, it is a doubling of processing, and in the worst of cases, it is a quintupling of processing. In all cases, there are lives ruined and families put in peril.

Hong Kongers are a case study of a people that has integrated into our society. They do not take handouts. They are taxpayers who contribute to the system instead of getting free hotel stays on the backs of hard-working Canadians.

The Liberals can secure our borders from their out-of-control asylum system by removing all the benefits. A single action like this would have sweeping effects, and yet the Liberals have chosen the path of half measures.

In conclusion, my message today about Bill C-12 can be expressed in two concepts: incentives and disincentives. All we have to do is to stop incentivizing behaviours we no longer wish to see and to start disincentivizing behaviours we want to end. We cannot secure our borders with half measures that dance around the core problem.

People are the actors; people do things, so to stop bad actors from doing bad things, we must build systems of incentives and disincentives around the bad actors themselves. This is only impossible to do when we actually love and esteem the bad actors above the hard-working, law-abiding and taxpaying Canadians. As it stands, structurally, Bill C-12 does not see the bad actors and does not hear the legitimately vulnerable. Bill C-12 is a bundle of half measures that would not secure our borders.

• (1230)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on some comments made by a Conservative who spoke previously. Before I do that, let me share a quote from a Winnipeg Free Press article referring to the leader of the Conservative Party's calling the leadership of the RCMP "despicable". I believe that the leader of the Conservative Party needs to apologize to Canadians for the reputational harm that has been caused to the RCMP.

When I raised the question with the member for Bow River, the member said that it was just management weakness of the RCMP. He is literally doubling down on what the leader of the Conservative Party is saying. Does the member across the way agree with the leader of the Conservative Party, and with his colleague from

Bow River who says it is just management weakness? Do they believe in the RCMP—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** The hon. member for Markham—Unionville has the floor.

**Michael Ma:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague just asked a question that is irrelevant to what I just talked about.

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

If we want to talk about relevance, I would remind the member for Winnipeg North that yesterday, when I introduced a bill on intimate partner violence, a bill that has been widely accepted by so many and is about as non-partisan a bill as we can get, he talked about its being "American-style" politics and performative. I question the member's talking about other people doing such things, when he did that very thing.

My colleague, on the other hand, outlined what he called half measures, areas we need to improve. I wonder whether he could expand on that.

• (1235)

**Michael Ma:** Mr. Speaker, the half measures are not addressing the issues—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** Order. Let us end the side conversation.

The hon. member for Markham—Unionville can resume his answer, briefly.

**Michael Ma:** Mr. Speaker, the half-measures in Bill C-12 would not address anything apart from what we already have. It would just be patching up bills that should have been repealed, Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, to truly attack the roots of the problems.

**Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to re-approach the question asked by one of the members on this side.

We think the first line of defence for mitigating crime in this country is building a relationship with law enforcement. The Leader of the Opposition clearly showed huge disrespect towards some of the top RCMP and police officials in this country.

Does the member opposite think that in order for us to move forward as a country, as a government and as members we need to have a respectful relationship with our top law enforcement?

**Michael Ma:** Mr. Speaker, the root of the problem is at the bill level and the policy level. The execution of bills is dependent on the proper set of policies that the government will have to table in order to fix all our issues. Right now, Bill C-12 is not addressing them.

**Eric Melillo (Kenora—Kiiwetinoong, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the bill is being brought forward at a time when the Liberals are trying to address a lot of failures that are a result of their 10 years in government.

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I am wondering whether the member wants to speak more to the Liberal failure to address crime and to the policies they brought forward that have made crime worse.

**Michael Ma:** Mr. Speaker, the bill, as I said earlier, would do only half the job. It should be addressing the fundamentals of fixing up the borders, fixing up the Criminal Code and repealing Bill C-75 and Bill C-5 to really discourage criminal acts. We need to fix all these issues fundamentally, not just do a half-assed job.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** I will just caution members about language in this place. Certain words would be considered unparliamentary.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Niagara South.

**Fred Davies (Niagara South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to participate in the debate on this split border bill, Bill C-12.

My riding of Niagara South is a border riding. The town of Fort Erie borders the city of Buffalo. The connection between Canada and the United States in my riding runs deep in our DNA. Everyone I know in every part of my riding has ties to western New York. Crossing the Peace Bridge was like simply crossing the street. Relationships and, indeed, every aspect of our region are, or were, tied to something or someone in the Buffalo or Niagara Falls, New York area. We cheered for the Sabres, of course, unless the Leafs were in town, in which case the KeyBank Center in Buffalo was often filled with a majority of Canadians. We were part of the Bills Mafia and lined up to cross the bridge to tailgate with our American friends.

We do not so much anymore. I am incredibly saddened by the current issues we are facing: trade disputes, tariffs and the strain and stress those are placing on literally thousands of people employed in my riding because we are a border community. Our cross-border business ties have become part of the very bone structure of Niagara South. Niagara South is a great example of what can be built with strong trade links and binational and international commerce.

I spent a lifetime in the local business community helping people grow their enterprises, commercialize their products and find markets in and outside Canada. We have struggled over the past 10 years with the brain drain of ideas flowing south to where capital is more readily available. Recent market machinations mean that our already-weakened innovation sector is at even greater risk. We are in a kind of economic purgatory right now. We have caved to Donald Trump after a decade of missed opportunities, failed industrial and innovation policy and declining productivity. We are now watching the Stellantis deal literally implode before our eyes, losing a long-term key investment and 3,000 jobs. This is a massive failure. There are repercussions to our trade failure, which the Prime Minister said is a rupture. It is an interesting case study in economic impotence.

Canadians want solutions, but the government has proposed none. The silence on the file, outside of platitudes and bold but meaningless political hyperbole, tells me that the guy who said he could deal with Trump is appeasing him or simply hoping to wait him out. The guy who said he would engage in nation-building projects simply announced old ones.

In my riding, the Peace Bridge is one of the most critical border crossings in Canada, facilitating over \$50 billion in trade every year. Tourism from our American friends also drove our local economy.

An issue that came up during the election relates again, to the Peace Bridge in Fort Erie. Transport Canada invested \$5 million, and the Peace Bridge authority also invested \$5 million, to build new infrastructure to scan commercial vehicles leaving Canada. This is called the Peace Bridge pre-arrival readiness evaluation project, or PARE.

Multi-energy portal technology exists to scan the contents of trailers, containers and vehicles while the vehicle continues to move at around 10 kilometres an hour through the scanning lanes. It identifies what is actually inside these vehicles. We know that only a small percentage of containers in the major ports in Canada are actually inspected. This is why thousands of stolen cars are being exported to distant criminal markets.

This MEP technology is universally used in southern U.S. ports of entry and exit and can provide a full inventory of contents within a minute or two. This technology is not new, but for some reason Canada has dropped the ball on this in the most egregious way. Canada and taxpayers invested \$10 million to build the infrastructure for this scanning equipment at the base of the Peace Bridge on the Canadian side two years ago. Guess what. The United States government invested \$30 million, literally giving us this technology here in Canada. All we had to do was build the infrastructure, and we did.

Unfortunately, Canadian bureaucracy has held this project up because we cannot seem to get the Canadian nuclear regulatory authority to green-light the technology, a technology already safely and widely deployed around the world.

For over a year now, this infrastructure has lain unused at the base of the Peace Bridge and the scanning equipment has sat in storage somewhere in Baltimore, waiting for the Canadian government to live up to its end of the bargain. This technology is pretty amazing. Using state-of-the-art scanning, we can get a full history of the trucks that cross the border, such as driving records, the track record of the company crossing, e-manifest verifications and facial recognition for matching driver identity. We get a complete data package on the vehicle in minutes. This expedites trade and safety. It lowers emissions and commercial congestion. It expedites the identification of contraband and stolen goods.

• (1240)

Last week, I heard a minister across say something about scanning equipment being put into the budget, but I am not sure who it was. If this technology is being considered, my question is this: What took the government so long?

The government is talking big about beefing up our security at borders. This bill is supposed to have a major role in this, but we have been standing on the shoreline of this project and missed the proverbial boat to solve one of the most pressing problems plaguing Canadians right now: the theft and export of stolen vehicles. Even ministers of the Crown are not immune to this, one having had his vehicle stolen twice. The anxiety Canadians feel over the lack of response to this epidemic is palpable. We no longer feel safe in our safe zones and neighbourhoods.

The Prime Minister was in Niagara last week reannouncing old announcements. I would bet a dollar or two that he had no idea this technology was sitting at the base of the Peace Bridge. If he really wanted to look at game-changing opportunities, he would have stood there and fixed the bureaucratic logjam. Instead, he regurgitated old announcements and called it news.

I wrote to the Minister of Public Safety, the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and the Minister of Transport in July urging them to get involved and fast-track this technology out of the bureaucratic logjam. Four months later, it is crickets. Is it any wonder Trump is taking advantage of us? We cannot even launch a project that is already built.

What about those 1,000 new jobs at the border? We have been hearing about these extra 1,000 border officers, a high-profile announcement with zero action. I have qualified constituents who have been waiting for months after applying with no response and no callback. No one at the CBSA has an idea of how this can be done. There is simply not enough training capacity.

There are other issues facing the CBSA that need to be fixed. Suicide rates in the organization have rocked its members. We need to pay attention to the entire cultural structure before making absurd political announcements.

Finally, I need to talk about one very serious issue related to this bill. Proposed section 6 requires operators of international border crossings, like the Peace Bridge in Fort Erie and the Rainbow Bridge in Niagara Falls, to provide existing, new or significantly expanded assets free of charge to the CBSA upon a simple request.

The Peace Bridge, unlike others in Canada, is owned by and operated through a binational authority, with no taxpayer or public funding. The operations of the bridge are managed through independent revenue streams or, in simple terms, tolls. This legislation imposes a blanket requirement on the Government of Canada to demand investment in new infrastructure without a financial contribution. This is an open-ended and serious flaw in the legislation. What it means directly is that, for non-federally owned or controlled border bridges, the only way to pay for capital expansion for federal freebies is through tolls.

There are federally owned bridges, such as Blue Water Bridge, Thousand Islands Bridge and Seaway International Bridge. Under

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proposed section 6, the costs would be borne by the government because it owns these border crossings, which is not the case with the Peace Bridge. This is a classic government download on the consumer and a lack of organizational understanding. Worse, it manifestly disregards the interests of local residents. The government needs to look at this unfair provision and make changes to ensure there is a level playing field. The legislation imposes a double standard.

There is so much more I could talk about regarding this bill, but time does not permit. There are serious issues to fix here. I hope the government will pay attention to the points I have raised. My riding's economy, people, businesses and jobs are inextricably linked to Canada and U.S. trade. Please let there be no absurd reannouncements of old projects. We have real problems to fix.

• (1245)

**Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government takes our borders quite seriously, especially strategic borders like Niagara and others in Ontario. There is the largest infrastructure project to build a great bridge out in Windsor. There is investment in these regions because we know it is part of our economic trade and development, and it connects us to our largest trade partner.

However, I want to talk about a serious issue: the Leader of the Opposition and his comments around law enforcement. Recently, he made a comment that really broke down the trust between law enforcement and, I believe, legislators, especially the Conservative opposition.

I want to know if the member believes that a strong relationship with our top law enforcement personnel across this country is essential for building a stronger border. It is yes or no?

**Fred Davies:** Mr. Speaker, one of the interesting components of the member's question is that it has nothing to do with this bill.

Let us talk about law enforcement. With respect to the CBSA, we hear about the 1,000 jobs being created. I have talked to people at the CBSA and people who have applied for the jobs. There has just been no response. The people who run the CBSA just point out the actual annual turnover of officers, either through resignation or retirement. Unfortunately, lately, there has also been a series of suicides. That has impacted the ability of the CBSA to operate effectively. There is a personnel issue here.

The CBSA would hire 1,000 new employees every year, given the opportunity. That is the importance of law enforcement at our—

• (1250)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola.

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**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 commend the member for Scarborough—Woburn for getting so many questions in. This is wonderful. We are hearing from somebody other than the member for Winnipeg North. This is just wonderful. Debate is to be encouraged in this place, and I love seeing that. I thank the member for his heckling and interventions today.

At the end of the day, the government has promised 1,000 new border officers. Pardon me. I should not have said “officers”. It is “personnel” now, though we do not know what that means. It is clear that the CBSA does not have the capacity to turn out those 1,000 members based on its training abilities.

I wonder what my learned colleague would have to say about this ostensible disparity.

**Fred Davies:** Mr. Speaker, at the public safety committee this morning, I was asking questions of officials of the border bridges. They were telling me about the shortfall of CBSA officers across the board. The shortage is well more than 1,000 people a year. There is just no capacity to train these people.

When the Gordie Howe International Bridge opens up shortly, the draw of existing officers to that new facility is going to be an enormous burden on our resources and our personnel. The Liberals can talk the big talk and make big announcements, but 1,000 new people is a drop in the bucket of what the CBSA needs.

I urge the government to move forward with 1,000 hires annually.

[*Translation*]

**Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party's comments are consistent, at least, as are those of the Conservative Party.

As I mentioned earlier, the government has repeatedly criticized the Bloc Québécois for ideological reasons because we had proposals that were aimed at tightening the rules on temporary immigration. Now I see my Liberal friends criticizing the Conservatives for their leaders's comments on security, once again, on the basis of ideology.

The question I would like to ask my colleague is this: Would it not be better to debate this calmly, with both sides, both the Liberals and the Conservatives, setting their populist ideas aside?

[*English*]

**Fred Davies:** Mr. Speaker, actually, my speech was a calm debate. It was pointing out existing issues that need to be fixed.

If border-scanning equipment were deployed in the port of Montreal, the port of Vancouver, Halifax and across the board, it would instantaneously fix the export of stolen vehicles in Canada. That is how effective this equipment is. It is deployed across the entire U.S. southern border along Mexico. We have one coming to Canada.

That is real debate about the solutions we have. I would encourage the government to deploy this across the country and fix the car—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

**Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-12, which is what is listed today under Government Orders. We have a very strange situation at the moment in that the bill is substantially similar, with the same title and almost all the same sections, to Bill C-2, which remains on the Order Paper. I draw attention to that as I go over the rules only because this is, to me, an unprecedented experience.

I have not been in this place forever, only since 2011, but I have never seen the government introduce two bills that are substantially the same. Sometimes, there is a private member's bill and we look at the order of precedence. As I read the rules, I think the government is within its rights to have two bills that have the same title and are substantially the same, but at the moment that it chooses one to put forward for a vote, we will know that the other one is withdrawn, because we cannot vote on two bills that are the same in the same session.

As a member of Parliament, I wonder what kind of game the government is playing with this. These are both government bills. Why is Bill C-2 still in the order of precedence, and why are we getting nonsense statements from Liberal members, who have said Bill C-12 builds on Bill C-2? That is clearly not what is happening here.

Bill C-2 is an omnibus bill whose title is about stronger borders, and it references many other pieces of legislation within it. Bill C-12 does the same. As some of my hon. Conservative colleagues have already noted, the parts that have been removed are those that were the most obviously egregious. The idea that the Canada Post Corporation Act has to be changed is in Bill C-2, but not in Bill C-12. It would allow people to open our mail in case there might be controlled substances. There are also the parts that would allow information from our Internet accounts to be accessed and shared. This is a source of real concern for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Bill C-2 is an omnibus bill touching on 10 different bills. I think Bill C-12 is down to touching on eight different bills now. It would change the Customs Act, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Oceans Act, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Act, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Sex Offender Information Registration Act and the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act. I have not read all of them into the record.

Omnibus bills are a problem, because when we deal with subjects that may be somewhat related but are sufficiently different, they should be studied separately. They should not be put together and called an omnibus bill.

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In this case, omnibus Bill C-2 attracted omnibus opposition. A broad coalition of over 200 civil society organizations put together a demand to Parliament before we resumed in September, as the original Bill C-2 was tabled in the spring. It attracted concern from civil liberties organizations, refugee protection groups and migrant protection organizations. I can mention some of the groups by name.

Specifically, over 300 organizations called for Bill C-2 to be withdrawn, including the Canadian Labour Congress, the United Church of Canada, the Migrant Rights Network, the Canadian Council for Refugees, Amnesty International, OpenMedia, Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights, Climate Action Network Canada, the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers and the Canadian Muslim Lawyers Association. They all called for a full withdrawal of Bill C-2. I have not read all of the groups' names into the record.

Now we have Bill C-12. Have these groups said the government has heard their concerns and, obviously, Bill C-2 is going to be withdrawn? No. Bill C-2, as I mentioned, is still on the Order Paper. More than that, though, removing the parts that were in Bill C-2 from Bill C-12 does not make Bill C-12 acceptable.

I am going to quote Matt Hatfield, the executive director of OpenMedia, one of the many civil society organizations concerned about this bill. This is his position on privacy rights and other aspects of the way in which Bill C-12 is still offensive. He said, "The story of this legislative package is the same today as it was on day one of Bill C-2's introduction; it's about pleasing President Trump".

• (1255)

Like the preceding speaker from Niagara, my riding is also a border riding. Saanich—Gulf Islands is on the Salish Sea, which is an ecological region shared with Washington state. The Gulf Islands referenced in the title of my riding, Saanich—Gulf Islands, are close relatives, one might say, to the San Juan Islands. They have the same ecosystem. The same endangered whales go through both waters of the Salish Sea, and whales and salmon do not carry passports.

The indigenous people of Washington state, the Lummi Nation, are relatives to the Saanich people I am honoured to represent here in this place. They are intrinsically linked, and our borders are strong in that we respect each other's nationalities. I have to say, there are certain strains when the Mariners are playing the Jays, but never mind. Let us set that aside. In my riding, we cheer for the Jays. This is clear.

On Friday last week, we had a cross-border forum and invited into Saanich—Gulf Islands representatives from local governments, indigenous governments, NGOs and civil society groups, and we all agreed that we are still neighbours and friends. We do not like Trump's tariffs and we do not want to kowtow to him, but we want to deepen the relationships that exist between us. We would really like to get our ferry service back, by the way, between Anacortes, Washington, and Sidney, British Columbia.

We can deepen relationships, but given the strong border language and the rhetoric around this, I have to agree with the com-

ment from OpenMedia. The language in Bill C-2 and Bill C-12 is all about pleasing Donald Trump.

What gets offended in the process? I used to practise refugee law. I was a lawyer in Halifax, and in those days, the refugees I helped were mostly ship-jumpers. With nothing more than the clothes on their back, they escaped from eastern bloc and Warsaw Pact countries, like Romania, came to Halifax Harbour and found themselves a lawyer. Generally, that was me.

I was so grateful for this. It has been mentioned a few times in debates that Canadians would hate the idea that we provided hotel rooms, which we did. I will never forget the brilliant young man who called me, probably four decades later, after I got elected, and wanted me to know how he had done in Canada once I helped him get a hotel room in Halifax and start his refugee claim. He started and ran a small construction company and had a number of sons, who are still running his construction company. He was awfully glad we had immediate help for refugees and did not require that they cross at the proper border. Sometimes, a person crosses where they can, with the clothes on their back. This is why I am proud I was a practising member of the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers. It is also absolutely opposed to what is being proposed here in Bill C-12, and remain so.

Going back to the fact that it is an omnibus bill, this means it is not going to go to the immigration committee for proper study with enough witnesses and experts brought to bear to say, "This is what is wrong with this bill, and this is how we might fix it." The Green Party still maintains that these issues are not fixable and that both Bill C-2 and Bill C-12 should be withdrawn immediately. In the meantime, the greater likelihood is that they will not be. The Liberals have caved to what the Conservatives demanded in this place, and I thank those on the Conservatives benches who demanded it, but they are not demanding enough. Both bills should be withdrawn immediately.

Bill C-2 had egregious sections regarding the post office and the Internet, but Bill C-12 is still unacceptable. It has provisions that invade privacy and hurt refugees, with innocent people caught in the gears of what is now an increasingly Trumpian world. We do not have to accept that. We can make laws that work for Canadians and for those who legitimately need our protection. Canadians will always want to say "elbows up", but with arms outstretched to the world.

• (1300)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our new Prime Minister made a commitment to Canadians to secure the border and take certain actions to ensure that we stabilize immigration-related issues. I see the legislation as being very positive and encouraging. Bill C-12 will hopefully garner the support necessary to ultimately get through. It is important to Canadians.

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This does not mean we give up on Bill C-2. As an example, in northern Manitoba, fentanyl in the mail really has an impact. There are many rural communities in northern Manitoba that want the government to take action on it. That action is in Bill C-2. I hope the leader of the Green Party will be more sympathetic to people in northern Manitoba—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** I must give time for the response.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

**Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of concerns for the residents of northern Manitoba. They face many issues, and we should certainly pay attention to the Port of Churchill.

There are many things that need to be done, but no one needs to open our mail to protect us from fentanyl. I have talked to the Minister of Justice about this. Many accommodations could be made. Mail, unlike many other objects that may contain illegal drugs, is addressed to the person who is going to receive it. As such, one could ask the post office to set it aside, contact the recipient and ask if they mind having their letter opened or if they would like to be present when their letter is opened.

The government has just said on the record that it has not given up on Bill C-2. Mark that well.

• (1305)

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

I want to pick up on what the member for Winnipeg North said. There is a resounding loyalty to the mess that is Bill C-2. I still do not think he has given up on the warrant issue and on believing that Canada Post should be able to open our mail without a warrant. This is the type of verbiage we are hearing in the House when it comes to Bill C-2.

We all agree on the overall aim of having a secure border. I wonder if my hon. colleague would agree that the government really missed the mark on that and that is how we got to Bill C-12.

**Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Kamloops, who practises law there. Parenthetically, I think we could use more lawyers in this place. We could use people who understand how to read legislation and can say, “Ah, this seems to have something funny about it. We don't want warrantless access to our private information.”

I agree with my friend from Kamloops that it is concerning that the government has not given up on the idea of further invasions of our privacy.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, the Green Party, through its leader, has indicated that it will not be supporting Bill C-12.

I wonder if the member could provide her thoughts on the Prime Minister's commitment to building on our border control and RCMP with 1,000 personnel in each area. Does she believe that is a positive thing?

**Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, yes, we certainly support the CB-SA. We have felt for some time that to the extent that our border

was in any way porous, it was not because of the risk of fentanyl coming from Canada into the U.S., as Mr. Trump seems to believe, but rather the opposite. In particular, it is because of other drugs, precursors of other drugs and illegal weapons coming from the U.S. into Canada. CBSA officers need to be able to take the time they need and be fully resourced to inspect things as they come to our border.

However, I will express concern briefly about the RCMP officers we are hiring. We need to look at the Mass Casualty Commission report, which recommended that our RCMP officers need more training, because “26 weeks is not enough. The Mass Casualty Commission recommended a three-year course to ensure that RCMP officers are adequately trained to do the very challenging job they have in front of them.”

**Blaine Calkins (Ponoka—Didsbury, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise today on behalf of the residents of Ponoka—Didsbury.

After a long decade of nihilistic Liberal rule, chaos and disorder reign supreme in our streets. Criminality may be only one of the many problems Canadians face, but it is a significant one.

A survey by Abacus Data released this year, in 2025, found that 46% of Canadians ranked crime and public safety among their top concerns. This can be contrasted with an Ipsos poll taken in June 2015, the year our previous Conservative government left office, which found that 15% of Canadians ranked crime and violence among the issues on the national agenda at the time. I will let Canadians ponder those two statistics to find out just who has been a better steward of peace, safety and security in this country.

Canadians understand that the situation is untenable. After all, it is they who have had to shoulder the burden of this rise in criminality in our communities. For context, since 2015, violent crime has spiked significantly, and it is up nearly 50%. That is not all; crime of almost every category has seen an increase: Sexual assaults are up nearly 75%, homicides are up 28%, gang-related homicides and organized crime have increased by 75%, violent firearms offences with illegal guns are up 116%, extortion is up 357%, auto theft is up 46%, and trafficking is up nearly 84%. Fraud, homicide and anything we can name are all going up. I could continue, but I think my colleagues get the picture.

This upswing in violence is not a coincidence; it is a result of soft-on-crime policies and a porous border. It is the realization of the law of unintended consequences brought on by a decade of bad policy, informed by a world view that cares more about optics than it concerns itself with the real-life effects of its own self-serving ideological agenda.

*Government Orders*

We now have a so-called government that is presenting bills in the House that purport to fix this collection of self-inflicted issues that Canadians face. These are the same problems that the members across the aisle from me created. In 2015, our Conservative government oversaw a Canada that had its lowest total crime rate since 1969. Unfortunately, the last 10 years has seen this progress almost completely erased.

It is the hypocrisy of the government that it has opposed and demonized those who support our hard-on-crime agenda while now implicitly acknowledging that Conservatives were right all along.

How did we get here? In 2022, Bill C-5 was passed. In this piece of legislation, the Liberal government removed the mandatory minimums on 14 different Criminal Code offences. These were common-sense penalties on dangerous offences that were instituted and put in place by our Conservative government; these were bills that I proudly passed when I sat on the other side of the House. They include using a firearm or imitation firearm in the commission of an offence, which people do not have to go to jail for anymore in Canada, thanks to Liberals. Possession of a firearm or weapon, knowing that its possession is unauthorized, so illegal possession of a gun, for example, is another offence that people no longer have to go to jail for.

Possession of a prohibited or restricted firearm with ammunition is an offence that people do not have to go to jail for anymore. Possession of a weapon obtained by the commission of an offence, so if someone steals a gun, they do not have to go to jail. Weapons trafficking, possession for purposes of weapons trafficking and smuggling, so someone can smuggle weapons now, in this country, and not go to jail. Importing or exporting knowing it is unauthorized is another example of smuggling; someone can traffic smuggled firearms, guns, ammunition, weapons or anything we can name. Discharging a firearm with intent and discharging a firearm recklessly are offences that people no longer need to go to jail for. If someone wants to commit a robbery, they might as well do it with a gun, because they do not have to go to jail for that either in this country anymore. Did I not just say that extortion is up 357% since 2015? The mandatory minimum penalty for extortion with a firearm is gone thanks to Bill C-5 and thanks to the Liberals and the NDP, which supported them at the time.

• (1310)

In fact, these policies were all informed by expert opinion, yet the Liberals did not seem to care. Instead, before passing Bill C-5, they doubled down and passed Bill C-75 during their majority tenure from 2015 to 2019. The bill eased bail provisions and legislated the principle of restraint, which was codified in the Criminal Code for police and courts to ensure that criminals would be released at the earliest possible opportunity with the least amount of restrictions. Essentially, this favours release over detention; it is precisely these two bills, along with a copious number of bad decisions made, that created the revolving door in our justice system by which offenders are free to continue to terrorize communities.

While the Liberals were making life easier for criminals by passing Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, they increased their attacks on law-abiding firearms owners, who are in no way responsible for any of this crime wave. They did so with a trifecta of bills with zero public

safety value. These bills include Bill C-71, which created a back-door gun registry; the 2020 order in council, a massive list of newly restricted firearms; and Bill C-21 in 2023, which created a national freeze on the sale, purchase and transfer of handguns for law-abiding citizens and sport shooters, as well as a new prohibition on many long guns used for hunting and sport-shooting purposes. Since the passing of these bills, the government has not stopped adding firearms to the restricted list.

The Liberals have now embarked on their so-called voluntary assault-style firearms compensation program, the gun grab, which is a program to confiscate guns from law-abiding citizens. It completely misses the mark by letting criminals go free and going after people who follow the law. If implemented, this costly and ineffective gun buyback is estimated to cost at least \$5 billion, even though only \$742 million has been allocated to it. With that kind of money, the government could easily fund such programs as acquiring modern scanning technology at our 119 ports of entry to secure our border.

I have an example to share that I also brought up during the committee hearings on Bill C-21. In the Cayman Islands, a high-efficiency scanner was bought. Someone can drive right through it in a truck, or a sea-can can go through it. It can be put at any port of entry. It will scan a container. It is safe for anyone who happens to be going through, and it will find all manner of contraband: drugs, people, firearms and illegal weapons. Those are about \$3 million U.S. apiece.

The Liberal government is going to spend \$750 million to take lawfully acquired property away from Canadians. That is about \$500 million U.S. If we divide that by \$3 million per scanner, we could easily put 150 of these scanners at our ports of entry to make sure we scan at least 10% of all containers coming in and going out. I think most Canadians would be shocked to realize that we do not scan a single container that leaves our country.

The shocking thing about all of this is that, with the change in administration to the south, the administration has claimed that fentanyl was flowing from Canada into the United States and, as a result, was killing American citizens. We would think a prime minister in Canada would have said the flow of illegal guns across the border from the United States into Canada is killing Canadian citizens, pushed back on the American administration and stood up for law-abiding firearms owners in this country.

*Government Orders*

However, the Liberals did not do that, because they did not want to admit that it was illegal guns killing Canadians on the street. They wanted to maintain the mantra of going after law-abiding citizens. We know that because the current public safety minister said as much when he thought nobody was listening.

How does all of this relate to Bill C-12? If the last decade is any indication, the government has an issue understanding that policy work is a careful game of trade-offs. When enacting policy, we have to heed the law of unintended consequences and try to understand the downward effects a piece of legislation may have. The Liberals did not do their due diligence on crime, and I do not think they have done it on the border bill.

When Conservatives forced the Liberals to back down on Bill C-2, we did so because we understand that the policies contained in Bill C-2 have unintended consequences and unforeseen ramifications. As with Bill C-2, we believe there could be provisions in Bill C-12 that violate people's freedoms and privacy, and it is our duty to ensure that Bill C-12 receives the proper scrutiny it deserves at the committee stage to ensure Canadians do not pay for another boondoggle of unintended, or not unintended, consequences.

• (1315)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when the member was reading some statistics, I did a quick search on Stats Canada to find out some information on crime issues. I found it interesting. This is from Stats Canada. The crime severity index is down 4.1%. The police-reported crime rate per 100,000 population is down by 3.6%. The violent crime severity index is down by 1%. The youth crime rate per 100,000 is down by 4.2%. The non-violent crime severity index is down by 5.7%. This is actually on Stats Canada.

Does the member recognize that stats can be used in different ways? The bottom line is that we are bringing in bail reform legislation, something the new Prime Minister has made a solemn commitment to Canadians on. I suspect it will deal with many of the issues Canadians are concerned about.

Would the member not agree, whether it is Bill C-12 or the—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** The hon. member for Ponoka—Didsbury.

**Blaine Calkins:** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, some people around here talk so much, they do not get to the point of actually asking their question. If I understand what he was asking me, it was whether we will support Bill C-12. Yes, we will support it to get it to committee, and we will do our due diligence. That is why we are having this debate in the House of Commons. I raised a number of very serious issues in my speech.

I led the rural crime task force in a previous Parliament. Rural crime is up. Dangerous and violent crime in the country is up. Police associations across the country are saying that the government has had misguided policies for the past 10 years and that it is doubling down on them in this particular Parliament.

Where is the bail bill? It has been seven months. I had the ability to draft a piece of legislation over the summer and table it, for my private member's bill.

The government, with all of its resources, cannot table a bill on bail in seven months. Why is that?

• (1320)

**Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the government has two very similar bills on the Order Paper right now: Bill C-2 and Bill C-12. The second bill is missing a few things that the first bill has, but the government has still retained the first bill on the Order Paper. We asked the Liberals this question this morning, over and over again, to get an understanding of why they would have both of these bills, which are essentially doing the same thing, on the Order Paper.

The member, by the way, gave an outstanding speech. I wonder if he could shed some light on why he thinks the Liberals have both of these live bills right now on the floor of the House.

**Blaine Calkins:** Mr. Speaker, if we ever wanted to see a government that does not know what it is actually doing and what that looks like and what that manifests itself as in the House of Commons, it is this: It will table a bill and realize that it has got it wrong, and then it will table another bill in the hopes that it might have actually gotten it right.

This has been talked about. The previous speaker, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, spoke about it as well. We now have two bills on the Order Paper that do essentially the same thing.

My confidence in the government's getting Bill C-12 right, in lieu of Bill C-2, has improved a little bit, but the reality is that we are only going to support Bill C-12 as far as getting it to committee goes, and then we will take a look.

If what I understand is true, if reasonable amendments could be made to actually strengthen the bill and make it better, we might have another conversation at third reading.

At this particular point in time, this is how incompetence looks. We have one bill, and then we have another one that does the same thing, because they did not get it right the first time.

[*Translation*]

**Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, when we talk about border security, we are also taking about the RCMP. What does my colleague think of the attacks on the RCMP at a time when what we actually need is to increase funding and strengthen security at our borders?

*Government Orders*

[English]

**Blaine Calkins:** Mr. Speaker, I would not have time to litigate the issues with former commissioner Lucki and the previous minister of public safety, who is now the member of Parliament for Scarborough Southwest. That actually played out in the public discourse. There were criticisms offered up by even the RCMP senior officers themselves about the conduct of the minister and the commissioner of the RCMP at the time. That is a conflated issue with what is going on right now.

We stand shoulder to shoulder with the frontline men and women who protect our country day to day, whether they are police officers, border services agents or correctional services officers. We need to continue to support them.

Do members know how we do that? We actually make it so that when they do their job, when they go out and risk their lives to apprehend, arrest and convict a bad guy, the bad guy stays in jail for a while. Otherwise, what is the point in a police officer risking his life to go do the job?

We need tougher laws so that when our police do the job that we have asked them to do, there are consequences.

[Translation]

**Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to speak to Bill C-12, which deals with border security and immigration and follows on from an earlier bill, Bill C-2. The government ultimately came back with Bill C-12. We are now discussing this whole matter of border security and immigration against the backdrop of these two successive bills.

Of course, we will study Bill C-12 at committee with the thoroughness we always bring to any examination of this subject. This legislation is necessary, but we want to ensure it is complete. Among other matters, we will be discussing the lack of human resources at the Canada Border Services Agency, or CBSA, and the RCMP.

The Bloc Québécois is committed to improving this bill at committee with the same goal in mind, specifically, having a border that operates efficiently, humanely, and in a way that respects people's rights. I am especially interested in this question since I grew up not far from the border with our American neighbours, I come from a region in southern Quebec and my riding is not far from the border. I am therefore going to paint a general picture of the situation. I will then look at some numbers relating to certain problems that are addressed in the bill, and I will close by saying a few words that pertain more to women and seniors, files for which I am responsible as the Bloc Québécois critic.

The first general observation we can make is that understaffing is a major issue. The Liberals promised to hire 1,000 additional RCMP officers and 1,000 additional CBSA officers. What progress has been made on that front? An announcement was made for the RCMP, but there has been no mention of the CBSA. According to the Customs and Immigration Union, they are currently short 2,000 to 3,000 officers. This means they have neither the tools nor the human resources needed to do their work effectively.

The Bloc Québécois is calling for patrols between border crossings to be authorized. That is what we are asking for. We are also calling for more operational flexibility and a real hiring plan. Regarding all of these Bloc Québécois proposals, I would like to commend the work of my colleague from Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, who has been working on this bill as the public safety critic. She does a really thorough job of it and has had several meetings. Our position is well documented. It is based on facts, not disinformation.

I would now like to provide a few figures, since Bill C-12 deals with auto theft and organized crime. Over 100,000 vehicles are stolen every year in Canada. That is a 48% increase since 2020. There is also an economic cost to all of this: Claims totalled \$1.5 billion in 2023.

I have had lunch with insurance company officials, and I can say that this is a real problem. They want us to deal with the situation. Interpol finds more than 200 stolen vehicles a week. In Quebec, there was a 57% increase in thefts between 2021 and 2023. The CBSA is often unable to inspect trains because it lacks the necessary infrastructure. Bill C-12 fixes that with mandatory access to warehouses and train yards. The Bloc Québécois wants to see this implemented. It may be helpful, but it will be somewhat ineffective if all the necessary staff and resources are not in place. I think that with these figures, we are showing our Liberal colleagues that crime is on the rise. There is no denying that.

Fentanyl is also a problem, but let us approach it from a public health perspective. This is no trivial matter: There were 42,000 opioid-related deaths between 2016 and 2023, and 70% of those deaths involved fentanyl. The minister has the power to quickly add chemical precursors to the list of prohibited substances. That cannot hurt. The important thing is to save lives and protect families. Behind the statistics are human tragedies. We therefore support the measure, but we also demand rigorous monitoring.

As my hon. colleague from Montcalm, our health critic, would say, we need to address the opioid problem holistically, combining several approaches, particularly in terms of public health.

With regard to immigration and asylum seekers, there are new rules. Asylum claims become inadmissible after one year in Canada. Irregular entry for more than 14 days results in removal to the country of origin. The aim of all this is to cut down on abuse and backlogs.

● (1325)

Quebec welcomed 55% of the 180,000 asylum seekers in Canada in 2023, which is a staggering number. Obviously, there is no denying that this has had an impact on public services, which are already saturated and overloaded, particularly schools, health care and community services. The Bloc Québécois hopes that Ottawa will rebalance the distribution of asylum claims and transfer the promised funds to Quebec to welcome claimants in a dignified and acceptable manner. That is our demand.

*Government Orders*

In Canada, money laundering and illicit financing activities are estimated to be between \$45 billion and \$113 billion annually. The bill provides for new measures and increased collaboration, particularly between the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada, the Financial Institutions Supervisory Committee and law enforcement agencies. In cases of non-compliance, fines will be multiplied by 40. The bill aims to improve and increase information sharing, but that requires caution in terms of privacy protection. The Bloc Québécois supports this modernization but is demanding that individual freedoms be protected.

When it comes to protecting rights, what has been taken out of this bill compared to what was in Bill C-2? Mail searches have been scrapped. That was an invasion of privacy. Restrictions on \$10,000 donations have been dropped, and so has the collection of private data. The Bloc Québécois is in favour of that, because there really needs to be a balance between security and freedom.

Most importantly, Quebec wants a secure border, a fair immigration system and respect for its areas of jurisdiction. People forget this, but these are the demands of Quebec, on whose behalf the Bloc Québécois speaks.

I am going to talk a little more about the issues that concern me. As my party's critic for women and families, I want to expand the issue of crime and its impact. Women are often responsible for household budgets, so they are on the front lines of the cost-of-living crisis. There are proven links between economic insecurity and social insecurity, and between poverty and financial stress, which increase the risk of violence and distress.

By cracking down on criminal networks linked to fentanyl, fraud and exploitation, we are reducing the economic and social pressure on women and children. Security must also be viewed from a social, economic and human perspective.

Seniors are increasingly being recognized as among the primary victims of crime and inflation. They are increasingly targeted by theft, fraud and scams, with over 35% affected in 2024. The rising cost of living only makes them more vulnerable. More than 55% of seniors who are renters spend more than 30% of their income on housing. Vehicle theft and fraud are causing insurance premiums to go up, which impacts people living on fixed retirement incomes. The cost of housing, an essential need, is on the rise because of money laundering in the real estate sector, which totals between \$20 billion and \$30 billion annually. Organized crime and the underground economy undermine seniors' incomes and deprive the government of resources that could be used to fund affordable housing, home care, and support programs for seniors.

For the Bloc Québécois, strengthening economic security also means protecting the dignity and financial peace of mind of seniors, as stated by FADOQ, which considers fraud against seniors to be a major political issue. According to this organization, seniors have become a prime target for phone scams, "grandparent" scams and bank fraud. It is calling for a review of the Criminal Code to strengthen minimum sentences for these types of offences. That is FADOQ's proposal, and we are willing to study it. The organization promotes awareness and prevention programs, particularly its Senior-Aware program, to educate seniors and equip them to deal with

fraud. FADOQ has made it clear that education alone is not enough. Strong political and legal action is also needed.

FADOQ often cites statistics from the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre, which found that in 2024, more than 130,000 cases of fraud were reported across the country, with financial losses in excess of \$650 million. The centre estimates, however, that only 5% to 10% of fraud is reported. People age 60 and over account for approximately 25% of reported victims, with average losses that are higher than in other age groups. Quebec is one of the hardest-hit provinces, mainly due to phone and bank scams.

In closing, I would remind members that seniors are not naive; they are being targeted by sophisticated networks. It is important to note that the average loss for senior victims is often two to three times higher than for other age groups, at approximately \$25,000 per major fraud. It should be noted that fraud erodes seniors' savings, trust and sense of dignity. It is an issue of mental health and dignity.

I want to say one last thing, which is a key message: fighting organized crime and strengthening our borders also means protecting Quebecers' and Canadians' pocketbooks. Fewer thefts and reduced instances of money laundering and corruption means more money for real priorities, such as seniors, women, families and safer communities.

• (1330)

We could also talk about the importance of supporting communities dealing with the consequences of fentanyl. Health care services in Quebec are facing major financial challenges. In closing, Quebec and the provinces need to be given increased powers over immigration to ensure that they alone determine their levels.

**Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the Bloc Québécois supports Bill C-12 and wants to send it to committee. Like my colleague opposite, I realize that asylum seekers represent a significant challenge in Quebec and in my riding. However, Bill C-12 should help in this area.

What measures in Bill C-12 does the Bloc Québécois support when it comes to securing our borders?

**Andréanne Larouche:** Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, the issue is that additional resources are needed. Additional resources have been announced for the RCMP, but nothing has been announced for the Canada Border Services Agency. There are some good measures, but there is still room for improvement.

We would be happy to go back to committee to study the issue of border security. Some unions are calling for more resources. Some announcements have already been made. That is all well and good, but we still need more.

If we want to talk about asylum claimants, an issue that often receives limited attention, it is because Quebec is doing far more than its fair share. The Liberal and Conservative sides do not appear willing to recognize that Quebec does more than its fair share and that there should be a more equal distribution across Canada.

*Government Orders*

• (1335)

[English]

**Eric Melillo (Kenora—Kiiwetinoong, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the bill is coming at an interesting time, after 10 years of the Liberal government that has brought forth soft-on-crime policies that have weakened our border and have put Canada in the situation we are currently in.

At the indigenous affairs committee, we are having a lot of discussion right now about first nations policing as well, and we are hearing about the increased gang activity and about drugs being brought into first nations across the country. We see it in northwestern Ontario in my riding. The government has ignored the calls from first nations or indigenous police services for more recognition and a better deal in terms of the resources and the structures they have in order to deal with a lot of the issues.

The bill is being brought at a time when the government is making it easier to get bail, is failing first nations police services and is failing on a lot of counts when it comes to the border and to criminal justice. I am wondering whether the member has any comments on that.

[Translation]

**Andréanne Larouche:** Mr. Speaker, it will be important to look at that in committee. The Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security will be examining Bill C-12 and the matter of border security. The issue of sentencing will be looked at by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. I encourage members to examine these serious and important issues in the most non-partisan way possible.

That being said, I would like to come back to the matter of indigenous police services. The Bloc Québécois is strongly in favour of a nation-to-nation dialogue. This gives me the opportunity to mention something that I did not cover in my speech: Organized crime and our lax border controls have a disproportionate effect on indigenous women. I have studied this issue at both the Standing Committee on the Status of Women and with the All Party Parliamentary Group to End Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

I would also like to draw the House's attention to two worthwhile security bills that have been introduced by the Bloc Québécois: the bill on organized crime introduced by the member for Rivière-du-Nord and the bill introduced this morning by my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton on the purchase of goods produced by victims of forced labour, a form of modern slavery, particularly the Uyghurs. The Bloc Québécois is taking a strong stance on these very important issues.

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on her speech.

On reading the bill, we see that it includes some provisions related to asylum seekers. These provisions are similar to past requests made by the Bloc Québécois. When we made those requests, the government called us all sorts of names. Then, 10 years later, suddenly these solutions are applicable.

I would like to know how my colleague explains that.

**Andréanne Larouche:** Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the work that my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean has done on this file. He always asks us to deal with this immigration issue meticulously and compassionately.

That being said, where were the Liberals and the Conservatives when the Bloc Québécois was talking about reviewing the safe third country agreement? Where are the Liberals and the Conservatives when the Bloc Québécois calls for a more even distribution of asylum seekers?

Right now, once again, Quebec is disproportionately affected by all this, and unfortunately, the federal government is not giving us the funds we need to support these people with dignity and humanity.

[English]

**Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish the entire House a very happy Trafalgar Day, a day on which we remember the sacrifice and brave leadership of Admiral Horatio Nelson, who gave his life in defence against Bonapartist tyranny. In addition, I would be remiss if I did not mention that today the Royal Canadian Navy is celebrating Niobe Day; 115 years ago today marked the first day of a Canadian warship, the HMCS *Niobe*.

It is a privilege to rise today to speak to Bill C-12, the strengthening Canada's immigration system and borders act. We are discussing the bill here today instead of Liberal Bill C-2, because Bill C-2 was met with considerable opposition from members of the House and from civil society groups that made it clear that the legislation would not be able to move forward without significant revisions.

Therefore, today we are debating Bill C-12. Despite the sweeping powers the government proposed in Bill C-2, the Liberal government did not even bother to consult with the Privacy Commissioner about the impacts that the legislation would have on the privacy rights of Canadians. It is only because of the accountability provided by members of the opposition in the House that we were able to push that legislation back so we could focus on legislation that would at least try to repair the damage of the last 10 years of the Liberal government by introducing changes on the border.

The objectives of the bill, I will say for those constituents of mine who are watching at home, are several. They include but are not limited to creating an expedited pathway for the Minister of Health to add precursors chemicals used in the production of deadly drugs such as fentanyl as controlled substances under the Criminal Code.

### *Government Orders*

Over the past few years, we have seen the devastation of the fentanyl overdose crisis in Canada. At the public safety committee, we have been hearing about some of the many gaps we have in this country, including testimony that has indicated that the non-resident import program is being used to smuggle precursor chemicals into Canada with less stringency at the border, which is creating a situation where Canada has become a major producer of fentanyl, which is being exported. We have heard recent stories of countries like New Zealand and Australia being the recipients of drugs like fentanyl and methamphetamine. Clearly this is not the reputation that a great country like Canada wants to have.

Another part of the legislation seeks to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to eliminate the designated countries of origin regime, which has been identified as a loophole. It would give the minister the powers to specify that required documents are needed to support a refugee claim. It would require the suspension of certain refugee protection proceedings if the claimant is not present in Canada, something I think should be common sense; somebody should be present in Canada if they are claiming refugee status here.

It seeks to change the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act to increase the maximum monetary penalties for those charged under these acts. It also seeks to make certain changes to the Sex Offender Information Registration Act to allow for increased reporting of the offender's description, as well as changes to the circumstances and frequency of reporting. It would also allow for information previously collected to be disclosed if it can reasonably be expected to assist in the prevention or investigation of a crime of a sexual nature.

Once again, I think these things are long overdue. We probably need to go even further, but we are certainly not going to throw the baby out with the bathwater on this one. Even with the second attempt at the legislation, the Liberal bill still fails to address the key issue of bail reform. We know that catch-and-release is alive and well for people who traffic in fentanyl and use illegal firearms, using our porous border to victimize more and more Canadian families.

We know that the sentencing provisions that were passed by the Liberal government under Bill C-75 and Bill C-5 have made it so that there no mandatory prison times for the people who traffic fentanyl, and there are still no new mandatory prison times for gangsters who use illegal guns to commit crimes, despite the Liberal government's incessant campaign against law-abiding gun owners. We also know that house arrest is still being used extensively in cases relating to violent criminals. Once again, this is unacceptable.

● (1340)

That said, I think we can all agree that strengthening our border is critical, and that is why legislation is desperately needed in this area. After 10 years of reckless Liberal policies, our border is broken, and we need to fix it. The Liberals' soft-on-crime agenda has made Canada a destination for international organized criminals trafficking in drugs, weapons, people and stolen cars. Gangs are committing brutal crimes on our streets every day.

The public safety committee has looked at the issues in depth, and we have repeatedly heard it is the broken bail system that has

contributed to the crisis. Organized criminals have chosen to make Canada their home because of our weak laws.

We also know the government's failed immigration policies have assisted in making Canada a destination for international organized crime. In the past, the government has removed visa requirements over the objections of law enforcement agencies, which stated that the removal of visas would increase the risk of organized crime's taking root in this country. The government moved forward with it anyway, and it is critical that the policies be reversed so we can once again make Canada the safest country in the world.

I want to be clear that nothing I am saying today is a criticism of our brave frontline law enforcement officers in the RCMP and the CBSA. We know they are doing their absolute best. We have heard from police associations in Ontario. I have heard from RCMP members in my riding, when I was out knocking on doors during the past election, for example, that they are arresting people and seeing them back out on the street mere hours after being arrested for drug offences. How demoralizing this is for our frontline officers.

We have heard from Mark Weber of the Customs and Immigration Union, the union that represents CBSA workers, that morale at the CBSA is at the lowest level he has ever seen. This is after 10 years of the Liberal government. We now see that the government keeps recycling its promises to keep hiring more border services officers, but it is clear much more needs to be done to strengthen our border and our security service.

Canada has the largest undefended border in the world, which is something we can all be very proud of as a country, but the lack of resources for the CBSA to fulfill its role has seen a rise in smuggling and human trafficking in this country and people coming to this country to pursue their criminal activities. It has skyrocketed over the past decade.

The CBSA has been sounding the alarm, but the government has not been listening. There is plenty of evidence to substantiate these points, but I will pick one specific example. At the immigration committee, IRCC officials stated that they believe there are hundreds if not thousands of violent criminals who are here illegally, violent criminals who are not citizens or permanent residents. They are temporary residents who are violent people, and officials have no idea where they are. When I asked the customs union employee, they said that there are only a couple hundred CBSA officers who are tasked with trying to track down the thousands of violent criminals who are at large in this country. This is unacceptable.

*Government Orders*

On the non-violent side, we know there are currently around 50,000 people who have come to Canada on student visas and whose visas have now run out. They are here illegally, and CBSA does not have the resources to reach out to these people or to remove these people who are now in this country illegally. Despite the shockingly high figures, as I said, there are something like only 300 CBSA officers who have been dedicated to this gargantuan task.

One of the reasons CBSA is suffering so much, as its union said, is that it is drowning in middle management. It is not getting the frontline officers it needs to do the job. This is endemic in everything the Liberal government has done for the last 10 years. Let us look at the great paradox, where we have a government where the bureaucracy has grown by 45% across the civil service yet there are fewer frontline workers in critical areas like the CBSA, the RCMP and the Canadian Armed Forces than ever before. How does that make any sense? The government is padding middle management and upper management, to the detriment of frontline workers who are doing the dangerous jobs we need them to do to keep us safe.

Action is desperately needed, and the largest beneficiary of the government's failed immigration and criminal policies has been organized crime. Canada has become a low-risk, high-reward environment. Criminals choose the path of least resistance. The strict border controls put in place during the pandemic saw the Canadian market shift from being an importer of fentanyl to becoming a domestic producer. CSIS has found that synthetic drugs are increasingly being produced in Canada using precursor chemicals from China. This is what experts are saying. It is estimated that about 80% of the precursor chemicals that are being used in fentanyl—

• (1345)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

**Hon. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a lot of talk has occurred today regarding the comments of the Leader of the Opposition when he referred to the RCMP as “despicable”. We have been asking some members of the Conservative Party about this today. Some have wanted to say something, like the member for Bow River who referred to the RCMP as having “management weaknesses”.

Others, on the other hand, have not really wanted to weigh in. The member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes had a lozenge in his throat when he was asked about it, and he therefore could not say anything.

I wonder if the member would like to weigh in as to whether or not he thinks that the leadership of the RCMP is despicable.

**Dane Lloyd:** Mr. Speaker, the government tries to distract Canadians from the real failures that the government has created. It is despicable that the government has not given the resources to our frontline officers to do the job they are doing, and the Liberals are hiding so they can avoid accountability for the failures.

The CBSA union has said that morale is at the lowest level that it has ever been, and that is under 10 years of failed Liberal leadership. Conservatives will take no lessons from the Liberals on how to stand up for—

• (1350)

**The Acting Speaker (Rob Morrison):** The hon. member for Kenora—Kiiwetinoong has the floor.

**Eric Melillo (Kenora—Kiiwetinoong, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member just spoke about the Liberals' failures. Of course, the Liberals have been in government now for 10 years, and what we have seen is that they have broken the bail system and that they failed to get frontline officers on the border and law enforcement the resources they need.

I am wondering whether the member wants to speak more on the pattern of failure of the Liberal government to keep Canadians safe.

**Dane Lloyd:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his hard work for his constituents. We know that he is doing an excellent job in northern Ontario.

It is clear that the ideological bent of the government is not to empower our frontline officers to do their job. The government is one that is beholden to a woke ideology, wherein it passes bills like Bill C-75, which tells judges to let criminals out at the earliest convenience with the least number of restraints. It is clear that it is policies like this that are being called out by frontline police officers and by police associations, and that are causing the havoc and violence we are seeing on our streets. Our party stands behind our—

**The Acting Speaker (Rob Morrison):** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Shefford.

[*Translation*]

**Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, an important aspect of border security that I talked about in my speech is human resources. We need enough officers and workers so that border crossings are effective. To improve the situation, the Bloc Québécois suggested allowing the CBSA to patrol between border crossings.

Budget cuts at the CBSA are nothing new. When I was working as an assistant to the former member for Brome—Missisquoi, we were already talking about this key issue. At the time, it was the Conservatives who were making cuts that had major impacts on the operation of the border crossings.

*Government Orders**[English]*

**Dane Lloyd:** Mr. Speaker, we know that with the longest undefended border in the world, there is no way we could hire enough police officers or CBSA officers to man every inch of our border, and that is why we need to make investments in technology and equipment. However, when the government had the opportunity to hire Canadian workers and Canadian businesses, what did it do? It chose to hire Black Hawk helicopters from the U.S. government, and it had to give a Transport Canada waiver because the helicopters were not safe to fly over Canadian skies.

Why are the Liberals choosing American companies over Canadian companies that do the job? We need to grow our made-in-Canada border security and not hire companies that have to get waivers because they are not safe to use in Canada.

**Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is once again an honour to rise on behalf of the resilient residents of Oshawa. Those are the residents who I believe are among some of the hardest-working Canadians in the country, but they are concerned about their safety. They are concerned about their safety when they are in their neighbourhoods and walking downtown, and they are concerned about border safety and the drugs that are freely flowing in our country, not just through the border, but from the free drugs people are getting from the government, which are being resold. We will talk about that later.

Canadians have heard a lot of big promises from the Liberal government about keeping our country safe, protecting our borders and restoring confidence in our immigration system. There are all of these wonderful things, yet after 10 years of Liberal government, both our borders and our public safety have rarely been in a worse place.

The legislation before us today is Bill C-12, the strengthening Canada's immigration system and borders act, which the Liberals claim would fix the very problems they created. I am reminded of something I learned in my education, and that is something called narcissism. I bring this up because narcissists engage in what clinicians call "crisis creation" or "drama seeking", which is to manufacture a situation. In my opinion, the Liberals have created the situations that allow them to dominate, control and be admired for saving others. They are keeping Canadians in constant trauma and creating, therefore, a trauma bond. The Liberal government constantly disappoints and then claims it is going to be the hero we can trust to come in to save the day from a crisis it created.

The bill is being sold as a solution, but Canadians have learned that, with this government, the title rarely matches the contents. Bill C-12 is a sequel to Bill C-2. Thankfully, Conservatives looked closer, and what we found were some sweeping data collection powers, warrantless search authorities and new threats to Canadian privacy. Therefore, through pressure, thankfully the Liberals have been forced to take Bill C-2 apart. Now we are left with Bill C-12, a slightly repackaged Bill C-2, but with many of the same problems.

In my job as an educational therapist for 20 years, we talked about breakdown points, and sometimes it seems very negative to talk about breakdown points when we are talking about families, children with learning disabilities and things like that, but in this scenario, I think breakdown points are very important because we

cannot come to a conclusion or a solution unless we discover what the breakdown points are, so let us talk about that.

Canada's asylum system, once the envy of the world, is now buckling under the weight of Liberal mismanagement. A decade ago, the backlog was under 10,000 cases. Today, it is over a quarter of a million and growing. Legitimate refugees wait years while bogus claims clog the system. Failed claimants appeal for years, and more and more often remain in Canada indefinitely, collecting benefits that many Canadians themselves do not receive, so this is not compassion. This is the chaos creation I was speaking about.

It started when the government decided it was going to play politics with our borders. In 2017, Justin Trudeau's #WelcomeToCanada tweet encouraged tens of thousands of people to cross illegally from the United States to claim asylum, many after already having been rejected in that safe, democratic country. Since then, more than 100,000 people have entered Canada illegally. Most are still waiting in the system, many housed at taxpayers' expense, while the truly vulnerable, those fleeing real persecution, are left behind.

This is not fairness. It is, rather, failure.

A broken asylum system does not just strain compassion. It undermines public safety. We have seen the consequences at our borders and on our streets. Under the government, criminals slated for deportation have disappeared, illegal guns continue to cross our borders and the fentanyl crisis is devastating communities across the country, including in my own community of Oshawa. If we were to walk through downtown Oshawa, we would see the toll this crisis has taken: lives lost, families shattered, and neighbourhoods struggling under the weight of addiction and fear.

● (1355)

Our first responders, outreach workers and volunteers are doing their best, but they are overwhelmed. According to Health Canada, more than 49,000 Canadians have died from apparent opioid toxicity since 2016, an entire community worth of lives. From January to June 2024 alone, 79% of accidental opioid deaths involve fentanyl, nearly double the proportion from 2016. Six months ago, my nephew, Cody Kirkland, died from an accidental overdose. Fentanyl and its precursors are the reason for that.

**The Speaker:** I would like to express my condolences to the hon. member on that tragic loss.

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

### STAN LAPIERRE

**Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today I honour the late elder Stan LaPierre, whose radiant smile and gentle, wise spirit were gifts to all who knew him. His compassion knew no bounds. His love poured freely into the lives of others, especially through his tireless care and love for families of murdered and disappeared women, girls and gender-diverse people, as well as survivors of violence. I will always remember the light of his smile. It could brighten even the darkest of rooms.

Though I knew Stan only briefly, I am profoundly grateful for his kindness, teachings and love. His absence leaves a great void in our community, yet his legacy of humanity will continue to guide us.

The love of his beloved partner, elder Thelma Morrisseau, reflected deep respect, joy, and devotion. My heart is with her and her family during their time of grief.

Rest in power, dear Stan. His light shines on.

\* \* \*

### SPECIAL OLYMPICS CANADA

**Leslie Church (Toronto—St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, visiting Ottawa today are two incredible athletes, Ava Walsh and Gracie Ryckman, as well as coaches, staff and volunteers from Special Olympics Canada. For more than 50 years, the Special Olympics have shown us the power of inclusion, creating opportunities for Canadians with disabilities to build on their strengths, foster lifelong friendships and shine on and off the field.

Across the country, and in my riding of Toronto—St. Paul's, where the beating heart of the organization has a home, I have seen how these programs bring communities together. They remind us that sport is not only about competition but also about belonging, confidence and joy.

Gracie and Ava's determination and teamwork inspire us all. They embody what it means to lead with heart. On behalf of the House, I thank them for their dedication, and I thank everyone who makes the Special Olympics possible.

\* \* \*

### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Jagsharan Singh Mahal (Edmonton Southeast, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, under the Liberal government, crime and chaos is out of control. Extortion has exploded into one of the fastest-growing crimes in Canada, with threats against small business owners and innocent citizens. Just this weekend, in my riding of Edmonton Southeast, an innocent family had their house shot up after it was misidentified by gangsters. This is unacceptable. It is a direct result of the Liberal soft-on-crime agenda.

Canadians deserve to feel safe in their own homes. That is why Conservatives want to restore mandatory jail time and repeal the dangerous Liberal catch-and-release laws, Bill C-5 and Bill C-75.

### Statements by Members

To the innocent family whose home was shot at, that should not have happened. My fellow Conservatives and I will fight hard to stop the crime so that criminals like the ones who attacked them will face real consequences, not just a slap on the wrist.

\* \* \*

### STEVE BUTLAND

**Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie—Algoma, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to my friend Steve Butland, who served as a member of Parliament in the House from 1988 to 1993. Steve and I also served on city council from 2003 to 2015. He was a one-term mayor and did a fantastic job serving with great passion. He was a mentor to me and a partner in many initiatives. Together, we co-sponsored a motion declaring Sault Ste. Marie the alternative energy capital of North America.

I remember dearly a little story about Steve when he and I, as city councillors, visited the House of Commons while we were here for an AMO conference. We walked in the door and a guard remembered him fondly. A decade later, he remembered Steve's name and everything, such as what party he belonged to. It was quite amazing the impact that guy had on every kind of person, from all walks of life.

I send my condolences to Sharran; his daughters, Stefanie, Suzanne and Stacy; their husbands; and his grandchildren. Rest in peace, Steve.

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[Translation]

### RIDING OF CHARLESBOURG—HAUTE-SAINT-CHARLES

**Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on October 19, 2015, the people of Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles did me the great honour of electing me to the House of Commons.

Today, 10 years later, I am proud and thankful to rise to mark this important milestone; 10 years defending the interests of our families, our seniors, our young people and all those who contribute to the vitality of our riding every day.

*Statements by Members*

I have had the privilege of working with organizations that embody our values of solidarity and commitment: the Knights of Columbus, the Patro de Charlesbourg, our seniors clubs, our sports associations and the organizations that support people living with various needs.

These dedicated men and women, who are often volunteers, remind us that the strength of a community depends on helping one another, on family and on shared responsibility. These are deeply rooted values in our riding that have guided me for the past decade.

I sincerely thank the people of Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles for their renewed trust, and I continue to serve them with passion.

\* \* \*

● (1405)

**WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**

**Claude Guay (LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate women this month, I would like to take a moment to recognize an exceptional woman in my life: my wife, Carol Anne, who is celebrating her birthday this week. For over 35 years of marriage, Carol Anne has been my rock and my inspiration. She has been right by my side for every one of my adventures, including this new one in politics.

*[English]*

Her strength, kindness and compassion make her truly extraordinary. Everyone who meets her can feel her genuine warmth and uplifting energy.

I thank Carol Anne for her unwavering support, her patience and her love. She reminds me every day what truly matters: family, respect and kindness.

Happy birthday to an amazing woman. I am so grateful to share this journey with her.

As we celebrate Women's History Month, let us take the time to recognize all the women who inspire us, lift us up and make our communities stronger every single day.

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**MARTIN BRODHAGEN**

**John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Martin Brodhagen, who died as a result of a tragic farm accident on the same land he tended for his entire life. He was a man of tremendous work ethic and immense resilience and had a good heart. Martin was devoted to his faith, his farm and his family.

He contributed to the community through Junior Farmers and 4-H, and he was the kind of person who would go out of his way to help his neighbours in their time of need. He enjoyed a good auction sale and a good joke.

He was a loving husband to Brenda and a caring father to his children, Amanda and Bryan, who were truly his pride and joy. Though Martin is gone, his legacy lives on through them, as they farm the land that meant so much to him.

*[Translation]***SPECIAL OLYMPICS CANADA**

**Madeleine Chenette (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know that sport can transform lives, build confidence, create bonds and bring joy. Everyone deserves to experience that.

Across Canada, thousands of athletes benefit from programs supported by passionate Special Olympics Canada volunteers and coaches who promote strength, pride, honour, courage and friendship, values that inspire us all.

Today, let us join in celebrating the vibrant spirit of Canada's Special Olympics athletes from coast to coast to coast.

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*[English]***SPECIAL OLYMPICS CANADA**

**Hon. Mike Lake (Leduc—Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to honour one of the most incredible organizations in the history of sport. While others will no doubt pay tribute to our beloved Blue Jays this afternoon, I am here to celebrate the many Special Olympics athletes joining us in Ottawa today.

For six decades, the Special Olympics has changed the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities worldwide, including the over 40,000 Canadian athletes who participate today. One of those athletes is my own son Jaden, who radiates pure joy whenever he has a bowling ball in his hands. Another athlete is Damion, a multi-sport Special Olympian and athlete ambassador I met this morning. Damion is carrying the torch in a way that would make the legendary Joey Moss proud.

I also want to salute the incomparable Mary Davis, CEO of Special Olympics International, soon retiring after 47 years of tireless leadership in the organization.

As Special Olympics Canada prepares for the 2026 Canada Summer Games in Medicine Hat, I know colleagues from all sides of this House will join me in recognizing its invaluable contribution to our country.

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*[Translation]***30TH ANNIVERSARY OF LA PETITE MAISON DE  
POINTE-CALUMET**

**Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as you will see, community spirit runs deep in my riding.

This year, we are celebrating the 30th anniversary of La Petite Maison de Pointe-Calumet, which was founded in 1995 by Diane Grenier. It has grown over the years thanks to the commitment of passionate people like current director Méliissa Corbeil and her hard-working team.

*Statements by Members***ANTI-SEMITISM**

With more than 550 people receiving assistance and dozens of volunteers helping out, the organization provides support to families, children and seniors on a daily basis through projects such as the community garden, collective kitchens, food aid and educational kits that make learning about important issues fun for the whole family. At La Petite Maison de Pointe-Calumet, the expression “it takes a village to raise a child” takes on its full meaning.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois and my constituents, I invite the House to join me in wishing La Petite Maison de Pointe-Calumet a very happy anniversary. I want to thank all those who have been fostering hope and solidarity there for 30 years now. What they do makes all the difference.

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● (1410)

[English]

**SMALL BUSINESSES**

**Chris Malette (Bay of Quinte, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, small businesses are the backbone of our communities. They create jobs, spark innovation and build local pride. With October 19 to 24 being Small Business Week here in Canada, I am reminded this week and every day of just how much small businesses in my riding of Bay of Quinte provide to our local communities. This week is about recognizing the hard work, creativity and resilience of small businesses, especially through these challenging times.

Small Business Week is also a moment to reflect on the challenges ahead and to recommit to supporting every entrepreneur with the tools they need to thrive. Our government stands with them, ensuring they have the opportunities and tools to shape Canada's future.

I look forward to honouring some of these businesses at the Quinte Business Achievement Awards this coming Friday, where many local small business champions will be recognized. I thank all small businesses in Canada and those in the Bay of Quinte.

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**PROPERTY RIGHTS**

**Chak Au (Richmond Centre—Marpole, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, residents of Richmond are deeply concerned about the Cowichan land ruling. This decision raises serious questions about long-standing private property rights in British Columbia. People want to know if their land titles are secure and what this means for their homes and their future, yet the Liberal government has remained silent. There has been no explanation, no reassurance and no plan. As a result, Richmond is holding a public information session on October 28 so residents can get the answers the federal government has failed to provide.

Property ownership is a foundational Canadian right. It is not optional; it is the responsibility of the federal government to protect it. Canadians are watching. They expect the government to stand up for their rights, not stand by in silence.

**Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today, I want to welcome the Jewish community leaders from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and the Jewish Federations of Canada, who are here on Parliament Hill for their annual advocacy day. They come at a time when Canada's Jewish community is facing an alarming rise in anti-Semitism.

Though Jewish Canadians make up just 1.2% of the population, we make up 70% of all religious-based hate crimes in this country. In 2024 alone, police reported over 900 such incidents, the highest number on record. Across Canada, synagogues, schools and community centres have had to assume extraordinary security responsibilities, spending more than \$40 million each year to keep their members safe.

These leaders are here to call on all of us, regardless of party, to confront anti-Semitism with the seriousness it deserves. There have been firebombs, people assaulted and Jewish students targeted on campus.

This must end now. Let us stand with Canada's Jewish community and affirm that hate has no place in this country.

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**CANADA REVENUE AGENCY**

**Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General has dropped another bombshell, and it landed right on the steps of the Canada Revenue Agency.

The AG reported that the CRA answered just 33% of the 32 million calls it got last year. That 33% is not a service level; it is a batting average. Perhaps the Blue Jays should hire the CRA.

When a call was answered, 83% of the responses given by the CRA were incorrect, which is less accuracy than a Liberal budget projection. Here is the kicker: Call centre employees do not even have to worry about giving wrong answers. In performance reviews, the CRA ranks showing up for work and going on coffee breaks as having a higher importance than delivering proper responses to taxpayers.

The CRA cannot answer phones, but it has increased the number of audits it is doing on Canadians by 10%. This is not a public service; it is a disservice to Canadians. After 10 years of Liberal mismanagement, Canadians deserve better.

*Oral Questions*

● (1415)

*[Translation]***ECONOMIC DELEGATION FROM THE QUEBEC CITY AREA**

**Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I would like to welcome to Ottawa a delegation of entrepreneurs and economic leaders from the greater Quebec City area, led by Québec International and its president and CEO, Carl Viel.

In these times of economic uncertainty, these women and men brilliantly embody the drive, creativity and expertise that form the backbone of our regional economy. Their presence here today demonstrates a strong commitment to building bridges, sharing their expertise and exploring new ways of collaborating with the federal government.

I join my colleagues, the Minister of Government Transformation and the MP for Québec Centre, in recognizing their outstanding contribution to innovation, job creation and the sustainable prosperity of our communities. The Quebec City area stands out as a gateway to America, an economic engine, a hub of innovation and a true source of national pride.

I welcome them to Ottawa and thank them for promoting Quebec City on the Canadian and international stage.

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*[English]***TORONTO BLUE JAYS**

**Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last night, for a few hours we were a nation united, gathered around our TVs watching the Toronto Blue Jays beat the Mariners in seven games to reach the World Series for the first time in 32 years.

The season started slow, but around the middle of May, something clicked. Playing with grit, hustle, good pitching, defence and no easy outs in the lineups, the Blue Jays went 73-45 to finish in first place, and they have not looked back.

We love Vladdy, and we have dreamt of what he could do since we signed him at 16 years of age. There is Gausman, Yesavage, Bieber, Scherzer and Hoffman. The list of all the great pitching goes on and on. Then there is Kirky. How could we not admire him, a fan favourite and the everyman in the lineup? George Springer found the fountain of youth and had a career year.

We love these Blue Jays because 41 million Canadians can see themselves in them: in an underdog, in their hard work, in never giving up and in believing in themselves.

There are four more. Let us win it all.

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**WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**

**Amandeep Sodhi (Brampton Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, October is Women's History Month, a time to honour the women who have shaped our country and to recommit ourselves to building a Canada where everyone can thrive.

Today, women hold nearly 43% of leadership roles in Canada, a real improvement from just a few years ago, but representation is still uneven. Indigenous women, women with disabilities and other marginalized women remain under-represented, especially in senior and board positions. These numbers remind us that equality is not guaranteed and that it is something we must keep working toward.

That is why I was proud to join an event put on by the Reaching the Un-Reached Foundation earlier this month in my riding of Brampton Centre, an organization dedicated to empowering and supporting women. I spoke with community leaders and discussed how we can continue to break down barriers for women in every sector.

This month, and every month, let us continue to advance gender equality and uplift women everywhere. To everyone watching, happy Women's History Month.

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**ORAL QUESTIONS***[Translation]***FINANCE**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, every dollar that this Prime Minister spends is costing Canadians a lot. Since he doubled the deficits left behind by Justin Trudeau, inflation has picked up speed. Statistics Canada announced today that the inflation rate is rising. In fact, four of the indicators are above the targets, and grocery costs are rising at two times the target rate.

Will the Prime Minister use his budget to eliminate these inflationary taxes and deficits and make life affordable for Canadians?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that the Leader of the Opposition is looking forward to November 4. I am too, as are all Canadians. Why is that? It is because we will have good news for Canadians this November 4. We are going to present them with an ambitious plan.

When I was in Washington last week, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund cited Germany and Canada as examples of countries with the fiscal room to make generational investments. That is exactly what we are going to do. We are going to build an ambitious Canada, a strong Canada, a Canada to make every Canadian proud.

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● (1420)

**CANADA REVENUE AGENCY**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we do not work for Washington bankers; we work for single mothers who cannot afford groceries.

Today, we are seeing runaway inflation at a time when the government is forcing Canadians to spend 70% more on the CRA. Today, the Auditor General revealed that only 15% of calls are being answered on time. Even when a call does get answered, the information is wrong 83% of the time.

Why should Canadians pay so much for such lousy service?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have more good news for the Leader of the Opposition. He will be happy to hear that we on the government side have already put measures in place. We have presented a 100-day plan to fix the situation at the Canada Revenue Agency.

That is because on this side of the House, we are aware that we need to do better and keep Canadians informed. Here is another thing that we do on this side of the House: We respect the people who work in the public service.

We will always respect the people who work in the public service, and we will always do more to serve Canadians.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### FINANCE

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, he admits they have to do better. It is not possible for them to do any worse.

The reality is that today we learned that inflation is again on the march. All four measures of inflation are above the Bank of Canada's targets; two are outside of and above the acceptable range. Food price inflation is rising at two times the rate the Bank of Canada targets. It is no wonder we have two million people lined up at food banks every single day.

This inflation has exploded since the Prime Minister doubled the deficit. Will he reverse his inflationary deficit and taxes in this coming budget?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think we all know on this side of the House, and Canadians know, that math might not be the cup of tea of the Leader of the Opposition, and neither may be economics.

Let me quote one of the authorities in the world, who is the director general of the International Monetary Fund. She said just last week:

And then we have countries in the G7 that are in a better position. Germany and Canada stand up in that regard.

Both Germany and Canada recognize that in this very testing time, they need to use their fiscal space.... In the case of Canada, the Canadian authorities have been very decisive [in taking] action....

We are—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

#### Oral Questions

#### CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, his banker friends in Washington may think they have fiscal space, but the single mothers who cannot afford groceries have no space left at all to pay for Liberal inflation.

The government is forcing them to spend 70% more on the Canada Revenue Agency. Today, the Auditor General revealed that only 15% of calls get responses on time, and even if someone does pick up the phone, there is an 83% change they give the wrong answer.

Why does the government force Canadians to pay so much for such terrible service?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives; trust me on that.

At every step of the way, they fought against dental care. At every step of the way, they fought against the national school food program. At every step of the way, they fought against pharmacare. At every step of the way, they fought against programs that would support Canadians at a time of need.

No one on that side of this House will tell us what to do. We are going to fight for Canadians. We are going to make Canada strong.

\* \* \*

● (1425)

#### AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is another day with more costly slogans from that member of Parliament. Now Canadians are learning it was a bait and switch, with another terrible tragedy.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** As they laugh, Mr. Speaker, 1,200 workers at the Ingersoll CAMI plant learned they would lose their jobs after the Prime Minister promised he would negotiate a win and that he would keep their jobs here in Canada. They join with 2,000 workers in Brampton and many more in Oshawa.

How does the Prime Minister look in the eyes the very workers he sold out and betrayed?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will tell the House how the Prime Minister will deal with the auto sector. He will look the auto workers in the eyes, and he will say that we will fight for their jobs. This is exactly what we are doing every single day. We are negotiating back in Washington, but it is also important to say that I met this morning with the Canadian CEO of GM. I was in conversation with the head of the labour union, of Unifor. I also talked to Doug Ford, and I talked to Vic Fedeli. We are putting in place a response group. We will make sure we fight for these jobs. We need to make sure—

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, she announced, just now, that she talked to this person, and she talked to that person, and she talked to this other person, and she talked, and she talked, and they talked, and they talked, and nothing gets done. Canadians are tired of talk; they want their jobs. The Prime Minister looked these workers in the eye and said he would negotiate a win, that he would protect auto jobs, that there would be an all-in-Canada supply chain that would keep them working. They even gave a quarter-billion tax dollars to GM for this plant. Now those workers do not know how they are going to pay their bills.

How does the government explain the broken promise and betrayal?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we will fight for these jobs, and we will hold the companies to account. That being said, let me talk about important jobs. There are 150 new jobs in Saint-Bruno at Alstom, 700 new jobs at AstraZeneca, 500 new jobs at Ferrero in Ontario, 50 new jobs at K+S Potash, 500 new jobs at Hitachi Energy. This government is building a strong Canadian economy.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**JUSTICE**

**Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Université du Québec à Montréal wisely banned a talk by Imam Uthman Ibn Farooq, but he will be wreaking havoc in Brossard anyway. Yes, this preacher will be able to spread his message of hatred and incitement to violence in Canada absolutely legally. Why? It is because he has the right to do so.

Will the Liberal government remove the religious exemption from the Criminal Code?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think those of us on this side of the House share the Bloc Québécois leader's concern. Hate speech has no place in Canada. That is why the Minister of Justice introduced amendments in Bill C-9 specifically to address hate.

In the last Parliament, we introduced a bill on online hate. We will keep working to ensure that hate speech has no place in Canada.

**Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice is dancing around the issue, but he is not addressing the root of the problem, which is the religious exemption that remains in effect in their law.

Spreading hatred is a crime in Canada, except when done under the guise of religion. Assaulting a woman captured in a war zone, for example by Hamas on October 7, 2023, is therefore something a man can do if he wants. It is halal.

Is that what Liberal values look like?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have said it before and I will say it again: Hate

speech has no place in Canada. The Minister of Justice has offered to work with the Bloc Québécois on reforms that are before the House as part of Bill C-9.

We are prepared to work with the Bloc Québécois to improve the situation and ensure that hate speech has no place in this country.

**Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, there is an incredibly easy way to solve the problem and free the government from the shame it has brought upon itself.

We will work to eliminate the religious exemption through the Liberals' bill. I challenge them, as much as they may support multiculturalism, to have the courage to vote in favour of our amendment to eliminate the religious exemption and thus ban hate, the spread of hate and incitement to violence in our media and on our streets.

● (1430)

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-9 is currently before the Standing Committee on Justice. The Bloc Québécois is free to make proposals regarding this bill and we invite its members to do so.

We will hear from experts on this issue and we are ready to work with the Bloc Québécois and all parties in the House to ensure, once again, that hate speech has no place in our country.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we all know the Prime Minister does not shop for his own groceries, so maybe someone over there should tell him what is going on with food prices. Food inflation has now reached the highest level since 2023. With fruits, vegetables, meat and even Halloween candy, everything is getting more expensive, and it is rising faster, not slower. The cost of living is soaring because the cost of government is soaring. The Prime Minister is spending more than even Justin Trudeau did, which means higher taxes and higher inflation for everyone who lives in the real world.

Does the Prime Minister realize that his out-of-control spending means real costs for real Canadians?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, time and again, we see the Conservatives fighting against policies that Canadians are not only benefiting from but also asking that we make permanent. This includes things like the school food program, which many advocates and, indeed, families have praised. In fact, in my own riding, I heard just yesterday from a food partner who is working with high schools to make sure kids not only get access to fresh food but also learn how to prepare it themselves.

These are the kinds of things helping Canadian families. Every step of the way, those guys fight against it.

**Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal minister sat here for 10 years while people lined up at food banks. Is that what she has to say? Runaway Liberal deficits doubled grocery prices. Now the same people who caused the crisis think the solution is just to spend more of other people's money.

It is not just Liberal deficits driving up food costs. They voted against removing every hidden food tax that they themselves imposed: packaging taxes, the industrial carbon tax and another 17¢ a litre because of the fuel standard. It is a religion to them. Food prices are soaring and fridges are empty.

Why do the Liberals not scrap the hidden taxes they imposed?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, we see the member and, indeed, the entire Conservative Party pretending there is a tax on food. Canadians are smarter than that. They know, when they go to the grocery store, that food is not taxed.

Instead of imaginary problems, we are coming up with real solutions on this side, whether it is for families, seniors or workers. We are here for Canadians, in both the good times and the bad.

I will just add that I hope this concern is going to translate into support for the budget that will be tabled later on.

**Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, greeters at Walmart grocery stores are no longer saying hello. They are apologizing, but it is the Liberals who should be apologizing for the inflationary deficits that have driven up food prices. Inflation data out today confirms that food prices have once again skyrocketed. They are up 4% as everyday groceries become even more unaffordable for families.

We just need the number. How much higher do food prices need to go before the Liberals admit their policies are starving Canadians?

**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 referred to apologies. Perhaps he would like to lean forward a couple of rows and suggest to his boss, the Leader of the Opposition, that he should apologize to the men and women who serve in Canada's RCMP for attacking their integrity and attacking the work they do to protect all Canadians. He should be ashamed of himself. He pretends to stand up for the police. He attacks them unfairly, and he should apologize to the

women and men who serve in the RCMP. That would be a good apology.

**Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are so focused on listening to their own spin that they have tuned out the grumbling sounds of millions of hungry Canadian stomachs. The Prime Minister said he would be judged by the prices people pay at the grocery store. With food prices up another 4%, thanks to his Liberal government's inflationary deficits, Canadians have made up their minds.

The Prime Minister is an empty suit making empty promises that have led to too many empty stomachs. How is this acceptable?

• (1435)

**Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House recognize that families need supports in meeting affordability questions. This is why we have supports in place and why time and time again we have stood for the national school food program; early learning and child care, making it affordable and accessible across the country; dental care; and the Canada child benefit. At each and every opportunity, the members opposite voted against these supports for families, for children and for Canadians from coast to coast.

**Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, under the Liberal government, everything is costing more, especially food. New food inflation data shows prices in Atlantic Canada are climbing faster than the national average, and in Newfoundland and Labrador, people are under tremendous pressure. Our province already has the highest unemployment rate in the country, yet families are being hit again at the grocery store. Beef is up 14%, sugar is up 9% and meat is up 6%. Runaway Liberal spending is fuelling inflation, and every dollar Liberals waste makes life harder.

When will the government stop the reckless spending and start making life affordable for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador?

**Hon. Joanne Thompson (Minister of Fisheries, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to share with the member across the way from Newfoundland and Labrador that a single mom in her riding who earns \$15,000 a year can now access up to \$25,000 because she will automatically get the benefits for her and her children. This is good news, this is affordability and this is not a slogan.

*Oral Questions*

**Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while the Liberals brag, more and more people line up at the food banks in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Liberals voted against our motion to reduce food costs. It is not good enough. Sneaky hidden Liberal food taxes, like the clean-fuel regulations, are driving up food costs, and since March, food prices have risen 48% faster in Canada than in the U.S. This year alone, food banks are expecting four million visits.

When will the Prime Minister end his inflationary spree and finally make life affordable for Canadians?

**Hon. Joanne Thompson (Minister of Fisheries, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to again remind my colleague of the benefit of the school food program. I have spoken with moms who are absolutely grateful. Their children now have food in their belly and are not separated from all the other children who can expect the basic right to have food in the morning. I also want to remind my colleague of the importance of the dental program, the child benefit and \$10-a-day child care.

This is affordability; it is not loose slogans.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**FINANCE**

**Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, inflation continues to spiral out of control under the Liberal government. The government is spending more, and Canadians are the ones paying the price.

Today, Statistics Canada announced that consumer prices rose by 2.4% over the past year. The situation is even worse in Quebec, where prices rose by 3.3%. What is more, the price of gas increased by 2.7% in Quebec.

The Liberals' deficits are costing Canadians dearly and costing Quebecers even more.

In his next budget, will the Prime Minister commit to bringing spending and the deficit under control and stopping inflation?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our friend across the way comes from a national assembly in Quebec City where decisions need to be made. He is well aware of that. We made the choice to support families, support child care services, support day care centres, support dental care, support pharmacare, support our seniors, and support our youth. I think that is the choice he would have made at the National Assembly of Quebec.

Why is he now standing up and criticizing us? He is going to vote against it. Let him take responsibility for that.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, imagine being this out of touch with Quebecers: On Thursday, the federal government announced \$52 million for Quebec's health care system, but not for treating the sick. No, that \$52 million is for angli-

cizing our hospitals. What our hospitals need is money to care for Quebecers, not money to anglicize Quebec. English is alive and well in Quebec, including in hospitals.

When will the government stop its crusade to anglicize Quebec?

• (1440)

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to my colleague opposite, he knows full well that our government did more for official languages than any other government in the history of this country with the reform of the Official Languages Act. We have invested \$2 billion in official languages.

For the first time in the country's history, we are set to meet our targets for francophone immigration outside Quebec. Not only that, but we are going to double or even triple them by the end of the year. We are the first government to have done that. We are also making investments like this for francophone communities outside Quebec. What the member is saying is patently untrue.

**Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, English is hardly at risk in Quebec. It is unacceptable to waste \$52 million of our money to anglicize our hospitals, rather than providing people with actual health care. Obviously, the Government of Quebec has spoken out about this, saying, "Once again, the federal government is infringing on Quebec's jurisdictions....Instead, it should be transferring the money to Quebec with no strings attached and letting the government that is responsible for health decide how best to use it".

Why not transfer the money to Quebec so that it can be put to good use in providing actual health care to Quebecers?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am shocked, and I think that most Quebecers are too.

This government is investing in essential services for people from linguistic minorities across the country. Take, for example, the Dr. Georges-L.-Dumont University Hospital Centre in Moncton and the health care centres in the Prairies. Of course, we are also investing in health care in Quebec.

Is the member suggesting that English-speaking Quebecers should be denied critical care in the language of their choice? That is what he is suggesting. Shame on him. We will keep—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Calgary East.

\* \* \*

[English]

**FINANCE**

**Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Prime Minister's economic record is even worse than Justin Trudeau's. By doubling the deficit, he is making everything more expensive, especially groceries.

*Oral Questions*

Today's devastating inflation numbers confirm that Liberal deficits are crushing Canadians. Rent is up 5%, groceries are up 4%, and the four core inflation numbers are all above the bank's target. The so-called budget expert's math is not mathing.

Will the Liberals stop their inflationary deficits that are driving up the cost of living?

**Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know that the Conservative Party opposite has a hard time, but here are some facts. We have had 21 straight months in the targeted inflation rate from the Bank of Canada. Our economy grew jobs in September. We have the lowest debt in the G7. We have the lowest deficit in the G7. We have the lowest net debt-to-GDP in the G7. Our economy has had challenges, but it is strong and it is growing.

Our Prime Minister was elected to build the strongest economy in the G7, and that is exactly what he is going to do.

**Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has built the fastest-shrinking economy in the G7.

Did the Liberals not learn anything from Justin Trudeau, that the more they spend, the worse it gets for Canadians? Ten years of deficit spending has left Canadians with high inflation, and it is only getting worse. In typical Liberal fashion, the Prime Minister promised to cap government spending, yet he is going to double the deficit.

After 10 years of Liberal deficits, what do the Liberals not understand? The more they spend, the more expensive things get for Canadians.

**Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, let us look at facts. Our economy is not shrinking; our economy grew. It added jobs. Interest rates are down, and inflation is within targeted rates.

On November 4, we are going to table a budget. We are going to spend less. We are going to invest more in capital projects. We are going to invest in nation-building projects, infrastructure and housing. We are going to build the strongest economy in the G7.

We are not going to take any lessons from someone who has never worked in the economy.

**Ned Kuruc (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, over the past weekend at Halloween events in Stoney Creek, the crippling cost of living was the hot topic at my booth. New inflation data confirms that all three core inflationary measures are above target. Grocery inflation is up 4%, and rent inflation is up nearly 5% in the last year.

Liberal deficits are driving inflation. The more Liberals spend, the more it costs Canadians at the grocery store.

Will the Liberals get their inflationary deficits under control to make life more affordable for Canadians?

• (1445)

**Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the party opposite has been, but we know where the

Leader of the Opposition has been. He spent the last week peddling dangerous far-right conspiracy theories about law enforcement in our country. He should apologize.

While the Leader of the Opposition has been attacking the rule of law, Canada's new government spent the last week announcing a new suite of affordability measures, measures to strengthen the rule of law, crack down on crime and keep Canadians safe. This will be included in our first budget.

I urge Conservative MPs to speak up, stand up and call on the leader opposite to apologize.

**Matt Strauss (Kitchener South—Hespeler, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what Canadians care about is the cost of living, and the more the Liberals deficit spend, the more it costs Canadians at the grocery store. New inflation data today confirms this. All three core inflation measures are above target. Rent is up 5% over the year, and groceries are up 4% over the year.

After 10 years of the Liberals' deficits, the cost of living in this country cannot take any more, so will the Liberals stay on focus and get their inflationary deficits under control to make life more affordable for Canadians?

**Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians trust that our government has their back. Why is this? It is because we are making life more affordable and have cut taxes for 22 million Canadians. This is allowing Canadians to put more money back into their pockets.

Speaking of food, there is good news: Our government is making the school food program permanent. This is going to put \$800 back into Canadians' pockets and actually feed healthy meals at school. In addition, 5.5 million low-income Canadians will automatically receive federal benefits through CRA tax filings.

These are real, tangible benefits for Canadians.

[Translation]

**Bernard Généreux (Côte-du-Sud—Rivière-du-Loup—Kataskomik—Témiscouata, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week in Montmagny, Rivière-du-Loup and Témiscouata-sur-le-Lac, I met families who are struggling to make ends meet. This should not be the case in a country like ours.

### Oral Questions

However, Quebec is seeing inflation rise to 3.3% because of this inflationary Liberal government. As a result, gas prices are out of control, rents have gone up 10% in the past year, and the cost of groceries has skyrocketed. Prices are soaring everywhere, and families are unable to pay their bills.

Will the Liberals finally get their inflationary deficit under control and make life more affordable for Canadians and Quebecers?

**Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the short answer is yes.

However, the question is coming from a member who has voted against every single support we have put forward in recent years. He has little credibility.

Speaking of credibility, we know that there are still reasonable Conservatives in this country who find the Leader of the Opposition's vicious attacks on the rule of law and the RCMP unacceptable. We know this because we read about it in the newspapers. For example, we read what their former colleague Alain Rayes had to say. We hear what they are saying on the radio and on television, and we read what they are saying on social media.

Here, when it comes time to speak out against the unacceptable Leader of the Opposition, the response has been crickets. Silence means consent. Will anyone stand up and call out what is unacceptable?

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[English]

### INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Hon. Helena Jaczek (Markham—Stouffville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be part of a new government that has championed trade diversification since day one. We have broken down internal trade barriers within Canada, and we have signed new trade agreements with Ecuador and Indonesia. We are moving at a pace and an intensity that Canadians expect of us.

Can the Minister of International Trade update the House on our government's latest action to expand and grow our trade relationship with the United Kingdom and on what it means for Canadians?

**Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is good news: Today we tabled legislation to expand the CPTPP trading bloc to welcome our partners from the United Kingdom, which is a major step forward for Canadian trade. Why the U.K.? The U.K. is Canada's third-largest trading partner. Last year alone, it represented \$28 billion of Canadian exports. That is billions of dollars of Canadian products produced by Canadian workers in communities across Canada. This is yet another step forward in our trade diversification efforts.

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### AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after the Prime Minister failed to negotiate a win with Trump, Canada's auto industry was hit yet again with devastating news this morning. Over 1,200 highly skilled auto workers at the CAMI Ingersoll plant are

being laid off by GM indefinitely. This adds to the 2,200 job losses in Oshawa and the 3,000 announced in Brampton.

The Liberals have sold out our auto workers. Will the Prime Minister finally admit that he has lost control of the wheel and is driving our auto sector off the cliff?

● (1450)

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague comes from the region, and I look forward to working with him in finding solutions.

Obviously, we will fight for these jobs. Not only will we do that, but also, this morning, we were already on the phone with the company to be in solution mode. We were with the GM CEO, Unifor labour, Doug Ford and Vic Fedeli. Our goal is to bring back a new model to Ingersoll, and we are on it.

**Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have been talking to auto workers who are losing their jobs now because of the Liberals' failed policies. An auto worker in Ingersoll called me this morning and said that he does not know how he will pay for his mortgage, and he does not know how he will feed his family. There is a real sense of anxiety in our community. The Liberals blew billions on EVs, and now Canadian workers and their families are the ones who are paying the price.

Will the Liberals finally hit the brakes and stop selling out Canadian workers?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is right in saying that there is real anxiety there. I agree, because I have been in contact with workers, and I feel it as well.

Our goal is to make sure that we are able to bring back jobs to Ingersoll, to work with the company, to work with the Government of Ontario and to work with the labour unions. Meanwhile, we will make sure that we continue to engage with the United States, because at the end of the day, we know that this is because of the unjustified tariffs of the president against the auto sector.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this news out of GM today is another devastating blow for auto workers. It comes less than a week after Stellantis announced 3,000 layoffs as it moved production from Canada into the U.S.

The Prime Minister looked Canadians in the eye and promised that, in exchange for their votes, he would prevent auto sector job losses from happening. Well, they are happening.

*Oral Questions*

If the government included a Canada-wide job protection plan in its \$15-billion deal to Stellantis, it could simply invoke that clause. The minister who signed the contract should be able to answer this question: Did the Liberals include a job protection clause in the contract with Stellantis?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know that the Conservatives have been wanting to see the contracts that are linked to the Stellantis plant, and we have said yes. The opposition on the committee will have access to the contracts, and they will discover that indeed we negotiated well and indeed Stellantis is on the hook.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it has been a week, and all we have gotten from this minister is political theatre. She is bragging about who she gets on the phone. She is bragging about the tough talks she is having. Here is the thing: If the Liberals actually included a job protection clause in the contract, all they have to do is invoke it.

I am starting to get a terrible feeling. I am starting to worry that they signed a \$15-billion deal with Stellantis and did not include a guarantee to protect those Canadian jobs.

Can the minister tell Canadians very clearly and explicitly if they included a job protection plan for all jobs at Stellantis when they forked over \$15 billion?

**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 trying to spook Canadians, but I would like to remind him that the support that was given to the company was linked to the production of batteries. Therefore, no money is spent—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Start from the top, please.

**Hon. Mélanie Joly:** Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleague is trying to spook Canadians right now, but what is really important to remember is that any support from the government was linked to the production of batteries. In that sense, our support would be linked to the moment production started happening. The production has not necessarily happened yet.

That being said, we will make sure that we hold Stellantis to account, because, obviously, jobs are important at the Brampton facility, and we will continue to fight for these jobs.

• (1455)

**Dalwinder Gill (Calgary McKnight, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, during the last election, the Prime Minister promised Canadians that he would get a deal with the United States, but since he was elected, tens of thousands of Canadians have lost their jobs and \$54 billion in investment has fled the country. Last week, Stellantis announced its plans to move its Brampton plant to Illinois after the finance minister signed a deal giving them 10 billion taxpayer dollars.

Canadian auto workers want to know what job guarantees were in these contracts.

**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 has heard very well that the government will make these contracts available to the opposition. He can assert a series of fabricated conspiracy theories, but it does not make them true.

What is true is that our government is supporting a proud tradition of building vehicles and cars in Canada. There is over 100 years of Canadian workers building these cars. We are going to defend those workers, support those businesses and fight to ensure we get a deal with the United States that is good for Canadian businesses and Canadian workers.

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[*Translation*]

**CANADA REVENUE AGENCY**

**Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General has confirmed what Canadians have known for quite some time: The Liberal Canada Revenue Agency is completely off the rails. In June, only 5% of calls were answered within the standard time frame. Worse still, when callers did get through, the information they received was inaccurate four times out of five.

My question is for the revenue minister, who is an honourable man. Is he aware that this situation directly affects the most vulnerable among us, such as low-income earners, seniors, and those who cannot afford to hire an accountant?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have enormous respect for my colleague, and he knows it. I am sure he will be pleased to know that we have already taken action. We did not wait for the Auditor General's report. Several weeks ago, I asked for a 100-day service improvement plan because we want to provide good services to Canadians.

In addition—and I am sure he will spread this news in his riding—we even introduced a way to obtain benefits automatically, or, rather, will do so in the 2025 budget. This will be a huge help for the people who need it most, and it will help make life in Canada more affordable. I can see he is very happy—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk.

**Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate that the minister is pleased with his 100 days. However, I would like to remind him that, just two years ago, he did exactly the same thing. He told everyone that he had met with all the supermarket executives and that we would see food prices go down, and yet, for the past two years, prices have only gone up. That is the truth.

Let me get back to the Canada Revenue Agency. The Auditor General wrote that the CRA places greater importance on how closely agents adhere to their schedule for their shift and breaks than on the accuracy of the information they provide.

*Oral Questions*

Is the minister proud of that?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure who is watching question period today, but I doubt whether the people in his riding would be proud of seeing him attack those who work at the Canada Revenue Agency. These public servants do exemplary work. What they need is an improvement in processes and technology. Everybody wants to ensure that Canadians get good service.

I know that he is aware that CRA agents work hard to serve Canadians. We will give them the tools they need to serve Canadians.

[English]

**Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, three things are certain in life. They are death, taxes and that we will wait on hold when we call the CRA, according to today's Auditor General report. CRA's own service standards were only met 18% of the time, with wait times doubling over the last year. Only 17% of agents could accurately provide basic tax information.

Complaints have increased by 145% in the last three years, so can the minister explain why Canadians are paying so much, yet receiving so little?

**Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians deserve timely, accurate and consistent information from the CRA. We accept the Auditor General's report. We have embarked on a 100-day plan. Service is improving. We have a long way to go. We are working with the leadership of the CRA. We will make it right. Canadians will get the service they deserve.

**Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, instead of focusing on other people's jobs, that member should start doing his. Almost 10 years ago to the day, the Liberals signed a \$50-million contract for the CRA call system. It has now almost quadrupled to \$190 million, and operational costs at the CRA have increased by 70% under the Liberals. While taxpayers wait on hold, Liberal insiders and contractors cash in.

Does the government have a hang-up with value for money? Is this another arrive scam?

• (1500)

**Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the CRA for delivering Canadians great services such as the Canada child benefit and the disability tax credit. Where would Canadians be without the CRA delivering COVID benefits?

Service levels need to improve. We accept the Auditor General's report. We will get this right. Service levels and access are improving.

We have a lot more work to do, but we will deliver for Canadians.

[Translation]

**ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE**

**Marianne Dandurand (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the independence of the RCMP is a fundamental principle of our democracy, and it is a principle that all responsible leaders should uphold, not undermine.

Last week, the leader of the Conservative Party chose to attack the RCMP, accusing it of covering up scandals and engaging in political manoeuvring. These remarks are irresponsible and cast doubt on an institution that is responsible for protecting Canadians.

Can the Minister of Public Safety reaffirm the independence of the RCMP and reiterate the importance of public trust in our institutions?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader's dangerous rhetoric is irresponsible.

[English]

The words of the Leader of the Opposition in relation to the RCMP are completely unacceptable.

The RCMP is an independent organization, one that enhances the rule of law in Canada and that ensures the safety and security of Canadians. Day in and day out, the RCMP officers on the ground work to save and secure this country.

I demand that the Leader of the Opposition retract the statement and apologize to the members of the RCMP.

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**FINANCE**

**Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while they continually try to distract from their irresponsible policy, we on this side of the House stand united, united against Liberal deficits, against Liberal incompetence and for the Canadian people.

For 10 years, the Liberals have promised deficits would lead to investment. Well, Canada had the worst per capita growth in the G7 and a more than 10% drop in investment per worker. That is no surprise to Canadians, though. We have the same government and the same, failed, Liberal policies.

Will they finally stop their inflationary deficits so Canadians can afford to live?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend would like the distractions to stop. I suggest that he tell his leader to not go on podcasts anymore, to not pay for shawarma with crypto and to not call into doubt the independence of our institutions such as the CBC, the Bank of Canada and the proud men and women of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

*Oral Questions*

**Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, every dollar the Liberal Prime Minister spends is taken out of the pockets of hard-working Canadians through inflationary deficits and higher taxes. Let us not forget that, for 10 years, Liberals claimed runaway deficits would spark investments.

The current finance minister, back when he was industry minister, helped double the national debt, promising it would lead to growth. What did Canadians get? The worst per capita GDP growth in the G7 and investment per worker collapse by more than 10%.

Will he ensure that his next budget will stop the inflationary deficit so Canadians can afford to live again, or will he instead double down on Trudeau's policies and make Canadians pay for his failures?

**Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Halloween is coming up, but the only thing scary in here is the misinformation coming from the Conservatives.

We are cutting red tape. We are building homes faster, and we have introduced dental care that now more than 2 million seniors have signed up for. We are building an economy that works for everyone, while Conservatives have a record of pushing the retirement age higher. I cannot think of anything scarier than that.

While they are voting against support for seniors, we are empowering older Canadians. We are protecting not only their dignity but also their peace of mind.

[Translation]

**Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this Liberal government has been taking Canadians for a ride for 10 years now.

The Liberals hold the record for the largest annual deficit. They shattered that record by doubling the accumulated deficit of all governments over the past 50 years.

What is the direct impact on Canadians' wallets? Things cost more. The Liberals should stop saying that they are putting more money in people's pockets.

Will the Prime Minister keep his promise and ensure that the deficit does not exceed \$42 billion, which will give Canadians some breathing room? The answer is a simple yes or no.

• (1505)

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the problem with the Conservatives is that they talk about inflationary deficits, but they never specify what kind of spending is supposedly inflationary. Is it dental care? Is it help for our industries and workers? Is it pharmacare?

Could they tell us what they consider to be inflationary spending?

\* \* \*

[English]

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Kent MacDonald (Cardigan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre reported that, in 2024 alone, Canadians lost mil-

lions of dollars to fraud. There is not one person in this House today who does not know a senior, a newcomer or a vulnerable person who has been affected by financial abuse and scams.

Yesterday, our government announced that it is taking action. Can the Minister of Finance provide an update on how our new government plans to help Canadians by combatting fraud, financial abuse and scams?

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Kent MacDonald:** Mr. Speaker, I am a new member; it has been five months.

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.):** Finally, we have a good question, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday my colleagues and I were proud to announce a very important measure to combat fraud and financial abuse. Yes, the Conservatives may want to listen to that. We announced measures to improve financial security for Canadians. In our upcoming budget, we will introduce the first-ever national anti-fraud strategy. We will also implement a new financial crime agency to lead Canada's efforts in combatting financial crime. We will also introduce a new code of conduct for the prevention of economic abuse.

On this side of the House, we understand we need to help our seniors, we need to help the most vulnerable—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt.

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**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Jim Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after years of talk, the Liberals continue to break their promise to get shovels in the ground when it comes to the Ring of Fire. Thousands of jobs and billions of dollars are at stake, yet the Prime Minister refuses to move this important project along. The Liberals ignored this vital project on their national priority list, which was a huge slap in the face to northern Ontario.

Will the Liberals stop breaking their promise and get shovels in the ground now, so our region can get to work?

**Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Ring of Fire represents an immense opportunity to develop Canada's critical minerals in partnership with first nations. We have established a regional assessment working group to advance the Ring of Fire alongside robust consultations with indigenous rights holders. We are actively working with the Province of Ontario to increase regulatory efficiencies, and we look forward to concluding our "one project, one review" process with the Province of Ontario.

*Government Orders***EMPLOYMENT**

**Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Trump is pushing for Stellantis to ship 3,000 jobs from Canada to the United States. Today, GM announced it is closing another plant in Ingersoll. That is another 1,000 jobs, making clear what we have known from the start, that Trump is set on destroying the Canadian economy. However, the Prime Minister continues to flatter Trump, calling him a “modern man”, a world-class leader. Trump is stealing our jobs.

When will the Prime Minister finally fight back against this economic extortion and protect jobs and workers in Canada?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, of course it is not lost on this government that these unjustified tariffs are having real impacts at home and real impacts at the Stellantis plant. That being said, I will of course work with my colleague, work with the NDP and work with Unifor to push back against the decision of the company, to make sure that we ultimately hold Stellantis to account. We need to put pressure on. Let us work together. Let us make this happen.

\* \* \*

**THE ECONOMY**

**Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians across the country are suffering from punishing high costs of daily essentials, such as food, housing and utilities. Grocery prices are sky-high, and rent is completely unaffordable, yet today's inflation numbers show the problem is getting worse, with food up 4%; rent is up 4.8% and 9.6% in Quebec.

Under the Liberals, life keeps getting harder for workers and their families. When will the government take the affordability crisis seriously, admit its policies are not working and take effective action to help?

• (1510)

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for bringing the affordability issue to this floor. We work together. There is a lot we can be proud of that we have achieved together. When we think about dental care, when we think about pharmacare, when we think about the national school food program, those are all the types of programs. The Conservatives call them slogans. When one is on the government side, we call them programs, because they deliver benefits to Canadians.

We are going to continue to work with our colleagues in this House to make sure we are there for Canadians in times of need.

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**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[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.

**Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, before we broke for some time, I was discussing the fentanyl crisis here in Canada. I mentioned my nephew, who lost his life to an accidental overdose six months ago in the middle of our last federal election campaign. I brought him up because I do not think the Liberals—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** Order. I would just ask all members in this chamber to please take their conversations to the lobbies behind the curtain, and we will resume the debate.

I encourage the hon. member for Oshawa to back up about 25 seconds.

**Rhonda Kirkland:** Mr. Speaker, as I continue my speech, I want to re-mention my nephew, Cody Kirkland, whom we lost in the middle of the last federal election campaign. He passed away due to an accidental overdose, and fentanyl was the cause, so it is close to home. I know folks in my community and folks across the country recognize how important this fentanyl crisis is and what is going on.

I hope the Liberals across the way will pay attention to this. I hope they will not have to have a crisis or a tragedy in their own families before they realize just how bad it is across the country. Police have uncovered superlabs operating right here in Canada, synthesizing fentanyl from precursor chemicals imported from China. Last fall, RCMP officers dismantled the largest and most sophisticated drug lab in Canadian history, capable of producing multiple kilograms of fentanyl each week, along with caches of loaded firearms, explosives and half a million dollars in cash.

This is the reality. Fentanyl is not just a drug problem; it is a public safety and national security crisis fuelled by organized crime and enabled by weak borders. It is a humanity problem, yet Bill C-12 is silent on the tools police and prosecutors actually need. There are still no new mandatory prison sentences for fentanyl traffickers. There are still no tougher penalties for gangsters who use guns to commit crimes, and the Liberals still allow house arrest for serious offences that endanger lives. Research and experience have shown that clear, consistent sentencing, including targeting mandatory minimums, deters repeat offenders and restores public confidence in justice.

We can already anticipate that the Liberals will soon stand and claim they are bringing forward new bail reform legislation, but Canadians remember the Liberal bail reform they already brought in through Bill C-75, instructing judges to release offenders at the earliest opportunity and under the least onerous conditions. In practice, it became a green light for repeat violent offenders to cycle in and out of the system, with tragic results in communities across Canada. Canadians do not need more Liberal announcements about bail. They need consequences that mean something and a justice system that protects victims and stops protecting repeat violent offenders.

We have a border system that cannot enforce removals and an immigration system so backlogged it invites abuse. We have a justice system that treats violent offenders as victims while law-abiding citizens face more restrictions than ever.

Conservatives believe in secure borders, a fair and orderly immigration system and a justice system that protects Canadians before it protects criminals. We believe Canada should continue to welcome those fleeing genuine persecution, but compassion must be paired with order, fairness and the rule of law.

Bill C-12 may contain measures worth exploring, but Canadians cannot take the government's assurances at face value anymore. The privacy risks are serious, the enforcement gaps are dangerous, and the Liberal record demands skepticism, not blind trust. That is why Conservatives will carefully review the legislation, line by line and clause by clause, to ensure that it strengthens our borders, upholds privacy and defends public safety.

● (1515)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, coming out of question period, one issue that constantly comes up is the lack of respect coming from the leader of the Conservative Party toward Canada's RCMP. This is a very serious issue. The leader owes Canadians an apology for his comments, which are despicable, toward our mounted police. Earlier today, the member for Bow River piled on by saying "management weakness", referring to the RCMP.

I am wondering if the hon. member would not agree that the RCMP is a world-class security and law enforcement agency that deserves far more respect than what the leader of the Conservative Party was saying over the last week.

**Rhonda Kirkland:** Mr. Speaker, the members opposite continue to try to distract and make a scenario out of this by using political spin, which they are very good at doing.

The comments made were regarding the former RCMP commissioner, who has a lengthy track record of publicly documented scandals, deceptions and public interference, to the benefit of the Liberal government. We know that. The Conservatives at the time called for her resignation. We simply stand by the call we made.

Conservatives will always stand up for the people Liberals have left behind. No party in the House has more respect for RCMP officers than the Conservative Party.

### *Government Orders*

**Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my heart goes out to the hon. member and her family members for the loss of a family member.

In my riding, I am receiving calls from constituents in Newmarket who are worried about the safe injection sites that are close to schools and day cares, as they often have to go into lockdown because somebody has come onto the property.

I wonder if the member could expand on that and give her thoughts on the Liberals' refusal to close injection sites close to day cares and schools.

● (1520)

**Rhonda Kirkland:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's comments regarding the loss of my nephew, who passed away during the middle of the last election due to a fentanyl overdose.

The Liberals continue to push so-called safe consumption sites, even next to schools and day cares. At committee, my Conservative colleague from Riding Mountain asked the health minister to rule out approving more sites near children. She refused.

We know that this is not harm reduction. This is a moral abdication that causes deaths like my young nephew's in Edmonton.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, speaking of moral obligations, I believe there is a moral obligation for the leader of the Conservative Party to apologize to Canadians for the comments he made last week. I cannot understand how the Conservatives not only refuse to address the issue, but refuse, at the very least, to recognize that what was said was wrong. The RCMP is an institution in Canada that is respected worldwide, except by the leader of the official opposition. I think that is despicable.

Will the hon. member not stand up for the RCMP?

**Rhonda Kirkland:** Mr. Speaker, do members know what I think is despicable? I think the member's comment, after I shared my nephew's death due to a fentanyl overdose, was uncalled for, uncaring and despicable. That is what I have to say to him.

**Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one thing we need to remind ourselves of in the House is that it was members on the other side who called to defund the police and attended "defund the police" rallies. I think that is despicable.

What are my hon. member's views on the Liberal members' opinions that we should defund our police?

*Government Orders*

**Rhonda Kirkland:** Mr. Speaker, police and law enforcement throughout the country know that Conservatives stand behind them. We always have. We always will. We support our police officers. We will never do what some Liberals across the way have done and call for the defunding of police.

I find it despicable that they would accuse us of things that make no sense.

**Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today, as the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, to talk about the strengthening Canada's immigration system and borders act.

Our immigration system is one of our greatest strengths. It fuels our economy, builds our communities and reflects who we are as a country. As patterns of global migration evolve, our system must also evolve. Our government is committed to managing migration in a way that is safe, orderly and fair so that Canadians and those seeking to come here can have confidence in our immigration system. For the next few minutes, I will be speaking about the four provisions that deal with my department in Bill C-12.

Bill C-12 would strengthen Canada's immigration and border system. It would introduce new authorities to improve information sharing with federal, provincial and territorial partners. It would enhance how immigration documents are managed and would support a sustainable asylum system that upholds integrity, restores balance and strengthens public trust, both among Canadians and among those seeking to come to Canada. The bill would also strengthen the flexibility, efficiency and responsiveness of the asylum system by establishing new ineligibility rules, creating a more streamlined application process and focusing Canada's protection on those who need it the most.

[*Translation*]

As a former provincial minister of immigration, I know how essential it is for the federal, provincial and territorial governments to work together on immigration policies and programs. When I was minister of immigration in Nova Scotia, I saw first-hand how strong partnerships help meet the needs of employers and communities, while supporting diversity and growth. The information shared by the federal government helps provinces and territories plan their programs and services more effectively.

That is why I am particularly proud that the bill makes it easier to share information on immigration, citizenship and passports with our national partners. This will enable us to improve the integrity of government programs and deliver better customer service.

• (1525)

[*English*]

As we improve how information is shared, we also must modernize the asylum system to strengthen migration integrity. To protect the system from sudden surges in claims, Bill C-12 would introduce new ineligibility rules for asylum. These measures make it clear that asylum is not a shortcut to permanent immigration. They would reduce pressure on the system so that protection can be provided more efficiently to those who truly need it.

Under the legislation, the federal government would no longer refer claims to the Immigration and Refugee Board for a decision if claims are made more than a year after someone first arrives after June 24, 2020, or if claims are made 14 or more days after someone enters Canada from the U.S. between official border crossings.

History shows us that most asylum claims are made within the first year of arrival. In the majority of cases, one year gives claimants time to consult experts, gather documents and make an informed decision. The one-year limit discourages those wanting to use the asylum system to extend their stay in Canada if other mechanisms fail. Canada is a generous country that values fairness, but not for those who try to bypass our laws and systems.

The same principle applies to those who cross the border between ports of entry. Despite clear laws and repeated warnings, some still attempt to enter Canada from the U.S. without checking in at an official land border office. It is dangerous, it is not legal and it is not safe. There have been many tragic cases of injury and loss of life. Such routes are often linked to human smuggling and organized crime, placing individuals, often travelling with children, at even greater risk.

If someone wants to come to Canada, the message is clear: They should use our existing lawful programs and pathways. Through federal, provincial and territorial streams, they are welcome to apply.

Claims filed more than a year after claimants first arrive, starting on June 24, 2020, and those filed 14 days or more after an irregular entry would not be referred to the Immigration and Refugee Board for a decision. Those whose claims are found ineligible would be referred to the removal process, with access to a pre-removal risk assessment. Let me be clear. Those who have well-founded fears of returning to their country of origin would have access to protection.

As part of Bill C-12, our government is introducing legislation to better manage immigration documents and applications, improving efficiency and reinforcing the integrity of Canada's immigration system. This legislation would give our government greater flexibility to manage immigration documents and applications. It would allow us to respond quickly and responsibly in times of crisis or uncertainty, while continuing to uphold strong safeguards that protect people's rights and ensure due process.

Canada's immigration system must be able to adapt to global realities and global pressures. Conflict, climate and political instability can all influence and have all influenced migration flows, and our system needs the tools to respond responsibly and effectively.

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

This bill supports Canada's broader efforts to strengthen the integrity of our immigration system by giving the government the tools it needs to respond quickly and effectively to global challenges while maintaining fairness and transparency.

The pandemic served to highlight the need for clearer powers to manage immigration documents in a time of crisis so that the government can act decisively while continuing to protect human rights.

• (1530)

[*English*]

At the present time, agents have the power to cancel a visa on a case-by-case basis if a person's status changes or if they become ineligible.

[*Translation*]

For example, this could include cases where false information was provided on an application, a criminal record was uncovered or the applicant passes away.

[*English*]

That authority, however, does not apply to groups of immigration documents. Bill C-12 would give Canada the ability to suspend, change or cancel multiple documents in exceptional circumstances. For example, it could be used during a global health or security crisis, with appropriate safeguards in place to protect people's rights and due process. It would also strengthen the government's ability to pause the intake of new applications when necessary. These authorities would allow the government to act swiftly and responsibly in the public interest, protecting against safety and security threats, health risks or abuse of publicly funded programs.

Let me be clear that this bill does not authorize the automatic cancellation of immigration documents, nor does it affect asylum claims or immigration status. Any use of these authorities would follow a separate evidence-based process and require a decision by the Governor in Council.

In conclusion, these changes reflect the reality that we are living in in today's changing world.

[*Translation*]

Through this bill, the government would make the asylum system more efficient and responsive, strengthen collaboration with the provinces and territories and focus decisions and resources where they are most needed.

[*English*]

We want to be simpler, faster, fairer and more focused. These reforms would enhance public safety and security, reinforce the integrity of our programs and improve services for those who rely on them. That is the system Canadians elected us for, and that is the system we are here to ensure we have.

I encourage my colleagues to support Bill C-12.

**Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there are 300,000 asylum claimants in the system, as we know. The

Liberals' interim health program is now \$1 billion. Toronto has to increase rents. The Liberals broke the system.

Many legal experts have suggested that the immigration provisions in the bill are unconstitutional. Some have even said they are undertaking research in preparation for legal challenges. Knowing this, is the government prepared to challenge court rulings against the provisions, or is it just planning on punting the utter mess it has made of the asylum system to the courts?

**Hon. Lena Metlege Diab:** Mr. Speaker, we have introduced the bill to provide us with the tools we need to curb abuse and to process more quickly so case loads and costs can go down.

The member knows, and the party opposite knows, we published the charter statement on Bill C-2. The member knows that the provisions in the current Bill C-12 with respect to immigration are identical to those in Bill C-2. The immigration measures are the same.

Again, on this side of the House, we know we have institutions we need to protect. We respect our institutions, and we respect the rule of law.

[*Translation*]

**Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the minister's speech, including the part where she said that her bill would solve problems that her own department had created.

For months now, the government has been asking universities to act like the police. It wants them to investigate the problem surrounding international students trying to use loopholes in the system to apply for student visas and then claim asylum. That is a failure of the system. The universities tell us that the Department of Citizenship and Immigration is refusing to share its data with them. It is making universities do the heavy lifting.

I would like the minister to reassure us today by telling us that she will finally demand that her department live up to its responsibilities and stop passing the buck to the universities.

• (1535)

**Hon. Lena Metlege Diab:** Mr. Speaker, I can tell my colleague opposite that we are working with Quebec.

For study permit applications in Quebec, a Quebec acceptance certificate issued by the provincial government is required. It is mandatory. The province is in the driver's seat when it comes to accepting students in its territory. Nearly 100,000 fewer new students arrived between January and July compared to 2024.

We will continue to work with Quebec.

*Government Orders**[English]*

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the many comments the minister has actually put on the record. I truly believe that the immigration department, with the new Prime Minister, has put a lot of emphasis on stabilizing immigration here in Canada.

When I think of asylum seekers, I go back to the days when I was the critic for immigration, when we had issues with Hungary, the number of Hungarians coming over, and how this was impacting asylum seekers. The government had to bring in legislation to make some changes.

I wonder whether the minister could provide her comments. At times, we need to bring in legislation to ensure that we are protecting the integrity of the system.

**Hon. Lena Metlege Diab:** Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. I really enjoy questions that are exactly on the point we need to address here in public policy and as legislators.

The government is committed to increasing trust in Canada's immigration system. We are making our borders stronger, more resilient and more responsive, and our efforts are working. Asylum claims are down by a third compared to last year, but our message is very clear: The asylum system should not be seen as a shortcut to immigrating to Canada. This is why we have the measures in Bill C-12 to strengthen the integrity of our system.

Again, I ask all members of the House to work with us to ensure that we have a strong immigration system in Canada, one all Canadians are proud of.

**Parm Bains (Richmond East—Steveston, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to be here today to speak to Bill C-12. The bill proposes amendments to various acts that would make our laws even stronger and that would keep our families, children and communities safe while protecting privacy and charter rights. The bill would help the government fight the flow of illegal fentanyl, enhance the integrity of our immigration and asylum systems, and combat money laundering. The focus of my speech today will be with respect to parts 2, 3 and 4 of the bill.

I will begin by stating that I do not think there is any member of the House without stories about how their communities have been touched by the fentanyl overdose crisis, the flow of precursors and the significant impact those have on families and communities across the country. According to Health Canada, in 2022 an average of 21 lives were lost each day because of opioid-related overdoses.

Part 4 of the bill would amend the Canada Post Corporation Act to enable police to search the mail as part of a criminal investigation. The amendments would remove a legal barrier to otherwise lawful seizure of mail, but would not create new search and seizure authorities. With this change, law enforcement could rely on existing search and seizure provisions in federal legislation, which is most commonly a search warrant issued under the Criminal Code.

The need for judicial pre-authorization would ensure that mail seizures are conducted in accordance with the law and the charter. This would bring Canada Post into alignment with other courier

and parcel delivery service providers such as Purolator that are already subject to lawful search and seizure. The bill would also expand inspection powers for postal inspectors. These changes would enable the police to stop the mail service from being used to traffic drugs and other illegal materials.

With the measures in the bill, we would be in a stronger position to prevent dangerous drugs such as fentanyl and their precursor chemicals from finding their way onto our streets and into our communities, to keep Canadians safe. Right now, police officers are not allowed to search and seize letter mail as part of an investigation, not even with a warrant; as a result, fentanyl and other synthetic opioids can be easily trafficked in small amounts by drug traffickers exploiting the postal system by sending illicit drugs through this method. The amendments to the act outlined in part 4 of Bill C-12 become crucial to correcting the issue and stopping the flow of illegal drugs into our communities.

The amendments to the Canada Post Corporation Act would allow police to search and seize contraband, including fentanyl, from Canada Post mail with a warrant. If I may, I will repeat, “with a warrant”, because I have heard many times a lot of misinformation coming from the other side of the House. Police could not just open our mail; they would be required to obtain a warrant from a judge to lawfully search and seize letter mail during an investigation.

The provisions would bring Canada Post in line with other mail couriers such as FedEx and Purolator.

The change would, notably, help remote indigenous communities and rural municipalities in their efforts to intercept dangerous illegal drugs such as fentanyl, which is often delivered through the mail via Canada Post. The Minister of Public Safety has heard from these communities, and they are supporting the measures. In fact, they have been calling on us to do this. The Mushkegowuk Council stated that the government's proposed amendments to the Canada Post Corporation Act are a good first step in addressing current enforcement gaps.

We also need to address the flow of chemicals used to produce fentanyl. Criminal groups mislabel precursors used to produce fentanyl to smuggle them into the country. Often these chemicals enter Canada legally to support the production of legal goods. To disrupt the flow of illegal fentanyl, the bill would create a new accelerated scheduling pathway to make it easier for the Minister of Health to order limits on precursor chemicals to ensure that they are used legitimately.

*Government Orders*

• (1540)

We have already made significant progress toward strengthening our border, but the measures in the bill would make our country even safer. By stopping the flow of illegal fentanyl, reinforcing our immigration and asylum systems and cracking down on money laundering and terrorist financing, we will keep our country strong and safe.

Like all of my hon. colleagues in the House, I too want fentanyl off our streets. Together, let us keep our communities and children safe by supporting the bill.

**Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to let my colleague know that he is welcome to come back to OGGO any time. We miss him.

He mentioned the issue around Canada Post. I am wondering whether he can tell us if his government has consulted with Canada Post about its role. I have spoken to people at Canada Post, and they have told me that, no, they will not participate in any of these actions and that in fact they have not been consulted on the proposed legislation the government has put forward.

**Parm Bains:** Mr. Speaker, the member is still the chair of OGGO, and I look forward to, at some point, maybe sitting in or substituting for somebody. I know of the very important work the committee does, and I miss it. As for the member's question, perhaps the chair of OGGO could have representatives of Canada Post come to the committee and further share their thoughts.

As I mentioned, this is important work that needs to be done. There are major challenges our country and communities are facing with respect to fentanyl and the flow of precursors. If we look at the negative impact that has had on our communities, we see that it is important to make sure Canada Post, with a warrant, I would add, is co-operating.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

**Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I need my colleague to explain something to us. In April, through the Prime Minister, the government promised to hire 1,000 new CBSA officers and 1,000 new RCMP members.

Six months later, just last week, the government repeated its April announcement to us. Can my colleague tell us how many officers have been hired since April? If none have been hired, what is the plan? How many officers will be hired, and what is the exact timeline?

[*English*]

**Parm Bains:** Mr. Speaker, I think we are all looking forward to the budget on November 4, and we will see many of those measures in it.

With respect to the member's question on how many officers have been hired, we have committed to 1,000 police officers and 1,000 CBSA officers. Just last week, I had the opportunity to make that announcement in British Columbia, and it was very welcome by all police agencies that are impacted by the issues we have talked about in communities.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am wondering whether my colleague could provide his thoughts on how the Prime Minister and the Liberal caucus are taking a holistic approach on the issue. Today we are talking about Bill C-12, which would do wonders in securing Canada's borders, but at the same time we are making tangible commitments. The member just referred to an announcement of additional RCMP officers and Canada border control officers.

Whether it is legislation or budgetary measures, we are taking the issue seriously, and when dealing with an issue of this nature, it is important that we take a holistic approach.

**Parm Bains:** Mr. Speaker, fentanyl, precursors and issues related to crime and strengthening our borders have had an impact on our communities. Over time, these issues change and evolve, and we need to evolve and bring in new measures. That is what we are doing at this point.

If we look at strengthening the borders by adding police and CBSA officers, with the new search warrant measures and all the resources and tools they would be given, everything from going after ghost guns, which we announced earlier to new offences, such as in Bill C-70 with respect to transnational threats, that is a holistic approach. There is a whole level of different measures we have put forward to combat the ever-evolving challenges that this country is facing.

**Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if we are going to talk about this piece of legislation, we should put a couple of things into context.

The first thing I would put into context is that this is another bill the Liberals are trying to bring forward to allegedly do something to deal with the massive surge in crime that has gone on in Canada over the last 10 years. It is a remarkable turnaround. I still recall when former minister of justice Arif Virani sat in this chamber. He would get up in question period and say we were trying to scare Canadians and were engaging in typical Conservative fear on the issue of crime when we raised the staggering increase in crime and violent crime. That was his answer. Now it seems like the Liberals have had their reckoning and realized that over the last 10 years, due to their policies, we have had a massive surge in crime.

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If members do not want to take my word for it, I have a few statistics that I would like to go through so that Canadians can understand just how bad crime has gotten in this country under the Liberal government. Total violent crime is up 49.84%. Let us round that up to 50%. There has been a 50% increase in violent crime after a decade of the Liberals running the country. Homicide is up 28%. Gang-related homicide is up 78%. Sexual assault is up 74%. Extortion is up 357%. Let that sink in for a moment. A decade ago, we had a certain amount of extortion and it is now up 357%. We know the terrible things that happen when people are trafficking in persons. That is up 83%. All of this has happened over the last decade with the Liberals running the country.

They introduced a massive omnibus bill, Bill C-2. To get to Bill C-12, we have to talk a little about Bill C-2. I am old enough to remember when the Liberals used to say it was a terrible thing to introduce omnibus pieces of legislation, and they would never do such things, but here we are. Bill C-2 was going to amend 15 statutes and had 120 pages of technical statutory changes. As Conservatives, we said, "That is a no go." In fact, it is due to Conservative pressure, because of a number of things that were included in Bill C-2, that we ended up here with Bill C-12, which actually has some things that we think might do some good. I know it is a strange thing to say, but as they often say, a broken clock is right twice a day, so they may have gotten a couple of things right in Bill C-12.

To go back to Bill C-2, I really want to talk about some very deeply troubling things that were included in that piece of legislation. It shows the mindset of the Liberals, who have turned around on some of these issues.

One of these is how Canada Post would be able to search mail. In and of itself, it is problematic, but the statutory change the Liberals were trying to bring in said this could happen with reasonable suspicion. Bill C-2 reads, "reasonable grounds to suspect". That is the lowest threshold in law that could be used to do this. Normally, to be able to search something, we need the much higher standard of "reasonable grounds to believe". The Liberals were putting in the very lowest standard possible of reasonable suspicion.

Because this was about the corporation, it would mean that any employee of the corporation who had a reasonable suspicion could be opening mail. It is a particularly troubling standard that they were trying to put into the bill. It has been through hard work from the Conservatives, who said "absolutely not", that those parts of the legislation remain in Bill C-2 and are not included in Bill C-12.

● (1550)

It is also very interesting to note what is not included in any of these pieces of legislation which is trying to deal with the issue of crime that the Liberals are belatedly waking up to. For example, there is nothing in Bill C-12 that would deal with the issues of fentanyl trafficking and sentencing for fentanyl traffickers. Something like that could have been incorporated into it to crack down on fentanyl trafficking. We believe it needs to be done, but it is not in there.

The Liberals also did not take the time to eliminate, for example, house arrest for drive-by shootings, which is still okay. They put together a massive omnibus piece of legislation, in part to deal with

crime, but they left things like that out of it. It is available, so somebody engaging in a drive-by shooting is eligible for house arrest.

If we go back to the statistics I talked about, gang-related homicide is up 78%. Generally speaking, the kinds of people who are engaging in drive-by shootings are people in gangs trying to cause homicides. The Liberals had so much opportunity to do better, and they failed on that.

Another thing they failed to do is make it crystal clear that so-called safe consumption sites should not be allowed anywhere near schools. We know the effects of these safe consumption sites. They become a blight in a neighbourhood, and having them near schools and children is not the kind of thing we want. Again, this was a simple place for the Liberals to have made that change, and they chose not to.

Let us quickly switch and talk a bit about some of the changes to immigration. I was around when Stephen Harper was prime minister and changes were made to the asylum system, and we brought asylum claims down to about 10,000. It sounds like a lot, but it is 10,000. If we look at where things are now, again, after a decade of these Liberals and their absolute and utter mismanagement of the immigration system, asylum claims are now at a whopping 296,000. Think about that. A decade ago, they were at 10,000, and now they are at 296,000. I think the estimate to process these 296,000 cases in the backlog is 25 years. Let that sink in. That is the backlog on asylum claims that has been created by the Liberals' absolute mismanagement of the immigration system.

What we are now hearing from some experts is that the proposed changes would not fix the broken system. This problem would be transferred to the courts, because they have decided they cannot fix it. The fix is not to figure out a way to quickly process the backlog, because we know so many of these claims are bogus asylum claims. In fact, one of the things we did under Prime Minister Harper was try to eliminate bogus asylum claims from certain countries by imposing visa requirements. One of the first things the Liberals did was eliminate those visa requirements. Surprise, surprise, we are up to 296,000.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Kyle Seeback:** Mr. Speaker, the member is laughing. The member who spends all day, every day doing nothing but talk about how great he thinks the government is doing is now laughing as I talk about the seriousness of a 296,000-person backlog. The system is absolutely broken after 10 years of the Liberals' management of the system.

There may be some things in this legislation that we could support. We have to send it to committee. I want to commend all of my colleagues for their hard work in getting this bill broken up into parts so that some of the things we know we cannot support are going to be in one particular piece of legislation, and some of the things we think we might be able to support with a bit of study are going to be in this particular piece of legislation.

I look forward to this particular piece of legislation being studied at committee.

• (1555)

[*Translation*]

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-12 addresses some long-standing requests from law enforcement for the necessary resources to crack down on auto theft, drug trafficking and transnational organized crime.

Does my colleague recognize the importance of taking action to keep Canadians safe? If so, will he commit to working with us to quickly pass Bill C-12?

[*English*]

**Kyle Seeback:** Mr. Speaker, I think most police organizations also want mandatory minimum sentences for trafficking in fentanyl. They also want to get rid of house arrest for drive-by shootings. I would encourage the member to talk to his caucus and see if they want to work on some of those things.

If he was listening, I said quite clearly that we would love to see this bill studied at committee. We think there might be some things in here that are worth supporting, but, of course, we need to study them at committee.

[*Translation*]

**Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the residents of Rimouski—La Matapédia, whom I proudly represent. I would also like to acknowledge the residents of La Mitis, Les Basques and Neigette.

The government seems to be recycling announcements all the time, not just some of the time. Last week, it recycled a major press conference where it announced that it would secure our borders. This is the same promise that the government and the Prime Minister himself made back in April. The government talked about hiring 1,000 new CBSA officers. It promised to hire 1,000 new RCMP officers.

During this time, how many officers did the government actually hire? The answer is zero. The government repeated the same announcement twice.

Does my colleague think that the government needs to make the same announcement three times before finally taking action?

• (1600)

[*English*]

**Kyle Seeback:** Mr. Speaker, I share the member's outrage for the recycling of announcements. The government has gotten very good at trying to trick Canadians into saying it has created new programs

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and new things, but it is, in fact, just recycling the same old things over and over again.

The Liberals never answer a question directly in the House of Commons. The member asked a Liberal member how many police officers had been hired since April. The Liberal member rambled on about the importance of this and recycled the hiring announcement. It is the same thing that happened yesterday when I asked the government members if they had a jobs guarantee in the \$15-billion contract they signed with Stellantis. Members should have seen them trying to tap dance on the head of a pin to avoid answering the question. They say they are going to fight hard, do this or that and stand up for Canada. The answer is they could not answer the question, which is also the answer here. They have not hired anyone, and God knows if they will.

**Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member to give us his thoughts on the Liberal government pretending to get tough on fentanyl traffickers, yet there are no mandatory minimums in this bill. Can the member speak to that?

**Kyle Seeback:** Mr. Speaker, this is something we have been fighting about with the government for almost a decade, ever since it made terrible decisions on bail. It has continually done things to make it much easier for criminals to be out in our communities, wreaking the havoc they wreak.

The government always says it is going to come up with some kind of solution or it has a new piece of legislation. The former justice minister, Arif Virani, introduced a piece of legislation on bail reform, saying it was going to solve the problem. Of course, we know it did not. Violent offenders are out on the streets again within hours, if not days, of committing violent offences.

Yes, the Liberals could absolutely do something about fentanyl trafficking. Namely, they could crack down on the traffickers so that they stay in jail and cannot victimize Canadians.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, bail reform legislation is on its way, and I look forward to the Conservatives' response to it.

The question I have for the member is about asylum seekers. Back when Jason Kenney was the minister of immigration, the number was 60,000 and it was reduced to 10,000. They recognized the need for change and brought in legislation.

There have been demands for changes to this and we are bringing in changes. Does the member support them?

**Kyle Seeback:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know. We are going to have to look at that. Ultimately, we want to hear from the experts on whether or not it would make a difference.

My quick review of it is, as I said in my speech, that we would not deal with all of these bogus asylum claimants through the process, but try to transfer them to the judicial system. Again, that will be far more complicated and it would not solve the problem.

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[Translation]

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during the last election campaign, Canadians across the country asked us to take concrete measures to build a safer Canada. They elected a new Liberal government with the clear and legitimate expectation that we would reform our bail system, improve public safety and make sure that our communities are safe.

We also made a commitment to secure our borders and preserve the integrity of our immigration system. That is exactly what Bill C-12 is all about. The bill makes crucial amendments to give law enforcement and border officers the tools and resources they need to disrupt the activities of increasingly sophisticated criminal groups, including those that traffic fentanyl and firearms, and to protect our communities.

The bill is built around two fundamental pillars: securing our borders and fighting transnational organized crime, including fentanyl and illicit financing.

The security of our border is a priority for our government. This issue is especially important for me as the member for Madawaska—Restigouche, a riding with five border crossings.

Before I go any further, I want to point out that Canada's borders are already strong and secure and that CBSA personnel are doing an amazing job. I want to commend them for their ongoing commitment to protecting our borders. Over the last few months, I have had the opportunity to meet many of these border officers during various activities in my riding and to discuss their important work with them.

Bill C-12 will make our borders even stronger. The bill amends the Customs Act to strengthen the CBSA's powers. The CBSA will now be able to better monitor points of entry and exit and to require owners and operators to provide the necessary facilities to facilitate inspections. Border officers will also have access to places under the control of carriers and warehouse operators to examine goods destined for export, so they will be able to intercept stolen or illicit goods leaving the country. This will make it possible to intercept more drugs, guns and stolen vehicles before they leave Canada.

The bill also modernizes the Oceans Act to expand the Canadian Coast Guard's mandate, allowing it to conduct security patrols and to share essential intelligence. This will strengthen maritime surveillance, which is critical to our national security.

The RCMP's capacities will also be strengthened, particularly for sharing information on registered sex offenders with domestic and international partners. Such information sharing is fundamental to protecting communities all across Canada.

At the same time, Bill C-12 proposes rules aimed at safeguarding the integrity of our immigration system. It includes measures to better manage asylum claims and introduces inadmissibility grounds that will help prevent abuse while upholding fundamental humanitarian principles in Canada.

It is also important to understand that this bill complements our other measures to strengthen our borders, including Canada's bor-

der plan, which comes with \$1.3 billion in funding, the largest investment in border security in Canadian history.

When we talk about strengthening our country's security, it is not just talk. We are taking concrete action. In fact, the Prime Minister recently announced new measures that will appear in the upcoming budget. We are going to hire 1,000 new CBSA officers. These new officers will help crack down on the movement of stolen goods and drugs, enforce import measures and investigate unfair trade practices.

We are also going to increase the CBSA's recruit stipend for the first time since 2005, raising it from \$125 to \$525 per week, to help attract and retain the next generation of highly trained border officers.

We are also going to amend the Public Service Superannuation Act to ensure that officers and other frontline first responders receive benefits that reflect the weight of their responsibilities.

This is terrific news, not only for my riding, which contains several border crossings, but for our country as a whole.

I would now like to turn to the second pillar of Bill C-12, namely combatting transnational organized crime and fentanyl. Now more than ever, the threat posed by transnational organized crime is a reality we must face. We understand that a strong Canada requires strong crime fighting measures.

• (1605)

The opioid crisis is wreaking havoc across the country. Thousands of lives are being lost every year. Not a day goes by without hearing heartbreaking stories of lives cut short. We cannot remain indifferent in the face of such a crisis, and we must take action.

Bill C-12 introduces a temporary accelerated scheduling pathway that will allow the Minister of Health to quickly control the precursor chemicals used to manufacture illicit drugs. This measure will enable law enforcement agencies and the CBSA to act swiftly to prevent these substances from being imported and used illegally, while ensuring rigorous oversight of their legitimate use.

The bill also strengthens the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing through tougher penalties and improved supervisory collaboration between the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada and the Financial Institutions Supervisory Committee. This enhanced collaboration is essential to detecting and stopping illicit financial transactions that fuel crime and terrorism.

Bill C-12 is part of a series of bold and decisive public safety measures that our new government has been taking since the beginning of our mandate. We know that safe, resilient communities are the backbone of a strong Canada. They attract people, families, businesses and investment and enable greater certainty and prosperity.

Just last week, our government announced new measures that will protect Canadians and keep our communities safe. We will strengthen Canada's Criminal Code to keep violent and repeat offenders out of our communities, including those accused of serious crimes such as violent auto theft, breaking and entering, human trafficking, violent assault and sexual assault.

We will also introduce consecutive sentencing to ensure that multiple crimes mean more time behind bars, impose harsher penalties for organized retail theft and restrict conditional sentences for a number of sexual offences. These are changes the public wants to see. We are also planning to hire an additional 1,000 RCMP personnel.

In the 2025 budget that will be tabled in the House on November 4, we will be announcing a \$1.8-billion investment over four years to increase federal policing capacity across Canada to combat crime, including online fraud, money laundering, online child sexual exploitation, and organized criminal networks that threaten Canada's economic and national security. This funding will also go toward raising the RCMP cadet recruitment allowance to \$1,000 per week and dedicating 150 new RCMP personnel to tackle financial crimes, targeting money laundering networks, organized crime, online fraud and the recovery of illicit assets.

Yesterday, the Minister of Finance and National Revenue also announced that we are going to introduce the very first national anti-fraud strategy and a new anti-fraud agency. These concrete measures will help protect Canadians, especially seniors and vulnerable persons.

Our actions show that we are very serious about the mandate given to us by Canadians to make our communities safer and our borders more secure. That is why we are taking a holistic approach, as I just mentioned. Through historic investments, bold action and tough legislation, such as Bill C-12, Canada's new government is working to protect our way of life. We are fighting crime, building safer communities and ensuring that Canadians have the security that they deserve.

Bill C-12 is the result of careful consideration, is backed by a massive investment and is designed to protect Canadians while respecting fundamental rights. Securing our borders and keeping Canadians safe means ensuring that the government and law enforcement have the tools they need to do their jobs. We have a collective responsibility to work toward a safer and stronger Canada. Bill C-12 is a decisive step in that direction, and we are confident that it will meet Canadians' expectations.

● (1610)

**Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. He said that the borders are strong and secure. One does not introduce a bill

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to strengthen borders that are already strong and secure. What my colleague is saying is illogical.

I would like to share with him some findings from independent observers. The Office of the Auditor General has pointed out that delays, a shortage of officers and a lack of performance evaluations at the Canada Border Services Agency are undermining the effectiveness of border controls. Meanwhile, the Customs and Immigration Union notes that Canada has never had so little capacity to control its borders.

I do not know what my colleague is basing his claim on, when he says that our borders are strong and secure, because others are clearly saying something completely different. In addition, the Customs and Immigration Union is calling for between 2,000 and 3,000 new officers to be hired. The government has announced the hiring of 1,000 officers, but it did not specify when that would happen. The government also said that there have already been two press conferences on the subject and that this will be included in the upcoming budget.

I would like my colleague to tell the public the truth and stop repeating things to try to lull us into complacency.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** Mr. Speaker, the truth is that we have a plan with an investment of over \$1 billion, the largest amount ever dedicated to border security in Canadian history.

I mentioned that there are five border crossings in my riding, Madawaska—Restigouche, and our officers are doing an amazing job on the ground. They work hard to protect our borders. I wanted to congratulate them in my speech.

Bill C-12 introduces measures to make our borders even stronger. That is not to say that our borders are not secure right now, but we can always do better, and we recognize that. We want to give law enforcement the resources they need to do their job. They have asked us for this, and we are delivering.

[*English*]

**Jagsharan Singh Mahal (Edmonton Southeast, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Liberal member advocating for Bill C-12.

If Bill C-12 intends to clean up the already burdened asylum system, how come it does not mention repealing pre-removal risk assessments once a refugee claim is already refused? It is parallel legislation within the legislation that would put an additional burden on Canadian taxpayers to force them to redo the same test once that test has already failed.

I would like to hear an answer from the member opposite on that.

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• (1615)

[*Translation*]

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** Mr. Speaker, as my colleague mentioned, Bill C-12 includes several measures to strengthen the integrity of our immigration system. We made a commitment to do so during the election campaign. We are delivering on our commitment through Bill C-12.

In doing so, we will take steps to protect the integrity of our system while respecting fundamental humanitarian principles. There will be enhanced measures, including new ineligibility criteria for asylum seekers, to ensure that asylum claims are not used as a shortcut to get around the proper immigration channels. There will also be measures to ensure that no one is removed if doing so would put their safety in real danger.

[*English*]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments my colleague put on the record. I would like him to expand on the importance of Bill C-12 in the sense that it is part of the overall package of what our new Prime Minister and this government has proposed.

During the last federal election, there was a commitment by the Prime Minister to secure Canada's borders. This is a very important aspect of fulfilling a campaign platform commitment. In addition to this legislation, as the member made reference to, there is the hiring of 1,000 new CBSA officers, which is another component fulfilling the election platform.

Could the member expand on the importance of fulfilling that particular platform issue?

[*Translation*]

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** Mr. Speaker, as my colleague says, we campaigned on a promise to make our communities safer. This requires a series of measures, including legislation such as Bill C-12 on border security and Bill C-9 on hate crimes. It also includes our upcoming bail reform, investments to hire more RCMP officers, and strategies, including the one announced yesterday about combatting online fraud.

When we talk about making our communities safer, we are not just spouting slogans. We are delivering investments, concrete measures and bills and taking a holistic approach to improving safety for Canadians.

[*English*]

**Chak Au (Richmond Centre—Marpole, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-12, legislation the Liberal government claims will strengthen our borders and protect our immigration system, but when examined closely, this bill is not about proactive security, it is about political damage control.

Bill C-12 is not a fresh start. It is a rebranded version of Bill C-2, legislation the government withdrew after Canadians were outraged by its sweeping powers to access personal digital data without a warrant. Bill C-2 would have allowed authorities to obtain Canadians' communications from phone companies, dating apps and even mental health platforms, with no judge, no oversight and no ac-

countability. Conservatives said no. We believe in strong border security and effective enforcement, but never at the expense of Canadians' fundamental freedoms. Security and privacy are not competing objectives. In a democracy, they must coexist.

The government removed the most invasive powers from Bill C-2 only because it was exposed, not because it understood the threat to Canadians' rights. The public safety minister has openly stated that those powers are still being pursued. The RCMP commissioner confirmed they are working with the minister to bring them back. Canadians' privacy has not been safeguarded, as this has merely been postponed. We must remain vigilant because the government has shown a willingness to reintroduce these measures quietly when public attention shifts.

While seeking new powers, the government has failed to deliver on basic enforcement. It promised to hire 1,000 new CBSA officers. That promise was broken. At major border crossings, such as the Pacific Highway and Douglas port near Vancouver, officers are stretched thin, trying to stop sophisticated smuggling operations with inadequate staffing and outdated resources. Organized crime is exploiting these enforcement gaps right now, yet Bill C-12 contains no staffing commitments, no new resources and no operational enhancements. It does not address the real challenges facing our border agents.

Bill C-12 amends 11 acts. Some of these measures are constructive and will assist law enforcement, for example, allowing CBSA to use private export facilities for inspections, enabling the Minister of Health to quickly ban precursor chemicals used to manufacture fentanyl, allowing the Canadian Coast Guard to share security information with law enforcement and tightening safe third country rules so that illegal border crossers may be returned to the United States within 14 days if they do not qualify for asylum. These are constructive elements. Conservatives support targeted reforms that improve enforcement and close gaps in coordination.

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However, these improvements are overshadowed by sweeping new powers the bill grants to the minister, powers that lack clear safeguards, transparency or due process. Bill C-12 would allow the minister to unilaterally cancel immigration documents based on allegations of fraud or criminality without defined criteria or independent oversight. Canadians expect fairness, transparency and accountability, not political discretion that could undermine the integrity of our immigration system.

In Richmond Centre—Marpole, residents are deeply concerned about the pressures on housing, health care and public safety. They support legal immigration and strong enforcement, not a system where ministerial power replaces due process.

● (1620)

More than 50,000 Canadians have died from opioid toxicity since 2016, and nearly 80% of those deaths involved fentanyl. Police have dismantled superlabs in Langley, Falkland and Richmond capable of producing kilograms of fentanyl every week. Just two milligrams, a few grains of salt, can kill a person. This is not recreational drug use. It is deliberate mass poisoning.

Conservatives believe that, if someone is manufacturing or trafficking fentanyl in lethal quantities, they are knowingly causing death and should face a mandatory life sentence. We have tabled targeted proposals to ensure major traffickers, importers and producers face real prison time, yet Bill C-12 is silent. There would be new offences, no new mandatory penalties and no enhanced enforcement measures for cross-border traffickers. While Canadians are losing their loved ones every day, the government refuses to act. We cannot accept a justice system that allows fentanyl traffickers to receive house arrest or suspended sentences. Conservatives will continue to fight for real consequences to protect Canadians and save lives.

To be effective, Bill C-12 must be strengthened. Conservatives are calling for mandatory life sentences for major fentanyl traffickers, real resources and staffing for CBSA to enforce our laws, strong privacy protections with independent judicial oversight and mandatory public reporting for any future orders affecting privacy or mobility rights. Canadians deserve legislation that delivers security with transparency and accountability, not legislation written to manage headlines.

Bill C-12 reflects a pattern we have seen repeatedly from the government, which is to introduce sweeping and vague legislation, face public push-back, retreat temporarily and then attempt to reintroduce the same measures under a different name. That is not leadership. It is governance by reaction, not reflection. Canadians expect responsible, balanced legislation that protects both public safety and constitutional freedoms. Conservatives reject the government's approach of overreach first and correction later. We believe law must be grounded in principle, built through consultation, and transparent in application.

Conservatives believe in strong borders, safe communities and an immigration system that is both fair and firm, one that welcomes those who follow the rules and holds accountable those who do not. Bill C-12 may have removed the most extreme intrusions, but it still reflects the same pattern: overreach, retreat and repackaging. The bill would fail to address the fentanyl crisis, would fail to fix

enforcement gaps and would fail to protect Canadians' privacy rights.

We will continue to stand up for the safety and freedoms of Canadians, defend the integrity of our immigration system and fight the scourge of fentanyl with the seriousness it demands. Canada can have security without surveillance and compassion without chaos. That is balance and that is common sense. That is what Conservatives would deliver.

● (1625)

[*Translation*]

**Natilien Joseph (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be frank.

Given that asylum is granted by independent judges, is my colleague opposite not questioning the competence of our judges, just as his leader did with respect to our great RCMP officers?

[*English*]

**Chak Au:** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government is passing the buck when it creates a problem and then tries to solve the problem it has created. In so doing, it is not only that the Liberals do not do enough, and they do not do it in an effective way, but also that they pass the buck on to somebody else and ask some other people to solve the problem for them. That is not taking responsibility. It is being evasive.

[*Translation*]

**Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, according to the bill, border officers have a surveillance mandate, but they are not truly a part of national defence. They cannot intervene directly.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about that.

[*English*]

**Chak Au:** Mr. Speaker, we understand that law enforcement officers need to have the power to do the job in an effective way. However, we cannot accept giving power to the authorities without checks and balances, oversight or judicial review. We cannot give the minister too much power so they can infringe on the freedoms and rights of Canadians.

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**Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government says that Bill C-12 protects Canadians, yet it expands government powers to collect and share personal information across departments.

Could he speak to why it is so important that Parliament scrutinize these new authorities to ensure Canadians' privacy is not compromised?

**Chak Au:** Mr. Speaker, we have to protect the rights of Canadians. We cannot accept this power being unchecked. Canadians deserve to have protection within the Constitution. That is why we cannot accept this kind of power being unchecked and being given without any kind of balance.

• (1630)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when I look at Bill C-12, as I have mentioned previously, I see it as a very important commitment that the Prime Minister made to Canadians, which was to secure our border and make sure that we have an increase in personnel, with 1,000 new border patrol officers and 1,000 new RCMP officers. This will have real and tangible results.

I am wondering if the member opposite could provide his thoughts on why it is important that we see a legislative initiative taken to support a secure border.

**Chak Au:** Mr. Speaker, as has been pointed out, these kinds of promises and commitments have been recycled many times. If they are very serious about providing the resources and the manpower to strengthen our security system, they should have done so many weeks or months ago and not recycled the same commitment again and again, pretending that they are doing something.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE**

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed the following bill, to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-211, an act respecting a national framework on sports betting advertising.

[English]

It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Employment; the hon. member for Riding Mountain, Health; the hon. member for York—Durham, Public Safety.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**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.

**Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a border is not just a line on a map. It is a symbol of our security, our sovereignty and our ability to make our own decisions.

For 10 years, the federal government has been turning a blind eye while stolen vehicles leave our ports, fentanyl crosses our borders and Quebec alone bears the brunt of unprecedented migratory pressure.

Today Ottawa is taking action, but only because it no longer has a choice. During all that time, the Bloc Québécois has been calling for better border control and increased efforts to combat organized crime and drug trafficking.

To us and the Government of Quebec, Bill C-12 is a step in the right direction. However, let us be clear: Our support is not a carte blanche endorsement.

Before praising the bill, we must also recognize its limitations. This bill incorporates several measures already included in Bill C-2, which is intended to combat transnational organized crime. Rather than piling up more legislation, the government would do better to enforce existing laws.

I would like to remind the House that the government's border security promises are not new. On April 10, 2025, in the midst of the election campaign, the Liberal leader, the Prime Minister that is, proudly announced in Brampton that his government would hire 1,000 RCMP officers and another 1,000 CBSA officers in order to curb the flow of migrants and combat fentanyl trafficking.

Six months later, on October 17, the same Prime Minister repeated the same announcement word for word, this time presenting it as a bold new measure. The same numbers, the same promise, the same speech—in short, nothing new at all.

If anyone is looking for concrete proof of the disparity between words and actions, they need only think of Roxham Road, a symbol of the Liberals' failure to control our borders. Between 2017 and 2023, more than 150,000 people crossed this border irregularly. In 2022 alone, there were nearly 40,000 crossings, more than all previous years combined. Of these irregular entries, nearly 90% were in Quebec. Quebec therefore bore the human, logistical and financial burden of this situation alone, spending more than \$400 million on accommodation, services and support. Rather than taking action, Ottawa allowed the issue to fester, repeating that nothing could be done, until the pressure became untenable.

When the Bloc Québécois asked to renegotiate the safe third country agreement to close Roxham Road, the government responded with bureaucratic excuses. As a result, there have been six years of neglect and Quebec was left to fend for itself.

This makeshift system where Quebec's role is to pay up while Ottawa communicates is a shining example of the federal government's denial. A border left open for six years is no border. It is an abdication of responsibility.

Ottawa likes to talk about a strong Canada. However, a strong country is not built on press releases. It is built with staff, equipment and commitment.

Let us talk about staff. The customs union estimates that the Canada Border Services Agency currently needs another 2,000 to 3,000 officers to properly fulfill its mandate. The government keeps making announcements, but on the ground, positions remain vacant. Inspections are not being conducted at ports, and border regions are still awaiting reinforcements.

The government even promised to review the pension plans of frontline officers in recognition of the fact that their jobs are so difficult, but once again, there was no meaningful follow-up. Officers are still waiting for concrete action, not press releases.

The government may be proud of its promises, but what it is saying in press conferences does not match reality. Trust is built on action, not on mere intentions.

The Bloc Québécois, like the customs union, is asking that Ottawa authorize CBSA officers to patrol between border crossings. We are not talking about replacing the RCMP, but rather empowering CBSA officers to intervene on the ground in places where trafficking and illegal border crossings occur. Nothing is preventing the government from doing so, apart from its own inaction.

● (1635)

When containers filled with stolen vehicles leave our ports without undergoing any inspection, this is not an administrative detail. It is a loss of sovereignty.

The border is also a matter of economic sovereignty. When imported products are brought into the country in violation of trade rules, our producers and local businesses pay the price. The Bloc Québécois will support any measure that protects Quebec's security and economy.

As the Bloc Québécois's science and innovation critic, I would also like to address the issue of asylum claims filed by some international students. For months now, universities have been sounding the alarm about the worrisome issue of fake students who enter Canada on a student visa, attend no classes and make an asylum claim after one year. These cases of fraud undermine the credibility of our university system and deny genuine talent a place at these institutions. In a system that limits the number of international students, every spot matters.

The most troubling thing about this is the way Ottawa has reacted. Instead of taking responsibility, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada is asking universities to police foreign students and to verify every student's attendance record and legitimacy. It seems to expect deans to act as immigration officers. Meanwhile, the same department is refusing to provide universities with data on individuals who filed a refugee claim after getting a study permit. In other words, Ottawa is asking universities to solve a problem without giving them the necessary information to do that. This inconsistency is irresponsible. The Bloc Québécois will not allow universities to become an administrative appendage of a department that is not doing its job. We are pleased that the bill seeks to close this loophole, but a lot more needs to be done to make Immigration,

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Refugees and Citizenship Canada genuinely transparent and accountable.

This bureaucratic inconsistency is also clear from the way Ottawa administers the safe third country agreement. For too long, this agreement allowed anyone who entered irregularly outside an official point of entry to file an asylum claim if they were not intercepted within 14 days. This provision encouraged clandestine and sometimes hazardous crossings. The government partially closed this loophole, but it did so without negotiating with Washington, preferring a unilateral solution instead. Now, anyone intercepted after 14 days will be returned to their country of origin, unless it is a moratorium country. This is progress, but it is still incomplete.

The Bloc Québécois will be monitoring the impact of this reform to ensure it does not create any new inconsistencies. We will also be scrutinizing the provisions that give new powers to the federal immigration minister, particularly the proposed addition to section 87 that would allow the minister to suspend, cancel or refuse to process visas, electronic travel authorizations or study permits. There is a legitimate objective for that, namely to combat fraud.

However, these powers must be circumscribed, especially if they impact permanent residents selected by Quebec. If there are no guardrails on this power, it could even invalidate decisions made under the Quebec experience program or other federal-provincial agreements. This would set a momentous precedent.

For years, Quebec has accepted a disproportionate number of asylum seekers, significantly in excess of its intake capacity. This situation has become untenable. The Bloc Québécois will ensure that Quebec's voice is heard, so that a fairer redistribution can be put in place and refugees can be accommodated in a way that respects Quebec's capacity and jurisdiction.

At committee, we will propose that the public safety minister be required to table a public report each year on the resources and operations of the CBSA. Quebecers have the right to know whether their border is really being protected. This debate highlights a broader issue. When Ottawa centralizes, Quebec waits. When Ottawa promises, Quebec must be patient. When Ottawa fails, it is Quebec that pays the price.

To summarize, the Bloc Québécois will support Bill C-12 at second reading, but let us be clear: Our support is not a free pass.

● (1640)

**Caroline Desrochers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his commitment to supporting the bill at second reading. We listened to stakeholders' concerns, including those raised by the Bloc Québécois. That is why we are introducing a bill with a narrowed scope and with provisions that are better suited to what we really want to address.

The Bloc Québécois members have often said that people want stricter border measures and tougher action on crime. I do not know why, but since the Bloc has heard about this bill, they have not taken a position on the new scope of the document.

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**Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Mr. Speaker, it is pretty easy to understand. What we want is to restore public trust in the security of our borders. I will say it again: Trust is built with actions, not intentions. Right now, we are constantly being fed recycled statements.

As I said in my speech, the Prime Minister repeated what he had said six months ago. Now we are being told that there will be money in the next budget on November 4. The Liberals cannot even tell us how many new officers they hired in the last six months. They are patting themselves on the back and telling us to trust them because there will be 2,000 new officers, but they are short more than the number that they promised. This is already an inconsistency. Once again, why wait months to do something that they could have done before?

I am all for hearing that things are going in the right direction, but they need to stop trying to pacify people with press conferences and take action, instead of questioning motives and saying nice things at press conferences.

[*English*]

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

I appreciate what my colleague just said, and I want to build on the question that was just asked.

I recently met with the union for the CBSA. The CBSA can maybe get 700 people per year through training. It loses between 500 and 600 people a year through attrition. Job satisfaction is extremely low, potentially the lowest in the government. The maximum number of people it can get through training per year is 200. Furthermore, since there is no budget, when it comes to police, anybody who is doing an acting job cannot get paid, so delaying the budget has real consequences.

Does my colleague see these things as concerns? To me as a Conservative, as a critic and as a Canadian, they are large concerns.

[*Translation*]

**Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Mr. Speaker, we can see the consequences. I gave the example of Roxham Road. I would have liked the Conservative Party to get more involved in this issue. When 150,000 people use a loophole to enter irregularly, I think that is a problem, but the Conservatives only get involved when it suits them.

To answer my colleague's question, the consequences are already apparent: Organized crime is becoming more prevalent in communities and people feel unsafe. Then there is fentanyl. Again, this requires coordination and mobilizing resources, not just good intentions. I hope the government will get to work as soon as possible. It needs to hire officers, but also ensure coordination, with a coordinated strategic plan.

• (1645)

**Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we have talked about the good intentions in what the government is saying. However, my colleague also raised the fact that there is a shortage of officers. He said that the government has promised to hire 2,000 more officers, which may not even be enough. During

the election campaign, we were told that about 2,000 officers would be hired, but the Speech from the Throne only mentioned 1,000 additional RCMP officers, not CBSA officers.

The Customs and Immigration Union is asking Ottawa to allow border services officers to patrol between border crossings, not to replace the RCMP, but rather to give federal agencies more depth and flexibility in enforcing the law. The Bloc Québécois also supports this request.

Can my colleague comment on that?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** The member for Rimouski—La Matapédia has 35 seconds to respond.

**Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Mr. Speaker, 35 seconds is not enough time to explain this government's bungling over the past 10 years. Again, Roxham Road is a monumental disaster.

To return to my colleague's question, last April the government promised us 2,000 officers: 1,000 for the RCMP and 1,000 for the CBSA. Last week, the Liberals held another press conference and repeated what they said in April. They told us that we have to wait for the next budget, that it will be in there. That is just straight-up recycling.

What we are telling them is that they need to listen to what the people on the ground are asking for and saying. According to the Customs and Immigration Union, Canada has never had so little control over its borders. I am not saying that to scare people, but if we want to find solutions to a problem, then we have to face reality and tell people the truth in order to bolster public confidence.

**Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be representing the people of Beauce today once again in the House.

Today, we are debating a bill that goes to the very heart of our country: our ability to welcome, integrate and protect those who choose to come to Canada. The Liberal government's Bill C-12 is an improvement over Bill C-2. We must acknowledge this.

Bill C-12 aims to modernize the immigration system. It claims to make the process more transparent and to improve the planning of the long-term immigration levels in order to meet Canada's economic needs. In reality, this bill lacks clear direction. It is weak and has lax security measures. Most importantly, it is disconnected from the reality on the ground. We need to listen to Canadians. Paying attention to the reality on the ground should be a priority for everyone, but especially this Liberal government.

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For years now, the Liberals have been promising to reform the immigration system. During these years, the system has been crumbling, backlogs have been piling up, processes have gotten increasingly complex and the provinces have been left to fend for themselves to deal with the consequences of the decisions made by the Liberals in Ottawa.

While the government keeps coming out with more and more announcements and slogans, communities are feeling the direct pressure of these poorly planned policies. Canadians, the people of Beauce, families and business owners are all saying the same thing: The Liberal government has lost control.

My colleague will be pleased to hear me say that Roxham Road became the symbol of this loss of control. It was wide open. Tens of thousands of people entered Canada illegally in plain sight. Everyone saw that. There was no security and no proper screening. What did the government do? It did absolutely nothing. It allowed things to get worse, weakening our immigration system and eroding public trust.

Let us be clear, there is a difference between legitimate refugees fleeing war and persecution and illegal migrants circumventing the law. The situation is also very different when it comes to economic workers, who are desperately needed in certain regions of Canada. The Liberal government created and maintained this confusion.

Meanwhile, the consequences are very real: We have a housing shortage, skyrocketing rents and overburdened public services. This is not ideology; it is a simple mathematical reality. When hundreds of thousands of people arrive without a plan to accommodate them and without enough housing, rents go up. It is simple math. That is fundamental. It is simple. Everyone saw it.

Bill C-12 claims to strengthen the security and integrity of the system, but once again, it is superficial. There need to be more resources, fewer announcements and some decisive action. The government needs to implement effective mechanisms to deport criminals and improve border surveillance.

While the government dwells on processes, criminals are getting organized. Drug traffickers, arms smugglers and groups associated with cartels are taking advantage of these government loopholes. As we said earlier, the border is really porous. Our borders have become a vulnerable point.

Canada needs a clear plan, well-monitored borders and rigorous screening at entry and exit points. Our border officers and police officers need more support. Most importantly, there needs to be the political will to act. Bill C-12 is weak on crime, weak on gangs and too weak to address what is actually happening on the ground. Again, I am talking about the reality on the ground.

Beyond immigration, another crucial issue for the safety of Canadians is the reform of the bail system. Too often, individuals accused of serious crimes are being released without sufficient safeguards, which endangers the public and undermines confidence in our justice system.

• (1650)

The Liberal government has failed to take decisive action on this issue, favouring measures that prioritize the rights of alleged offenders over the safety of victims and citizens.

It is essential that Bill C-12 or any other reform include more rigorous mechanisms for denying bail to individuals who pose a real risk to society. We must strengthen the role of judges so that they have the tools they need to protect Canadians, taking into account not only the presumption of innocence, but also the paramount importance of public safety.

Furthermore, protecting the fundamental rights of Canadians must remain an unwavering priority in any legislative reform. A responsible government must be able to rigorously defend these rights, while ensuring social peace and the rule of law. This is how Canada will maintain its status as a free and orderly society.

A poorly monitored border is an open door to illegal activities such as arms and drug trafficking or illegal immigration. Our border officers do an excellent job, but they simply lack resources. Again, the government is only making announcements. It is not taking action.

It is important to remember that some regions, like Beauce, share a direct border with the United States, in my case, with the state of Maine. This geographic reality demands greater vigilance. Bill C-12 does not propose any measures to better protect these sensitive areas. It completely ignores the unique challenges specific to border regions. This is a serious flaw in an already fragile system. Canadians deserve better. They deserve a government that protects them, takes action and stands up for the integrity of our country. The safety of Canadians must always come first. We have seen the consequences when that is not the case: exploitation, fraud, crime. A responsible government does not throw open its doors without ensuring that those who enter share our values, respect our laws and contribute to our society.

Demanding rigour does not mean one is against immigration. We support a system that is fair, orderly and respected. The Conservative Party believes that we can welcome people with compassion, but also with caution and judiciousness. It is a matter of respect for Canadians and for newcomers.

Meanwhile, the Liberals are inflating immigration thresholds without taking the reality on the ground into account. The housing crisis is getting worse. Inflation is driving up housing prices. Millions of Canadians, including people in Beauce, are struggling to find housing. Rents are skyrocketing. Mortgages are drifting out of reach. There is no coordination with cities or provinces to adapt infrastructure, hospitals, schools or housing. That is irresponsible. In many regions, including Beauce, businesses are desperately looking for skilled workers. The current federal system is failing employers. They have to navigate a complicated and lengthy bureaucratic maze while highly skilled foreign workers wait in limbo.

Bill C-12 is a step in the right direction, but it does not solve anything. It does not align immigration with actual economic needs. It overlooks rural and industrial regions. It does not support businesses, families or local growth.

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Another essential element is that the provinces have been excluded from the planning. There is no coordination, no serious dialogue. However, they are the ones that must provide education, health care and housing services. As a result, schools are overwhelmed, hospitals are overflowing and there is not enough housing. Ottawa makes all the decisions but then always blames everybody else.

The Conservative Party is proposing a different path, an approach based on collaboration, listening, and shared responsibility. Provinces and municipalities have to have a say, because they are close to the reality and know their limitations. Immigration cannot be simply a matter of quotas. It also needs to take integration, social cohesion and shared values into account. That is what we, as Conservatives, promise to do.

• (1655)

**Caroline Desrochers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a bit of a stretch for my colleague from the Quebec Conservative caucus to say such a thing when he knows full well that the Province of Quebec is actively consulted on all decisions affecting immigration. It is consulted more than any other province and territory in Canada.

It is a shame that what should be a debate of ideas is still being used to present divisive rhetoric on immigration.

With regard to crime, I would invite my colleague to check out the remarks made by the Prime Minister last week. We have stated very clearly what we are going to do about the issue of conditional sentences.

The Conservatives say they want stronger borders and a crack-down on organized crime. If my colleague is serious about that, will he support this bill?

**Jason Groleau:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know if my colleague is familiar with the business world, but it has been left to its own devices. When it comes to the threshold that was approved without consulting the provinces, there is a difference between illegal immigrants and the foreign workers who are needed in our regions, especially those where the unemployment rate is extremely low—that is, less than 5.5%—as the Conservative Party has mentioned.

I would like to remind my colleague that it is essential to consult the provinces.

**Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague was obviously speaking of the reality on the ground.

I would like him to tell us where the Conservative Party was when people were entering Canada through the irregular border crossing at Roxham Road. In five years, more than 150,000 people made that journey. That is the reality on the ground. The Conservative Party said not a word; it had no plan and no solutions.

I would also like to remind my colleague of Quebec's motto: “Je me souviens”, or I remember.

When the Conservative Party formed the government in 2015 under Stephen Harper, its plan was to cut border officers. That is the reality on the ground today.

I would like my colleague to tell us, in all honesty, what the plan is: Does he want more border control, but fewer staff? I would like him to explain that to me.

• (1700)

**Jason Groleau:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's question. He is one of my most pleasant colleagues here. I appreciate him.

As to his question, I was not in the House at the time. However, I am not sure about this, but I believe he was here and supported a number of the Liberal government's decisions, some of which had to do with Roxham Road.

I am surprised that he is talking to me about it, given that he supported most of the Liberal government's proposals when he was in the House.

I am a little disappointed.

[*English*]

**Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot about the scourge of fentanyl and what it is doing to Canadians. More Canadians have been killed over the last 10 years, since the Liberals took over, than died in the Second World War.

I wonder if my colleague could opine on what he thinks the reason is that the government has waited so long to bring in some of these reforms. Fentanyl has been killing Canadians for a full decade. Why have the Liberals waited until just now to bring in some of these necessary reforms?

[*Translation*]

**Jason Groleau:** Mr. Speaker, they did nothing for 10 years. The answer to my colleague's question is as simple as that.

By anyone's standards, the borders are porous. We have all seen that. Outside those doors, we can all see that one plus one equals two. Only the Liberal government cannot see it. Drugs get through the borders. There are not enough officers. They need support. Announcements have been made, but there are none on the ground.

As we said earlier, it is important to have those on-the-ground connections and be close to the people. That right there is one of the Liberal government's big problems.

**Caroline Desrochers:** Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleague to clarify something. I am a bit confused.

At the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, our Conservative colleagues seem to want to destroy the temporary foreign worker program, saying that it is not needed and that it is causing youth unemployment, when we know full well that businesses need it, as my colleague said.

I would like him to clarify the Conservative Party's position.

**Jason Groleau:** Mr. Speaker, some parts of Canada are experiencing very high unemployment. We can agree with that. As our proposal says, regions where unemployment is below 5.5% need foreign workers.

That is our proposal, and ours is the best one.

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**Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-12, the strengthening Canada's immigration system and borders act, a piece of legislation the Liberals have hastily introduced in the wake of Conservative opposition to their previous omnibus bill, Bill C-2.

Before addressing Bill C-12 directly, it is essential to reflect on the deeply flawed Bill C-2. This omnibus bill, which sprawls across 140 pages and would amend over a dozen pieces of legislation, was a dangerous attempt by the Liberals to consolidate sweeping powers that would trample on Canadians' fundamental rights and freedoms. The bill was so broad and so intrusive that it sparked serious concern not only from Conservatives, but from legal experts, privacy advocates, opposition parties and of course everyday Canadians. At my office, we received numerous calls and have had numerous correspondence with constituents who are deeply concerned with the provisions of Bill C-2, which I will detail later in my speech.

The Conservatives played a pivotal role in pushing the government back from its original overreach in Bill C-2. Part 4 of Bill C-2, for example, would have allowed Canada Post to open any mail without a warrant, which is a flagrant violation of privacy in a country that prides itself on liberal democratic values. Thankfully, this part has been stripped from Bill C-12, though it is still in Bill C-2, which remains before Parliament.

Similarly, Bill C-2 included sweeping warrantless powers for the government to demand personal data from electronic service providers, banks and telecommunications companies, which was done under parts 14, 15 and 16. These powers would have allowed the government to collect detailed location and subscriber information without judicial oversight, disregarding basic principles of privacy and due process. The Privacy Commissioner himself confirmed that the government had failed to consult him before pushing these alarming measures, which is a stark reminder of how little regard the Liberals have for Canadians' privacy rights.

The clauses within Bill C-2 were sharply criticized for threatening personal privacy and potentially breaching the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, including section 15, the right to be treated equally under the law. This is according to an analysis by the Library of Parliament.

Matt Hatfield, the executive director of the advocacy group OpenMedia, said, per *The Globe and Mail*:

...the proposal could compel a large range of electronic service providers, including social media platforms, e-mail and messaging services, gaming platforms, telecoms and cloud storage companies, to disclose information about their subscribers including the province and local area where they use their services without judicial oversight.

This is not the Canada that Canadians expect. Law-abiding citizens deserve privacy protections, not to be treated as collateral damage in a government's quest to expand its control.

Again, the Conservatives have been proud to stand firm and force the government to remove these unjustified intrusions from Bill C-12. That is the duty of a principled opposition: to safeguard Canadians' freedoms and hold the government accountable.

While Bill C-12 is an improvement and is something that the Conservatives plan to support and send to committee for further study, it does remain incomplete. One glaring failure of Bill C-12 is that the Liberal government still refuses to take seriously the fentanyl crisis, a crisis ravaging Canadian families, devastating communities and destroying lives across this country.

Let me remind the House of the Prime Minister's own words earlier this year, when he dismissed the fentanyl crisis as merely a "challenge" in Canada, while calling it a "crisis" in the United States. Such minimization is not only out of touch, but deeply irresponsible.

Health Canada reports that fentanyl was involved in 79% of opioid-related deaths in the first half of 2024, a staggering increase over previous years. Despite this crisis, the Liberals continue to push for drug consumption sites near schools. At the health committee, the Conservatives called for the Liberals to shut down fentanyl consumption sites next to children, but the health minister refused to rule out approving more of these consumption sites next to schools and day cares.

• (1705)

Canadian police have uncovered and dismantled superlabs manufacturing kilograms of this lethal drug within our borders, fuelling a national emergency that the government continues to downplay. Bill C-12 fails to implement mandatory minimum sentencing for fentanyl traffickers, the very criminals who are poisoning our streets and fuelling the opioid epidemic. The Liberals continue to resist measures that would ensure traffickers face serious consequences for flooding our streets with this extremely lethal poison.

The Liberal government claims to be tough on crime. We have heard the Secretary of State for Combatting Crime say this very thing, yet people of my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge and across this country see it very differently. They see a much different reality, one marked by rising shootings, brazen bank robberies and increasing violent crime.

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The Liberals continue to refuse to close the loopholes that allow catch-and-release bail for fentanyl dealers and firearms traffickers, loopholes that criminal gangs exploit to terrorize our communities. The Liberal government has had ample opportunity to address the seriousness of crime affecting our country. Since they have taken power, violent crime is up 50% and violent firearms offences are up 116%, increasing for nine straight years. Auto theft, which is a huge issue in Vaughan, is up 46% nationally. Everyone in my community knows someone who knows someone who has had their vehicle either stolen or attempted to be stolen. Gang related homicides are also up 78%.

The Conservatives unequivocally believe that trafficking lethal fentanyl is the moral equivalent of murder. That is why we demand mandatory, harsh prison sentences for those who manufacture, import, export and traffic fentanyl. Those who profit from addiction must face swift and serious consequences. The government's unwillingness to adopt these common-sense measures sends a clear message: Criminals can operate with impunity while Canadians suffer.

The failures do not end there. The Liberals also refuse to acknowledge their abject failure on border security, another critical element that Bill C-12 purportedly aims to address. Earlier this year, the Canada Border Services Agency revealed that 600 foreign criminals were scheduled for deportation, but now they have gone missing in custody. This is completely unacceptable and represents a grave threat to public safety.

Canada's border must be secure to protect Canadians from criminals and illegal activities, including fentanyl trafficking and gun smuggling. Canadians deserve better from their government, one that respects their privacy, does not overreach with warrantless surveillance powers and is serious about fighting fentanyl by imposing real consequences on traffickers. Canadians deserve a government that protects our borders, enforces immigration laws fairly and firmly and supports law enforcement in combatting organized crime, and a government that does not leave foreign criminals at large in our communities.

Canadians are looking to this House for leadership, not partisanship, on critical issues like public safety and immigration. While we have serious concerns about how the government first approached matters in Bill C-2, we also acknowledge that Bill C-12 represents a step in the right direction. This very step came because Canadians raised their voices and the Conservatives did our job: We were listening, we pushed back and we demanded better on behalf of the citizens of this country.

Our work here is not done. We will support moving Bill C-12 to committee, where it will be scrutinized carefully, and we will work to improve it even further.

• (1710)

**Doug Eyolfson (Winnipeg West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I share the member's concerns about why addressing crime is so important. My father was in the RCMP for 24 years, and I work in the emergency department, where I see the effects of crime.

I found the statements in his speech rather incongruous. It is almost as though this is Schrödinger's government: at one point being

too soft on the population and, on the other side, violating people's rights.

The member talked about mandatory minimum sentences, yet the Supreme Court of Canada has repeatedly said that mandatory minimum sentences are a violation of human rights. Does the member think we should not obey the Supreme Court of Canada?

**Michael Guglielmin:** Mr. Speaker, in the Supreme Court's decision in *R v. Lloyd*, the Supreme Court ruled that the government should narrow its scope for mandatory minimum sentencing, and that is exactly what I spoke about in my speech. We should narrow the scope and target it toward people who are trafficking, importing and producing fentanyl. We should target it toward organized crime and, as we said before, have the harshest mandatory minimums for people who produce and traffic in excess of 45 milligrams, which is a lethal dose. That is very targeted and specific and fits the scope.

[*Translation*]

**Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague on his fine speech. I have the pleasure of working with him on the Standing Committee on Industry.

As he said, my party will also support this bill at second reading. We look forward to thoroughly analyzing this bill in committee.

That said, the major problem we see is that there are a lot of commitments, but there are staff shortages at the CBSA and the RCMP.

What does my hon. colleague think about that?

[*English*]

**Michael Guglielmin:** Mr. Speaker, I share my colleague's concern and disbelief, frankly, because what we have seen over and over again with the Liberals is they say one thing and do nothing. As we know, so far no new border agents have been hired, and we certainly support the hiring of more border service agents to ensure we have widespread security across our border.

• (1715)

**Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, can my colleague give his opinion on the government's inability to commit to banning consumption sites near schools and playgrounds?

*Government Orders*

**Michael Guglielmin:** Mr. Speaker, it comes down to a lack of attention to the problem, in my view. We have been sounding the alarm for a while now that having drug consumption sites next to schools and day cares is completely unacceptable. It is an infringement on the morals we hold deep in this country to keep drugs and crime away from children. We know these areas are riddled with drugs and criminal activity. We hope the Liberals do the right thing and decide to remove drug sites around schools, day cares and the presence of children because it is the right thing to do.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, to be very clear, provinces and municipalities dictate where the safe sites go. To try to blame Ottawa for something that is not within its jurisdiction is irresponsible.

Does the member not have any confidence in the municipalities and the province he represents? Does he believe the province should not be responsible for safe sites, along with municipalities?

**Michael Guglielmin:** Mr. Speaker, frankly, what I find irresponsible is that the other day when we heard the Prime Minister's announcement on crime, there was no attention paid to removing the principle of restraint, which was endemic to Bill C-75, the very principle that is allowing for catch and release to continue. I would ask the members opposite to put some forethought into this to make sure this principle is removed so we can keep criminals off the streets.

**Harb Gill (Windsor West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today as the member of Parliament for Windsor West 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 and respecting other related security measures.

Let us begin with how we got here. The original version, Bill C-2, was deeply flawed. It would have given the government warrantless access to Canadians' financial data and unchecked powers to manipulate platforms. It would even have allowed Canada Post to open private letters without a warrant. All of this was proposed without consulting the Privacy Commissioner, of all people. Conservatives and Canadians said it was enough, so our Liberal friends backed down.

Now we have Bill C-12. It is more focused, yes, but it still misses the mark, especially when it comes to public safety, border integrity, and fentanyl and meth trafficking.

Windsor is Canada's busiest border crossing, handling over half a billion dollars in trade every single day, yet our frontline agencies there are stretched thin, underfunded, understaffed and overwhelmed. When President Trump raised concerns earlier this year about the northern border, Ottawa scrambled. The government spent \$5.3 million leasing Black Hawk helicopters and flew 68 patrol missions in just six weeks. That program has ended, by the way. The RCMP called it rapid response capability, but only one interdiction came out of all that effort. That is not enforcement; it is border security theatre.

Senator Sandra Pupatello, who hails from Windsor, recently raised the alarm about illegal crossings by kayaks and motorboats in southwestern Ontario. She is absolutely right that if it floats, it can be used to smuggle guns, meth, fentanyl and cash. It is all mov-

ing across the river, yet the federal government continues to ignore the voices of those on the ground who are sounding the alarm.

Canada's failure to act has had consequences far beyond our borders. After an investigation done by W5, a report aired this past week. According to W5, a young man named Aiden Sagala died in New Zealand in 2023, after unknowingly drinking liquid meth disguised as beer, which was exported from right here in Canada. He was just 21 years old. Authorities in New Zealand seized 29,000 cans shipped from Toronto. Did we do anything about it? Sadly, no. There were no charges, no suspects and no answers. The RCMP has remained silent. That is not just negligence; it is a public safety failure.

Since 2016, 49,000 Canadians have died from opioid overdoses, and I have been to a few funerals myself. Seventy-nine per cent of those deaths involved fentanyl, yet Bill C-12 does not include mandatory minimum sentences for fentanyl or meth traffickers or for gang members using firearms. That is not progress. That is abdication of the government's responsibility to Canadian citizens.

In British Columbia, labs are producing kilograms of fentanyl every week. These criminals are profiting from addiction and misery. Canada has become a low-risk, high-reward destination for traffickers, and not just for drugs. We have also become a haven for money laundering, with billions flowing through shell companies, real estate and even casinos. TD got fined last year by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission for these kinds of activities. This is not just a health crisis but a national security emergency.

Our bail system is broken. Known traffickers and repeat violent offenders are walking free, sometimes the very same day they are arrested. In Windsor and across Ontario, auto theft is up 167%, extortion is up 350%, and firearms violence is up 97%. Roughly 90% of the guns that are used in crimes are smuggled across our borders. There are no answers to that either. What is not up, one might ask? Resources, helicopter patrol hours, Coast Guard funding and border surveillance equipment are not up. We are asking our officers to do more with less while criminals operate with complete impunity.

*Government Orders*

• (1720)

Windsor is not just the front line of Canada's economy; it is now the front line of the drug crisis and the fight to secure our borders. If the government cannot track lethal drugs hidden in beverage cans that are exported overseas where innocent people are dying, how can we trust it to protect our own communities?

We are not just risking lives; we are also risking our relationship with other nations, and our reputation as a reliable security partner is also being questioned. The question we need to ask ourselves is this: What message are we sending to our allies, our citizens and the brave officers who are out there? Whether they are from CBSA, the RCMP or municipal or provincial police services, what are they expecting of us, and how are we helping them to stay safe?

Conservatives support sending the bill to committee. There are elements worth exploring, but we will be pushing for serious amendments to ensure that law-abiding Canadians are protected, criminals are held accountable and border communities like Windsor are no longer left behind. Canada's border is not just a line on the map; it is a front line in crisis, and it is time we started treating it that way, with urgency, investment and real leadership.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can say that real leadership does not come from a Conservative leader who insults the RCMP as an institution. That is despicable, yet we still have not heard him apologize to Canadians for making what I would classify as a stupid statement.

Having said that, my question for the member is with respect to fentanyl. Conservatives talk about wanting the government to do more on the fentanyl issue, yet when it brought in a mechanism to deal with fentanyl being distributed through the mail, they jumped up and down and said we could not do it that way. I wonder why, when we actually take an action to deal with something, it is the natural disposition of the Conservatives to oppose the government no matter what. That is what it seems at times.

• (1725)

**Harb Gill:** Mr. Speaker, the answer is very simple. If it is done legally, done properly, done sensibly and done with common sense, we will support it. Anything less we will not support.

We are not here to trample on the rights of Canadian people; we are here to stand up for them and fight for them.

**Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is one thing I would like to get the member's opinion on. Members on the opposite side in the last couple of years both attended defund the police rallies and specifically called to defund the police.

I wonder how the member, as a former law enforcement officer, feels about the calls from that side of the aisle to defund his colleagues in the police force.

**Harb Gill:** Mr. Speaker, whenever that happens, it is always deeply troubling, because members of law enforcement, whether with the CBSA or police agencies, no matter where they serve, serve with integrity. They have values they follow. They sacrifice. They miss birthdays and weddings so all of us stay safe. They miss Christmases and Thanksgivings with their family. When they see or

hear these sorts of things, such as “defund the police”, it truly is tragic that this is the value somebody has placed on their work.

It is deeply offensive. It was offensive to me when I was a police officer and still is today that the sacrifice is not acknowledged. We add value to the lives of our citizens by protecting them and by serving them. However, the reward we get in turn is to hear that we should be defunded.

**Doug Eyolfson (Winnipeg West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member still has not answered the question.

I agree that police officers miss family birthdays and Christmases, and they risk their life. I was raised by an RCMP officer, and I know this. Why have not any members on the other side of the House stood up against their leader's disgraceful statements disparaging the RCMP?

**Harb Gill:** Mr. Speaker, that is pretty rich coming from these folks. These kinds of statements are sowing division, not unity. The challenge we have is whether or not we are going to be united.

With respect to these sorts of matters, we have to follow the evidence. If the evidence is there, let it be, but the evidence has to be explored and dealt with properly. If a statement is made by any member of the House, it has to be reviewed and looked at properly in the sense of whether that statement was made with any basis.

I believe the leader when he says there are issues with those investigations. I know for a fact that there were. If members want to have a committee hearing, I would be happy to endorse that. However, just scolding someone or alleging that they did something wrong or insulted somebody is absolutely facetious and does not help the conversation.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** The hon. member for Winnipeg North is rising on a point of order.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, the member was requesting some information, and I would be happy to table a document with unanimous consent—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** Order. We are quickly delving into debate.

I will give the member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes 10 seconds to ask a very brief question.

**Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to address the faux outrage and pearl-clutching on the other side. For 10 years, we have listened to the government chew on the RCMP. Here is a headline quoting the public safety minister: “RCMP racism is ‘intolerable’”. The former prime minister called the RCMP a racist organization—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** Order. I have to give the member 10 seconds to respond.

The member for Windsor West.

**Harb Gill:** Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more. There is a lot of fake outrage with no substance to it.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1730)

[*Translation*]

### DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT ACT

**Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ)** moved that Bill C-228, An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act (prior review of treaties by Parliament), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to rise to speak to my bill, C-228. I will read the summary of the bill:

This enactment amends the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act to add certain requirements for the tabling in Parliament of documents relating to treaties entered into by the Minister of Foreign Affairs on behalf of Canada.

More specifically, Bill C-228 provides for the following: systematic tabling of treaties in the House of Commons; a requirement to wait 21 days after tabling before ratifying treaties in order to give the House an opportunity to consider them; and publication of treaties in the Canada Gazette and on the website of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

I will define what we mean by “major treaty” later on, but the bill proposes a requirement to obtain the advice of the House before ratifying major treaties and a requirement to consult civil society through a parliamentary committee before Parliament votes on major treaties, which I will come back to later.

Canada is currently bound by 4,400 international treaties. These are treaties in the broad sense and include agreements, protocols, conventions and amendments to existing treaties. These are all examples of different kinds of international treaties. Treaties affect all aspects of society, including taxation, investment, exports, environmental protection, human rights, labour law, international trade, government procurement and standards to be applied to marketable products. These treaties clearly have a considerable impact on all aspects of life, both economic and political.

I would like to point out that, in many cases, treaties are more important than laws. In today's world, who would deny that the free trade agreement between Canada and the United States has a greater impact on the people of Canada than the law governing Parliament's official poet? I picked a law at random. The current tariff crisis is demonstrating the consequences that a free trade agreement can have.

Furthermore, while any legislation passed in this Parliament could be amended in the next Parliament, the same cannot be said for treaties. Since they are essentially contracts between countries, they cannot be changed without the other country's consent. Metic-

### *Private Members' Business*

ulous and transparent review of treaties is even more essential given the relative permanence of treaties. Laws are passed after a well-established process that includes detailed study in committee after public hearings. Parliament, on the other hand, is largely excluded from the treaty-making process. That is not necessarily the case in other jurisdictions, and it is not how it works in other countries. In short, let me be clear: If the people's representatives are left out of the process, then the people are also being left out when it comes to ratifying treaties.

I would like to explain how international treaties are ratified. There are five main steps, and within those five main steps, there are a number of undemocratic processes that this bill attempts to fix.

The first step is to adopt a mandate. That is the starting point. Cabinet decides to start negotiations for a treaty and gives a mandate to the negotiator, setting objectives to be reached and red lines that must not be crossed. This is the mandate. The decision to start negotiations is generally public. We know that when the government wants to renegotiate CUSMA or develop new international treaty agreements, it is generally clear about its intentions. However, the negotiating mandate is not made public. The public remains in the dark about what will be negotiated and how.

• (1735)

Cabinet alone makes that decision, even if the proposed treaty deals with matters that are normally within the purview of Parliament and even if the treaty affects matters under the legislative jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. Anyone can see that this is undemocratic.

After the mandate comes negotiation. This is when countries try to agree on a text that works for both of them. As we all know, this horse-trading, the entire negotiation process, takes place behind closed doors. Quebec and the provinces are generally not part of the negotiating teams, although they are often consulted and kept informed. Parliament, however, is rarely kept apprised of the status of ongoing negotiations and discussions.

The third step is signing the agreement. This is when countries wrap up negotiations, say they have agreed on a final text and commit to doing whatever their legislators need to do to ratify it. From that point on, there is a relatively final text that can be looked at. That is where Bill C-228 comes in. It would require the text of major treaties to be tabled in the House of Commons. Then, after committee scrutiny, the House would have to vote on those treaties.

*Private Members' Business*

Here is how we would define “major treaty”. Members can probably see where I am going. What we want to see is a treaty approval process comparable to the legislative process. Generally speaking, “major treaties” means those that require the enactment of a federal law, confer new powers on the government, impose a significant financial obligation, result in a change to Canada's boundaries, the imposition of sanctions, or a transfer of jurisdiction to international institutions, affect the government's jurisdiction, or concern international trade.

As an opposition party, we are clearly able to define what a major treaty is, yet the government is still unable to define what a project in the national interest is. That was just a friendly reminder.

The fourth step is implementation. At this stage, countries change their internal operations to bring them into compliance with the requirements of the agreement. We are talking about changes to laws, regulations and government programs. That is the only step that Parliament is currently involved in. However, it is important to note that Parliament currently does not become seized with the treaty itself and cannot propose changes to any aspect of it. The treaty is unalterable, and parliamentarians only consider amendments to existing laws that will allow it to come into force.

In fact, the very minimal impact we can have is through our control, so to speak, over existing legislation. Since trade treaty implementation legislation affects tariffs, which have a financial impact, a confidence vote is usually involved. That is another problem. If we refuse to accept a treaty tabled in the House, Parliament could potentially be dissolved. This gives the government a disproportionate amount of leverage.

The fifth and final stage is ratification. This is the stage where the countries involved declare that their domestic laws are consistent with the requirements of the agreement and that they agree, under international law, to be bound by the obligations set out in the agreement. This stage comes under the exclusive authority of the executive branch.

If I can summarize, all these stages show that the process for ratifying international treaties is clearly undemocratic. In Canada, cabinet adopts the mandate unilaterally and keeps it secret. Federal negotiators report exclusively to the executive branch and do not have to report to anyone about the progress of discussions. The government alone brings the negotiations to a close and signs the final text of an agreement before disclosing it to anyone. Public debate is possible only after negotiations have ended and the text of the agreement is signed. That means it cannot be changed, whether by civil society, which can lobby elected officials, or by the elected officials themselves, whose ability to make changes is quite minimal.

● (1740)

In short, Parliament is essentially relegated to the role of a rubber-stamp chamber. It does not get to study the treaty itself. It merely adopts the changes to the laws that allow the treaty to come into force. During the review of the bill, any amendment that would affect the draft treaty is even ruled out of order.

Worse still, the government does its job with a knife to our throats, since laws to implement trade treaties generally affect taxation, which means they involve a confidence vote. That makes it

impossible to change them. Either we approve them, or we face an election. Once again, this gives the executive branch a disproportionate amount of leverage.

What Bill C-228 would do is make the treaty-making process a little more democratic in five ways, which I will summarize briefly. First, it would require all treaties to be tabled in the House of Commons. Second, it would require the government to wait 21 days after tabling before ratifying a treaty to give the House an opportunity to consider it. Third, treaties would have to be published in the *Canada Gazette* and on the website of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development. Fourth, it would add a requirement to obtain the advice of the House before ratifying a major treaty, which I defined earlier. The requirement to obtain the opinion of the House is not binding. I will see what my colleagues have to say about that. Lastly, civil society would have to be consulted by means of a parliamentary committee before Parliament votes on major treaties.

Quite frankly, when it comes to treaties, Canada is one of the least democratic countries in the industrialized world. The bill we are introducing is somewhat inspired by what is being done in Quebec.

In Quebec, there is an obligation to table and publish treaties. This obligation is set out in the Act respecting the *Ministère des Relations internationales*. This Quebec law also provides that the ratification of an international agreement or the making of an order cannot take place with respect to an important international commitment until the commitment is approved by the National Assembly. This mechanism allows the entire assembly, not just the executive branch, to express opinions. My colleagues will see that Bill C-228 is largely based on the practice in Quebec, which requires that parliamentary approvals be published, and that is what Bill C-228 seeks to replicate. It is also based on what is done in most European countries.

Canada is lagging behind when it comes to transparency, democracy and treaties, and that can be seen simply by looking at what is done in Europe and the United States. Parliamentary approval of treaties is the norm rather than the exception in Europe. Belgium even requires that regions and communities give their approval before it ratifies a treaty that affects their jurisdictions. Obviously, Bill C-228 does not go that far. In the United States, Congress itself adopts the negotiating mandate. It is kept informed of the discussions and must approve the text before ratification. In Europe, the European Commission cannot enter into trade negotiations without the authorization of the European Parliament and a mandate from the member states represented on the European Council.

It is clear that, in many countries, parliaments adopt treaties through a far more democratic process. Furthermore, in some European countries, the adoption of treaties is considered important enough to be enshrined in their constitutions. That is the case in France, Germany, Denmark and Italy. Pursuant to its constitution, the U.S. must obtain legislative approval for certain categories of international agreements before they can be ratified.

In terms of transparency, Canada made some progress under the Harper government. I am sure that my Conservative colleagues will be pleased to hear this. It was in 2008 that the government outlined a new policy requiring all treaties signed by Canada and other states or entities to be tabled in the House before being ratified.

• (1745)

However, the tabling of treaties in the House remains a courtesy, similar to the courtesy shown by the Chair in letting me know that my speaking time is over. I am looking forward to hearing my colleagues' opinions. I believe that this is a bill that calls for greater democracy and transparency. I hope everyone shows such good faith.

[English]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, when I think of this private member's bill, the first thing that comes to mind is that we have literally dozens, if not hundreds of treaties that have been brought in. Since I was first elected, there have been probably 400-plus treaties.

I contrast what the member is asking for with the sorts of procedures we have had over the years. For example, on trade agreements, we have opportunities for opposition days. There is all sorts of debate when legislation and so forth come forward.

I have never really heard someone say they have an objection to how the majority of the MPs in the chamber did not support a particular treaty. Is he aware of any treaties that the majority of MPs did not support?

[Translation]

**Mario Simard:** Madam Speaker, we need to focus on treaties that have a slightly broader scope. Why have all the other countries, like the European countries and the United States, decided to have a more democratic treaty-making process? I suppose it is because they believe in the role of elected officials when it comes to international treaties.

We have seen some major blunders in the past. I was first elected to the House in 2019, when Canada had just renegotiated CUSMA. One sector that was left out was aluminum. Aluminum was the only sector that was not protected under CUSMA, even though steel was.

A Canadian negotiator candidly told us that this situation had come about because the problem was not addressed at the negotiating table. If the government was in the habit of consulting elected officials who are aware of the realities and the needs on the ground, this type of problem might not happen.

**Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for introducing this very important bill in the House. As he said, most European countries and the United States have a process that involves parliamentarians before final ratification.

I was elected in 2015, and there was a lot of talk about protecting supply management. I am pleased because we just passed a law that protects it, but in the last three trade agreements, supply management was sacrificed and used as a bargaining chip with other coun-

### *Private Members' Business*

tries, whether it was with Europe, the United States, or as part of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

If we had a more democratic law, such as this one and such as exists in Europe and the United States, would Parliament have had the tools and means to protect the supply management sector?

**Mario Simard:** Madam Speaker, what an intelligent question. I think that is fantastic. The answer is yes. During a recent discussion that my party caucus had with Daniel Johnson, who was premier of Quebec and also a trade agreement negotiator, Mr. Johnson told us how dysfunctional Canada's approach was, since it does not involve the terms of negotiation being validated by its houses of assembly.

In the United States, the negotiating mandate comes from politicians. Unfortunately, that is not the case in Canada, which for a long time sidelined the much-debated issue of supply management; not only is it essential to Quebec, but it also serves the interests of other agricultural producers in Canada.

It took a lot of painstaking work by the Bloc Québécois to get supply management on the federal government's legislative agenda. We had to fight with senators. During CUSMA negotiations, this issue could have been resolved quickly if the House had been asked, and perhaps even if Quebec City had been consulted to find out what was important to them in trade negotiations.

• (1750)

**Hon. Mona Fortier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would first like to thank the member for Jonquière for introducing Bill C-228, which is a private member's bill. I am grateful for his work on this important and timely issue.

The debate on this bill touches on fundamental principles of our democracy and our constitutional framework. In a global context marked by geopolitical uncertainty, it is essential to ensure that Canada's treaty-making system reflects today's reality.

First, I rise today to reaffirm the integrity, transparency, and accountability that are already built into Canada's treaty-making process. This includes the essential step of tabling treaties in Parliament. This step is a more recent addition to our tradition, but it has been respected and supported by Canadian governments of all political stripes since the January 2008 announcement of the policy on tabling treaties in Parliament.

[English]

Since the introduction of the policy on the tabling of treaties in Parliament in 2008, successive governments have maintained a strong commitment to transparency by regularly tabling treaty texts before the House. These documents, along with negotiating positions and impact assessments, are made available to parliamentary committees, allowing Parliament to exercise oversight.

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[*Translation*]

Our government will always take a strong stand for transparency in Canada's international agreements and partnerships. As we endeavour to diversify our relationships abroad, we agree that there can be no compromise on transparency to Parliament.

[*English*]

We agree that as we focus on diversifying our relationships and treaty relations abroad, there must be no sacrifice on openness with Parliament.

[*Translation*]

As members of the House know, the authority to enter into international treaties on behalf of Canada belongs to the elected government. Like many of our allies who also follow the Westminster model, our government has a mandate to negotiate, sign and ratify treaties on behalf of Canada for all Canadians.

[*English*]

It is important to recognize that the constitutional authority to enter into treaties rests with the elected government of the day, consistent with the Westminster parliamentary tradition. As with many of our allies who share this system, the executive branch is tasked with negotiating, signing and ratifying treaties on behalf of all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

At the same time, parliamentary control and transparency are central to our democratic governance. The current policy framework offers a number of opportunities for parliamentary participation by the provinces, territories, indigenous groups and relevant stakeholders, from preliminary consultations during treaty planning and negotiations, right up to tabling of the treaties prior to their ratification.

For nearly 20 years, since 2008, successive governments have tabled treaties in Parliament in accordance with the requirements of the policy on tabling treaties in Parliament. This process is not a mere formality; it embodies the philosophy that underpins our system of government.

[*English*]

As we begin the debate on Canada's current treaty-making process, it is important that we all understand what exactly our current policy is and what level of openness, input and transparency it affords to Parliament.

[*Translation*]

First, a government's accountability in the treaty process begins well before signing or ratifying a treaty. It begins with the planning stage. As the policy states, when a negotiating mandate is developed, public servants must demonstrate that they have conducted a comprehensive consultation process. This process involves not only federal departments, but also, depending on the subject of the treaty, the provinces and territories, indigenous peoples, as well as civil society in the form of non-governmental organizations, academia and industry.

Second, these consultations continue throughout the negotiation phase. Stakeholders are consulted, including provincial and territorial governments where certain provisions of the treaty fall within their constitutional jurisdiction. In the case of multilateral negotiations, representatives of these groups are often part of Canadian delegations.

Third, for agreements of major economic importance, including trade agreements, additional transparency measures were put in place in 2020. These additional measures require that the government table in Parliament a notice of intent to negotiate at least 90 days before the discussions begin and that negotiation objectives be tabled 30 days before.

• (1755)

Fourth, the requirement to table the text of international treaties in Parliament before taking any action intended to bind Canada is an essential component of our commitment to accountability.

[*English*]

During these treaty-tabling periods, opposition parties have the option to seek a vote and pursue a debate in the House regarding the treaty in question.

Fifth, where the fulfillment of the obligations in a treaty requires amendments to federal legislation, a bill to implement those obligations is presented to this House and follows the standard procedures for the adoption of law. This again provides significant opportunities for review, examination, debate and approval by parliamentarians.

[*Translation*]

Finally, the commitment to public transparency is also reflected in the publication and registration of treaties. Once in force, they become publicly available, they are registered with the United Nations and they are kept in the public domain, ensuring their visibility both in Canada and internationally.

[*English*]

For treaties with significant economic implications, such as free trade agreements, the government introduced enhanced transparency measures in 2020. These include the requirement to table a notice of intent to negotiate and the negotiation objectives in this House before talks begin. Furthermore, Parliament's approval is required before implementation legislation can be enacted, ensuring legislative scrutiny before these treaties take full effect domestically.

In summation, the current parliamentary review process for treaties has seen over 450 treaties brought before this House since 2008, providing members with opportunities for examination, debate and, if desired, votes. When treaties require amendments to federal laws, such changes must pass through the normal legislative process, offering further opportunities for parliamentary review.

*Private Members' Business*

[Translation]

It is true that Bill C-228 seeks to strengthen parliamentary participation by requiring prior approval of treaties. That is an honourable goal shared by every member of the House.

[English]

However, we should be cautious about any changes to our ratification process, particularly when they may introduce delays and uncertainties that could hinder Canada's ability to negotiate effectively and respond swiftly to evolving global circumstances.

[Translation]

This year alone, nearly 20 treaties have been tabled in Parliament. Under the process outlined in this bill, each of these treaties would have had to spend months in committee and months more awaiting the drafting of a government report, meaning several years' delay in the implementation of international agreements that have earned our country a global reputation as a reliable partner.

[English]

This balance between executive flexibility and parliamentary oversight is complex. Other Westminster democracies, such as the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, offer useful examples.

In the U.K., treaties are laid before Parliament prior to ratification under the Ponsonby rule, allowing scrutiny while preserving executive discretion. Australia and New Zealand follow similar practices, where parliamentary review occurs after negotiations.

In short, when one considers the extensive transparency measures that have been in place for over two decades, the notion that treaty-making in Canada lacks transparency is not borne out.

[Translation]

In conclusion, I have outlined key steps in Canada's treaty process, a process that ensures that each negotiated agreement is guided by the principles of democracy, transparency and respect for the constitutional framework. This system is robust, it provides for appropriate consultation and it allows for parliamentary participation through the tabling period.

I understand and share the concerns raised by my Bloc Québécois colleague. We are operating in a complex global environment, and Canada's international relations decisions carry more weight than ever.

• (1800)

[English]

I thank my colleague for his thoughtful contributions and for highlighting the vital role Parliament plays in shaping our foreign policy, and I look forward to continuing our collaboration.

[Translation]

As we continue to consider Bill C-228, it is critical that we reflect not only on the transparency and oversight mechanisms already in place in Canada, but also on the constitutional principles that define the roles of the executive and Parliament in the treaty process.

I look forward to the rest of this debate.

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills North, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from the Bloc Québécois for bringing this bill forward. I think it will give us an opportunity to talk about the treaty process here in Canada and in the House of Commons.

[English]

The first multilateral treaty negotiated and signed by Canada was the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. The first bilateral treaty negotiated and signed by Canada was the Halibut Treaty between Canada and the United States in 1923. Before that, the United Kingdom negotiated, signed and ratified treaties on behalf of all of the countries in the empire. Full treaty authority was not fully delegated to Canada until 1947, with the issuance of the Letters Patent, 1947. As I think my colleague mentioned, there are some 4,400 treaties that Canada has entered into or has been bound by over the years.

An important starting point for this particular private member's bill is discussing the nomenclature of a treaty. Under the Vienna convention that codified international practice in 1969, Canada defines a treaty as “a single instrument” or “two or more related instruments” and indicates that treaties can come in various forms of description. They can be called treaties, conventions, agreements, protocols or some similar word. They can be a simple exchange of diplomatic notes or a simple exchange of diplomatic letters. All of these are incorporated into what Canada considers to be a treaty.

What is not a treaty is an arrangement or a memorandum of understanding. Those two documents are not considered by Canada to be treaties, although other states consider them to be treaties.

It is important to start with that description of what we in Canada call a treaty before we go on to a discussion of the bill.

When I look at Bill C-228, I note that it further defines a treaty as an amendment to a treaty. Treaties are not simply the original bilateral, multilateral or plurilateral agreement; any amendment to such an agreement is also considered a treaty in the definition provided by the bill.

The bill then goes on to define what a major treaty is. When I read the bill, a major treaty seems to encompass pretty much all treaties. They are almost one and the same. A major treaty is defined as any treaty that requires for its implementation “the enactment of an Act of Parliament”, “the conferment of new powers on His Majesty in Right of Canada”, or “the imposition of a tax by Parliament”; “imposes a significant direct or conditional financial obligation on Canada”; “concerns the transfer of part of Canada's territory”; “requires Canada to impose...economic or military sanctions on a state”; or “concerns the territorial jurisdiction of Canada”. In the final two descriptions, a major treaty is any treaty that “concerns international trade or investment” or “concerns Canada's participation in international institutions”.

*Private Members' Business*

When we look at what a major treaty is as defined in the bill, it pretty much encompasses all treaties. A very broad set of treaties would be defined and captured by this bill.

What the bill would do can be summarized by three elements. The first is it would codify existing policy and practice by the Government of Canada and the practice here in the House of Commons, which my hon. colleague across the aisle called the Ponsonby convention.

• (1805)

As an aside, I might mention that one of the primary schools I went to when I was a kid was Ponsonby Public School, which is just down the road from where I grew up. It was probably named after the person who authored the convention, but it is the Ponsonby rule that had been in place in the United Kingdom since 1924. That rule in the United Kingdom has been codified into law by the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010.

What we currently do here in practice in the House, what the government currently does in policy, which was enacted by the Harper government in 2008, is being proposed to be codified by the bill that is before us, and I think that is an interesting idea. It is something the U.K. has done, but in practice I do not think it would make any real change to the way we consider treaties here in the House.

The second and third elements of the private member's bill would change significantly how we deal with treaties. The second element is that “the Minister must obtain the advice of the House of Commons regarding the treaty before ratifying it.” In other words, the minister needs to ensure that a debate and a vote take place in the House as a whole for each treaty laid before the House. The third element of the bill is that all major treaties would be reviewed by a committee of the House and that the committee would have to report back to the House.

I think the second and third elements of the bill would be a problem, and I want to explain why. As my hon. colleague mentioned, there are some 4,400 treaties that Canada is party to. Let us just assume that they have been negotiated over about 100 years; that means about 44 treaties a year. That would be a lot of treaties for the House to debate and to vote on each and every time. It would be a lot of work for a committee to review and report back to the House each and every time.

Seeing that the House typically sits only 26 or 27 weeks a year, we would be looking at having a day of debate and a vote in the House pretty much three days out of every two weeks the House is sitting, and the committees of the House would also be tasked three times every 10 sitting days with reviewing and reporting back on a treaty.

I looked at the statistics for the last five Parliaments, beginning with the 41st Parliament, about the number of treaties that have been laid before the House. In the 41st Parliament, which lasted about four years, there were 142 treaties that were laid in front of the House, which is roughly 110 a year. In the 42nd Parliament, which sat for four years, there were 91 treaties that were laid before the House, which is a rate of roughly 22 treaties each sitting year.

In the 43rd Parliament, which was the pandemic Parliament, when arguably, even though it lasted for a year and a half, we really sat for only about a year, 32 treaties were negotiated during the roughly 20 to 30 weeks the House sat. In the 44th Parliament, over three years, 62 treaties were laid in front of the House. Just in the first eight weeks of the current Parliament, I counted ministers' laying before the House 17 treaties, at a rate of roughly more than two a week.

When I look at what the bill proposes, I think it would be an undue burden on the House and its committees. I think that three treaties every 10 sitting days being laid before the House, triggering a debate with a commensurate vote, and three treaties every 10 calendar days being sent to committee for review and report would put a big burden on the House and distract us from the other critical work we need to do in this place.

• (1810)

I will finish by saying that I think this is a well-intentioned bill that has allowed us to shine a light on the Ponsonby Rule, which has been in place here in the chamber since the Harper government issued the policy through a ministerial statement in 2008. Some of the aspects of the bill are interesting, such as the codification of that rule into law, but I think the way the bill has been worded in its second and third elements, related to a review and vote in the House and its committees, would put an undue burden on the House.

[*Translation*]

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise this evening as the Bloc Québécois critic for international trade to speak to Bill C-228. This bill, which I think is very important, seeks to strengthen transparency and parliamentary oversight around trade agreements. Ottawa's lack of transparency in these matters is down-right monarchical.

I have been here for six years, and as my colleagues have said, not once have we voted on a trade agreement. We have always voted on bills to implement agreements. This means that it is virtually impossible to amend them and they are always tabled under very tight deadlines.

I also find it somewhat ironic to hear people saying that we have a policy on treaty-making. Apparently, because we have had this wonderful policy since 2008, everything is fine. I find it ironic to hear that today considering that the policy was violated just a few days ago. This policy, which is not a law and is therefore non-binding by definition, normally provides for a 21-day period between the announcement of the content of an agreement and the introduction of a bill. However, the bill on the protocol on the United Kingdom's entry into the Trans-Pacific Partnership was introduced after only 15 days, so I find it very funny to hear today that this policy is perfect when it was not even respected just a few days ago. In other words, perhaps they need to find a better argument. Let us get the message across to them.

*Private Members' Business*

Whatever the issue and whatever the political leanings of the government, Ottawa does not appreciate its opponents scrutinizing its actions too closely. When it comes to trade agreements, secrecy is the name of the game. Canada is living up to its monarchical tradition by keeping the agreements it signs under wraps, no doubt for fear that they would fall apart under scrutiny, much like a vampire exposed to the sun.

As a member of Parliament, I experienced this in December 2020. I was on the Standing Committee on International Trade and we were asked to study the proposed free trade agreement between Canada and the United Kingdom but without seeing the text of the agreement. Who would have thought that possible? We heard from witnesses, senior officials and representatives of organizations. Their recommendation was to adopt the agreement, despite concerns about this thing or that. At one point, I raised my hand to say that I had not read the agreement. I asked the witnesses if they had information I did not have. One by one, they each told me that they did not know, that they had not received any information. Is that not unbelievable? It really was a theatre of the absurd. Only in Canada could such a thing happen.

When Canada's foreign affairs department was created in 1909, the minister was supposed to table before Parliament an annual report on the department's operations. This report would logically include an overview of Canada's international discussions and commitments. This was somewhat of an attempt to demonstrate the beginnings of a desire for transparency. In 1995, at the height of globalization, the department's act was amended to give the minister a freer hand by granting him jurisdiction over international trade, to the detriment of Parliament. The 1909 annual reporting requirement was abolished in 1995.

I will take another look back in time. In 1926, the House of Commons passed a resolution stating that "...before His Majesty's Canadian Ministers advise ratification of a treaty or convention affecting Canada, or signify acceptance of any treaty, convention or agreement involving military or economic sanctions, the approval of the parliament of Canada should be secured." That is what was passed, but in actual fact, this practice was applied unevenly for 40 years until it was finally abandoned in 1966. A parliament worthy of the name should adopt procedures aimed at increasing the level of democratic control over agreements.

● (1815)

My political party, the Bloc Québécois, introduced seven bills on the procedure for reaching agreements between 1999 and 2004, requiring the minister responsible for the ratification of an agreement to table it in Parliament, along with an explanatory memorandum, within a reasonable time frame, and requiring the approval of members of Parliament before any ratification. As a result of the Bloc Québécois's efforts, it is now policy that an explanatory memorandum be submitted within a reasonable time before an agreement is ratified by elected members, but no government has ever had the courage to create binding legislation. As I said, this policy was violated just a few days ago, yet they have the gall to use that as an argument today. It is unbelievable.

As a result, the government can act arbitrarily, as the Liberals have just done once again. We are certainly not a British regime

where Parliament is supposed to have partial veto rights over ratifications. While fundamentally desirable despite being ridiculously inadequate, this policy consisting in asking members what they think after the fact could be a means of controlling Parliament. Rather than really involving members in the drafting of international agreements, this policy is merely an instrument to sound out the opposition parties' position, since they are presented with a finished product that is all ready to go.

Some parliaments around the world even consult elected members before starting negotiations to obtain mandates on sectors to be promoted or protected. That is vastly different from what we have here. The United States, for example, has a law that protects the sugar sector, while the European Union frequently holds votes to ask its members what they would like to see protected, promoted or, conversely, removed from the table. The principle makes sense. Members of Parliament are elected by the public to represent the interests and values of their constituents. Given its lack of transparency before, during and after trade negotiations, Canada has a long way to go when it comes to involving members of Parliament in the process. It also falls far short when it comes to involving the provinces. However, this is another issue that the current bill does not address. Nevertheless, it shows how ridiculous Ottawa is when it comes to democracy and transparency.

The way the process works in Canada can be summarized as follows: First, cabinet unilaterally adopts the mandate and keeps it secret. Second, the Canadian negotiators report only to the federal executive branch and are not accountable to anyone regarding the status of discussions. When they appear before the Standing Committee on International Trade, they tell us next to nothing, regardless of whether the meeting is in camera or public. Third, the government alone ends the negotiations and signs the final text before sharing it with anyone. Fourth, public debate can only begin once negotiations have concluded. At that point, the signed text is impossible to change. Parliament is essentially relegated to the role of rubber-stamping the treaty. It never votes on or debates the treaty itself, but rather an implementation bill. Ultimately, we can change next to nothing or nothing at all. We end up with an implementation bill that is a few pages long for treaties that can sometimes be 5,000 pages long.

Parliament simply adopts the changes to the laws that will allow the treaty to come into force. During the study of the bill, any amendment that would affect the draft treaty is ruled out of order because it is only the implementation bill. I find it unfortunate that our Conservative friends are opposed to our bill, as far as we know, because virtually all of their proposed amendments to the free trade bill with Ukraine were rejected and ruled out of order. I voted against the Conservatives' proposed amendments, because I disagreed with them. However, each time they were ruled out of order, I still voted with the Conservatives in committee to challenge the chair's decision, because it seemed logical to me that these proposals should still be debated and put forward.

*Private Members' Business*

Today, the Conservatives are defending the same policy that prevented them from changing anything back then. What a brilliant move. Ultimately, Parliament ends up doing its job with a knife to its throat, and that is what—

• (1820)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** I have to do my job, which is unfortunately to enforce speaking times.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington—Tyendinaga.

**Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington—Tyendinaga, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am happy to rise tonight to speak to Bill C-228, legislation that would fundamentally reshape how Canada affirms its treaties.

I will admit that this is not quite the agreement I hoped to be speaking to after more than five months of trade negotiations with the U.S. Still, Bill C-228 raises issues that go to the very heart of how Parliament exercises its constitutional role.

The intent behind this private member's bill is commendable. It seeks to give Parliament a stronger voice in the treaty process to make the approval and adoption of agreements more transparent and accountable. Those are principles I support, but while the goal is worthy, I believe the way this bill goes about achieving it is flawed. At the risk of echoing some of the thoughtful concerns by my colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills North, I would like to briefly outline the key provisions of this legislation.

As written, the legislation would do three things. First, it would formalize the practice of ministers tabling major treaties in this place prior to ratification, along with an explanatory note. Second, it would require a committee of the House to review any proposed treaty and report back to the House. Third, it would require the Minister of Foreign Affairs to obtain the advice of the House before ratification.

While I am all for giving this place a bigger voice in the machinations of government, I am concerned about the second aspect of the bill, namely the requirement of a committee of the House to review and report back. My concerns are threefold. First, what is the purpose of sending proposed treaties to committee? Second, can the committees, as they are currently constituted, actually carry out the massive increase in workload Bill C-228 would necessitate? Third, and perhaps most important, I am concerned about a potential chilling effect it may have in a negotiating process.

To be clear, this is not a question of effort. The reality is that there are just not enough hours in a day, a week or a month for parliamentarians to thoroughly scrutinize the dozens, if not hundreds, of additional documents that could be sent to the relevant House committees.

To provide some context, since 2008, 467 treaties have been tabled in the House. By my napkin math, during that same time period, 341 pieces of government legislation have passed committee and received royal assent. We already face severe limitations on our ability to analyze legislation and conduct studies at our committees. With the addition of proposed treaties being sent into the room, the

very few hours we have would be reduced even further. This means less legislation passed, fewer treaties approved, fewer private members' bills agreed to and fewer studies in committee.

For a microcosm, in the 41st Parliament, former prime minister Stephen Harper and his strong, stable, national majority government tabled 142 treaties in the House. If this bill were law then, that would mean that that Parliament would have had 142 additional study topics and 142 other very important committee meetings that would not have occurred. This is assuming the absolute best-case scenario, where each treaty is approved by all parties with little or no debate. Who knows how long a treaty may require at committee.

This leads to my second concern with the proposal to send this to committee, which is the simple question, why? Parliamentarians do not have the capacity to amend or change the wording of a proposed treaty. We are simply there to say yea or nay. We are not involved in the negotiation process. The government is, with ministers, skilled public servants, subject matter experts and diplomats hammering out minutia after minutia. I am curious as to what members would envision the committee process would look like. Would we treat the treaty like legislation? Almost everyone in this place has done line-by-line consideration of legislation before. We know how tedious, but necessary, it is.

Let us engage in a bit of a thought experiment. Let us say that tomorrow this legislation achieves royal assent, and additionally, the government announces we have a renegotiated CUSMA. It is a trilateral trade deal with revisions and additions. CUSMA then gets sent to the international trade committee. The agreement is about as long as the previous one, ringing in at just under 1,900 pages. What happens next? Do they do line-by-line consideration or clause-by-clause consideration? How are the offices expected to do due diligence in understanding each clause in the little time we have?

• (1825)

Does the committee supply simply a nay or yea? Does this end the deal? How much time is given to the committee and its members to consider the document? Does a 10-page treaty get the same amount of time for MPs to familiarize themselves with as a 2,000-page behemoth? Does rejecting the treaty mean that trade talks collapse?

*Adjournment Proceedings*

This highlights an unfortunate reality that the legislation could not meet. Either the process is fulsome and done with attention to detail and due process that it deserves, in which case it quite possibly cripples the workload of the relevant committee, or it turns into a rubber-stamping process, in which case it is irrelevant and not needed. This, of course, ignores the other elephant in the room: It provides all parties with another legislative process that could be politically weaponized, further delaying the process.

All of this leads to a third issue that, in my opinion, is by far the most serious. This may be the first time that members will ever hear a Tory say this in the House, but the legislation's most worrisome aspect is the potential effect this will have on limiting the authority of the current government to do its job. The legislation would have a massive chilling effect on the government's ability to negotiate in good faith with other governments. Simply put, why would the nations of the world put any faith or effort into the treaty negotiation processes if the entire process can be derailed or held up in Parliament? This is particularly poignant given what is happening right now in Washington.

To be clear, the Conservatives wish nothing but total success to the government in its negotiating efforts with the U.S. We all want what is best for Canada and the U.S. We may disagree on how we are going to get there, but our goal is the same. I would like to take this opportunity to place on the parliamentary record my continued commitment, that of my team and myself, to extend our co-operation and support to the government negotiating team in any way we can. I reiterate to the Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister directly that my door remains open and that my commitment to constructive co-operation and engagement with our U.S. neighbours is unwavering.

However, I want to be clear: Members should understand that the willingness to co-operate does not exempt the government from rightful scrutiny and criticism where it is warranted. It also means that the government needs to signal its intent to actually engage with the opposition to get the best deal possible for Canada and end this unjust, unprovoked trade dispute. To bring this back to Bill C-228, the last thing I would like to do during any negotiation process is to signal to any potential trading partners that the government does not have the agency to negotiate on behalf of the government.

In closing, Bill C-228 is guided by good intentions to strengthen Parliament's role in treaty approval. However, as drafted, it risks slowing decision-making and blurring the line between advisory oversight and executive responsibility. I would like to applaud the member for Jonquière for his vision and efforts to empower this place, but, unfortunately, I cannot support the implementation of that vision as is.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1830)

[English]

### EMPLOYMENT

**Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, during question period in the spring, I pointed out that the Liberal government had no plan when it came to the then already-metastasizing youth unemployment crisis. Things have continued to get worse and the government still has no plan.

Youth unemployment, according to the latest StatsCan numbers, has jumped to 14.7%. We are now approaching half a million unemployed young people in the country between the ages of 15 and 24. This means hopes eroding and opportunities lost. Young people who want to work hard, contribute and get ahead are not able to because of the failed policies of the government.

We have called on the government to adopt a plan to reverse its bad policies, a plan to help young people get back to work. We have done more than just suggest that it put forward a plan. We have actually put forward a plan ourselves.

Last week, the Conservative Party released our Conservative youth jobs plan here in Ottawa. That plan was released in a constructive spirit, in the hopes that the Liberals would adopt our youth jobs plan as part of their budget. They have no plan, but we have a plan, and we put it forward in the hopes that the Liberals would adopt it.

Our Conservative youth jobs plan has four elements. We are calling on the government to unleash the economy, fix immigration, fix training and build homes where the jobs are.

When it comes to unleashing the economy, the Liberals need to reverse policies that are blocking economic development. They need to repeal Bill C-69, repeal Bill C-48, get rid of the production cap, eliminate the industrial carbon tax to allow our energy sector to move forward. More than that, they need to address the red tape and high taxes that are making it so difficult to start and grow a business.

They need to implement our proposals to stimulate economic activity. We proposed, in the last election, that the government eliminate the capital gains tax for dollars that are immediately reinvested here in Canada.

These measures would unleash our economy and help young people get back to work.

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The second part of our plan is to fix immigration. We put forward constructive proposals on immigration, recognizing that under the Liberal government, the system has gotten way out of whack with our labour market needs. We keep hearing experts, during public hearings at the human resources committee study, speak about how Liberal policies on immigration have particularly exacerbated challenges for youth and working-class people by not having effective screening based on skills and by not aligning our immigration system with our labour market. The Liberals need to address these immigration failures. They need to unleash the economy, fix immigration and fix training.

We have proposed significant new investments to support union-based training and support trades programs in high schools. Also, student loan programs should offer relatively more generous support for students pursuing studies in high-demand fields. Right now, loans and grants are offered regardless of the program students are studying in. We are proposing that relatively more generous support be offered to students who are pursuing in-demand fields.

Finally, we need incentives to assist employers that build employee housing so that they build homes where the jobs are. We are proposing a 100% accelerated capital cost writeoff for employers that build employee housing. This plan would help get housing built where jobs are and would make it easier for unemployed young people in regions of high unemployment to move to areas where there are jobs and opportunity and find housing along the way.

This is our plan to unleash the economy, fix immigration, fix training and build homes where the jobs are. The Liberals have no plan to address the metastasizing youth unemployment crisis. Conservatives have a plan. Will the Liberals adopt our plan in the budget?

• (1835)

**Annie Koutrakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Jobs and Families, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, governments, businesses and workers are navigating new challenges because labour is changing at a dizzying pace. We are looking at a whole new kind of labour market. Many workers are retiring from important sectors, which will lead to critical labour shortages. Some 600,000 skilled trades workers will retire by 2031. That means 600,000 new job opportunities are opening up. On top of that, we expect 400,000 new jobs to be created by the end of this decade alone.

Canada's workforce has a generational opportunity to renew. That is why we have a plan to help Canadians gain a foothold in the job market.

It starts with youth employment. The Canada summer jobs program has a proven track record of providing many young Canadians with their first job. Since 2019, more than 460,000 young people have been helped by the program. After 70,000 jobs were initially created for the summer of 2025, this spring we added 6,000 more opportunities for young people.

That one program is working, year after year, to set young people up for a lifetime of success. In fact, we have supported over 138,000 opportunities for youth under the youth employment and

skills strategy, which includes Canada summer jobs, the Canada service corps and the student work placement program.

[Translation]

Our goal is clear: to help young people develop their skills and gain the experience they need to enter the labour market as adults. So far, I have focused mainly on youth employment, because youth are at the heart of our economic future. However, our plan to help people get into the workforce is much broader.

[English]

Each year, the Government of Canada invests nearly \$1 billion annually in apprenticeship supports through grants, loans, tax credits and employment insurance benefits. The skilled trades are one of the most important areas of job growth in Canada. Canada needs more homes for people, and in budget 2024, the government unveiled an ambitious plan to build 3.87 million new homes by 2031. However, we cannot build houses without the skilled trades, so we need to train thousands of new skilled tradespeople right now.

[Translation]

There is currently a high demand for many skilled trades. This includes automotive service and repair technicians, power line technicians, millwrights, horticulturalists, and truck and transport vehicle mechanics, to name a few.

Each of these trades contributes directly to building a more prosperous Canada.

[English]

We are working hard to strengthen Canada's economy. We are investing in this country's very deep pool of made-in-Canada talent, because we will always support Canadian workers and their families. The Government of Canada is delivering for Canadians and providing opportunities so this country can grow the workforce of tomorrow.

**Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, respectfully, the parliamentary secretary's response generally proved my point. She said there are changes in the workforce coming, and then she highlighted, as the government's response to those changes, the continuation of a program, the Canada summer jobs program, that has existed since the 1990s. I had barely been born when the program started.

The continuation of a program that provides, on average, eight-week-long summer paid employment is not a response to the metastasizing crisis of now close to half a million young people being unemployed. They are not looking for eight-week jobs; they are looking for permanent jobs. That is why we need to unleash our economy, fix immigration, fix training and build homes where the jobs are.

We need to support the trades, and the tone matters. The government has spent 10 years running down trades workers and the sectors they work in by attacking the natural resource sector, by attacking the forestry sector and by undermining the value of trades work. When will it get a plan?

**Annie Koutrakis:** Madam Speaker, I am quite happy the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan repeatedly asks questions about our plans to get Canadians into good jobs. It gives us the opportunity to talk about our great array of programs supporting our boundless ambition to create a skilled workforce for the future.

Canada summer jobs is not just about eight weeks. Everywhere in my riding, when I go to visit the employers who hire young summer students through the program, they are all asking for more positions, more money and longer times, so it must be making a difference.

• (1840)

[Translation]

Our plan is to invest in training, because that is the key to a prosperous economic future. This plan—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

[English]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** We do not heckle during adjournment debate, please.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

[Translation]

**Annie Koutrakis:** Madam Speaker, our plan is to invest in training, because that is the key to a prosperous economic future. This plan is working. Canada is adapting to a changing world and building stronger, more resilient communities.

[English]

Young Canadians who want to work should know that their employment aspirations will be met. There are jobs.

#### HEALTH

**Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to stand here at the late show.

On August 12, The Globe and Mail published an article with the following headline: “Spanish drugmaker using Canadian-donated blood plasma for products sold abroad”. Was the Globe and Mail report false, yes or no?

**Maggie Chi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, two weeks ago the member opposite raised this question and used it as an opportunity to spread unfounded conspiracy theories and get clips for social media. Here we go again today. Once again, the member opposite is using his time

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to spread unfounded conspiracy theories and get clips for social media.

The answer today is the same as it was two weeks ago. I will spell this out clearly, even though we know the Conservatives will continue to spread incorrect information.

Despite what the Conservatives would have us believe, Health Canada has no role in the day-to-day operations of Canadian Blood Services. It regulates the safety of blood and plasma collection and products made from blood and plasma. Canadian Blood Services operates independently from the federal government, working with the provinces and territories, outside Quebec, to collect plasma.

The provinces and territories determine how plasma is collected in their jurisdictions, including the role of paid plasma collection. Canadian Blood Services has confirmed again and again that it does not sell the blood or plasma it collects from Canadians. It is selling a waste by-product called albumin to Grifols. Canada has more than enough albumin to meet the needs of Canadians.

Grifols turns this waste by-product into life-saving plasma. Canadian Blood Services then buys back the plasma at a significantly reduced rate, increasing our domestic blood supply. In fact, not only does this increase our blood supply, but it also creates jobs. A manufacturing facility for plasma products recently opened in Saint-Laurent, Montreal. This will establish Canada's first end-to-end domestic blood supply chain.

At a time when provincial and territorial partners need to increase their blood and plasma supplies, it is deeply disappointing that the Conservatives would rather spread misinformation and fear via social media clips. Canadians can rest assured that if they have donated plasma to Canadian Blood Services or Héma-Québec, it is going to Canadians.

**Dan Mazier:** Madam Speaker, I will repeat The Globe and Mail's headline, which reads, “Spanish drugmaker using Canadian-donated blood plasma for products sold abroad”. Those are not my words; they are from The Globe and Mail, which is a very well-respected media outlet.

On September 11, 2025, the CBC published an article with the following headline: “Blood donors surprised Canadian plasma products being sold abroad[:] Spanish drugmaker Grifols using donated plasma byproducts to manufacture albumin”.

Was the CBC's report false, yes or no?

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**Maggie Chi:** Madam Speaker, there is no evidence to suggest that Canadian Blood Services is not working in the best interest of Canadians. It operates at arm's length from the federal government, but we have confidence that Canadian Blood Services is making sure Canada's blood supply is there for Canadians. We hope the Conservatives will stop trying to discourage Canadians from donating blood to Canadian Blood Services and focus on saving lives rather than getting clicks.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

**Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC):** Madam Speaker, in response to my question in June about the over 70% increase in major assaults in Ontario since 2015, the Secretary of State for Combating Crime assured me new legislation was coming that would solve this problem. It is now well past June, and we still do not have that legislation, but I understand it is coming.

In fact, the situation is much worse than just a few months' delay. We have had 10 years of the Liberal government, and in fact, it has created the mess with bail through Bill C-5 and Bill C-75.

The Prime Minister has made some comments about what the legislation would include, but I have a very simple question for the parliamentary secretary. Would the new legislation repeal the principle of restraint that currently requires violent offenders to be released "at the earliest reasonable opportunity and on the least onerous conditions", yes or no?

• (1845)

[Translation]

**Jacques Ramsay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to address concerns about public safety and bail reform. Canadians are rightly concerned about repeat and violent offending. They expect our justice system to keep communities safe while upholding the rule of law.

Let me be clear. Former Bill C-75 does not require courts to release violent offenders at the earliest opportunity and under the least onerous conditions. That characterization is simply false. Bill C-75 modernized and clarified the bail provisions in the Criminal Code. It ensured that non-violent, low-risk individuals were not detained unnecessarily, while giving judges the discretion to detain dangerous individuals when public safety was at risk.

These reforms codified the principle of restraint, a long-standing rule of criminal law that was reaffirmed by the Supreme Court in 2017 in the Antic decision, which requires pre-trial detention to be ordered only when necessary to ensure the accused's attendance in court, to protect the public or to maintain confidence in the administration of justice.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the presumption of innocence and the right to reasonable bail unless there is just cause for detention. These are the cornerstones of a free and democratic society. That said, the law is clear: No one should be released on bail if they pose a flight risk or a danger to the public, or if their release could undermine confidence in the justice system.

In 2024, Parliament strengthened these protections through former Bill C-48, which expanded the reverse onus provision for intimate partner violence and made targeted amendments to better deal with repeat offenders and violent offences involving firearms and other weapons.

The federal government is also investing \$1.8 billion over four years to hire 1,000 new RCMP employees, increase federal policing capacity, and crack down on financial crime, online fraud, and organized criminal networks. This includes increasing the recruitment allowance and allocating new resources to the recovery of illicit assets.

Our government is working with the provinces, territories and local law enforcement to address the root causes of crime while investing in affordable housing, mental health and substance use supports, and programs for at-risk youth.

Stringent federal laws are only a part of the equation. Bail is a shared responsibility. The provinces and territories have to ensure that courts have sufficient resources, that justices of the peace are properly trained and that community supervision programs are in place. Without these supports, even the most robust federal laws are destined to fail. That is why our government continues to call for cross-jurisdictional collaboration. Public safety requires coordination, investment and evidence-based solutions, not slogans or scapegoats.

Canadians deserve safe communities and a fair justice system. Let us move forward together, with targeted, practical reforms grounded in principles, not in politics. Let us turn away from fear and division.

Let us focus—

[English]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for York—Durham.

**Jacob Mantle:** Madam Speaker, when a member makes an accusation that another member is engaging in misinformation, I believe it is incumbent on that member to back that up with facts. When I quote from the Liberal's legislation, and it is accused that it is misinformation, that is simply not true.

Despite the parliamentary secretary's response, I did not hear an answer to my very simple question, which is this: Will the new bail legislation that the Liberal government has promised repeal the principle of restraint?

• (1850)

[Translation]

**Jacques Ramsay:** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague knows full well that we cannot announce the measures that will be in the upcoming bill, which will be announced this week. He knows full well what our obligations are, and I hope he is not asking me to betray them.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Let me be clear: Our government is taking action. Our government is ramping up its efforts with new legislation and major investments. We are supporting our provincial and territorial partners. We are working as a team, and we will continue to fund the courts, train justices of the peace and expand community-based solutions.

We will be introducing a new reliable, robust and constitutional bill in the coming days.

[*English*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:51 p.m.)

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