



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

---

# House of Commons Debates

Official Report  
(Hansard)

**Volume 152 No. 044**  
Monday, October 27, 2025

---

Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



## **CONTENTS**

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, October 27, 2025

The House met at 11 a.m.

---

*Prayer*

---

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1100)

[*Translation*]

### CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM ACT

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ)** moved that Bill C-245, An Act to amend the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (non-application in Quebec), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am proud to start debate on Bill C-245, which I tabled on behalf of the Bloc Québécois.

The purpose of our bill is to exclude Quebec from Canadian multiculturalism so that Quebec can apply its own model for integrating immigrants. It is simple, just a bill with a single section, stating that the Canadian Multiculturalism Act does not apply in Quebec. This bill was largely inspired by the work of my colleague from Montcalm who tabled Bill C-393 during the 42nd Parliament and Bill C-226 during the 43rd Parliament, that is, in 2018 and 2020.

Why are we raising this issue again today? It is because the context has changed again. The bill has become even more important with the new situation in Quebec. My colleagues in the House may not be aware of this, but on May 28, 2025, the Quebec National Assembly passed Bill 84, the Act respecting integration into the Québec nation, which gives Quebec its own integration model. It is therefore clearer than ever that Quebec has its own integration model that is not the same as Canada's multiculturalism model. What is more, on the day of the vote, the Quebec National Assembly also adopted the following motion:

THAT the National Assembly recall that, as a distinct host society, the Québec nation has its own national integration model;

THAT it declare that the Québec national integration model fosters social cohesion and counters isolation and communitarianism;

THAT it affirm that the national integration model is distinct from Canadian multiculturalism.

I would like to begin by explaining where Canadian multiculturalism comes from. To do that, we need to go back to 1867, to the early days of Confederation. In French Canada, Confederation was

sold to the public as a pact between two founding peoples, the English and the French, with no mention of the first nations. Many people wanted to believe in this tale of two equal founding peoples walking joyfully along hand in hand, to the point where many French Canadians considered settling in Ontario and western Canada. Some even went so far as to do so. They wanted to live the dream of the two founding peoples being friends and equals.

Louis Riel's hanging was a brutal indication that Canada would never accept a significant francophone presence in the rest of Canada. This also applied to first nations, as Louis Riel worked and lived among the Métis and first nations. The only place where French would be tolerated was in the bilingual province of Lower Canada, and that is where it had to stay. That is the message that was sent at the time and that is the message that was received. From that moment on, my ancestors began to understand that Quebec was the only national home for French Canadians, the only place where they could truly feel at home and safe. This has been confirmed over time by the ban on French in almost all Canadian provinces, especially in school education when French-language schools were closed.

Rather than defining themselves as French Canadians, French Canadians living in Quebec gradually began identifying as Quebecers and wanting to develop their own quasi-state. Corporations like Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec were created, along with Hydro-Québec, which nationalized the hydro sector. All these efforts served as a means to affirm Quebec as a nation, an expression of our transition from a French Canadian to Québécois identity. Some folks even began calling for Quebec, which was de facto bilingual, to become francophone with Bill 22, followed by Bill 101. They even dreamed of making Quebec its own country. That bothered a lot of people in English Canada because, to them, French Canadians and Quebecers were the proverbial drawers of water, and there was no question of that ever changing.

• (1105)

The outcome of all this was the Laurendeau-Dunton commission, which came close to achieving recognition for linguistic and cultural duality, known at the time as biculturalism. Then along came someone who would make that impossible: Pierre Elliot Trudeau. He supported linguistic bilingualism, but staunchly opposed the recognition of French-Canadian and Quebec culture—something new in Quebec. Quebec's affirmation had to be defeated. This is when the focus shifted to multiculturalism. As Quebecers, we collectively transitioned from an imagined position as a founding people to denying our very existence as Quebecers. That is what was shocking about Pierre Elliot Trudeau's multicultural policy.

*Private Members' Business*

That is also why Quebec rejected the 1982 Constitution. It was rejected not only by the premier at the time, René Lévesque, but by every premier since then as well. It is also why the Meech Lake and Charlottetown accords failed. Quebeckers have never gotten over this betrayal. It should also be noted that the Canadian model does not even recognize the existence of Quebeckers or indigenous peoples. In fact, according to multiculturalism philosophy, there is no such thing as founding peoples, and there is no such thing as a host society. It is as though newcomers have settled on a virgin land called Canada, where there is no history, no culture, no values. It is a veritable tower of Babel.

Canada misuses and trivializes other cultures by freezing them in time and inviting people who come here to define themselves by their country of origin rather than their host country. Whether they have been here for one generation or 10, they are immigrants and they will remain immigrants. They are exiles for eternity.

How can we build social cohesion, social solidarity and a society with shared values and a common vision for the future, when some people glorify the isolation of communities? I do not know. Canadian multiculturalism is a slippery slope that allowed Justin Trudeau to go so far as to claim, in 2015, that Canada was the first postnational state, as though Quebeckers do not form a nation. If Canada wants to be a postnational state, that is its business. We, in Quebec, are a nation in our own right, and we have no intention of getting engulfed in that. The Quebec nation does not exist anywhere else in the world, and our provincial status leaves us in a dangerously weak position vis-à-vis a central government controlled by the Canadian majority. Multiculturalism is a slippery slope that is becoming even slipperier in our time, given that, for example, supposedly progressive Canadians are going so far as to challenge bilingualism on the pretext that it could hinder the emancipation of many people who speak several languages but not French.

The most compelling and most recent example is the decline in the appointment of francophones to certain positions requiring at least some knowledge of both English and French. We only need to think of the appointment of Mary Simon as Governor General of Canada, although this is not an isolated case.

In today's multiculturalist Canada, French is being transformed into a barrier to diversity, as if French is not part of that diversity, particularly in the context of primarily English-speaking North America. Not only is multiculturalism a model that does not work for Quebec, but it is in direct conflict with what Quebec wants, as I mentioned earlier. It conflicts with Quebec's Act respecting integration into the Québec nation. Multiculturalism is a policy that we must break free from if we want to continue having successful immigration to Quebec. That is the subtext of Bill 101, Bill 96 and even Bill 21. The goal of these laws is to embrace immigrants and let them know that we want them to become part of the Quebec nation.

Just because someone opposes Canadian multiculturalism does not mean they oppose ethnic and cultural diversity. That is often how our opponents try to portray us. They will attempt to conflate the concepts of cultural and ethnic diversity and Canada's multiculturalism policy, which is toxic for Quebec. The Quebec nation is made up of people from all kinds of backgrounds and cultures. However, as Quebeckers, we share a common culture, which is en-

riched by the contributions made by people from around the world who choose to join our Quebec culture. This has been going on for 400 years and will continue well into the future.

• (1110)

Let me be clear, Quebec is not frozen in time. It is 2025. Today's Quebec is not the Quebec of New France. That proves that we are shaped by our geography, our climate, our history, but also by the people who come from other parts of the world and join the Quebec nation.

We are not asking people who come here to ignore their roots. We are not asking them to relinquish their identity when they get here. On the contrary, we want to maximize interactions between immigrants and the host society, so that newcomers gradually develop a sense of belonging and feel more and more like Quebeckers. This is not a one-way process. It goes both ways. It is inevitable that newcomers will also influence those who are already here, and that is a good thing. Basically, we give and we receive at the same time.

However, we do not want people to be perpetual immigrants, either. This is fundamental to the concept of Quebec's integration policy. We do not want the children and grandchildren of newcomers to still be considered immigrants. We want them to be full-fledged Quebeckers, fully integrated people who add to who we are as Quebeckers.

I will give an example that says it all: Mary Travers. Who is Mary Travers? She is the daughter of an Irish immigrant whom we all know as "La Bolduc". Is there anyone who is more of a Quebecker than La Bolduc? When we talk about traditional Quebec music, she is the first person who comes to mind. She is the gold standard. However, her music was influenced by her Irish roots. Obviously, she was also influenced by the Quebec culture that was all around her. At the time, it could be referred to as French-Canadian culture. She blended the two traditions and went on to influence all of Quebec society. Her sound continues to influence our traditional music to this day. It is magnificent.

Mary Travers is not an isolated example. The same is true of a wide range of fields today. Consider the films of Ricardo Trogi, who is of Italian heritage; the music of Loco Locass' Chafik, who is of Lebanese heritage; or the writings of Boucar Diouf, who is of Senegalese heritage. These examples are not all. There are plenty more examples of successful people who are an integral part of the Quebec nation and who changed and influenced who we are as Quebeckers. They helped shape our culture and our collective imagination. I love that. In short, that is Quebec's model for living together in harmony, and it works.

Canadian multiculturalism, on the other hand, means living side by side, nothing more. Most importantly, it means making Quebecers invisible and negating our status as a nation. That is not okay.

Considering that Quebec recently passed its own law on national integration, our law on national integration should obviously take precedence over the Canadian Multiculturalism Act. Nothing else will work. The two models are contradictory.

The easiest way to make that happen would be to pass Bill C-245. This would allow Quebec to define itself, to decide for ourselves who we are and what is best for us. From a broader perspective, that may also be what is best for Canada. Canada might decide to look at what is being done in a thriving and prosperous Quebec and draw some inspiration. That could happen. It could also encourage Canada to adopt its own model, which might not be the Quebec model or multiculturalism, but one that it defines for itself.

The good thing about this bill is that we are not attacking Canada and we are not attacking Canadians. We are not even trying to prevent Canadians from maintaining their multiculturalism policy. All it does is allow Quebec to adopt its own integration model. Ottawa needs to let us be ourselves.

Our bill is particularly interesting because it proposes a model for living together in way that is joyful and fulfilling, which can only be positive. As I see it, a bill like this would normally just be a formality. All parties should be voting in favour of it. It will also better equip all newcomers to Quebec who will no longer necessarily have to cope with the notorious duality or dual legitimacy of Quebec versus Canada, which is always harmful.

• (1115)

I urge the parties in the House to vote in favour of our bill—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** Questions and comments.

The hon. member for Madawaska—Restigouche.

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as an Acadian, I am proud to support the objectives of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act.

Our policies supporting multiculturalism and others promoting our two official languages can be mutually reinforcing. Consider all the work our government has done to promote francophone immigration. In fact, the first week of next month will be National Francophone Immigration Week, which brings together thousands of francophones from across the country in a celebration of cultural wealth and diversity.

I want to ask my colleague this: How do the principles championed by the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, like reciprocity, dialogue and respect for pluralism, stand in the way of Quebec's ability to keep protecting its culture?

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian multiculturalism policy rejects any notion of a majority host society. What it says is that all peoples are of equal value. That is correct. Indeed, all peoples in the world are of value. It is important that they exist.

### *Private Members' Business*

Nevertheless, the Quebec people exist in only one place in the world: in Quebec. Considering the Quebec people as just one of many peoples within Quebec diminishes the appeal of the Quebec nation to people arriving in Quebec. What we want is to encourage people arriving in Quebec to become part of the Quebec nation, and not to isolate themselves from it.

We want to work with them to pass on our culture to them and build a society that will be different tomorrow, one that they contribute to and are proud to participate in.

**Gaétan Malette (Kapusking—Timmins—Mushkegowuk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as a Franco-Ontarian, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech.

With all due respect, I would like to mention that we, as French Canadians, live and survive in the French language. We have just celebrated the 50th anniversary of our flag. We have schools and our community health care centres. We live our lives in French. It is much the same across Canada.

My daughter just moved to Thunder Bay. My grandson immediately started attending a French-language school. That is the reality, whether in Maillardville, British Columbia or St. Boniface.

My question is this: How does my colleague's bill protect the French language outside Quebec?

• (1120)

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is talking about two different battles.

Our bill specifically targets Quebec only. There really is no direct effect on other provinces.

Of course, Quebec's integration model includes the concept of passing on the French language to Quebecers. If a French-speaking Quebec becomes stronger and thrives, it can only be a positive thing for francophone communities outside Quebec.

**Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, what we are increasingly seeing around the world is that models based on multiculturalism are being rejected. Multiculturalism involves interacting with people on the basis of their ethnic origin, which encourages people to remain within their ethnic group.

In contrast, the Quebec model, which we call an intercultural model and which many people today refer to as cultural convergence, aims to further promote integration into the workplace and integration into the culture of the host society. This could apply to the rest of Canada if people were interested in such an approach. It would further encourage the integration of newcomers into the francophone culture all over Canada.

This bill has been introduced several times in the House over the years. There are people who believe that the Quebec model does not exist, that there is no other model for integrating newcomers than multiculturalism.

How does my colleague explain this lack of knowledge—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** The hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères.

*Private Members' Business*

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Mr. Speaker, I think the reason lies in the history behind the Canadian multicultural policy, which, at the time, was put in place in a way that failed to recognize Canadian biculturalism, or the difference between English Canada and French Canada. Quebec's desire for emancipation and affirmation was drowned out by the rest of Canada, which is made up of people arriving from around the world.

Our goal is to reaffirm that Quebec is a nation, that we have the right to exist and that we have the right to be different from Canada.

**Madeleine Chenette (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages and to the Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to Bill C-245, which seeks to exempt Quebec from the application of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act.

I want to begin by saying that I have the deepest respect for my Bloc Québécois colleagues and that I personally share our profound attachment, as Quebeckers, to our language, our culture and our identity. That being said, I consider this bill a mistake, both for Quebec and for Canada.

Today's debate concerns more than a mere legal issue. It concerns how we choose to live together in this country—with respect, openness and solidarity. It concerns whether our differences should keep us apart or bring us closer together.

We can start by clearly reminding everyone that Quebec is a nation. The House recognized this fact almost 20 years ago, and it was not mere token recognition. Quebec's distinct identity, French language, history, secularism and civic values are an integral part of Canada's character.

Furthermore, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act already recognizes that reality. Section 3 states that implementation of multiculturalism must be consistent with Canada's official languages and must enhance the development of French-speaking and English-speaking communities. In other words, multiculturalism does not ignore Quebec's distinctiveness; it includes it.

Multiculturalism and bilingualism are not mutually exclusive, but complementary. Bilingualism protects our two official languages and multiculturalism guarantees that whatever their background, Canadians can fully contribute to the shared society we are building together.

The Canadian Multiculturalism Act was never meant to erase or replace one culture. Its purpose has always been to ensure that no individual has to renounce who they are to feel at home in Canada.

Multiculturalism is not a threat in a country that has welcomed immigrants, refugees and newcomers for generations, a country founded on indigenous lands and enriched through people from all over the world. It is what brings us together. It is not an ideology that divides us, but a principle that brings people together.

Multiculturalism affirms that it is possible to be proudly Quebecker and proudly Muslim, Haitian, Japanese, Jewish or Sikh and that identity is not a zero-sum game. The goal was never to create a

patchwork of solitudes, but rather, a community that is based on equality and respect.

It is true that my native province of Quebec has developed its own model of integration that it calls interculturalism. The model emphasizes the French language as the civic language and encourages participation in a shared public culture.

The model is credible, commendable and fully aligned with Canadian multiculturalism. There is nothing in the federal bill that would prevent that. In fact, the Canada–Québec Accord relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens already gives Quebec expanded powers over the selection and integration of newcomers.

The real question today then is not whether Quebec should promote French or determine its own course with regard to integration—it is already doing that. The question is whether Quebeckers should be denied federal recognition of diversity, the very principle that allows Quebec to thrive within Canada.

This bill would do just that. It would tell the whole world that diversity is a Canadian value, except for those of us who live in Quebec. This message does not do anyone any good. It weakens the voice of Quebec and tarnishes Canada's image as an inclusive and democratic society.

The Bloc Québécois is framing this debate as a choice: multiculturalism or Quebec's survival. I completely reject this false dichotomy. Yes, the French language in Quebec is fragile and must be protected. However, its future does not depend on whether or not the Canadian Multiculturalism Act applies in Quebec. It depends on demographic vitality, economic choices, linguistic habits, and the strength of our francophone institutions.

Exempting Quebec from the Canadian Multiculturalism Act will not result in French being spoken more widely. It will not strengthen language laws, will not improve education in French, will not support the promotion of Quebec culture, and will not guarantee greater francophone immigration.

What it will do is send a signal that Quebec stands apart, that it rejects a principle that has helped make Canada one of the most respected countries in the world. Cultural confidence is not built by putting up legislative walls. It is built through pride, education, and the active promotion of the language and culture that unite us.

• (1125)

We must remember that Canadian multiculturalism arose out of a very specific challenge: reconciling diversity in a vast country comprising two official languages, indigenous peoples, and successive waves of immigration.

The 1988 act is the continuation of a policy put in place in 1971 by Pierre Elliott Trudeau. It recognized that Canada was not a cultural monolith, but rather a common home for many peoples. Far from erasing French, it made it one of the pillars of our national identity.

The Canadian Multiculturalism Act was passed under Brian Mulroney, a prime minister from Quebec. Mr. Mulroney was a Conservative from Baie-Comeau who, like me, understood full well the importance of Quebec's role within Canada.

This is a good reminder for us that this question goes beyond partisan divisions. It goes to the heart of who we are as a nation. Canadian multiculturalism has enabled us to fight against racism, exclusion and discrimination. It has opened the doors to generations of Canadians who would otherwise have felt marginalized. It has also inspired other countries to follow our example of inclusion. Nothing is ever perfect, but this model remains one of our greatest collective strengths. We must defend it and apply it to ensure the successful integration of newcomers and a good quality of life for all Canadians who have forged our multiculturalism.

If this bill were to pass, it would cause confusion and fragmentation. Citizens of the same federation would be subject to two different recognition frameworks: one where diversity is protected by laws and the other where it is not. In practical terms, this would create two classes of citizenship: multicultural citizenship for the rest of the country and citizenship without that recognition for Quebec.

What would be the result? Quebec already has all the tools it needs to manage immigration and promote French. It has its own ministry, its own integration programs and its own charter of values. This bill would not make any real difference aside from creating more division and misunderstandings.

I stand here as a proud Quebecker. I am also the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages. The Bloc Québécois says that it wants to protect Quebec's identity, and I am also here to do that. However, I also want to protect something just as precious: our shared Canadian identity, which is based on respect, openness and solidarity.

Multiculturalism is not some abstract political ideology. It reflects Canadian reality. My colleague gave some wonderful examples, such as La Bolduc and Boucar Diouf. Simply walk down Saint-Laurent Boulevard in Montreal, or make your way through Toronto's Portuguese neighbourhood, Chinatown in Vancouver and the Filipino communities in Winnipeg, or visit the Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia in Halifax. These places are not separate worlds. They are threads woven together, creating the fabric that is Canada.

Quebec's francophone culture is not just another frayed thread that is part of this fabric. It is a building block. It roots us in our history, our creativity and our beautiful language. Excluding Quebec from the Canadian Multiculturalism Act would be tantamount to saying that recognizing diversity is incompatible with its identity. I certainly do not believe that. I know some amazing artists, teachers and community leaders in Quebec that prove exactly the opposite every day. They show that we can be proudly francophone and deeply rooted in that Quebec pride while remaining open to the world.

Our country has always progressed through dialogue, compromise, and respect. We have rightly recognized Quebec as a nation

### *Private Members' Business*

within a united Canada. We have recognized the rights of indigenous peoples and the contributions of newcomers. We have proven that our two official languages and our diverse cultures can coexist not despite their differences, but because of them.

Bill C-245 would set us back. It would replace co-operation with confrontation, pride with resentment, and openness with isolation. If we truly believe that Quebec is a nation within Canada, then we must also believe that Quebeckers are entitled to the same principles of equality, inclusion, and diversity as all Canadians. Let us oppose this bill, not out of disrespect for Quebec, but out of respect for what we have built together. Let us reaffirm that Quebec's culture, language, and identity flourish best not by distancing themselves from Canada, but by participating fully in it. It is a distinct and essential voice in a country that celebrates all voices.

• (1130)

**G rard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrak, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one of the greatest Quebeckers, the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney, the little guy from Baie-Comeau, who was very proud of his Irish heritage and the exceptional welcome the Quebec nation gave his family, helped define this nation. It was under his leadership, as prime minister, that Canada passed the Canadian Multiculturalism Act in 1988.

Essentially, the spirit of Mr. Mulroney's law is to send a message around the world that, regardless of where you came from or when you arrived in Canada, you are Canadian and you contribute to the wealth of this country. No matter where you come from, the opportunities are there and everyone is equal among equals. That is multiculturalism as conceived in Mr. Mulroney's mind.

He said in 1988 that multiculturalism is an affirmation of our commitment that Canadians of all origins have equal rights and equal opportunities in this country. That is the Conservative vision of Brian Mulroney, a great Quebecker who assumed the role of prime minister with honour and dignity after receiving the support of a majority of Canadians, not once, but twice. That is the spirit of multiculturalism, and it is win-win for all Canadians.

It cannot be overstated that Mr. Mulroney truly embodied what Canada is all about. His roots may have been Irish, but the little guy from Baie-Comeau was just as comfortable on the main street of Baie-Comeau as he was in downtown Toronto. That was Mr. Mulroney's strength and power. His experiences and his laws made him the poster boy for multiculturalism.

We are also very proud of the approach that another great Canadian, Prime Minister Stephen Harper, took on the topic of multiculturalism. This is what he had to say about this topic:

[Multiculturalism means] celebrat[ing] our nation's rich multicultural heritage.

Canada is a nation of immigrants. For more than 400 years...[t]hey have added immeasurably to every community in which they have settled. And they have laid the foundation for the Canada we know and love today - a nation that is strong, united, independent...

In the 21st century...[a]nd every year, our country benefits from the arrival of thousands of men and women drawn by the equality of opportunity that exists here.

*Private Members' Business*

That is multiculturalism with net benefits. It is inclusive multiculturalism. It is multiculturalism that ensures that everyone is welcome. It is true that it applies right across Canada, in particular in Quebec, with all its national pride. That is why, under the leadership of prime minister Stephen Harper, Canada adopted a motion recognizing Quebec as a nation. This is very important. While some people believe that Quebec is rightfully a nation, this does not in any way erase Canada's multicultural reality. They are not mutually exclusive.

I would remind the House that there was some friction when this motion was debated and passed in this House in November 2006. That is normal; it is a feature of public debate. Initially, some parties supported the motion while others were against it. We heard a future prime minister say that he opposed it, but in the end he did not really know which way to vote. That is part of debate. However, the recognition of the Quebec nation within a united Canada clearly defines the pride we all have as Canadians, but also the pride we all feel as Quebecers. The two are not mutually exclusive. One allows the other to thrive and take charge of its destiny, as recognized by the motion on the Quebec nation.

All I want to say is that everything was going well until 10 years ago. Ten years ago, Canadians decided to put the Liberal Party in power. For 10 years, we have seen an erosion of the multiculturalism that united Canadians, recognized the Quebec nation, and affirmed that all Canadians were equal, no more, no less, and that they contributed to this country. However, for more than 10 years, we had a prime minister who unfortunately had a completely different approach.

Let us not forget that this government shamelessly stated that Canada was the first postnational country. The prime minister said he was the leader of a postnational government. One would be hard pressed to find a more embarrassing statement. For 10 years, this was the prevailing approach in the Liberal government.

• (1135)

Let us also not forget that, throughout it all, we had a prime minister and a government that was more prone to issuing apologies than to celebrating our successes. It got to be embarrassing. This does not in any way absolve us of the responsibility we all bear for the errors made during our history. This is what led Prime Minister Harper to extend a full and sincere apology to the first nations for what happened at the residential schools. It is also what led Prime Minister Mulroney to recognize the wrongs that had been committed against the Japanese and Chinese communities in earlier times.

It became embarrassing after a while to hear the Liberal prime minister making formal apologies nearly every month. Can we not also celebrate our successes? This went on for 10 years, not to mention that history was also being erased and our heroes were being maligned. We cannot escape our history by disparaging and erasing it. On the contrary, we have to explain it, understand it and learn from it. We will certainly not learn anything by disparaging our ancestors or other figures and pretending that the past never happened.

In my opinion, what offended Canadians the most over the past 10 years of this Liberal government was the flagrant attack on our heritage and our history when symbols of our history and our Cana-

dian unity were erased from the passport. Nothing is more precious to Canadians than our passport. When I look at mine, I think of everything that was erased from it: Samuel de Champlain; the Fathers of Confederation; the great railway; Captain Bernier, who explored Canada's north; the richness of the Prairies; Pier 21 in Nova Scotia; the Canadian Parliament; Niagara Falls; Vimy, one of the greatest Canadian military achievements of all time; Quebec City, which hits pretty close to home; the RCMP; and the two cups that we all rally around, the Stanley Cup and the Grey Cup. If there had been an image of Major League Baseball, they might have removed that too, even though we are going to win the World Series. Worst of all, this Liberal government erased that great and extraordinary Canadian, Terry Fox, from the passport. That is 10 years of Liberal wokeism in a nutshell.

Then the Liberals act surprised when people have doubts about multiculturalism. That is the legacy of 10 years of Liberal rule. The Liberals tried to erase Canada's identity. That was not the intent of the great Quebecer and Canadian Brian Mulroney in 1998, but that is what happened. For years and decades, under the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, we recognized Quebec as a nation and Quebec was able to assert that position without any issue, but unfortunately, we also saw that the Liberals were trying to drown out this Canadian pride in some very delicate situations.

I am the son of immigrants. I am very proud of my roots. Like hundreds of thousands of Canadians, I am proud of my origins, which are not part of the deep roots of this country. My parents chose Canada, and Canada chose them. However, what have we seen in recent years? Unfortunately, we have seen a reckless approach to immigration, leading to concerns that have nothing to do with multiculturalism but that have had very real impacts. I cannot emphasize enough that immigrants themselves are the primary victims of this sad and unfortunate approach to immigration, the primary victims of the Liberals' mismanagement over the past 10 years.

Let us celebrate our country, the Quebec nation and who we are as Quebecers and Canadians. Let us celebrate this great heritage and, most importantly, let us celebrate the fact that we live in a country that is full of opportunity. For that, we have to stand up proudly for our identity—as a Quebecer who is proud of the Quebec nation, in my case—so that all Canadians can achieve their full potential with the Conservative approach that we had for years and that was in keeping with the spirit of the great Brian Mulroney's law.

• (1140)

**Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères for tabling this bill, which shows once again that the Bloc Québécois really listens to what Quebecers want.

What do Quebecers want? What the current Government of Quebec and the vast majority of the Quebec National Assembly want is for Quebec to be able to choose its own integration model. Even though, like my colleague, I am calling on the other parties to support our bill, I must admit that I have some doubts about whether our efforts will pan out.

I have had the honour of representing the people of Drummond for six years, but I have never seen a speech change the position of a federal party in the House of Commons, no matter how eloquent, relevant, articulate, well argued and reasonable the speech was and no matter how good the arguments in it were.

We proposed that prayer be replaced by a moment of reflection and that parliamentarians be allowed to say a silent prayer of their choice, but no, we were not allowed to touch that, just as we were not allowed to touch the monarchy, the position of Governor General, multiculturalism, or the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, with the exception of section 33. We do want to touch section 33, the notwithstanding clause. Canada has its sacred cows.

Quebec has always said that multiculturalism does not work for it. Ottawa sees that as an attack on the federal government and on Canada's identity, even though multiculturalism is just one option among many, one possible way to live together in a society. Social mores can change over time if people take time to think and reflect. People have the right to question concepts.

In Quebec, the simple truth is that multiculturalism has never worked. Quebec is the only nation of its kind in the world. It is inhabited by eight million francophones on a continent of almost 400 million anglophones. Demographically speaking, we should have disappeared over time. It is true that Quebec is a historical anomaly, and this has been said before.

Nevertheless, Quebec needs all possible tools to survive, starting with independence. The federal government could have been an ally to the phenomenon of Quebec, or what I would even go as far as to call the miracle of Quebec. Ottawa could also have used its powers to allow Quebec's distinct identity to develop. Members will recall the "Meech Lake-Charlottetown" fiasco. Instead, Ottawa is hindering Quebec and undermining Quebec's efforts to create a unifying Quebec culture.

One of Ottawa's worst attacks on the Quebec nation, on what we are collectively, is multiculturalism. Multiculturalism flies in the face of the Quebec phenomenon and the existence of a common culture. That is the reality.

On the Government of Canada website, in the "Canadian Identity and Society" section, there is a page that says that multiculturalism "ensures that all citizens maintain their identities [and] take pride in their ancestry". In other words, there is no point in integrating.

In Quebec, multiculturalism is not a policy of integration, it is a policy of disintegration. It is a policy that creates a fragmented society where people who come from diverse cultures merely exist side by side, instead of allowing for the development of a society that integrates newcomers in order to enrich a common culture—the key word being "enrich".

The truth is that multiculturalism rejects the idea of a common culture by fostering the coexistence of multiple cultures. Although it is defined as a model of integration, it actually promotes cohabitation based on indifference or even tolerance, rather than respect for differences, and this invariably leads to ghettoization.

Out of fear that multiculturalism could cause society to fracture into separate solitudes, Quebec has always rejected the Canadian

### *Private Members' Business*

approach, especially because it trivializes Quebec's place within Canada, contrary to what many of my colleagues here claim. It denies the very existence of the Quebec nation, contrary once again to what has been said in the House on several occasions.

As far back as 1971, Robert Bourassa wrote in a letter to Pierre Elliott Trudeau that "that notion hardly seems compatible with Quebec's reality". It was true 50 years ago, and it is just as true today. As we can see from the Quebec government's rejection of multiculturalism, Quebec's focus is on integration.

Cultural pluralism, cultural diversity, provides riches to be shared. Quebec's approach is that we should get to know one another better, talk to one another and build a society together. To do that, we have to get along.

That is why Quebec asks immigrants to recognize the French fact, to learn the French language and to acknowledge that it is the language of our shared spaces. That is why Quebec also insists on the need to respect the key foundations of Quebec society, such as the separation of church and state, gender equality, and the existence of a historical cultural heritage. That heritage is multicultural, but not multiculturalist. There is a difference.

● (1145)

Before 2003, there was even talk of a civil pact. The Quebec model of integration goes beyond simple citizenship designed to promote the development and peaceful coexistence of cultural minorities in a vacuum by bringing these minorities to enter the symbolic and institutional space occupied by the nation. In other words, contrary to Canada's approach, which talks about preserving the identity of minorities without integration, Quebec's approach supports integration based on the learning of the French language, the official language and language common to the citizenry, and on the adherence to a set of fundamental principles.

According to the Quebec department of immigration and cultural communities:

An intercultural society's challenge is a collective one: to ensure harmony by maintaining and adopting the values and principles of action that unite all citizens. This challenge is met with respect for individual, cultural and religious differences.

There is no better example to illustrate the difference between Canada's approach and Quebec's approach.

Quebec is a French-speaking, democratic and pluralist society based on the rule of law, which means that everyone has the same value and dignity as well as the same right to protection under the law. Knowledge and respect for the values of Quebec society are necessary for adapting to Quebec's environment and fully participating in it. Integration is achieved through full participation, which multiculturalism inhibits.

In a February 2008 article in *Le Monde diplomatique*, Louise Beaudoin explained why the Quebec integration model and the Canadian one are incompatible:

*Private Members' Business*

For nearly 30 years, Canada and Quebec have had two [completely] different approaches to integration. The federal multiculturalism policy, which is modelled on the British approach, promotes cultural diversity based on ethnicity and encourages people to seek out their own community of origin. In contrast, Quebec opted for a model based on interculturalism, a cultural exchange within the framework of the common values of a pluralistic nation with a francophone majority. These two clearly conflicting visions are irreconcilable.

This is confusing to newcomers. They see Quebec as a French-speaking nation that exists within a bilingual country that promotes bilingualism. It prides itself on an approach to welcoming and integrating newcomers that focuses on the importance of certain basic values and upholds French as the language of the people. This conflicts with the definition of a Canada that presents itself as bilingual and multicultural.

In its preliminary submission to the Bouchard-Taylor Commission, the Conseil des relations interculturelles du Québec highlighted this confusion:

However, the efforts made by the Government of Quebec to define and promote its own model of integration came up against the ideology of multiculturalism, which was sometimes interpreted by certain groups as the possibility of living one's own culture according to the rationale of separate development....the ideological way of thinking that emerged in the 1970s, which presented society as a mosaic of cultures, has since been encouraging certain groups to develop beliefs that clash with Quebec's vision.

People arriving in Quebec receive two contradictory messages. Instead of laying blame, as some are wont to do, the Bloc Québécois thinks it would be better to make the messages clearer. In their February 8, 2007, manifesto entitled “En finir avec le multiculturalisme”, Quebec intellectuals Charles Courtois, Dominic Courtois, Robert Laplante, Danic Parenteau and Guillaume Rousseau stated the following:

We think that Quebecers want to see the principles of equality and public secularism affirmed, putting the emphasis on a common culture and providing inspiration for the principles of integration and the methods of dispute resolution. The Charter of the French Language already does this in part, but in order to do so fully, Quebec needs to have its own citizenship.... For now, new Quebecers are sworn in as new Canadian citizens without being encouraged to integrate into the Quebec nation. This is not what inclusion means to Quebec.

This is why it is important for Quebec to have maximum flexibility in enforcing its own citizenship and integration policy. We believe that Quebec will not truly be free until it becomes independent. This will put an end to the mixed messages. Immigrants who choose Quebec will no longer be coming to a Canadian province, but to a francophone country. Until then, however, Quebec must be exempted from the Canadian Multiculturalism Act.

That is why I am very proud to support Bill C-245, which my colleague from Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères introduced in the House this morning.

• (1150)

[English]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak to the issue of multiculturalism. Many years ago I was appointed the responsibility of tourism in the province of Manitoba. One of the challenges I was provided was to attend all the pavilions Winnipeg offers in the summertime during Folklorama. It was like visiting 40-some nations in a two-week period.

The reason I say that is that it showcased what I believe, and what I suspect we will find a majority of members believe, which is that the diversity Canada has to offer the world is one of the greatest assets and strongest strengths we have as a nation. I look at what is being proposed by the Bloc Party in two ways: One is the motivation for bringing forward the legislation, and the other is the whole issue of diversity.

I reflect on Canada as a nation. I have made reference in the past to the fact that generations ago, my family originated from the province of Quebec. Today I have siblings who live in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. I have a sister who has in the past lived in the province of Quebec. I have a sister who has lived in the province of Newfoundland. No matter where one goes in Canada, I believe it is its diversity that defines how great our nation is today and the potential it can have into tomorrow. I will give some specific examples of that.

When I think of multiculturalism, I think of tolerance. A week ago I posted something on Facebook, and the response I received was actually quite upsetting. A group of gentlemen from our Indo-Canadian community was playing a game of Seep, and I was there. I posted about it because I thought it was a wonderful thing to see a group of people aged 55-plus playing this wonderful game.

The racial comments on the post, the hatred in what was said in words, many of which I would not dare repeat inside the chamber, were very upsetting. When I looked into the backgrounds of most of the people who were making the negative comments, I saw that they came from a sector of society in Canada that is very much close-minded with respect to what I believe our Canadian values are, one of which is that we should be very proud of our diversity.

I think of multiculturalism as one of the things that highlights Canada and gives it an identity we can share around the world. Our values are ultimately one of the reasons Canada is a desired country to immigrate to. That is something we should all, collectively, be very supportive of.

The Bloc makes reference to Quebec as a province or as a nation. I, too, understand its distinctness and nationhood, and I do support the French language. In my home province today, as diverse as it is, the fastest-growing communities are probably our Indo-Canadian community, our Filipino heritage community and, to a certain degree, our Ukrainian heritage community. Those are the fastest-growing communities today in the province of Quebec.

• (1155)

The French language in Manitoba is a success story. Never have we had as many people speaking French in Manitoba as we do today. I would encourage members, in particular Bloc members, to visit Winnipeg, check out St. Boniface and visit some of the rural communities, like St-Pierre-Jolys, where I have family members who were born in Quebec and came to St-Pierre-Jolys.

The French language is part of our Canadian identity. What the Bloc tries to seat as fear is, I would suggest, the opposite. If someone goes to a school in the north end, they will find that there are not many people of French descent, but there are many of Filipino heritage, and they are learning to speak French at school.

*Government Orders*

When we hear members of other ethnic origins speaking the French language, I see that as a strong positive, because they are recognizing what Canada is: a bilingual country. Canadians do not have to live in Quebec to appreciate and value the arts and heritage in Quebec. We see in Manitoba a respect and passion for Quebec.

At the end of the day, I truly believe that with the values Canadian have, they are very supportive of multiculturalism, because they see multiculturalism as an issue of diversity and something we should be celebrating. I can speak about the city of Winnipeg, which I have had the opportunity to live in and call home for a vast majority of the years I have lived. Not only is it a community that values the French language, but a growing number of people are speaking French there.

When I go to a citizenship court and witness people of all backgrounds and diversities singing the national anthem for the first time as Canadian citizens, I see the multicultural fabric that makes up our society, which each and every one of us should be proud of, like those who have just been sworn in. That is not just one occasion. Those who attend the citizenship ceremonies will see that. They will see the respect for indigenous people and the respect for the distinct nature that all regions of our country bring together, along with the value of the English language and French language.

We should celebrate our nation, recognizing what people outside of Canada—

• (1200)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** The member will have a minute and four seconds the next time the House considers this matter.

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

---

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### CITIZENSHIP ACT

The House resumed from October 24 consideration of Bill C-3, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (2025), as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

**Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure and an honour to get up again to speak to Bill C-3, now in its amended form from committee, on behalf of the great constituents of the wheat city in western Manitoba.

I find the discussion that has taken place on Bill C-3, since it came back from committee with amendments, fairly startling. We are going to get into a discussion about the amendments that were approved in a multipartisan fashion at committee, but some of the comments coming from those on the government side have been alarming. They say this bill was required by a lower-court decision so we should absolutely agree to everything the court said.

Some members opposite have even commented that Parliament is not supreme in its ability to make laws on the citizenship question and once a court has made a decision at all. We know that is factually incorrect. In fact, my colleague from Calgary Nose Hill cited subsection 91(25) of the Constitution in her speech, which specifically discusses that Parliament has the power to make decisions regarding the provisions of citizenship in this country. The facts around that are clear. Whether the Liberal government is going to accept them and accept the amendments that were approved at committee remains to be seen.

We know the government has made a lot of comments about being a listening government and about wanting to work together more collaboratively. The Liberals are often griping about previous parliaments and the fact that no one wanted to work together with them. We have an opportunity here. Two other official parties in this place have come together and moved some fairly simple, basic and agreeable amendments to a government bill. We sincerely hope that the Liberal government is going to approve them and move this bill forward in an adequate and appropriate way for Canadians.

We know that the national identity of Canada is constantly under threat. We see commentary on all kinds of different ideals about postnationalism and globalism and what it means to be a Canadian citizen, and how being a Canadian and how Canada as a whole fit into that context. The biggest concern I am hearing from Canadians is with respect to the value of Canadian citizenship and what amount of value we place on being a Canadian citizen in an increasingly interconnected and interrelated world.

This bill, in its initial form, was pretty bonkers; that is the first word that comes to my mind. I do not understand the concept of citizenship that goes on and on, with multiple generations that have no connection to this country and, in many cases, that have barely or never been here, generation after generation.

I have family who have moved overseas, to anywhere from Europe to the South Pacific, and they are having children overseas. I know they are going to make sure those children have a connection to this country because they believe that being Canadian means something. It is not just words and a piece of paper. It is about a connection to this place, the actual physical space of this country, and the people who call it home and make up our nation as a community of diverse individuals. If they expect their grandchildren and great-grandchildren to be Canadian, they will make sure they spend time in this country. Even if they choose to live abroad, which is of course their right, they will make sure those relatives have a connection to this country.

What are the amendments we have put forward that the Liberals are so upset about? For citizenship by descent, an amendment was approved saying that citizenship would not be granted to persons when “neither of the person's parents who was a citizen was physically present in Canada for at least 1,095 days during any period of five consecutive years before the person's birth”. That would be for citizenship by descent and by adoption. That 1,095 days is not an onerous length of time to expect someone, who was perhaps born abroad themselves and received citizenship, to spend in this country to pass citizenship to the next generation.

*Government Orders*

• (1205)

There are language provisions. We have two official languages in this country, and I should just pause here to thank my colleagues on the citizenship and immigration committee, the member for Calgary Nose Hill, who was joined by the members for Saskatoon West, Markham—Unionville and Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, for the excellent work they did in putting forward fairly common-sense amendments to this bill.

I also thank my colleagues in the Bloc. Those folks are not typically standing up for Canadian citizenship. By definition, they are a separatist party that wants Quebec to be a different country in and of itself, but even they can see how badly the bill, as it was presented to Parliament by the Liberals, devalued the value of Canadian citizenship. Even Bloc members are concerned about this, so they worked with us to defend language rights and expect people who are applying for citizenship through descent or by adoption to know one of the official languages. That is a fairly common-sense, reasonable request. I would expect most Canadians to believe that as well. Whether the Liberals do, I guess we will see, but I certainly think the vast majority of Canadians expect someone who is becoming a citizen of this country to know either English or French.

We also know that an amendment approved at committee talks about having knowledge of Canada. I was just talking about the example of my own family. Going forward, many generations that have lived abroad and have never spent any time in Canada at all, under the way this bill was presented by the Liberals originally, would automatically be citizens of this country. We believe that is a choice that has to be made with an understanding of the country that someone is a citizen of.

This is very simple. People should take a citizenship test or knowledge test based on the citizenship guide. We expect other people applying for citizenship to take one. I do not think that is unreasonable. It is actually pretty normal to expect that. In fact, as Bill C-3 was originally presented, we would have been the only country in the G7 to grant citizenship in the fashion it noted. None of our allies, the most developed economies and countries in the world, would have had a citizenship provision like the Liberals presented originally.

As such, we amended the bill to add a citizenship provision so that people would have to declare that they do not believe in barbaric cultural practices, like, for example, female genital mutilation and other severe violence. We understand in this country that when someone wants to escape a terrible situation in the country they are in, when they are an immigrant, they need to leave the conflicts of the country they came from. That is not an unreasonable request, and we believe that should be applied to anyone who is obtaining Canadian citizenship from any path.

These are pretty basic bars that have been amended into this bill in a multipartisan fashion, but the main point is that we believe on this side of the House that Canadian citizenship has value, and with that value comes responsibilities and rights. It does not mean a blank slate. There are expectations of Canadian citizens, regardless of how people obtain citizenship, and they need to be outlined, which is why we have amended this bill.

There are adoptive provisions in this bill for people who are adopted that we agree with completely, but we need to make sure there is a discussion happening in Parliament, not just decisions made by judges, about the expectations and responsibilities of people obtaining Canadian citizenship. We feel that these amendments do that, and we know our colleagues in the Bloc agree. Being a Canadian citizen matters. It has value in the world, and we understand that folks who want to be Canadian citizens would be affected by the provisions of this bill, so let us make sure they are joining the citizenry of this country in the right way.

• (1210)

[*Translation*]

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the bill seeks to correct an historic injustice by allowing people to pass on their citizenship to their children in the future. One of the amendments made by my committee colleagues concerns the length of residence: Instead of the three non-consecutive years that were initially required, it would now be three consecutive years out of five. However, I would like to understand why, for example, someone who lived in Canada for two years as a student, returned to their home country, and then came back—as is often the case in 2025, where realities are different—might not be eligible.

Sometimes people work abroad for a few years, come back to Canada for a year, go away again and then return. They may have spent several years in Canada during a significant time in their lives, either for school or for work, but according to the proposed amendment, they would not be able to pass on their citizenship to their children if they did not reside in Canada for three consecutive years out of five. Could my colleague explain the reasons behind this change?

[*English*]

**Grant Jackson:** Mr. Speaker, for starters, on the lost Canadians piece, I would say to my colleague across the way that we agree with those provisions, and this is why we did not amend that part of the bill. That provision stands. I think our Conservative comments at committee stand for themselves.

With respect to his example of someone who is globe-trotting and here for school, away for school, here for a job, back for a job, etc., that person would still have spent the amount of time required by the bill in the country with their going back and forth, whether it is for school or for work. Their children would have citizenship under the provisions of the bill. That is already clear in the bill.

We do not think that 1,095 days out of a five-year period is an unreasonable expectation. We certainly hope the Liberals will support that.

• (1215)

[*Translation*]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer's estimates, approximately 150,000 new people would get citizenship, which means that they would also get the right to vote.

A Conservative member raised an interesting point last week in this regard: We still do not know how it will be determined in which riding these people will be registered and vote. That could become an issue if there is a close race in certain ridings.

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

[*English*]

**Grant Jackson:** Mr. Speaker, I think our concern is certainly the 150,000 people at a time when our immigration system is already overwhelmed. There is no question that the Liberals have absolutely broken Canada's immigration system. Even they recognized that under Justin Trudeau and decided they were going to make some public statements about curbing the flow of immigration into the country. Now they are waffling on that, walking that back and trying to pretend that the last eight years of their record did not happen.

We are concerned about the impact on our housing system and our health care system. As my colleague mentioned, where people choose to register as citizens, if they choose to spend time here, will have an impact on those systems.

There are a lot of provisions, which is why one of the amendments in the bill is a requirement of the minister to report where these people are registering and how many people have obtained citizenship through the bill.

**Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned in his speech that there was a court ruling from an Ontario court that precipitated this whole discussion, so I have a two-part question here.

First, why does he think the government did not appeal the decision? That seems like a strange decision from the government. Was it smart or not smart?

Second, there needs to be a substantial connection according to the court ruling, which makes a little bit of sense. Our suggestion would be to have maybe a better substantial connection than what the government has proposed.

**Grant Jackson:** Mr. Speaker, very briefly, it was a mistake not to appeal that court decision at the lower court level when it was rendered. There could have been a much better framework put out than Bill C-3.

Unfortunately, the Liberals just threw up their hands because they seem to prefer not to make challenging decisions and to blame the courts when things do not go their way. We have seen that with other issues, and we are seeing it again with immigration. That is the weak way out.

### *Government Orders*

We believe there is a better path. Colleagues such as the hon. member have done an excellent job of putting that forward with these amendments to Bill C-3.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising today to speak to Bill C-3.

[*English*]

The bill would remedy the status of people who, were it not for the first-generation limit imposed in 2009, would be Canadian citizens by descent from birth. This is largely a cohort of children who were born after 2009, which means they would be 16 years of age and younger; it also includes descendants of previously lost Canadians. It also addresses a very small historical cohort who lost citizenship under the outdated provisions of the 1977 Citizenship Act.

[*Translation*]

During the study in committee, members proposed and adopted several amendments to Bill C-3. The government reviewed each of them.

After doing that, we are convinced that the initial concept of Bill C-3 brings fairness and transparency to our system and confirms the value of Canadian citizenship.

[*English*]

The framework set out in the bill for citizenship by descent is straightforward. Once enacted, a Canadian parent born abroad may pass on their citizenship to a child born or adopted abroad only if that parent has at least 1,095 days of physical presence in Canada before the child is born or adopted. Each generation after the first one must demonstrate their connection to Canada. If a parent does not do so, citizenship by descent stops with them.

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

I would like to point out that this bill does not seek to create a new way to immigrate to Canada.

[*English*]

This is not an immigration bill, nor would it allow people who are living abroad to pass on Canadian citizenship in perpetuity.

[*Translation*]

The goal is to ensure that children of Canadians with a substantial connection to our country can obtain citizenship by descent, regardless of where they were born or adopted.

*Government Orders**[English]*

The question then is this: How do we measure the connection? For people who move to Canada and seek to become Canadian, we have a clear way to assess whether they have a substantial connection to the country, and that is laid out in the Citizenship Act; they would have to accumulate 1,095 days in a five-year period in order to apply for naturalization. However, citizenship by descent is different. It is not about granting citizenship for someone to join Canada; rather, it is about confirming citizenship at birth based on the parent's connection to Canada. For that reason, the test is different.

*[Translation]*

Bill C-3 is based on a cumulative model. For Canadian parents born outside Canada, this model adds up every day that a parent spent in the country before starting a family. This approach recognizes the many ways that Canadians can maintain a substantial connection to the country, even when they have to go abroad for work, school or family responsibilities.

Take, for example, a Canadian child born abroad whose family moves every two years for work. This child may have lived in Canada for nearly a decade before turning 18 without ever having spent three consecutive years in the country over a five-year period.

When that child grows up, they could start a family or choose to adopt abroad. Under a fixed three-out-of-five-years framework, because of real-life experience in Canada, it would be impossible for their child to obtain citizenship.

*[English]*

The cumulative model would allow Canadians whose lives span borders to demonstrate their connection to Canada from birth until they start a family. It is the fairest and most practical way to uphold the value of Canadian citizenship. Importing the naturalization requirements into citizenship by descent would conflate the two distinct policy purposes and risk excluding the children of Canadians whose ties to Canada were built here over time.

For immigrants to Canada, our naturalization process assesses their readiness to join the Canadian family. It requires establishing a substantial connection to Canada through recent residence, knowledge of the country, capacity in one of our official languages and tests that confirm they are ready to become part of our shared civic life.

Citizenship by descent is different. It is not an immigration pathway. It does not confer membership in Canada on someone new. It recognizes citizenship that existed from birth through a Canadian parent who has a real connection to Canada, either because they were born here or because they met the statutory test of physical presence in Canada.

*[Translation]*

We are not asking Canadians born in Canada to take tests to keep their citizenship and we are not imposing these kinds of tests on Canadians born abroad.

Imposing such tests on people who were born or adopted abroad beyond the first generation would create distinctions among Cana-

dians based solely on place of birth. Canada cannot have different classes of citizens.

Bill C-3 maintains an appropriate degree of separation between immigration law and citizenship law. It guarantees that citizenship at birth, whether it is determined by place or by descent, remains clear, consistent and secure.

*[English]*

Bill C-3 includes important safeguards to uphold both the integrity of citizenship and the security of Canada. Citizenship by descent would not operate on the honour system. The burden of proof in the act would rest squarely on the Canadian parent, who must provide evidence of their 1,095 days of physical presence in Canada before the child is born or adopted. Documents, including educational transcripts, pay stubs and leases, would be reviewed by officers. If a parent cannot demonstrate the required physical presence, their child born or adopted abroad would not become Canadian, unless they immigrate here afterward through our immigration pathways, of course.

- (1225)

*[Translation]*

All of Canada's existing integrity measures also continue to apply. Passport controls, coordination among law enforcement agencies, the prosecution of extraterritorial offences and the revocation of citizenship in cases of fraud will continue to be key tools for protecting the safety of Canadians and their confidence in the citizenship system.

Our government remains committed to transparency. Citizenship and immigration results are already publicly reported through tools such as the annual report to Parliament on immigration and the departmental results report.

The creation of new reporting obligations, particularly for data that Canada does not collect, such as country of residence or dual citizenship, would add unnecessary complexity and more costs for Canadians.

The bill represents a thoughtful and balanced step forward when it comes to citizenship laws in Canada.

*[English]*

We know there is a relative consensus among the parties about the necessity to correct the injustice that is there. We believe that the bill offers that solution.

*[Translation]*

The bill also modernizes the application of citizenship by descent. It preserves the connection between generations of Canadians while ensuring that laws remain clear, practical and consistent.

*[English]*

We believe the 1,095 days is an equitable way to measure the authenticity, the relationship and the value of the parent's attempt to get citizenship for their child.

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

Language skills, knowledge tests and security checks will be maintained where they are needed in the naturalization and immigration process.

[English]

I will tell a quick story. A number of people reach out to my office. Jeff, a Greek Canadian whose grandparents became Canadian while working in the flea markets of Montreal wrote to me. His father met his mother in the 1970s, and they had Jeff in Athens. He grew up in Canada and pursued his education here, and then work opportunities took him back to Greece. Although he has lived in many countries, he retains his connection to Canada with regular visits. Without Bill C-3, his children would not have the chance to inherit the citizenship and identity that shaped them.

As we continue this debate, I encourage members to have an open mind and pass the bill.

**Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for attempting to explain the Liberals' position on this.

First off, I want to once again mention that it was very silly of the government not to challenge the lower court ruling to be able to be in control of the situation. It just demonstrates the government's typical desire to let the courts make the decisions so it does not have to make the hard decisions.

The average Canadian listening hears that the government put a condition on this of 1,095 days for the parent to be in Canada. Canadians see conditions. Conservatives proposed some additional conditions, such as language, for example. If the minister is imposing conditions on this form of citizenship, why not also add language? Language is so important, whether it is English or French, in this country. Why would the minister just skip over something as important as language and only put the condition of 1,095 days?

**Hon. Lena Metlege Diab:** Mr. Speaker, the member has a very informed question and was at the committee when I was there. I respect the manner he always presents himself and his respectful question.

Again, we respect Canada's institutions. The courts are those institutions, and the fact is that this legislation would remedy what the court said was unconstitutional. If we do not do anything, it would mean that citizenship by descent would go on in perpetuity. I know no one in Parliament wants that.

We believe we have introduced a reasonable limit of 1,095 days, which would give people the time to build a substantial connection to and feel part of Canada. This is important. The majority of people who would fall under this would be those who were not remedied in the 2009 legislation or the 2015 legislation, which means most of them will have been born after 2015. Most of them will be 16 years of age and younger. I ask members to keep that in mind.

• (1230)

[Translation]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to circle back to my Conservative colleague's question, which has still not been answered. It was a very good question.

My colleague asked why the government did not include official languages in the bill's criteria. The purpose of this bill is to define what constitutes a sufficient connection to Canada. This seems like a perfectly normal condition, given that we operate in both English and French.

How is it that this much-talked-about connection with Canada does not require knowledge of French or English, which is how that connection would be formed?

Is the minister comfortable with the idea of granting citizenship to people who speak neither French nor English but who claim to have strong ties to the country?

**Hon. Lena Metlege Diab:** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-3's approach enables individuals to show their commitment to Canada and their plans to participate in and contribute to Canadian society. Most of the applications concern children born after 2015, who are 16 years of age or under. If those children want to become Canadians, then I hope that their parents will submit the appropriate application on their behalf, and that they will come to Canada and learn both of the country's official languages.

[English]

**Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, near the end of the minister's speech, she talked a lot about families she is connected to and has spoken to personally. Maybe she could share some of those stories of the families that would benefit from this change in legislation with the House.

**Hon. Lena Metlege Diab:** Mr. Speaker, the legislation is extremely important, but it affects a minority of people in the population. For those we are trying to rectify this for, it is of significant importance. Even if we can rectify the situation for a few thousand people, that is why we are here. This is for people who have a tie to Canada, have lost their right to citizenship and whose situations were not remedied by the 2009 and 2015 legislation. Those are the ones who are crying, because they have a deep commitment to Canada. They want to become Canadians, but they also want the right to pass citizenship on to their children.

**Michael Ma (Markham—Unionville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the common-sense amendments that the Conservatives and the Bloc so carefully crafted at committee to improve Bill C-3 are being undone by my postnationalist colleagues across the aisle.

### *Government Orders*

The Liberals do not believe in Canada because they do not believe in our borders. They believe in a two-tiered immigration system, where citizenship by naturalization within our borders has harder requirements than citizenship by descent outside of our borders does. They believe in distributing the privileges of Canadian citizenship abroad while offloading the costs and duties of citizenship to those who live coast to coast to coast. They believe that Canadians of convenience should be able to wear the team Canada jersey without ever putting in time on our ice. They are people who want to be in the team photo without being a team player.

Let me remind the House of how this entire situation first began.

The phrase “Canadians of convenience” emerged after 2006, when, during the Lebanon war, the Canadian government evacuated 15,000 Lebanese Canadians at the cost of \$94 million to Canadian taxpayers. They were evacuated beginning in July 2006, and by September of the same year, 7,000 of those evacuees had returned to Lebanon. This was the central reason the Harper government took action to initiate the first-generation limit several years later.

Let us make this definition very clear: Canadians of convenience, as grounded in our 2006 example, are those who hold Canadian citizenship but live abroad and do not participate in Canadian society. They view Canada as an insurance policy when a crisis emerges, but never pay into our system. They are passport holders who merely parachute back into Canada when they need assistance. They wear team Canada’s jersey, but they have never played with us.

Conservatives are in full support of all measures needed to specifically address the lost Canadians situation. However, lost Canadians must understand that they have been used as a Trojan Horse by the postnationalist Liberals.

The first-order effect of the original Bill C-3 would directly help lost Canadians. The second-order effect of Bill C-3 in its original form would have indirectly created over 100,000 Canadians of convenience. This is why the Bloc and the Conservatives united to create common-sense amendments that would lessen the impacts of Bill C-3’s second-order effects.

Let us discuss the common-sense amendments that were crafted in committee. Might I add, these were crafted by recognized opposition parties through a committee, where committees are central to the parliamentary process. Our legitimate parliamentary work is being opposed by team orange, which has been stripped of official party status.

I will only entertain this tangent once, but I do question the legitimacy of an unofficial party challenging the parliamentary work of recognized parties in committees. What are the optics of this? Why bother having parliamentary committees if all voted resolutions are ignored? I digress, so I will get back to the amendments.

The goal of our amendments was simply to harmonize the requirements of citizenship by descent with those of citizenship by naturalization within Canada. Is it too much to ask for a harmonized system with universal standards? What we achieved in the amendments would strengthen the substantial connection test, while adding quality control reporting responsibilities for the presiding minister.

One, we amended the three-year presence in Canada to be achieved within a five-year timeline. This would allow some flexibility while ensuring some level of intensity. With any more flexibility, we must seriously ask if we are talking about a path to citizenship or mere tourism.

● (1235)

Two, we added requirements about language proficiencies, citizenship knowledge and security checks. It is not a high bar to demand proficiency in one of our official languages. It is not a high bar to demand a prospective Canadian citizen should understand the responsibilities and privileges of Canadian citizenship. We expect much more of someone getting their driver’s license. It is not a high bar to demand a security assessment, but it is a high bar for Canadians of convenience who would like to wear team Canada’s jersey without being a team player on our national rink.

Finally, the Bloc and the Conservatives added reporting requirements for the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. The first reporting requirement would be the number of citizenships granted by the enactment of Bill C-3. The second reporting requirement would be security screening exemptions. Essentially, the first stream of data would be to understand how Bill C-3 is performing, and the second would be to keep an eye on potential security threats. If we have the best interests of Canadians in mind, these reporting requirements are not just logical but absolutely necessary. Unfortunately, these reporting requirements are too high a bar if the goal is to obfuscate operational metrics while being soft on crime.

Taken together, our amendments make the substantial connection test of Bill C-3 functionally substantial in practice and not just in words. Of course, there is nothing more substantial than what citizenship by naturalization requires of those understanding its process. What these amendments achieve is the addition of a certain cost to the process of earning Canadian citizenship, a cost to reflect the value we hold in being Canadian.

I would like to wrap up my comments with a topic that has been the central but unspoken theme of Bill C-3, which is the value of Canadian citizenship. Every Canadian citizen is like a voting shareholder in a corporation. The shareholders have elected the Liberals to be the operating officers on the assumption they would be prioritizing the values of what it means to be Canadian shareholders. Instead, they have weaponized a promise to reinstate lost shareholders as a Trojan Horse to dilute every existing share by issuing new tranches of passive shareholders of convenience.

*Government Orders*

All the Bloc and the Conservatives are asking is that this new tranche of shares being issued under Bill C-3 meet the same standards as those governing employees who earned sweat equity by contributing to our corporation. When the Liberals, as the acting officers of our corporation, and the consultants on team orange, who are no longer legitimate members of the board, decide that Bill C-3 tranches of shares should be issued without the parity vesting and work we require of sweat equity earners, I have only one question: Are they fulfilling their fiduciary duty to our existing base of shareholders?

• (1240)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives fail to recognize that there is a difference between someone who says they want to be able to immigrate to Canada and someone who wants to get their citizenship reaffirmed. For example, a foreign bureaucrat, who has done years of service for Canadians but who has done that service in an embassy, wants to be able to see some form of their descendants being able to have citizenship. We want to apply the very same rules as when we are affirming the citizenship by having a substantial residency factor of 1,095 days. This is the connection, and I think it is reasonable, given that, in order to become a Canadian citizen, if they are a permanent resident, it is 1,095—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** I have to give the member time to respond.

The hon. member for Markham—Unionville.

**Michael Ma:** Mr. Speaker, the example is of foreign services. After *x* number of years, they have to return to Canada for a number of years before they get reassigned. That should address your issue. Any other corporation in the private sector has similar types of arrangements that can be addressed appropriately.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** Please address all comments through the Chair.

The hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères.

[*Translation*]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I believe that my colleague mentioned in his speech that the amendments made as a result of serious work in committee by my colleague, the member for Lac-Saint-Jean, are falling apart because of collusion between the Liberals and the NDP. One of the amendments in question had to do with the tabling of an annual report in Parliament on the bill's impact.

What does my colleague think about the fact that the government, with the NDP's support, is refusing to take accountability for the impact of this bill?

[*English*]

**Michael Ma:** Mr. Speaker, for any government party, there is an obligation to report to the House and Canadians on what has been done. The simple ask of the committee, from the Bloc and the Conservatives, was merely for the ministry and the minister to report on the facts so that Canadians and Parliament can understand what has taken place and whether the treatment of Canadians overall is fair.

• (1245)

**Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, at a time when our immigration system has been stretched and faith in its fairness is fading, Bill C-3 tells the world that one could be Canadian without ever truly living here. Canadian citizenship is one of the most valuable things in the world. It is something that generations have worked hard to earn and to honour, but Bill C-3 would give automatic citizenship to children born abroad, even when their parents have spent little time living in Canada.

We used to have an immigration system that was the envy of the world. It was rooted in fairness, contribution and community, but the bill risks turning citizenship into a paper privilege, rather than a lived commitment.

Before granting citizenship, should we not expect at least some genuine connection and some proof of interest in, effort for or belonging to the country we call home?

**Michael Ma:** Mr. Speaker, it is true that the value of Canadian citizenship used to be one of pride all over the world. As I said, if we want to wear the jersey, we have to be part of the team. If we continue this process of passing it on from generation to generation, we are going to lose that Canadian value and the connection to Canada.

What would the loyalty to Canada be other than being a Canadian passport holder for convenience?

[*Translation*]

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today, we are addressing a very important issue with our study of Bill C-3. Canadian citizenship is more than just an administrative status. It is a powerful symbol of belonging to a country. It confers certain fundamental rights, such as the right to vote and the right to travel with a Canadian passport, and it also embodies a civic responsibility, a shared identity and a deep connection to our country. To be a citizen of Canada is to be part of a collective project rooted in democracy, equality, diversity and freedom.

There are three pathways to citizenship under the Citizenship Act: by being born in Canada, through naturalization by immigrating to Canada and acquiring citizenship, or by descent if an individual is born abroad to a Canadian parent. Today, our debate is focusing on this last pathway, which is citizenship by descent. I want to make that clear, because it is important in our discussions not to confuse citizenship by descent with citizenship by naturalization.

Naturalization results from the process of immigrating to Canada, while descent applies when a person is the child of a Canadian citizen and is therefore a right acquired by birth. The criteria and requirements are obviously different in both cases. I would like everyone to keep this distinction top of mind throughout the debate.

### *Government Orders*

Since 2009, the fundamental right to citizenship by descent has been unfairly restricted. Thousands of people with a real, long-term connection to Canada have been deprived of that sense of belonging. An amendment made to the Citizenship Act under Stephen Harper's Conservative government introduced an arbitrary rule commonly known as the first-generation limit.

This provision means that only children born abroad to a Canadian parent who was born in Canada are automatically entitled to citizenship. In other words, if two successive generations are born outside Canada, even if the parents are active Canadian citizens, the child cannot become a citizen.

This provision severed the legal and symbolic tie between Canada and many children of Canadians living temporarily abroad. Canadian families were plunged into legal limbo or even exclusion when they discovered that their children were considered foreigners by their own country.

These issues are not theoretical. They are affecting children growing up in Canadian households abroad and families who wish to pass on to their children not just a passport, but also a Canadian identity, a cultural heritage, a sense of belonging to a community and a feeling of safety. Failing to recognize them sends a message of exclusion to those who feel like full-fledged Canadians. It is a dismissal of the contributions of our diaspora and of the reality that this is a country where familial and citizenship ties often transcend borders.

In December 2023, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruled that the first-generation limit is unconstitutional on the grounds that it violates sections 6 and 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, that is, mobility rights and equality rights.

The Government of Canada did not appeal this decision, since it acknowledges that the act has had unacceptable consequences. The court granted us an extension to allow Bill C-3 to run its parliamentary course. If this bill is not passed within the next few weeks, before the suspension of the declaration of invalidity ends, there will be no limits anymore on citizenship by descent for all the people born to Canadian citizens abroad. People will be able to pass citizenship on to their children in perpetuity without the need for a substantial connection to Canada.

Therefore, to comply with our constitutional obligations and preserve the integrity of our citizenship process, our government opted to propose a responsible and balanced legislative framework. I sincerely believe this was the right decision.

Bill C-3 seeks to extend citizenship by descent beyond the first generation. It was designed with a clear objective: to restore the rights of Canadians deprived of their citizenship, while establishing a fairer framework for future generations. In so doing, it seeks to strike a balance between setting reasonable limits on automatic citizenship by descent and protecting the rights and privileges associated with Canadian citizenship.

Once passed, Bill C-3 will automatically grant citizenship by descent to all individuals born abroad to a Canadian parent before the coming into force of the act. This means that descendants of Canadians who have been unfairly excluded will have their status restored. For children born after the act comes into force, a new

framework will be introduced. Under this framework, citizenship can be transmitted beyond the first generation if the Canadian parent can demonstrate a substantial connection to Canada, defined as 1,095 cumulative days, or about three years, of physical presence in Canada. This requirement guarantees that children who receive citizenship have a genuine connection with the country, without arbitrarily excluding individuals based on their place of birth.

● (1250)

The introduction of the substantial connection requirement allows for a reasonable balance to be maintained. Citizenship by descent remains available, but it is anchored in a real and tangible connection with Canada. This requirement guarantees that future generations will not receive citizenship if they do not have genuine ties to the country. This reflects our desire to preserve the value of Canadian citizenship without needlessly restricting it.

This is a modern, balanced and responsible framework. In fact, it is more rigorous than if we simply abolished the first-generation limit. It protects the integrity of our citizenship while correcting blatant injustices. However, during the committee study, Conservative members got several amendments to Bill C-3 adopted that change the spirit and intent of the bill in a way that is unacceptable. For example, the Conservative amendments at committee changed the criterion in the bill for determining a parent's substantial connection to Canada. What changed is the restriction about the 1,095 days being over a period of five consecutive years. If we require parents to be present in Canada for a cumulative period of three years in the five years prior to their child's birth or adoption, we will be reducing the flexibility and options available to first- and subsequent-generation Canadians to pass on their citizenship.

In 2025, Canadian families, including those abroad, live very different lives. We support their freedom to pursue studies and other endeavours outside Canada. We do not feel that their choices should compromise their ability to pass on their Canadian citizenship. A connection to Canada can be demonstrated in many ways, and it can be maintained even while pursuing activities abroad. This change could result in more lost Canadians. It would be fundamentally unfair to deny a substantial connection with Canada to those who have spent more than three years in the country over long periods of time.

In fact, taken as a whole, these changes are inconsistent in many other respects. They require the minister to report annually on cases where the security assessment requirement has been lifted, without including a provision giving the minister the power to lift that requirement. They establish a substantial connection criterion in the law while giving the Governor in Council the power to make regulations to establish and modify that same criterion. In the interests of consistency, the substantial connection criterion should be defined in the law or in the regulations, but not in both, as my opposition colleagues would have it.

*Government Orders*

These amendments require Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, or IRCC, to report data that the government does not currently collect. That would place an additional burden on the government and taxpayers by requiring the creation of a new mechanism for Canadians to register the birth of their children abroad. Our approach is to govern effectively, decisively and with respect for Canadian taxpayers' money, not to introduce new red tape.

In closing, I would like to emphasize that Canadian citizenship gives us all a deep sense of belonging to this diverse, democratic, and inclusive country that we are proud to call our own. Our government will continue to protect the value of Canadian citizenship by ensuring that the process remains fair, transparent and based on sound principles. Bill C-3 strikes a necessary balance. It corrects a past injustice to Canadians who were stripped of their citizenship, while ensuring that the future of citizenship by descent is based on genuine ties to our country.

However, amendments proposed by Conservative colleagues have introduced unacceptable and unnecessary requirements that have never been applied to other citizens, making it difficult to meet the substantial connection requirement for individuals seeking to pass on their citizenship, and potentially creating new categories of lost Canadians. I think we should ensure that these amendments are not included in the final version of the bill that will be passed in the House.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that, behind the legal and administrative considerations we are discussing today, there are real people with personal stories, life experiences and sincere ties to Canada. We must remember that the decisions we make in this House can shape the destinies of individuals and entire families. Bill C-3 is based on our government's reasoned, balanced approach that allows us to meet our constitutional obligations while maintaining the integrity of our citizenship.

● (1255)

**Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I really appreciated my colleague's speech. I know that he was not here during the previous Parliament when we had a great deal of debate on this bill. We had discussions with families that fall under this category. These are Canadian families that have served outside Canada.

What does my colleague think about the fact that this matter has come back to the House a couple of times and that Conservatives continue to put barriers to Canadians' access to this birthright?

Most importantly, what message does this send to families that have served outside Canada if we prevent them from obtaining citizenship for their children or grandchildren?

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. In fact, Bill C-3 seeks to correct a historic injustice. People with genuine ties to Canada have been stripped of their Canadian citizenship. Bill C-3 responds to those injustices.

The amendments our Conservative colleagues brought forward in committee would create new injustices and could create new generations of lost Canadians.

There are people with substantial connections to Canada who have worked abroad in various diplomatic missions or who have spent time abroad studying. The Conservatives want to deprive these people of the opportunity to obtain their citizenship while abroad.

I oppose the amendments proposed by our colleagues so as not to create a new injustice.

[*English*]

**Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am perplexed at how tone-deaf the Liberals seem to be on the question of why they would be so supportive of not having criminal background checks on people coming into our country. No matter what stream of the immigration system people come here through, why would the Liberals support that?

My question to the member opposite is simple. Are people in his community satisfied? Would they be happy if people move into his area, the street he lives on and the surrounding area, and they do not know whether the people walking the streets have perpetrated crimes in the country they came from?

[*Translation*]

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague's question puzzles me a little. A lot of information seems to be mixed up.

We are not discussing an immigration program here. We are discussing access to citizenship by descent, meaning by birthright, when a parent is a Canadian citizen or has maintained substantial ties to Canada. The two are not the same by any stretch. When we mix everything together, we end up misleading the public. It is important that we exercise great diligence in debates such as these.

The fact is that insinuating that citizenship by descent is an immigration stream falls short of the diligence that Canadians expect from us.

● (1300)

**Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, one objective of the amendments proposed is to grant citizenship by descent. However, the amendments state that the applicant should still be required to undergo security, language and knowledge testing, like any other naturalized citizen.

What have my colleague and the Liberals got against that?

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault:** Mr. Speaker, acquiring citizenship by descent and acquiring citizenship by naturalization are two completely different things.

*Government Orders*

People are given access to citizenship by naturalization at the end of an immigration process that includes various requirements, including knowledge of the official languages. Those requirements are justified by the fact that it is an immigration process. Once the requirements are met, citizenship is obtained through naturalization.

Acquiring citizenship by descent is not an immigration program. It is a right acquired at birth because one parent is a Canadian citizen or has maintained a substantial connection with the country. We are talking about two different things: citizenship by descent and citizenship by naturalization. Immigration requirements are a completely different subject.

[*English*]

**Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to stand once again in this chamber to speak to the legislation before us.

I was disappointed to hear that our Liberal colleagues are working to overturn the common-sense amendments that the Conservatives and the Bloc passed at committee in our deliberations on Bill C-3. It is not surprising that they are getting help from their traditional coalition partner, the NDP.

The Liberals have turned our immigration system into a nightmare. Now, they want to pass even more legislation that will not fix the issues they have created but will continue to add to this huge mess. They want to potentially add thousands of new citizens without the necessary housing, health care or jobs to support them.

At committee, Conservatives put forward multiple amendments to make this lousy bill into a slightly less lousy bill. I would like to thank our Bloc colleagues, who worked with us to get these amendments through the committee.

The Liberals will say that they have to pass this legislation because a lower court ruling said that the first-generation limit of citizenship by descent could go on indefinitely. What they failed to mention is this: Not only did they not appeal the court ruling, but they have the control as to how it is implemented through legislation they put forward.

The previous Conservative government put in place a rule that said that if somebody was going to pass down their citizenship to a child born abroad, they could only do it for one generation, and that somebody who obtains citizenship by descent had to have a substantial connection to Canada. Liberals want this substantial connection to be three years over the course of someone's life. The first amendment passed at committee was to harmonize the residence requirements for someone obtaining citizenship through naturalization with citizenship by descent.

It really does not make sense to my constituents and, I believe, to Canadians across this great country to bestow citizenship on someone whose parents lived here 30 years ago for a three-year period of time. Now, they have not lived a day in the country, know nothing about the country and potentially do not speak the language. They and their parents have not contributed to the economy of this country. They have not lived their lives here, ever, but would be automatically bestowed citizenship without the checks and balances that would be inherent in going through the normal immigration

streams. Conservatives proposed that new citizens be required to live in Canada at least three consecutive years out of five years to have the provisions in the bill apply to their descendants.

Given that the Liberal government has shamefully dropped the ball repeatedly on conducting thorough criminal background checks for immigrants, providing proof of three years of residency within the five-year period over the entirety of somebody's life would cause huge administrative problems and carry a high risk of fraud. How is an immigration officer supposed to verify three years of physical presence using records that could be decades old or may not exist?

Just to clarify so there is no confusion, the Liberals want three years over the course of somebody's life. We are proposing three years over a five-year period. That is a reasonable change. It was supported by the Bloc and passed at committee, but we now read in today's news that the NDP has partnered with the Liberals to vote down this very important amendment. This will also make the massive process and backlogs that the Liberals have already created even worse, hurting genuine immigrants waiting for service.

The second amendment passed at committee was to add a language component. I would argue that it is hard enough for new citizens to establish themselves and get ahead in Canada as it is when they speak a little of either of Canada's official languages, English or French. How can they integrate and actively participate in Canadian society if they are unable to communicate or speak one of our official languages? Our citizenship laws need to help immigrants become integrated into Canada, not push them further away. Language is part of our national identity and it is a bond we all share. The ability to communicate with each other cannot be understated.

• (1305)

I am a bit confused by the Liberals voting against this amendment because, when the Liberal Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship was asked at the citizenship committee what she believed Canadian values are, she stumbled, mumbled and then admitted that official languages are part of our Canadian values. If the minister believes English and French are part of Canadian values, why is the Liberal government not actively looking to celebrate and promote them within the bill, which the very same minister brought forth to Parliament?

Worse still, the bill does not require mandatory criminal background checks, meaning citizenship could be given without a full security screening. The importance of background checks cannot be understated. Canadians expect that the people we welcome into the country are law-abiding citizens like them. They expect that the people who are walking in the streets and who are at the community centres and the malls, around the schools and everywhere else are law-abiding citizens. A background check would correct that issue. It would address that very issue.

*Government Orders*

Unfortunately, the Liberals are saying that no background checks are required for this stream of people who have never lived here before and who come here at the ages of 30, 35 or 40. They could have done whatever they wanted in their country, but they are owed their citizenship so we should just give it to them. It does not make sense. That is not what Canadians want.

Removing this requirement, which Canada has for other immigration pathways, is irresponsible, dangerous and certainly a lot less safe. We deserve better. Canadians deserve better. We are seeing high crime in our communities, where violent attacks are taking place in once-quiet and once-safe neighbourhoods. Not requiring background checks for new citizens puts Canadians at risk and will only worsen the crime seen in our communities.

The Liberal government is acting irresponsibly by putting forward legislation that will make critical issues worse. Its working to overturn the common-sense amendments the Conservatives and the Bloc passed at committee is reckless. This bill undermines Canadian citizenship and what it means to be a Canadian. It will result in new citizens with very little, if any, connection to Canada. We will not know if they have a criminal background or if they uphold any Canadian values. In many cases, we will be unable to prove with certainty that applicants were in the country for the required period of time. Records may simply not exist, let alone the difficulty in trying to ascertain something from 30, 40 or 50 years ago.

I support the section of this bill regarding international adoptions. I have spoken at some length in this chamber about how I adopted my own children internationally, so this issue touches close to home for me.

We are making Canadian citizenship worth less by setting the bar so low for those obtaining citizenship by descent. It is unfair to every person who worked hard, learned one of our languages and had to pass all the necessary tests required.

In closing, the Liberals' mess in immigration has worsened every crisis in our country: housing, health care and jobs. They brought in too many people too quickly, without any plan. Now communities are overwhelmed. Young people cannot find jobs and newcomers are struggling to find housing and food. Unemployment right now among youth in the greater Toronto area is hovering around 20%. Already, what the Liberals' plan for international students and temporary foreign workers has done is overwhelm the system. Our own youth in Canada cannot find the entry-level jobs that were readily available to most of us in the House when we were their age.

Now they want to bring in additional people without proper background checks and add to the system, putting an even bigger strain on housing, health care and jobs. There are people waiting in hospitals in the greater Toronto area and across the country five, six, seven or eight hours to get service. They cannot get that service.

The Liberals say that we should never mind doing any background checks. They have found another stream that they want to add to the system. They will make it so easy for those people to just walk into the country. This bill will continue to add to the chaos. It cheapens Canadian citizenship. It requires yet more bureaucracy. It

worsens the trust in our immigration system, which was once the envy of the world.

● (1310)

[*Translation*]

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that naturalization is the result of an immigration process in Canada, while citizenship by descent applies when a person is the child of a Canadian citizen and that parent has maintained a substantial connection with Canada.

Citizenship by descent is not an immigration program. It is completely false to claim otherwise. I would like to know why my colleague insists on repeating this false information in the House during our debates.

[*English*]

**Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Speaker, the member probably has not read the bill in its entirety and probably does not understand the impact the bill would have.

There are going to be people in the member's community who came into the country and have not had any background checks and do not speak the language but simply say their mother and father were here 30 years ago; they graduated from university and were able to obtain citizenship back then. They then moved out of the country.

Consider a person who was born in another country and does not speak the language here. They have committed five or six crimes, but now that their country knows who they are and that they are a criminal, let them go to Canada where they would be welcomed into the country.

What the member opposite does not understand is the danger to the safety of our communities with this ridiculous legislation.

[*Translation*]

**Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, beyond the semantic debates about naturalization and descent, with Bill C-3, we could have someone who obtained citizenship in Canada after living in Canada for three out of 60 years and whose children could get citizenship without ever living in Canada, without knowing the language and without passing a security assessment.

What does my colleague think about all that? Why are the Liberals bent on having such weak conditions for citizenship by descent?

[*English*]

**Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Speaker, that was a very well-thought-out question. Clearly the member has read the legislation and understands the impact it would have on our communities.

It really does not make sense in any way, shape or form to think that someone who lived here 50 or 60 years ago could bestow citizenship in perpetuity to generation after generation simply because they were here 50 or 60 years ago, without having contributed at all, not one minute of their life, to any of our Canadian provinces or territories.

*Government Orders*

**Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, being Canadian is something people around the world dreamt of, and for good reason. Our immigration system used to be the best: fair, predictable and built on hard work. However, now it is a mess, with millions of temporary residents, hundreds of thousands of undocumented people, and endless backlogs. Instead of fixing the problem, Bill C-3 would make it worse, handing out citizenship without real connection and commitment.

It seems that the government does not understand that the system is in cardiac arrest. Is there any reason why the Liberals refuse to fix the problem?

**Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Speaker, truly the only word that comes to mind is “incompetence”. We are now on the seventh Liberal immigration minister in the last 10 years. The bill is actually a copy of a previous bill. Members of the government just changed the title from Bill C-71 in the previous Parliament to Bill C-3 now. They introduced it in the month of May or June and then took the summer off. They all went home. They did not do any consultations across the country, with communities. They did not want to listen to people—

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals think that a proper way of presenting the bill or defending it is by having the government whip sit in this space, thinking he is properly representing the people of Kingston and the Islands by heckling when someone is speaking in the House. This is not a serious government—

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Speaker, if government members were serious, they would be putting Canadians' interests first and would not be putting their political nonsense of partisan politics first.

• (1315)

**Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to be in the House today speaking to the bill before us.

Fundamentally, we are talking about Bill C-3, which is a chain migration bill. It is a bill that would allow parents who were not born in Canada to give their children who were not born in Canada citizenship forever and ever. From my perspective, that is not a good thing.

How did we get to this place? Originally, way back when, there was Bill S-245, which was meant to fix one simple thing: the issue of lost Canadians. Then there was a court ruling that happened in Ontario that the federal government chose not to appeal. The Liberals chose to allow the courts to establish the policy of the Government of Canada. I think they were too weak or too scared, I am not sure which, to actually make the policy themselves, so they just said, “Great, we’ll do what the court asks.”

In my opinion, the Liberals should have appealed the ruling and should have made their own decision in terms of what they wanted in the legislation. However, they then introduced Bill C-71 in the last session and forgot about it. They did not act on it in any way, and now here we are with essentially the same bill.

As I said, Bill C-3 is chain migration bill; it would allow people to pass on citizenship to their children indefinitely, whether they were born in Canada or not. The Liberals have actually put one condition on this. They keep talking about the semantics of the kind of method by which people are getting their citizenship, but at the end of the day, it does not really matter; there is a condition, which is the 1,095 days that a person would have to be present in Canada, which we have heard about all day long here.

We are essentially saying that it is fine, but we want to tweak it a bit and add a couple more conditions, which is all this is. Really what we are arguing about in the House today is how many and which conditions. It is not zero conditions; there are some conditions. The government has proposed some, and we are proposing a few more.

We are proposing that we strengthen the connection test a little so that, yes, a person could be here 1,095 days, which do not have to be consecutive but would have to be within a five-year period. We are also proposing making sure that people have either English or French proficiency, that they know the country they are coming to by taking a citizenship test and that they do not have a criminal record.

These are things that we believe are very reasonable and very fair and that should be done. Of course at committee we were able to put forward these common-sense proposals. We received majority support with the help of the Bloc at committee to do this, but now the government, in its incessant desire to break everything, wants to change that again, so here we are now.

Members might ask what the risk is. We are talking about children and other people who probably have a connection, which is quite likely true in many cases. There are people who are very legitimate who are young, under the age of 15 or 16 years old and potentially under the age of five or 10 years. Certainly those people, generally speaking, would be legitimate claimants to citizenship, but we have a very weak system.

The government has broken our immigration system so badly. It has messed up when it comes to asylum and when it comes to losing control of the number of students coming into our country. Everybody knows that; the faults are well known and well documented. However, now we have a government that has completely broken our system, saying, “Trust us. We’ve got this. We know exactly what we are doing.” Well, pardon me if I do not trust the government and if I do not think it has got this, because I do not think it does.

We know that when there is a weak system, there are bad actors in the world who try to take advantage of things, which is exactly what would happen through the proposed system. That is why we proposed some amendments, and I will quickly go through them.

*Government Orders*

First is the time period. The government's first condition that it proposed was that parents would have to spend 1,095 days in Canada before the birth of a child. We think that is fine, except that we want to see a bit of a stronger connection test, because the days could be over quite a span of years. What we are proposing is that the 1,095 non-consecutive days happen within a five-year window. That is what we are proposing, and we think it is very reasonable.

Second, we believe that people who obtain citizenship through this method should be able to speak either French or English. It is a fairly simple requirement; it is not complicated. We require this of all other people who obtain citizenship in our country, so we feel that is a very reasonable request and quite necessary for having a good, solid life in Canada.

The third condition we think should be in the bill is a citizenship test. We need to make sure that the people who are coming to our country actually know about our country, because by definition, these are people who have potentially not spent any time in Canada. We need to know that they understand what it means to be in Canada and what their rights and responsibilities are, just like other people who come to our country.

• (1320)

Finally, the other condition we think is very reasonable and prudent is a security check. We want to make sure that people who are criminals in other countries do not automatically get citizenship in Canada. This seems like common sense. I do not understand why it is so complicated for the government to understand.

There could be person who has been convicted of crimes in other country and then realizes that their parents lived in Canada for 1,095 days before they were born, when their parents were in university or something like that, and who thinks they have a solution: Even though they are wanted for crimes in their own country, they will just go to Canada because their parents could pass on their citizenship. That is what we are trying to avoid, and a simple security check would prevent that from happening.

One other thing that we asked to be included, which I think is very reasonable, is a reporting mechanism so Parliament and therefore Canadians would know how many people were granted citizenship through this method.

I think these are very reasonable things to ask.

There is risk when people can manipulate and abuse a weak system to their advantage. The amendments that would essentially add a few more conditions to the one the Liberals already proposed would mitigate those risks, making the system a little less weak and potentially a little less risky.

One thing I also want to mention is that there would be many young people who would be affected by the legislation, those under the age of 16 years, as I said before. They should be able to fly through the requirements very easily: the time period, languages, the test of Canada and the security screening, which they may be exempt from. Right now we require that only of people who are between the ages of 18 and 54. There would actually be no burden on young people.

That gets back to my original point: We are not after the people who are coming here legitimately. We want to make sure that those people do get the citizenship they are owed. However, we want to make sure that people who do not deserve citizenship, those who are taking advantage of the system, would be subject to some checks, just to make sure we can control and know who is coming into our country.

I know that the NDP is very angry at voters for taking away its party status in the House. That has caused a lot of angst, I am sure, in its ranks and in its members. The member for Vancouver East was very much opposed to the changes made at committee without her being able to be there. I know that she spoke on Friday, and there are a couple of things that I want to make sure she understands.

The first is about consecutive days. The member mentioned that we are proposing that the condition needs to be consecutive days. It does not. It would be 1,095 days within a five-year period. We realize that people do need to have the opportunity to visit their home country for weddings, funerals or different events that happen, and that seems very reasonable. It is not consecutive days; it is just that within a five-year period, we feel there should be a substantial connection to Canada.

The other thing I want to mention briefly is the confusion about who is a visitor to our country. It is pretty clear. As a kid, I grew up in a lovely town on the eastern side of Saskatchewan called Yorkton. My grandparents lived on the exact opposite side of the province in a small town called Herbert, another lovely town in Saskatchewan. As a youth, I spent a lot of time in Herbert, Saskatchewan, but I always considered myself a visitor to Herbert; I never thought I was actually from Herbert or had any kind of substantial connection to Herbert. I grew up in Yorkton, and that was where I spent most of my time.

That is the principle we need to follow. People may have visited Canada a number of times, and that is fine. We welcome visitors. We love it when they spend their money in our country; it is amazing, but we also need to make sure that this does not imply in any way that it makes them entitled to become a citizen of this country. We have to be very clear on what "visitor" means and what it is.

We also have to be careful of the government we have and the now seventh immigration minister we have in the House. We have had seven immigration ministers in 10 years, who have not done their due diligence on bills like the one that is before us. The current minister just took the bill from the last Parliament, which was the bill from the previous one. They just bring the bills along without actually putting some thought and logic into what is going on. That is very dangerous, and we have to be very careful of it.

*Government Orders*

What we are seeing right now is that the old NDP-Liberal coalition is back on. There is a budget coming up next week, and I think what is going on here is that in return for its support of the budget, the NDP has demanded that the Liberals support it on the amendments they want to this bill. That is where we are right now; the NDP-Liberal coalition lives on.

Citizenship has value. We need to make sure that we reinforce that and that we defend that.

• (1325)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of things that come to my mind. First and foremost, the Conservatives seem to not want to recognize that there is a difference in what this legislation would do for someone who immigrates to Canada. When a person immigrates to Canada, the individual becomes a permanent resident and then certain things have to be adhered to before they can become a citizen. For example, they have to be here 1,095 days within a five-year period. This legislation would acknowledge individuals who could or should be entitled to Canadian citizenship.

I am wondering if the member opposite would recognize that there is a difference.

**Brad Redekopp:** Mr. Speaker, I know the member for Winnipeg North is a master of words and likes to speak in all kinds of different ways, but the reality of this is really quite simple. We have a person who is not a Canadian and is obtaining Canadian citizenship one way or another. The member spoke about this method versus that method or another method. It does not really matter. The average Canadian does not understand that anyway, and I do not blame them, because it is a very complicated system.

The reality is that you would have a person without citizenship who gets citizenship. The reality is that the government would impose a condition on that person. We are proposing adding a couple more conditions. That is all. It is a very simple thing, yet the government refuses to consider conditions of criminality, language and knowledge of the country.

That is what we proposed and that is what went through at committee. We would like to see that in the bill.

[*Translation*]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, at the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean, who represents the Bloc Québécois, asked the minister about this issue. He asked how many more people would be granted citizenship as a result of this legislation. The minister was utterly unable to answer or provide a figure.

My question for my Conservative colleague is this: How can this government implement policies whose impact it knows absolutely nothing about?

[*English*]

**Brad Redekopp:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague referred to the member for Lac-Saint-Jean, who is a very good and diligent mem-

ber of the committee. He does very good work and has been very helpful to the committee as a whole.

He asked an excellent question. We and the member for Lac-Saint-Jean asked it of the government as well. We asked how many people this would impact, and the government is incapable of knowing the answer. That is a very scary thing, because if a government does not know the impact of a policy it is making, it is taking chances with something as sensitive and dear to Canadians as citizenship.

We have a government that has no clue what impact this legislation would have and is unable to answer the most basic question of how many people would be impacted, yet it is moving ahead with this legislation. It is pushing it forward, throwing its hands in the air and saying it hopes it is going to be a good piece of legislation. That is a very bad choice.

**Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it was refreshing to hear a speech in this House that was brought down to everyone's understanding and simplified. We understand that very simple amendments were made at committee. We have the committee process for a reason.

I am wondering if the member would give his opinion on why the Liberal government is against simple amendments that would protect the safety of Canadians and the value of Canadian citizenship.

**Brad Redekopp:** Mr. Speaker, trying to understand the reason and logic behind the Liberal government is something I have struggled with the entire six years I have been in Parliament. It is very difficult sometimes to understand the logic behind decisions.

As I just said, the government does not know how many people this bill would affect, yet it is moving ahead with this legislation. It does not understand the potential number of people with criminal records who might come into the country using this new method of obtaining citizenship, yet it proceeds with this method. It does not understand the implications of not having language or the other things that we think are critical in this particular legislation.

The government does not have the ability to think ahead, to anticipate difficulties or to see how someone with dishonest intentions might be able to take advantage of the situation or abuse the system it created. It is unable to see around corners, as some have said.

In my opinion, this is a weak government producing weak legislation.

• (1330)

**Jamil Jivani (Bowmanville—Oshawa North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin my comments about Bill C-3 today by first recognizing the great work done by Quebeckers to shift the conversation about immigration in our country to a more positive direction.

[*Translation*]

I want to congratulate Quebec nationalists. For several years now, Quebeckers have not been afraid to talk about immigration, identity and integration. More needs to be done to improve our immigration system. I thank them for their courage.

*Government Orders*

[English]

One of the Quebecers I would like to acknowledge is a great young man from the beautiful city of Montreal, Mr. Anthony Koch, who took to the pages of the National Post this summer to identify his concerns about an issue that is holding Canada back from having a common-sense conversation about immigration policy. I would like to read some of the words from Mr. Koch for the benefit of those in the House. He wrote:

The fact that my grandparents were immigrants does not mean I must support mass immigration forever. It does not mean I must stand aside while my country becomes unrecognizable. It does not mean I must endorse the strain on schools, hospitals, housing markets and communities that unsustainable immigration levels brings in the name of some imaginary moral debt I never incurred.

I owe nothing to the people who use my heritage as a weapon.

I want to thank Mr. Koch for his words. I would like to highlight his point about how the heritage of the descendants of immigrants is often used by the Liberals as a weapon to wedge us, corner us and make us feel as though we have to agree with their immigration policies. It is immoral, and it is important to note that it is observable in the debates about Bill C-3, formerly known as Bill C-71, in the House.

Members may know I like to do my homework. I combed through the transcripts of the debates on Bill C-3 and found numerous examples of Liberal and NDP MPs making reference to their heritage as immigrants or as the descendant of immigrants, as if that necessitates a certain perspective or position on Bill C-3. Some examples came from the MPs for Vancouver Granville, Kingston and the Islands, Spadina—Harbourfront and Vancouver East, all of whom made reference in the House to their own family heritage or immigration history as if it were relevant to their positions on Bill C-3. That is a textbook example of what Mr. Koch wrote about. It is the tendency of Liberals to weaponize one's heritage against them. I would go so far as to say that it is a textbook example of Liberal racism, which has run amok here in Ottawa.

I would like to explain this further, and I will explain my own family history to provide some contrast.

My father came to this country from Kenya. Someone could make a movie about my father's life. He was born an orphan in Nairobi. He is a Black African man who is very proud of his heritage. He was adopted by an Ismaili family and reorphaned as a teenager, and he had to teach himself how to be a man. He came to this country and worked in hotel restaurants and kitchens. It was hard work and hard labour that took a toll on his body, which one can see in him today. I can assure members that my father did not do all of that hard work so that one day, some smug Liberals in Ottawa could tell his son he has to support Liberal immigration policies and the cheapening of Canadian citizenship.

My grandfather came to this country from Scotland after World War II. He was broke. He had empty pockets. He had not a dollar to his name. He got a good, union job working as a school custodian with the Toronto District School Board. When everyone else went home for the evening, he was still there, working, mopping the floors and cleaning the classrooms so that children had a nice place to learn the next day. I can assure members that he did not mop those floors and clean those classrooms so that one day, some smug

Liberals in Ottawa could tell his grandson he has to support Liberal immigration policies and the cheapening of Canadian citizenship.

• (1335)

My grandma came to this country from Ireland after World War II decimated her neighbourhood in Belfast. She came here and met my grandpa, and together, they raised four children. She helped raise grandbabies. She attended church every Sunday. She loved this country and she loved Jesus Christ. She did not do all that work raising children so that one day, some smug Liberals in Ottawa could tell her grandbaby he has to support Liberal immigration policies and the cheapening of Canadian citizenship.

My point is that my family came here to be part of this country. They came here to be free people, which means that we get to have points of view that are different from the Liberals' on important issues, including immigration and citizenship. We are free to say what we believe is best for the future of this country as equal Canadians. The idea that our heritage would be used against us to push us around and make us feel like we have to endorse their broken policies, which have led to public trust and confidence in the immigration system being the lowest they have ever been in my lifetime, is wild.

We reject the weaponization of our heritage. We reject Liberal racism. They can kick rocks. I do not want to hear it. It is a new day in the House of Commons. It is a new day in this country, where people from all diverse religious and cultural backgrounds can stand with confidence and say they reject Liberal immigration policies. We do not agree with them. We do not agree with what they have done to the system.

We are building a diverse and beautiful movement. In my home community of Bowmanville—Oshawa North, people from all religious and cultural backgrounds are coming together and unifying in opposition to what the Liberals have done to immigration in this country. People who grew up speaking English at home and people who learned English much later on in life are building bridges and talking to each other about what has gone wrong with immigration policy in this country.

The Liberals will pay lip service to that and pretend they are making changes, yet we see what is happening in the House right now with Bill C-3. They are doubling down on the very irresponsible and unsustainable approach to immigration that has gotten us to this point. It is a serious problem, and they make light of it.

They think they can tell us, because we are the descendants of immigrants, that we have to line up behind them. No. That is not happening. My grandparents and my father did not work this hard so that we could be pushed around by these guys, and it is not going to happen anymore.

*Government Orders*

The point I would like to reiterate is that we have very serious problems in the immigration system. If the Liberals want to assure the public they can have trust and confidence that the Liberals can fix the problems, doubling down on the same direction is the wrong way to go. Putting forward legislation and not being able to assure the Canadian people how many individuals will be entering our country as a result of it is them doubling down on the very same broken approach. They are putting forward legislation, and they cannot tell us how many new people would come into our country, despite the overcrowded hospitals, not having enough houses and enough jobs, and traffic in the GTA getting worse and worse every day.

We are supposed to sit back and accept that the very same people who broke the system want to continue going in the wrong direction, and we are not supposed to say anything about it because we are the descendants of immigrants. No. That is unacceptable.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge the good work done by Conservative members on the immigration committee here in Ottawa to present some common-sense amendments to try to salvage the bill and instill some sensibility into a piece of legislation that is horribly flawed. The bill reflects, once again, that the Liberals have learned nothing from the fact that public trust and confidence in our immigration system are at the lowest they have been in my lifetime.

• (1340)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think I will be given enough time to respond fully to the statements that have been made.

I can tell the member that we had an election not that long ago, during which the Prime Minister made a commitment to deal with the immigration issue. That means stabilizing it. We are well on the way to doing that.

There is a reason we are at this stage. Yes, the federal government has to take some responsibility, but so do post-secondary facilities and other stakeholders, like the provinces and so forth. It is not just one government at fault here. The member tries to give the impression that we in the government cannot reflect on our heritage and sees that in a negative way, and then he goes ahead and reflects on his own heritage. There are some inconsistencies.

Will the Conservative Party support Bill C-3?

**Jamil Jivani:** Mr. Speaker, my Conservative colleagues on the immigration committee put forward a series of amendments asking the Liberal government to make better decisions about immigration policy. The ball is now in the Liberals' court. Are they going to instill some common sense in the legislation or continue doubling down on the very approach that has broken the immigration system we have today?

The member wants to bring up that I referenced my heritage. Let me reaffirm to the member what the point is. We cannot tell, even the Liberals, who love to believe they can, what someone thinks based on what they look like or where they come from. Two people can be descended from immigrants and have a debate about immigration policy.

The Liberals do not get to ascribe to us what we are going to say and believe despite our heritage in this country. We are free people.

[*Translation*]

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I participated in the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration meetings on Bill C-3. We heard from expert witnesses, and we carefully analyzed their testimony. Amendments to Bill C-3 were proposed, debated and supported by the majority of committee members.

Now all of a sudden the Liberals are using some sort of procedural tactic to try to undo, in the House, the amendments that were voted on and supported by the majority of committee members.

What does my colleague think this says about the Liberals' view of the rigorous work we do in committee? That is part of our job as parliamentarians. What does this say about the Liberals' view of democracy and committee work?

[*English*]

**Jamil Jivani:** Mr. Speaker, I wish I could respond to my hon. colleague in French. I am working on it. I will get there at some point.

I agree with my colleague across the way that the Liberal government pretends that it wants to work with people. It says all the time that it just wants to work with us, but it accuses the opposition parties of being obstructionist. We engage in the process that our constituents voted for us to come here and engage in. We present amendments and they pass through committee, yet the Liberals still say no.

It is a sign. They are the obstructionists. The Liberals are the obstructionists here in Ottawa, and their approach to immigration is a perfect example. They pretend they want to change, and they go to their friends in the media and the media amplifies the message that they want to change direction. Look at the numbers. They speak for themselves. The Liberals have broken the system and they do not want to fix it.

**Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, at a time when our immigration system is already stretched and faith in its fairness is fading, Bill C-3 tells the world that one can be Canadian without ever truly living here. Canadian citizenship is one of the most valuable things in the world. It is something that generations have worked hard to earn and honour, but Bill C-3 would give automatic citizenship to children born abroad, even when their parents have spent little time living in Canada. We used to have an immigration system that was the envy of the world, one rooted in fairness, contribution and community, but the bill risks turning citizenship into a paper privilege rather than a lived commitment.

Before granting citizenship, should we not expect at least some genuine connection and some proof of interest in, effort for or belonging to the country we all call home?

*Government Orders*

● (1345)

**Jamil Jivani:** Mr. Speaker, yes, we should expect a real connection to the country before issuing citizenship to people. That is a bare-minimum expectation that all Canadians from all different cultures, religions and backgrounds can agree to. It is one that is now under attack. A consensus is under attack by the Liberal government. It should be ashamed of itself.

[*Translation*]

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a few months ago, I spoke to Bill C-3, a reiteration of Bill C-71, and Senate Bill S-245, intended to correct a historic injustice by granting citizenship to Canadians whose files had fallen through the cracks.

I talked about children, born abroad to Canadian parents, who had lost their citizenship because of changes in federal rules or based on other conditions that seemed to me difficult to justify at the time. Basically, what all these bills tell us is that we need to restore citizenship to everyone who lost their status because of exceedingly complex and often unfair provisions of previous Canadian legislation.

In fact, Bill C-3 incorporates all of the amendments proposed to Bill C-71, which sought to correct injustice and errors in the Citizenship Act.

The bill responds to an Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruling declaring that the first-generation limit on citizenship applicable to the children of Canadians born abroad is unconstitutional. The government then had six months to amend the law. Bill C-3 was introduced as a safeguard, because Bill S-245 and even Bill C-71 unfortunately could not proceed for partisan reasons.

On this point, I would like to reiterate the following. Despite my occasional differences of opinion with my colleagues from other parties in the House, as we all know, I am not in the habit of engaging in partisanship. I even think that being non-partisan often allows me to do my job well for the people of Lac-Saint-Jean, who, since 2019, have allowed me to proudly represent them in the House of Commons. In that sense, and without wanting to be partisan, I still believe that we must at least assess the overall impact of bills such as this on the public.

Let us come back to the matter at hand today. Although some believed it was 500 to 600, IRCC's initial estimates at the time were that between 100 and 200 people had still not regained their citizenship.

In committee, it quickly became apparent that the number of Canadians stripped of their citizenship was difficult to assess. Various publications, including that of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, came to the same conclusion. According to the Minister of Immigration, who was there in committee, it would be impossible—that was the word she used—to estimate the number.

Times like these demonstrate the importance of the parliamentary work done in House of Commons committees. As parliamentarians, we must be thorough and mindful of the impact our decisions have. The Bloc Québécois has always worked that way, and it will continue to do so.

Before continuing, I would like to confirm that, as was the case with Bills C-71 and S-245, the Bloc Québécois agrees with Bill C-3 as amended by the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. My colleagues and I have done work on this bill that may have been perceived as harsh, but after gathering some information and analyzing the facts, it was quite obviously necessary.

In particular, the bill was amended in committee to ensure that the requirements for passing on citizenship by descent to second-generation Canadians born abroad are identical to the requirements for naturalized citizens. Bill C-3 calls for citizenship to be granted to children as long as one of the parents spends a minimum of 1,095 days in Canada over an indefinite period before the child's birth.

To ensure consistency across federal laws, we supported an amendment calling for this 1,095-day requirement to be met within a five-year period, as is the case for someone seeking citizenship through the immigration process.

We also supported an amendment that will require people who are over 18 at the time of their citizenship application to comply with additional requirements. They would have to meet the same requirements as those imposed on naturalized citizens, namely, to pass a language test, to pass a citizenship knowledge test and to undergo a security assessment.

Furthermore, Bill C-3 will now hold the federal government accountable to some degree. There can never be too much accountability where the federal government is concerned. We will require the tabling of a report containing annual statistics on the number of citizenships granted under this legislation, which seems perfectly normal and understandable to me.

We sincerely believe that these amendments address the court's ruling that we determine what is meant by a real connection to Canada. Since everyone should be considered equal before the law, replicating the naturalization requirements for second-generation children born abroad establishes that the same rules apply to everyone.

● (1350)

The amendments brought forward by the government at this stage are problematic. We know for a fact that they aim to restore amended clauses to their original form, except for the one about the three requirements, in other words, the security, language and citizenship test for persons between 18 and 55 years of age.

In addition, one insidious aim of the amendments is to overturn the careful work done by a majority of committee members to achieve this outcome. In that respect, the Bloc Québécois demands respect for the work of committee members. It blows me away to think that the House needs to be told to respect the work of committee members. For that reason, we are going to oppose the amendments proposed by the government at report stage.

*Government Orders*

As the House knows, I was in favour of Bills S-245 and C-71. I am obviously in favour of quickly passing Bill C-3 to meet the court's requirements. However, that does not mean I am in favour of shoddy work. I am talking about swift but effective adoption. I am talking about adoption that is the result of rigorous work that has allowed the bill to follow the usual steps, including committee review and the tabling of a report in the House. I am talking about adoption that respects the decision of the majority of members of the House and the important work of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

I find it a shame when I read amendments like the ones proposed today. I believe they reflect a lack of consideration for the work that is done at committee. As parliamentarians, we need to tackle the issues that matter most to our constituents with a strong sense of duty and without partisanship. At the Bloc Québécois, that is what we always do.

The Chair knows better than anyone in the House that when we step into this place, our goal is always to work for our constituents, not for anyone else. We in the Bloc Québécois are here for Quebecers who care about Quebec's future, and not just when it is time to cater to our electoral ambitions. People know that. They saw the work we did in committee on this bill. They heard the evasive answers from the Department of Citizenship and Immigration officials when we asked them questions in committee.

I sincerely hope that the efforts and energy that my colleagues and I have put into studying this bill will be given due consideration and respect. I want to reiterate that citizenship status must be equal for everyone, and Canadian laws must be consistent.

Despite what my colleagues opposite may think, the amendments adopted by a majority of the members of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration are consistent with that approach.

I look forward to questions.

[*English*]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if we were to apply the same principle the member is arguing for right now to all legislation that goes before the standing committee, we would not be able to bring in any amendments to legislation. All legislation has to go to committee. What is important to recognize in this debate is that the Conservatives and the Bloc did not work with members who do not have official party status, and as a direct result, amendments were brought forward without them.

Does the member not believe that ultimately the majority of members who make up the House should be the ones who determine the ultimate fate of legislation that gets out of the committee stage?

[*Translation*]

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Mr. Speaker, I would say that, true to form, the member for Winnipeg North is not acting in good faith, and that is putting it politely.

The amendments introduced by the government are a direct attack on the amendments that were voted on in committee. They

simply undo the amendments that were voted on in committee. However, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer's remarks in committee, we are not talking about 500, 600, 700, or 1,000 people who would be affected by the bill, but rather 115,000 to 150,000 people. The Minister of Immigration told us that it is impossible to estimate.

We have worked hard to set guidelines to ensure that our work is thorough. This bill is important to people who have experienced injustice. What the government is doing now is simply joining forces with another party that does not sit on the committee and is not there to vote on amendments.

Unfortunately, the work done in committee is being taken lightly by this group, which is always saying it wants to collaborate.

● (1355)

[*English*]

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague opposite often talks about the importance of language rights in Canada. I note that one of the amendments passed at committee stage was an amendment to ensure that people who are obtaining citizenship by descent through this very terribly crafted bill by the government would be subject to the same language requirements as somebody who is seeking citizenship by naturalization. This is for adults.

Can the member talk about why he supported this amendment in the context of why it is so important to ensure that people seeking Canadian citizenship have an adequate knowledge of one of Canada's official languages?

[*Translation*]

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Mr. Speaker, this amendment is very important. Obviously, we want to demonstrate that a person who obtains citizenship has a special connection to Canada. That is the first thing. I also think that, when someone of legal age is seeking to acquire citizenship, requiring them to speak one of the two official languages should not even be a question. There are countries where knowing the language is mandatory in order to obtain citizenship, so I believe the work that we did was tough, but perfectly reasonable.

Again, why do people even need to be compelled to learn the national language, which is French in Quebec, before becoming a citizen living in Quebec? At the Bloc Québécois, we take things further. We think that when someone has an address in Quebec and they want to obtain citizenship, they should be fluent in French. As things stand, in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, it is not even a requirement. A person need only to be fluent in English to become a Canadian citizen, even if they live in Quebec. It makes no sense because French is the official language of Quebec.

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague was quite right to point out the factor of the unknown. As the minister said, we have no idea how many new citizens this law will create. In this context, it appears that the committee was wise to ask for a report to be tabled in the House or, at the very least, in committee, to indicate how many people would be affected every year by this new law.

I would like to know whether my colleague sees this as important and whether he heard the government say that it would honour that request.

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Mr. Speaker, it is ridiculous that the government will not tell us how many people are currently affected by this law and will obtain citizenship. Worse still, after this bill passes, the government does not want to tell us how many people will be affected year after year. The government is allergic to accountability, no matter what the issue is. It is the opposite of Midas, who turns everything he touches into gold. The government turns everything into a word I will not say.

This government has a real problem with being accountable to the people. No one understands why, since it is the government's duty to be accountable to the public. Every time the government is asked for a report or accountability, it buries its head in the sand like an ostrich. This government is truly shameful when it comes to being accountable to the people.

---

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### CANADIAN FARMERS

**Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the vibrant colours of autumn signal the end of harvest, I want to take a moment to recognize the incredible farmers in Kitchener—Conestoga and across our country, whose dedication helps feed us all.

From the fields of Wellesley and Wilmot to the barns and greenhouses of Woolwich, farmers work tirelessly, feeding our families, fuelling our economy and stewarding the land with care and resilience.

While the fall harvest marks a seasonal milestone for many, the work of farming never truly stops. Whether it is planning, caring for livestock or managing operations, our farmers continue their vital work year-round. Therefore, I thank all our farmers for their hard work, their resilience and their deep care for the land and for us. They make Kitchener—Conestoga proud and Canada strong.

\* \* \*

● (1400)

### RECOGNITION OF VETERANS

**Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this weekend the Billy Bishop Museum hosted the 25th annual Honouring Our Local Veterans ceremony.

To date, 230 local veterans have been honoured. This year, 11 brave men and women were recognized for their service and their sacrifice.

The following are from World War I: Private Percy James Barber, wounded at Vimy Ridge, and Lance Corporal Arthur Simpson Martin, MM, with the RCD.

The following are those from World War II who were killed in action: Private Benjamin Roy Ashkewe, Sergeant Howard Arnold

### Statements by Members

Jones, Lieutenant James Russel Martin, Private Leslie McGregor and Flying Officer Howard Weaver.

The following are those who served but returned home: Corporal Margaret Ruth Ellis, in the RCAF Women's Division, and Sergeant Major William Alexander Spears of the Perth Regiment.

The following are the more recent veterans: Warrant Officer Allan Johnson of the RCR, with tours in Kosovo and Afghanistan, and Chief Warrant Officer Chris Pawliw from the Grey and Simcoe Foresters, with tours in Croatia, Sierra Leone and Afghanistan.

Our veterans are incredible men and women who have served our country and deserve to be remembered for their sacrifices and their contributions to Canada.

Pro patria. Lest we forget.

\* \* \*

### GORDON GRANT

**Wade Grant (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to tell Parliament that I have a lot to celebrate this year. However, my family came together in mourning this summer. My 91-year-old uncle, Gordon Grant, passed away. He was the oldest member of our family.

He comes from a unique background. My grandfather Hong Tim Hing immigrated from China. My grandmother Agnes Grant was a Musqueam member. Gordon was the first mixed Chinese-Musqueam person in our community.

At the age of 20 years old, he became a father to my dad because their father passed away. I never got to meet him.

I know he is a man on whose shoulders I firmly stand today. I would not be who I am without his strong will and determination. He was able to raise five children of his own.

He allowed me to be a proud to be a Canadian of Chinese and Musqueam ancestry. He allowed me to be proud to be a Canadian. We would all be better off with more Uncle Gordies in this country.

[Member spoke in Hul'q'umi'num]

[English]

*Statements by Members***SEALING INDUSTRY**

**Jonathan Rowe (Terra Nova—The Peninsulas, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, whether we talk about the farmers struggling with the canola trade, the steel companies facing tariffs or the auto workers losing 3,000 jobs to the U.S.A., it seems as though all the Liberals are doing is helping Trump build a wall on trade barriers. They never mentioned the trade barriers on our sealing industry in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The seal overpopulation in Atlantic Canada is killing our ecosystem. According to the DFO, a sustainable harvest is around 250,000, yet only 30,000 are being killed each year.

Here are the facts: Each seal eats 11 pounds per day. Collectively, they eat 9.7 billion pounds per year. The entire Atlantic fishery lands less than 2.5 billion pounds.

We need to restore balance to our ecosystem. We need to feed Canadians. We need a Prime Minister who will remove the global trade barriers for seal harvesters in our country.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]**HUGUETTE VEILLEUX**

**Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate Women's History Month, I want to pay tribute to the outstanding and often unnoticed contribution of one exceptional woman.

Born during World War II, she raised seven children while working alongside her husband day after day on the family farm in the Lower St. Lawrence. Despite her demanding and exhausting days, she found the strength and courage to sit as a board member for a major insurance company for over 26 years, from 1986 to 2012. I need not remind the House that, back then, the number of women sitting on the boards of major corporations could be counted on one hand.

Only recently did her children fully realize that their mother, with remarkable discretion and unwavering determination, had helped blaze new trails for women on the path to a more egalitarian society. Her name was Huguette Veilleux.

I want my mother to know that I am proud to be her son.

\* \* \*

[*English*]**CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS**

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, lately, there have been a lot of terse words said about Canadian-American relations, so today I would like to try something a little different. For generations, Canada and the U.S. have shared the world's longest undefended border, fought together on the battlefield against evil, maintained strong trade ties and joined our nations through marriages such as mine.

The peace, freedom and prosperity we have shared has helped to bring stability to the world. To continue, we must each safeguard our economies and societies through smart policies, strong militaries and robust protections for our democratic institutions, as well

as, frankly, seeking to understand the complexities that each of our nations faces, our hopes and our challenges.

I will do my part by saying to Master Sergeant Jeffrey Scott Garner, Sr., my husband, a proud American to the core, that I love him. I thank him for loving me as I stand for my people while also providing me with important perspectives about his nation.

May we all continue to strive for prosperity and peace between our nations. The free world is counting on us to get it right.

\* \* \*

● (1405)

**BUFFALO SABRES PLAYER**

**Mike Kelloway (Sydney—Glace Bay, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Colten Ellis of River Denys, Cape Breton. Recently, Colten made his NHL debut with the Buffalo Sabres, in which he turned aside 26 shots, earned his first NHL win and was named the first star of the game in Buffalo's 4-2 victory over the Red Wings.

Colten's rise from Cape Breton's local rinks to the NHL speaks to his incredible determination and incredible talent, as well as the community that has been behind him from day one. He is showing young athletes across Cape Breton that anything is possible.

On behalf of all Cape Breton hockey fans, I extend heartfelt congratulations to Colten and his family. We are proud of him, and we will be cheering for him every step of the way.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]**125TH ANNIVERSARY OF CREDIT UNION**

**Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it being the 125th anniversary of Desjardins Group, it is an honour for me, as a resident of Lévis, to pay tribute to Alphonse and Dorimène Desjardins, founders of what has become the largest co-operative financial group in North America and one of Quebec's largest private employers.

The first caisse populaire, the Caisse populaire de Lévis, was founded in December 1900, when 132 people signed the founding social pact. Since then, Quebecers have not wavered in their commitment to this institution. With some seven million members and branches throughout the regions, Desjardins is now a key player in Quebec's economic development, as well as an important player elsewhere in Canada and beyond our borders.

I applaud the vision of Alphonse and Dorimène, their enduring values of justice and solidarity, and all the employees who, over the decades, have made Desjardins a co-operative that inspires immense pride. I also applaud Denis Dubois, president and CEO of Desjardins Group, who is with us today in Ottawa.

\* \* \*

#### 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF CREDIT UNION

**Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this year we are celebrating the 125th anniversary of the pride of Quebec: Desjardins Group. Founded in Lévis in 1900 by Alphonse Desjardins, it was the quiet revolution before the Quiet Revolution.

While anglophone banks turned their backs on French Canadians and predatory lending was wreaking havoc, Alphonse Desjardins drew inspiration from the European co-operative model to create a fund for and by the people.

Over the years, credit unions have helped our people, farmers, labourers, gain access to credit, in addition to participating in the birth and growth of several local gems such as Sico, Vachon, Cascades and, of course, Cirque du Soleil.

Today, Desjardins has deep roots in our regions, our villages and our towns. It is a symbol of determination and collective success that reflects the entrepreneurial spirit of the Quebec people.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I invite the House to join me in wishing a fantastic 125th anniversary to Desjardins Group. I raise my glass to 125 more years and beyond.

\* \* \*

#### HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS NIGHT

**Natilien Joseph (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 27th edition of Homelessness Awareness Night in Longueuil, and the theme was “solidarity for greater dignity”.

This annual event is organized by the Table Itinérance Rive-Sud, bringing together residents, community organizations and institutions to raise awareness about homelessness, challenge prejudices and promote solidarity.

I would like to commend the exceptional work of Gilles Beaugard, the volunteer and community organization coordinator. I would also like to thank everyone who courageously shared their lived experiences. Their commitment reminds us that no one should be left homeless and hopeless.

Homelessness is not inevitable, but addressing it requires compassion, collaboration and action. Together, let us build communities where everyone can live with dignity.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### THE BUDGET

**Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of the Liberal government, Canada has gone from having the world's most prosperous middle class to a country of empty bank accounts, empty refrigerators and unaffordable homes. That is why

#### Statements by Members

Conservatives demand an affordable budget, one that cuts the hidden taxes on food, like the industrial carbon tax, the plastics ban and the fuel regulations; one that cuts taxes on work, housing construction, investment and energy, like income taxes and the capital gains tax; and one that stops the inflation tax, the cruellest tax of all, by keeping the deficit under Justin Trudeau's staggering \$42.7 billion and by reining in out-of-control spending on bureaucracy, outside consultants, false asylum claimants and especially corporate welfare.

The government has chased half a trillion investment dollars out of Canada and has taken Canada to the bottom of the G7 and the OECD in per capita growth. That is why Conservatives demand that the budget contain a complete reversal of the lost Liberal decade and puts Canadians first.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

#### SERVING SCHOLARS PROGRAM

**Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, visiting Ottawa today are two remarkable individuals who founded the University of Guelph's serving scholars program: Dr. John Walsh and Lieutenant Darren Sargent of Guelph's 11th Field Artillery Regiment.

For eight years, the serving scholars program has provided academic accommodations and experiential learning opportunities while fostering a campus culture that values military service. It enables Canadian Armed Forces members to stay in the Reserve Force, grow professionally and gain knowledge that strengthens both their military careers and academic success. Serving scholars reminds us of a simple truth: Those who wear the uniform can also wear the cap and gown, because those who serve our nation deserve every chance to succeed in the classroom.

On behalf of the Parliament of Canada, I thank Dr. Walsh, newly promoted Lieutenant Sargent and all past and current students who have served and studied through the serving scholars program. Their dedication to Canada in uniform, in the classroom and in the community makes us very proud. I thank them for their service.

\* \* \*

#### AFFORDABILITY SUPPORTS

**Kelly DeRidder (Kitchener Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, affordability in the Waterloo region has never been worse. Since 2019, monthly visits to Canada's food banks have more than doubled. In the Waterloo region alone, one in eight families is currently accessing food assistance programs just to feed their families, spending \$1,350 a month on groceries alone while housing prices are increasing, yet the Liberal government has failed to deliver.

### Oral Questions

Promises were made, but the supports have never come. Let me quote the Prime Minister: “We will need to do things previously thought impossible at speeds we haven’t seen in generations.” This was during the election. Let me quote him now: “it will take some sacrifices and it will take some time.”

Canadians have sacrificed enough. We need leadership that listens, acts and empowers. It is time to stop rewarding delay and start demanding results, because in the Waterloo region, unaffordability is not just a talking point; it is real.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF CREDIT UNION

**Hon. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier—Gloucester, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in tribute to a remarkable Canadian who once worked right here in the House of Commons as a stenographer. As he listened to debates in the House, Alphonse Desjardins grew aware of the problem of access to credit and the devastating impact of usurious loans.

He undertook a vast study on the co-operative model. Over the course of his research and discussions with numerous European co-operatives, he adapted this model to the context of the day and opened the first credit union in Lévis. Over the past 125 years, Desjardins Group has evolved into the largest financial co-operative in North America, and we owe it a huge debt of gratitude.

I would like to thank Alphonse and Dorimène Desjardins, who left us an essential institution. Desjardins is known across North America for financial solidarity, high capitalization and an unwavering commitment to its 7.8 million members and customers across the country. I also want to give a nod to Denis Dubois, the new president and CEO of Desjardins Group, and wish Desjardins another 125 years of building for the future.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### FOOD AFFORDABILITY

**Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, more than two million visits were made to food banks in March, with twice as many Canadians needing help to eat than in 2019. In a nation as rich in resources as we are, this is unacceptable.

Nearly one in five people who turn to a food bank is employed. They go to work every day and still cannot afford groceries. One third are children. Seniors are showing up in record numbers. Food banks are doing everything they can, but they are being pushed beyond their limits. They are spending more than twice what they did just a few years ago to keep shelves stocked.

Recent reporting shows that grocery prices in Newfoundland and Labrador rose about 4% last year. That may sound small, but for families already stretched thin, it means they go without. In Stephenville, Catherine told my office she buys only what is on sale and that fresh fruit is a luxury. She grows vegetables so she can eat. She does everything right and still falls behind every month.

The time for action is now. Canadians deserve more than excuses.

• (1415)

#### WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

**Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, October is Women's History Month, and it is not over yet. Join me in celebrating all the amazing women and girls across the country, women past and present who have made groundbreaking discoveries in medicine, pioneered innovations in AI, championed in public service and so much more.

On this side of the House, we invest in women's prosperity. We have contributed \$7 billion through the women entrepreneurship strategy to support over 400,000 women in launching and scaling up their businesses. On this side of the House, we invest in women's safety. We have contributed over \$539 million through the national action plan to end gender-based violence to better protect women and end the cycle of violence. On this side of the House, we invest in women's leadership. Women make up 40% of our Liberal team in Parliament, and we have the largest women's caucus in Canadian history.

We know that when we invest in women, Canada thrives.

---

## ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

#### THE ECONOMY

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Food Banks Canada released its HungerCount 2025 report today, which shows a 100% increase in the number of people who have to rely on food banks in Canada since the Liberals came to power.

Last year, 39% of the population experienced food insecurity; 53% skipped a meal; 34% went an entire day without eating and 82% of households did not have enough to eat because of the Liberals' inflationary policies.

How many meals will Canadians have to sacrifice because of this Prime Minister's costly budget?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Food Banks Canada has identified four key areas that it says will help address the issue of hunger in Canada. This is a persistent problem that should not exist, but one that we are fighting hard to address. The areas to focus on include benefits for people with disabilities, providing dental care, offering meal programs in schools and supporting the national housing strategy. These are all programs that the Conservatives voted against.

The Leader of the Opposition raises this issue and then votes against any initiative that helps the most disadvantaged people. Shame on him.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am going to paraphrase what Food Banks Canada said in its Hunger Count report. It took decades to reach one million visits to food banks in a month, but just half a decade to more than double that.

Let us talk about the Liberals' programs. They have been in power for 10 years and there are now 700,000 children who need food banks. The Liberals' programs feed bureaucracy, not children.

Will they force Canadians to sacrifice even more meals with their—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Secretary of State for Children and Youth.

**Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know that Canadians are facing challenges. That is why our government is investing in Canadian families to help them get ahead. This report underscores the help that families receive through the national school food program. We are making it permanent.

We are easing the pressure on families through our investments in dental care, child care services and the Canada child benefit.

According to this report, these measures are essential for taking the pressure off families.

[*English*]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Food Banks Canada released its report today, "Hunger-Count 2025", showing that the number of Canadians relying on a food bank has more than doubled since the Liberal government took office. It shows that 39% of the population experienced food insecurity, 82% did not have enough to eat, 34% went an entire day without eating, 53% missed a meal to afford something else and 28% went hungry at least once a week. Now the Prime Minister says that Canadians will have to make even more sacrifices.

How many meals will Canadians have to sacrifice for yet another costly Liberal budget?

• (1420)

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is good at throwing all of this stuff out. What he is not good at is reading what the groups on the ground have to say. Of course, there are too many people living in poverty in Canada, but there are significant initiatives being put in

place by the government, opposed by the Leader of the Opposition and his party, that were systematically evoked in the report from Food Banks Canada today.

We support these key assistance programs for Canadians. He votes against them and then dares to get up and criticize us for putting in place support for the weakest Canadians.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, their programs do not feed kids. They feed bureaucracy, consultants, lobbyists and Liberal insiders. If members want to question that, 700,000 kids are lined up at food banks every single month.

Let me quote from the report: "It took decades to reach one million visits in a month, and it has now taken half a decade to more than double that.... These are not outliers. This is Canada's new normal."

The more the government spends, the more things cost. How many meals will Canadian kids have to sacrifice for yet another costly Liberal budget?

**Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's largest food bank in Toronto, the Daily Bread Food Bank, is asking that the national school food program be made permanent through legislation. We are delivering this. It is asking because the program helps provide nutritious meals to 400,000 children at school. The Conservative Party voted against this.

The members opposite will soon have an opportunity to do the right thing for their constituents and make school food permanent. We urge them to do so.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal programs feed bureaucracy, lobbyists, consultants and insiders, but they do not feed kids. Children cannot eat Liberal press releases or Liberal photo ops. Mothers cannot fill shopping carts with Liberal boasting.

Canadians need food. Right now, after 10 years of Liberal government, there are 2.2 million Canadians lined up at food banks, 700,000 of them kids. A third are in families that work but whose paycheques are vaporized by Liberal taxes and inflation.

How many meals will Canadians have to sacrifice for the next costly Liberal budget?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition seems to flat out ignore the fact that the government is focused on affordability. We are focused on affordable housing, which reports outline is a critical driver for affordable food. We are taking action. Look at the trajectory we are on right now. Mortgage rates are coming down and average rents are coming down, according to the Parliamentary budget office.

We are seeing progress, but we are not stopping there. Build Canada Homes will be in this budget, \$13 billion of which the opposition can vote for, for affordable housing.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, is their focus affordability?

Here are the facts from the HungerCount report: 78% of food banks had to buy more food than normal because they were running out and not collecting enough donations. One quarter of food banks ran out of food while there were still people lined up waiting for something to eat. We now have nearly a third of Canadians going hungry at least once a week. This sounds like something out of the Great Depression, and the Prime Minister has the audacity to say Canadians should sacrifice even more.

How many meals will his costly budget force Canadians to sacrifice?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I take it from the question from the leader of the official opposition that he will support budget 2025, where we make the school food program permanent, where we double down on jobs for young Canadians and where we invest in skills training for the skilled trades professionals of the future.

I just announced that, in the budget, personal support workers will receive a tax credit of \$1,100 a year. We are putting money and support in the hands of Canadians. That is why they trust us.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**FINANCE**

**Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government pointed fingers at the opposition again this past weekend, complaining that it will not have enough support to pass its budget. As a friendly reminder, the people elected a minority government. That means that voters wanted the government to work with the opposition parties and reach agreements. The government can come to an agreement with the Conservatives, with us or with independent members.

Instead of complaining and threatening an election, when will the government get to work?

• (1425)

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, of all the criticisms that can be levelled at the government, accusing us of not working must be one of the most far-fetched.

That being said, there are 44 Quebec members on this side of the House who are working very hard to convey the needs of their communities, the demands of their constituents and the real needs on the ground in Quebec. It seems to me that the Bloc Québécois, with its 22 members, is having a hard time accepting that. This is a minority government, but—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Saint-Jean.

**Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have forgotten what it even means to work together for the common good. They are telling us to vote for their budget even though they have completely ignored Quebec's needs. Now they are shocked to be told that they need to get to work.

One week remains before November 4. The Liberals are well aware of our demands concerning health care, seniors, housing, access to home ownership, infrastructure and repayment of the \$814 million that was stolen from Quebeckers.

The real question is, do they even want our support?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think I am going to ask you to help me because I am having a very hard time understanding the Bloc Québécois's position.

A meeting was held between the leader of the Bloc Québécois, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and me. The Bloc Québécois presented us with a series of demands and then said that it would not vote in favour of the budget. I have a hard time understanding that.

Are the Bloc members ready to negotiate? If so, we are ready to negotiate. If not, then they are not ready to negotiate, but they cannot just sit on the fence like that.

**Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals met with party leaders about the budget after it had already been written. They did not talk to Quebeckers either. There were no pre-budget consultations. No witnesses were heard in committee. After a year and a half without a budget, the Liberals worked alone, not even meeting with a single stakeholder from Quebec's various social and economic groups. Now they are surprised when we tell them that they are not meeting Quebeckers' needs.

Contrary to what they say, the Liberals know what they need to do to get our support. The real question is, do they actually want us to support their budget?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, six months ago, Canadians elected a new government with a mandate to undertake major projects and initiatives in Quebec and elsewhere, to respond to the needs of different groups, to engage with communities, to move projects forward and to create opportunities for our young people throughout Quebec and Canada.

Here is the real question: Will the Bloc Québécois trigger a Christmas 2025 election, yes or no?

\* \* \*

[English]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Daily Bread Food Bank and the North York Harvest Food Bank in Toronto just released their annual report. It is called “Who’s Hungry”, and it seems like the answer to that question is “nearly everyone”. There have been 2.2 million visits in a single month. It took decades to hit one million and only half a decade under the Liberals to double it to more than two million. It found that 82% of households reported they “did not have enough food to eat” this year. The majority said this was because of the cost of living. Every dollar the government spends simply drives up food prices.

It is over four million visits in Toronto. How many more people do the Liberals want visiting next year?

**Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government has taken, and continues to take, real action that supports the people of Canada. We have instituted the national food program. We have instituted the Canadian dental care program. We have instituted a number of things that help Canadians, whereas the Conservatives cannot be trusted to help anyone. They use this as a speaking point instead of really caring about Canadians and whether they have the resources they need.

These programs help seniors across the country and ensure they have what they need to retire with dignity, whereas the Conservatives push the retirement age higher with every vote.

**Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if any of those programs worked, there would not be over 700,000 kids in line at food banks. Make food cheaper.

Instead, the Liberals doubled the deficit and sent food bank usage up 360% in five years in Toronto. Students make up a quarter of those visits to food banks. Just last week, the Prime Minister lectured them all about making sacrifices. Well, they have already sacrificed home ownership and good-paying jobs. Now he is asking them to sacrifice food.

What sacrifices will they need to make to stop the Prime Minister's out-of-control spending?

● (1430)

**Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the report invoked also clearly states that to tackle these challenges, we need to strengthen supports for families. It specifically mentions delivering school food, dental care, child care and affordable housing at scale.

Conservative MPs have voted against each of these measures. In fact, the Conservative MP for Central Newfoundland called the national school food program “garbage”, even though it is already feeding 4,000 kids in his home province.

We are focused on solutions and on delivering for Canadian families.

**Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington—Tyendinaga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, food banks were meant for emergencies, not everyday survival, yet more Canadians rely on them each month just to eat. Families are working harder but falling further behind as groceries soar and paycheques shrink. This is not about generosity. It is about failure. As Food Banks Canada CEO Kirstin Beardsley warns, there were 2.2 million food bank visits in a single month. The longer the Liberals ignore the reality on the ground the deeper the crisis becomes.

When will the Liberal government realize its inflationary deficits are driving Canadians to the food bank?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I assume the member of Parliament opposite was listening to my colleague when she was quoting Food Banks Canada about what needs to happen next, which is making the school nutrition program permanent, investing in affordable housing and ensuring people have the supports they need to live a comfortable life, including affordable child care and dental care.

That is what we are going to do, and we sure hope the Conservatives do not vote against Canadians again.

**Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington—Tyendinaga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we keep sounding the alarm, but it feels as though no one on that side is listening.

Families are stretched thin and communities are breaking under the weight of rising costs. One food bank executive said it plainly: Housing and food costs are the greatest contributors to the increase in their services. Costs for basic living continue to rise while the money coming in does not.

When will the government finally hear the voices of Canadians and stop letting hidden taxes, packaging taxes and the industrial carbon tax drive families to the food bank?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, the member opposite connected the dots between housing costs and food costs. That is why the government is so laser-focused on affordable housing.

We are seeing action on this. We are seeing progress to date. We have seen average rents come down across Canada. We are seeing mortgage rates coming down. We are seeing home prices coming down to make life more affordable. We are cutting taxes for 22 million Canadians and first-time homebuyers.

All those measures are delivering results, and we are not stopping there.

**Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Food Banks Canada reports 2.2 million visits in a single month, double what it was just six years ago. Its CEO says that poverty and hunger have become “the new normal in Canada” and that working Canadians, from construction crews to office staff, “are needing to stop at the food bank on their way home from work”. In rural Canada, where food and fuel already cost more and jobs are often seasonal, families are being hit hardest.

When will the Prime Minister admit that his inflationary deficits are driving Canadians to food banks instead of grocery stores, and change course?

**Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is hard to listen to the party opposite talk about affordability when they voted against every single affordability measure this government has put forward. Whether it is the Canada child benefit; day care; the school food program, which is not “garbage”; or housing, we are focused on making things affordable for Canadians. We are cutting taxes for 22 million Canadians. We are cutting the GST for first-time homebuyers.

On this side of the House, we believe in supporting the most vulnerable in our society. They do not.

[*Translation*]

**Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, “Montreal ravaged by hunger” headlines *La Presse*. Food Banks Canada's HungerCount 2025 paints a bleak picture of the state of Canadian families' finances after 10 years of Liberal government. Across Quebec, nearly 600,000 people receive help each month from food assistance organizations. Across Canada, more than two million people a month use food banks. The trend has accelerated after 10 years of Liberal inflationary spending: 33.5% of them are children, nearly twice as many as six years ago.

Does the Prime Minister still think it is time to ask them to make sacrifices?

• (1435)

**Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, food inflation is a global phenomenon that is much more complex than the simple talking points that the Conservatives keep repeating. The big difference between the Conservative Party and this side of the House is that here, we believe that the government must provide a

bulwark against this inflation, that we must help middle class families and the most vulnerable.

That is what we are doing with the Canada child benefit, which they would have sacrificed on the other side of the House. That is what we are doing with the national school food policy. The president of the Quebec chapter of the Breakfast Club of Canada said that this would improve the living conditions of young Quebecers. Last week one of the Conservative colleagues said that it was garbage.

That is the difference between the Conservatives and the Liberals.

**Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government is not creating a bulwark against inflation. It is creating inflation. It is forcing Canadians to turn to food banks. There is a reason why Food Banks Canada's 2025 HungerCount report is called “Food Banks as a Lifeline: Canada's New Normal”. The new normal in Canada involves relying on food banks. That is the new normal under these Liberals. In fact, 20% of food bank users are employed, 8% are seniors and 23% are two-parent families.

What is the Prime Minister waiting for? When will he stop his inflationary spending, which is forcing more and more Canadians to turn to food banks?

**Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this report clearly shows that we need to strengthen support measures for families to address these challenges.

However, Conservative members have opposed each and every measure we put forward to help overcome the challenges outlined in this report. The Conservative member for Central Newfoundland said that the national school meal program is garbage, even though it is already feeding more than 4,000 children in his province.

We are focused on solutions and on getting results for Canadian families.

\* \* \*

**FORESTRY INDUSTRY**

**Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, Donald Trump announced a 10% tariff increase for our forestry industry. That 10% is on top of the 10% we have been subject to since October 14 and the 35% countervailing duties that already exist. That is a 55% tariff in total. One thing is clear: Washington wants to destroy our industry.

This situation calls for a rescue package that includes financial support and wage subsidies to protect jobs, and the industry needs it now.

How is it that 55% tariffs is not enough for the government to take action for the forestry industry?

*Oral Questions*

**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, of course, our government remains fully prepared to resume discussions with the U.S. government.

However, our colleague alluded to certain potential tariff increases. We have to be careful and wait for the official executive order from the U.S. government before concluding that certain percentages will be applied.

However, we fully share his concern about the future of forestry workers and industries. As in other sectors of the economy, we will support these workers and industries and—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Jonquière.

**Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, voicing concern is one thing, but taking action is another.

The forestry industry was already at the breaking point before the new tariffs were announced on Saturday. No other industry has taken a harder hit from Washington than this one. Even so, the financial assistance announced by the Liberals in August is still on hold nearly three months later. There are still no wage subsidies to protect jobs and there is no rescue plan. To top it all off, Ottawa has cut measures to facilitate access to employment insurance. The crisis is not over; it is getting worse.

When will the Liberals step up for the forestry industry?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are taking action, and we are willing to work with our colleague. I know there are a number of forestry industry companies in his riding.

Financial supports are available through banks. Everything is guaranteed by the BDC. The system is working. The first payments have already been sent out in the past two weeks. We are working to find solutions.

That said, we know that more remains to be done and that we have to help the industry and the workers. We will be there.

\* \* \*

● (1440)

[English]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, under the Liberals, food prices have gone bananas. They are so bad that one in five food bank users works full time. Even people working full time cannot afford to eat in Canada. Now food banks are feeling the crunch, jammed with 2.2 million visits in a single month, and the Liberals think Canada is ripe for more inflationary spending, which is rubbing salt on the wounds.

When will Liberals stop squashing workers with their inflationary spending and realize it is time to reverse course?

**Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Food Banks Canada has highlighted the importance of federal government action that is helping Canadians, such as the

national school food program and the Canadian dental care program. This is helping more than two million seniors.

We are building an economy that works for everyone. Conservatives have a record of pushing the retirement age higher, cutting benefits and leaving seniors behind. I say, “not again”. The Canadian public trusts us, not the Conservatives. That is why, while they are voting against every measure for Canadians, we are empowering older Canadians and protecting not only their dignity but also their peace of mind.

**Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals love to talk about political food programs instead of affordable food. That was the question. Before Liberal inflationary spending and hidden food taxes, Canadians could actually afford to feed themselves. Parents do not want the state parenting their children for them. Parents want the government to eliminate food taxes and stop inflationary spending so they can afford to feed their kids themselves.

We have the Liberal fuel standard, the food packaging tax, the industrial carbon tax and inflationary spending. When will it end?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a few things need to be cleared up here. The Conservatives talk about these imaginary taxes. I think the member needs to come clean. There is no tax on groceries. There never will be a tax on groceries. That is pretty clear.

They talk about imaginary programs. I assure the member that he has voted against some very real programs for school food, dental care and many other things for the most vulnerable in society. The last thing is this: What is inflationary spending when it comes to supporting Canadians? Canadians want to know.

**Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, every dollar the Prime Minister spends comes out of the pockets of Canadians through higher prices and food inflation. It took decades for food banks to have one million food bank users every month. It took the Liberals just six months to double that number. The Prime Minister said, bet, he is going to double the deficit and make more than 2.2 million Canadians visit a food bank in a single month.

When will these guys realize that inflationary deficits are driving up food costs and driving more Canadians to food banks?

*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, when the Prime Minister said it is time for Canada to bet big, he meant bet big on Canadians. This is something these guys do not understand. They refuse to invest in Canadians.

Today I announced that, in budget 2025, \$75 million will go to building trade unions to make sure kids and young people can get great jobs in the skilled trades. These are good-paying jobs. This is what it looks like to bet on Canadians. This is what it looks like to have the backs of Canadians.

**Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if programs like that actually worked and did not feed bureaucracy, 700,000 kids would not be visiting a food bank every single month. Their Liberal deficits are what is making the food go up in cost. This is why grocery inflation is up 4%. People who used to donate and who used to volunteer at food banks are now standing in line for food at those food banks.

Why will the Liberals not stop feeding their egos and their bloated bureaucracy so Canadians can finally afford to feed themselves?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, which is it? They are either about empowering Canadians through good-paying jobs or empowering Canadians through programs such as the school food program. We believe in both, because we are betting on Canadians. We are betting on both their resiliency and their ability to get those great-paying jobs as we create those projects across the country. The member opposite does not want to invest in Canadians, either to support them now or to help them have better features.

Which is it? Which is it that he is asking for, to cut services for Canadians or invest in them? We are going to do both. We are going to make sure—

• (1445)

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Saskatoon—University.

**Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, hard-working Canadians spend all day at work, and on the way home, they are not stopping in a grocery store. They are stopping in food banks. For millions of working Canadians, they have to go to food banks because they cannot afford the hidden Liberal food taxes, such as the industrial carbon tax and the food packaging tax. Food Banks Canada reports a record smashing 2.2 million visits in a single month. Donations are down because Canadians are broke.

When will these out-of-touch Liberals admit to driving up the cost of food and driving Canadians to the food bank?

**Hon. Buckley Belanger (Secretary of State (Rural Development), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of Conservative MPs coming to Ottawa, collectively, with the 14 of them coming, that is 140 years, and that is the first question we got from a Saskatchewan perspective. In my riding, Saskatchewan is finally here on the government side. We are going to address housing. We are going to address the cost of living. I am glad that the Conservatives from Saskatchewan have finally woken up.

**Paul Connors (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, constituents of my riding of Avalon, and the good people of Newfoundland and Labrador, were shocked to hear the Conservative member for Central Newfoundland say that the healthy meals program, which feeds 4,100 or more kids at schools in our province was “garbage”. In reality, hundreds of thousands of additional children are being fed at schools across Canada thanks to the government. I guess it is easier to say they are going to cut a program if they try to make themselves believe it does not exist.

Can the secretary of state please inform my constituents of the benefits of the national school food program?

**Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Sarah from Central Newfoundland reached out to tell me about the national school program at their school after the member's comments last week. She said that it is wonderful. More students are getting healthy lunches, and the lunch lady went from working part time to working full time. Plus, they hired two nans to work part time. This is employment in this area.

There are countless examples like this across Canada of kids getting meals thanks to the national school food program. We will always be there for Canadian families.

**Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, children are going hungry in Canada due to Liberal mismanagement. Every dollar the Liberal Prime Minister spends comes out of the pockets of Canadian families through higher prices and food inflation. A third of Canadian children now live in a food-insecure household. Food Banks Canada reports record-breaking food bank use with 2.2 million visits in a single month, and over 700,000 of those visits were children.

When will the Liberals realize that their inflationary deficits are driving up the cost of food and driving Canadian children to the food bank?

**Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we are committed to growing the strongest economy in the G7, and protecting and strengthening the supports that help Canadian families. Of the report that is being highlighted here, I would say that the relief families get through the school food program, as well as through dental care and child care, are all things the report cites as being critical to addressing the challenges that Canadians are facing right now.

The government will always stand with Canadian families.

*Oral Questions*

**Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if a single one of those projects and programs actually worked, there would not be 700,000 children waiting in food bank lines every single month. This is not okay, yet somehow the Liberals have normalized this. Nine out of 10 kids are not even fed by the school food program.

When will the Liberals realize that their inflationary deficits and hidden food taxes are making food more expensive and driving Canadian children to food banks?

**Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, no child in this country should go to school hungry. That is why our government brought forward the national school food program, and that is why this new government has committed to make this program permanent, introducing legislation to do so, as well as the funding necessary to ensure the program continues in perpetuity. This is an essential piece of tackling the challenges that Canadian families are facing. We are proud of this program.

• (1450)

**Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, every dollar the Prime Minister spends comes out of the pockets of Canadians through higher prices and food inflation. Food Banks Canada is reporting 2.2 million visits in a single month. That is double what it was just six years ago. Even more alarming, one in three of those visits is by a child. Its CEO says that parents are stopping in at the food bank on their way home from work, not at the grocery store.

When will the Prime Minister finally admit that his inflationary spending and deficits are driving parents to food banks?

**Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue and to the Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, years ago, Food Secure Canada did an analysis of all the issues in the food system. Do members know what issue was the most popular among Canadians? It was feeding kids. It is instinctual for any parent, but the desire to feed kids extends almost universally to all Canadians, except when it comes to the Conservatives. They have taken the most unpopular position. They actually oppose a national school food program. Their usual excuse is to claim that there is no food in the food program, but last week they actually had the gall to call the food program “garbage”. Who does that? Who says that?

**Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if those programs actually fed the children the Liberals are claiming they feed, there would not be 750,000-plus children lining up at the food banks every month.

The Liberals' hidden taxes, such as the fuel standard, the food packaging tax, the industrial carbon tax and rising inflation, are making it harder for families at the grocery checkout. Grocery prices are up 4% overall, with ground beef up 17%, coffee up 28% and soup up 9%. Those numbers translate to record numbers of Canadians turning to food banks to feed their families.

When will the Prime Minister stop making it harder for families?

**Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue and to the Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while our government invests in feeding 400,000 more kids healthy food in schools, the Conservatives call that “garbage”. While our government works to expedite major infrastructure projects, creating tens of thousands of jobs, the Conservative leader calls them “pathetic”. While our government gives law enforcement the tools it needs to keep our communities safe, the Conservative leader calls the RCMP “despicable”.

The pattern is clear: The Conservatives will disparage people, projects and programs that help Canadians, while we continue to deliver for them.

\* \* \*

**SENIORS**

**Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the very people who built this country and taught us the value of hard work while managing our budgets are having to line up at the food bank. Food Banks Canada reports that almost 10% of food bank users are seniors, which is up 22% from 2019.

The Liberal government's reckless spending has driven up prices and left our seniors behind. When will the Liberal government respect our seniors and stop the inflationary spending so they can live their retirement years in dignity?

**Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this government is the only party in this House that can be trusted to have seniors' backs. We returned the age of retirement to 65 when Conservatives wanted to push it up to 67.

Through this government's actions, we are ensuring that Canadian seniors have access to one of the largest social programs in the country, and that is old age security and the guaranteed income supplement. Through that, we are ensuring that folks have up to \$1,086 per month for the most financially vulnerable seniors. It is things like this that ensure seniors have—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Markham—Unionville.

*Oral Questions***THE ECONOMY**

**Michael Ma (Markham—Unionville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, every dollar the Prime Minister spends comes out of the pockets of Canadians through higher prices and food inflation. Monthly visits to food banks have doubled since 2019, with 2.2 million visits per month. Nearly 10% of food bank users are now seniors. This is up 22%.

This reliance on food banks has become an ongoing necessity to survive. When will the Liberals realize that their inflationary deficits are driving up the cost of food and driving Canadians to the food bank?

● (1455)

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think we have covered quite a bit in this question period, but let me remind the opposition that, today, I was with the SEIU, which represents personal support workers across this country, and for these incredible, hard-working people who support our family members and our seniors every day, budget 2025 proposes that they will receive a non-refundable tax credit worth \$1,100 a year. The union fought for this; they asked for this. It is a promise made, promise kept.

I will end with this: This is money in the pockets of these workers. I sure hope the Conservatives are going to support the budget.

[*Translation*]

**Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, sadly, this morning, a baby who was abandoned in a bus shelter passed away. There are no words to describe how sad this is, and I am sure that all my colleagues in the House join me in hoping that that baby rests in peace.

It makes me wonder what suffering the mother went through to reach that point. People are suffering. They are discouraged. They are struggling to find housing and to put food on the table. They are losing their jobs. Those people are our people. They are Canadians.

Are the Liberals aware of the consequences of their mismanagement?

**Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I believe I speak for all my colleagues when I say that we are sending our deepest condolences to the baby's family. This is a tragedy that has touched all of Quebec at this time. I find it truly appalling that the Conservative Party is using it to raise a question today.

**Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, those are the facts. We are showing our support for the baby and the baby's family. That is what we are doing. We have to fight. We are talking about our people. I will talk about my people in Richmond—Arthabaska.

The use of food banks has risen. Some people have created an organization called Clan Destins that provides food for children's lunch boxes. What are the Liberals going to do to help people feed themselves and their children?

**Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have a national school food program for

children. It seeks to help Canadians cope with the challenges they are facing these days. What I am trying to say is that the members across the way will have the opportunity to support this program and the budget for this program. I encourage them all to support Canada's national school food program.

**Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, food banks in Canada reported a record 2.2 million visits in a single month.

The CEO of Food Banks Canada has said that poverty and hunger have become normalized in Canada. People are stopping at food banks on their way home from work instead of going to the grocery store.

Inflationary deficits are driving up the cost of food. Why does the Prime Minister continue to spend more and more without caring about people who have nothing to eat?

**Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I always find these questions surprising from a party that was prepared to sacrifice so many programs that Quebeckers and Canadians depend on every day. Examples that come to mind are the Canada child benefit, the dental care program and the school food program.

If the member wishes, I invite him to come to my riding to speak with the people at the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul or the United Way and tell them that this bureaucracy serves no purpose and has never fed anyone. I think the members opposite need a reality check.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Abdelhaq Sari (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government has always been there to support health care workers, the dedicated women and men who care for our loved ones and our seniors every day.

My question is for the Minister of Health.

Can she explain how the newly announced measures, including the tax credit for personal support workers and increased support for union training, will help strengthen our health care system and better support these truly dedicated workers?

● (1500)

**Hon. Marjorie Michel (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his question. Our new government supports, protects and values those who care for Canadians every day.

Our personal support workers tax credit, a new refundable tax credit of up to \$1,100 per year, recognizes the valuable work they do. We are protecting workers by prohibiting non-compete agreements in federally regulated sectors.

We are delivering results for Canadians.

\* \* \*

[English]

### THE ECONOMY

**Eric Melillo (Kenora—Kiiwetinoong, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister told a room full of students that they are going to have to make sacrifices. They have already given up their dream of home ownership, they went all summer without work and they are paying the price of exploding food costs. Food bank visits have doubled since 2019, and Canadians should not have to sacrifice any more for Liberal failures. They have sacrificed enough over 10 long years.

Will the Liberals finally keep their promises and get spending under control so that young Canadians can afford to feed themselves?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today, I announced another \$75 million for skilled-trades training, in partnership with unions across this country. Why? It is because Red Seal trades are great-paying jobs, and we need individuals all across this country to build homes and to build the projects that build infrastructure.

We know that unions can get the job done. These great-paying jobs are what youth have to look forward to as we build Canada strong together.

**Kurt Holman (London—Fanshawe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister told a room full of students that they are going to have to make sacrifices. This includes students at Fanshawe College in London.

Young Canadians have already sacrificed enough over 10 long years. They have sacrificed the dream of home ownership. They have paid the price as food costs have exploded. They have spent a summer without work.

Food Banks Canada reported that monthly food bank visits have doubled since 2019, reaching over 2.2 million. Nearly one in five people using food banks has a job, but they still cannot make ends meet. Its CEO warned that poverty and hunger are being normalized in Canada.

When will the Liberals stop breaking promises so hungry Canadians can afford to feed themselves?

**Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while the party opposite's leader and that party are clearly out of control, we are focused on this side on what we can control. We are going to make generational investments to change our economy from reliance to resilience. On November 4, we are going to table a budget that will invest in Canada. We are going to build Canada because we believe in Canada.

### Oral Questions

**Jonathan Rowe (Terra Nova—The Peninsulas, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, food bank usage has doubled in the past six years, now with over two million users per month. One in five of those people is actually employed. Even more alarming is that one in four food bank users is from a two-parent household.

Young people in this country are doing everything right, and they still cannot live because of Liberal inflation. Instead of asking young Canadians to make more sacrifices, why can the Liberal government not sacrifice its ego and stop its inflationary budgets?

**Hon. Joanne Thompson (Minister of Fisheries, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to remind my colleague from Newfoundland and Labrador in the opposition that school nutrition programs are important to a province. We were the first to sign on to this program, because it mattered. The Conservatives voted against it. One Conservative called it “garbage”. It does feed children. It matters. I am asking the member if he is going to vote with us when the time comes.

\* \* \*

### HEALTH

**Amandeep Sodhi (Brampton Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians depend on personal support workers every day, whether they are in long-term care homes, retirement residences or community settings. These workers deserve fair recognition for the critical care they provide.

Can the minister update the House on how budget 2025 will help strengthen the PSW workforce and ensure it is supported and rewarded for its vital contributions?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this morning, I was at Extencicare with a number of personal support workers as we announced a measure of support for the very workers who care for our loved ones. Kelly, one of the support workers, said that people talk all the time about the importance of the work, but this was the first time they had ever felt like someone was doing something for them.

I am so thrilled to say that we will be supporting personal support workers with a refundable tax credit of \$1,100 a year. What is more is that we will make sure that these workers are not just feeling supported but are supported in the workplace.

*Routine proceedings*

• (1505)

[Translation]

## CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

**Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we thought we had seen it all at the Canada Revenue Agency, but Radio-Canada reported yesterday in an article by Daniel Leblanc that the CRA had produced documents showing a large cheque for a company requesting a refund. The cheque was sent without any verification by CRA officials. Can anyone guess how much it was for? It was for \$4,997,433.72, almost \$5 million. Can anyone guess who noticed? It was not the CRA. It was TD Bank. It is ridiculous that the bank is doing the CRA's job. That is what happens after 10 years of Liberal mismanagement.

Is there anyone over there who will stand up and dare to defend the indefensible?

[English]

**Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, abuse of the tax system is illegal, and the CRA takes enforcement action when instances of abuse are identified.

While we cannot comment on matters before the courts, Canadians can be assured that the CRA is maintaining the integrity of the tax system and preventing misuse of sensitive data. Canada's new government is committed to working with the CRA to continue to strengthen the integrity of our tax system and protect taxpayer dollars.

\* \* \*

## HEALTH

**Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Albertans are being charged \$100 for a COVID-19 vaccination while other Canadians are getting their vaccinations for free. The Canada Health Act guarantees access to necessary health services for everyone regardless of where they live, but the government is doing nothing while premiers break the law and Canadians' health suffers.

I wrote to the Prime Minister about this months ago and have yet to hear back from him, so I am asking the Prime Minister this today: Why is he refusing to enforce the Canada Health Act so that Canadians can get the health care they deserve?

[Translation]

**Hon. Marjorie Michel (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure my colleague that we do believe in vaccines. The science on vaccines is very clear. We are working closely with the provinces and territories to accelerate vaccination. Vaccines that are absolutely necessary are covered by the provinces. I am working with the Province of Alberta to increase vaccination rates in that province.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1510)

[English]

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

## ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

**John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I move that the third report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, presented to the House on Monday, September 22, 2025, be concurred in.

I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, who is also a stalwart defender of openness, transparency, truth and accountability, as our shadow minister for ethics on the ethics committee.

The ethics committee has been in the process of studying a report and a review of the Conflict of Interest Act. As I reported to the House, what the committee is in the middle of studying right now includes the conflict of interest rules, disclosure mechanisms and compliance measures set out in the act.

The committee is also looking to the House to instruct the committee on whether the act should be amended or expanded with a view to enhancing transparency; preventing conflicts of interest; avoiding potential or apparent conflicts of interest; regulating public office-holders' ownership of assets in tax havens, and I will have more to say on that in a few minutes; limiting the availability of blind trusts as a compliance measure; extending the act's provisions to political party leaders and leadership candidates; and increasing penalties for non-compliance. The conclusion of the review calls for the committee to report its findings to the House.

The Conflict of Interest Act, quite frankly, has never contemplated a situation such as the one we are in right now, where we find a designated public office-holder with so many potential conflicts of interest because of extensive private sector holdings. We are really trying to focus on and narrow down how we can improve the Conflict of Interest Act and perhaps provide recommendations to the House, and certainly to the government, in amending the law in ways that would protect the transparency and accountability that Canadians so rightly demand.

It is not just about the one thing of having a conflict; the appearance of the conflict is also another thing. Quite frankly, there are many holes within the Conflict of Interest Act that allow for designated public office-holders, including those holding the highest office in the land, to use that act, with its many loopholes, to skirt around the law that exists today, and that would cause reasonable, thinking people in this country to question the motives and intention of a designated office-holder.

We are quite understanding of the fact that we cannot focus on things on a case-by-case basis, and that is why we are conducting the comprehensive study on the act to ensure that Canadians are confident that their designated public officers are not using their offices as a means to enhance or further their private interests and to gain financially as a result of their being in office.

As members will recall, the act is quite comprehensive, but it is to ensure that ethical governance exists. It is central to maintaining the integrity of public trust in government. It is also designed to prevent the misuse of power. It aims to prevent officials from using their positions, as I said, to further their private interests, and it aims to clarify obligations as well. Designated public office-holders have complex and varied responsibilities under the act.

It also provides for some oversight and accountability to strengthen oversight mechanisms so parliamentary reviews can identify gaps on enforcement and compliance, which is what the committee is doing right now, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the Ethics Commissioner. The committee oversees the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

It is also to respond to public concerns, high-profile cases or controversies that may prompt the need for legislative review, which certainly we are seeing in the case of the Prime Minister right now. On modernization and reform, the intent of the committee is also to update outdated provisions.

The act may need revisions from time to time to reflect current realities, for example, digital assets and lobbying practices. I am very pleased to report that the ethics committee has passed a motion to study the Lobbying Act, which has not been reviewed since 2012 despite the legislative requirement of a five-year review. I know that the Commissioner of Lobbying is very much anticipating the review, and I expect that you, Mr. Speaker, will hear from committee or the House leaders, asking for the committee to conduct such a review.

- (1515)

It is also to address ambiguities. Some rules may be unclear or be inconsistently applied across different roles.

Certainly, first and foremost, it is to improve transparency by strengthening disclosure and reporting requirements that can enhance, ultimately, what the goal of all parliamentarians and designated public officers should be: to ensure that the public has the utmost confidence that designated public office-holders are not using their position to further enhance their financial portfolio.

Right now the committee is undertaking a review of the applicability to various roles, as ministers, parliamentary secretaries and senior officials have different levels of obligation. It will assess post-employment rules and consider exemptions and exceptions. Some provisions may allow for exceptions, which may need a little more scrutiny.

From a policy and legislative alignment standpoint, it should align with other ethics frameworks to ensure consistency with the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons and other federal ethics laws and certainly to support broader accountability, including transparency, lobbying and privacy legislation as well.

The committee is working. It is in the process right now of undertaking the study. There have been some pretty significant interactions with witnesses who have provided some suggestions to the committee that could eventually form the recommendations of a study that we ultimately present to Parliament, and have the gov-

### *Routine proceedings*

ernment respond to many of the recommendations that may come. I certainly do not want to preclude any results of this.

Obviously the committee has more work ahead of it. There are more witnesses to appear, but also, as we draft the report and come up with recommendations, I can assure the House with some confidence that many of those recommendations will form a significant upgrade and allow for the Conflict of Interest Act to reflect the modern times and the situation we find ourselves in, where, in the case of the Prime Minister and his private interests, we have never had a prime minister as conflicted as the current one is, with having to declare 103 conflicts of interest, as well as stockholdings in the United States that represent almost 93% of his portfolio.

What makes it important, particularly with blind trusts and the ethics screens that have been set up, is that there are many loopholes within the current, existing framework of the act that can allow for a designated public officer to be directly engaged and involved in the decision-making process when, in fact that person should be recusing himself or herself from any decisions that are made, because there is a financial gain or a financial interest at play.

The committee wants to make sure that it is in a position to close the loopholes. There have been significant suggestions from witnesses who have appeared on how to do that, so that will form the basis of many of the recommendations the committee presents.

We also want to ensure that there is ethical governance. The act is central to maintaining integrity and public trust in government. In some cases, quite frankly, that trust has been eroded. In the Prime Minister's case, during the election he told a reporter that he holds only cash and real estate, but we found out subsequent to the ethics reporting that the Prime Minister has an extensive portfolio of holdings within companies, particularly affiliated with Brookfield and others, 93% of which are in the United States.

We also found out through witness testimony that while the Prime Minister was the head of Brookfield, taxes were dodged in tax havens to the extent of \$6.5 billion. When Canadian companies do not pay their taxes, that is less money for services that look after vulnerable people, less for health care and less for education. Therefore, we want to ensure that public trust is restored, that designated public officers are held to the highest standard and that we review and modernize the Conflict of Interest Act to reflect the modern realities of Canada today.

*Routine proceedings*

• (1520)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I question the motivation behind bringing forward this particular report. I will have a chance to provide some more detailed comments shortly, but the question I have for the member is this: Given that we have bail reform legislation we are hoping to start to debate, that we have a budget coming up and that there is a superior court deadline in regard to Bill C-3, something that we were supposed to be debating this afternoon, can the member give an indication whether the Conservatives plan to continue to debate the report for the next few hours?

**John Brassard:** Mr. Speaker, I will say this: The report's being presented in the House and being concurred in is a requirement in order for the ethics committee not just to continue its study but also to eventually present a report to the House. There were Liberal members on the committee who agreed with our having the House concur in it.

At some point the concurrence motion had to come to the House. Today was the day, and I would hope that the member is not opposed to the committee's work on improving and increasing the transparency and accountability of designated public office holders.

**Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to second the motion brought forward by my colleague from Barrie.

I want him to expand a bit on what he was just talking about. The member for Winnipeg North's questioning the motivation is a bit concerning. I find his insinuation to be a bit shocking, given that we all should be upholding the provision of ethical government, even if it is self-reflective of the Liberals.

I wonder whether my colleague could comment a bit on that and on why we should have ethical government here even if the Liberals do not like it.

**John Brassard:** Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying that it is the job of the ethics committee, as an oversight committee, to hold the government to account. It is majority-led for a reason, by a majority of members of the opposition, and it is our job to provide oversight. There are other committees that do that as well, but it is critical, as I said, that Canadians have transparency and accountability and are confident in the ability of the Conflict of Interest Act to hold designated public officers to account, and it is also critical in the appearance of conflicts.

In the case of the Prime Minister, in an example I gave earlier, he has 103 different conflicts of interest declared and over 550 stocks held in the United States. We heard from the deputy clerk of the Privy Council, for example, during transportation committee hearings, that it takes a whole department to look after the Prime Minister's conflicts, so we want to make sure we have the right people in front of us, including the Clerk of the Privy Council and the Prime Minister's chief of staff, to ensure that the screens are being properly applied and that the Prime Minister is not in conflict.

[*Translation*]

**Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I commend my committee colleague who, I want to point out, is doing a very good job in the chair this afternoon.

We did indeed hear from a few witnesses, including the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, who was very concerned that restricting conflict of interest rules could discourage “competent” people from entering politics. He said that we need to strike a balance: restore or enhance public trust in democratic institutions without going overboard on tightening the rules.

What does my colleague think about that?

**John Brassard:** Mr. Speaker, no one who aspires to become prime minister or a member of Parliament should profit from things they conceal among their private assets.

[*English*]

We talked a lot about, and there has been some testimony about, complete divestment of holdings in order to ensure that designated public office holders are not subject to the perception among the public that there is an alternative reason as to why they are in that position, for profit.

• (1525)

**Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the motion that has been brought forward by my hon. colleague for Barrie South—Innisfil, who serves as the chair on the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, is important.

Having served on this committee over the past few Parliaments, I have had the opportunity to work with the member for Barrie South—Innisfil and to see him bring the serious approach that is necessary when we are dealing with matters that fall under the purview of this committee. This is a prime example of the important work that this committee can do. With members of opposition parties carrying a majority of votes on this committee, it presents an opportunity for this standing committee to examine, challenge and test the rules and legislation as they pertain to issues that strike at the heart of what has undermined Canadians' confidence in our democratic institutions over the last few years.

We have seen the Conflict of Interest Act, a law, not being well respected by the Liberal government over the past 10 years, with members of the current cabinet found to have broken that law and former prime minister Trudeau found to have broken that law five times. This is a concern for Canadians. Now we are reviewing this act in the context of a Prime Minister who has 103 potential conflicts that have to be managed. What does that mean and what does that look like? How is that process being used to enhance and protect the confidence that Canadians are supposed to be able to have in their executive and in elected officials?

Right now, with those conflicts of interest, there are screens in place, which means that there are issues that are not to be raised at the cabinet table when the Prime Minister is in the room. There are 103 issues. Based on his work as chair at Brookfield, they touch on things that we would expect are important for the Prime Minister to be at the table for: telecommunications, infrastructure, military. I would say that the screen, this protection, is not for the Prime Minister but for Canadians. The intent here should be that we protect Canadians from public office holders, from ministers, in this case the Prime Minister, and his being involved in discussions and taking decisions that would improve his finances and that he could financially benefit from. However, the people who administer that also work for him. It is the Clerk of the Privy Council and the chief of staff to the Prime Minister.

We had the former clerk of the Privy Council testify at committee. The challenge I would raise today is that for the former prime minister, Mr. Trudeau, it was when Mr. Wernick was the clerk that the five occurrences in which the Conflict of Interest Act was broken by the prime minister took place. What was the efficacy of this system? I would say it did not work; it was very poor. Is this something that needs to be changed? This is what the committee is considering, of course.

• (1530)

The question of whether or not, as the act defines it, divesting funds is sufficient is also very important. We had another witness at committee, a former chief of staff to former prime minister Harper, who agreed with the suggestion that divestiture should mean it is actually divested, not placed into a blind trust, but sold.

There are conflicts that continue to exist with the current Prime Minister. He set up all kinds of funds when he worked at Brookfield and has invested in those funds, but the pieces of those funds are not clear to the public. It is very opaque. Does he continue to hold, through that blind trust, investments in tax havens? We do not know. Should a prime minister have investments in tax havens? I would say no. They should be paying taxes as everyone else does, not using the accounting tricks the wealthy rely on to avoid paying their fair share. We expect, at a minimum, that the Prime Minister is going to pay his fair share of taxes.

Therefore, we expect we are going to be able to get some transparency through the reporting process. Right now, we do not get that. Should “divest” mean that one instead sells those controlled assets, not one's real estate, not one's home, and then has the investing process carried out by a manager who would operate blind with a direction from the Prime Minister?

We heard from the current Ethics Commissioner that when funds go into a blind trust, there is not a lot of turnover, churn or trading that takes place, and they often come back out the other side in the same form. The composition of the trust is the same. However, I think we would find, if we looked at the performance of the investments made by the Prime Minister that he set up immediately before taking office and then placed into the trust to be managed by someone else, that the only people who are blind to the full composition of the trust are Canadians. The Prime Minister knows what went in and what is going to come out and, based on the decisions he makes, the value is going to increase. His decisions are only to

### *Routine proceedings*

be stopped, if at all, by his two employees. These are the things we need to study. We need to get better visibility on who is managing it and how it is being managed.

For these reasons, and others that I cannot get into at great length at this moment but would like to see the committee examine, I am going to move an amendment to the motion.

I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word “That” and substituting the following: “the third report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, presented on Monday, September 22, 2025, be not now concurred in, but that it be recommitted to the committee for further consideration, with a view to assessing whether the scope of the review of the Conflict of Interest Act proposed by the committee should be amended in order to address better the concerns posed by the unprecedented extent of the Prime Minister's corporate and shareholding interests, provided that, for the purposes of this order of reference,

(a) the following be ordered to appear as witnesses, separately, for at least two hours each, at dates and times to be fixed by the Chair of the Committee, but no later than Friday, November 21, 2025:

(i) Michael Sabia, Clerk of the Privy Council and an administrator of the Prime Minister's conflict of interest screen,

(ii) Marc-Andre Blanchard, Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister and an administrator of the Prime Minister's conflict of interest screen,

(iii) Bruce Flatt, Chief Executive Officer of Brookfield Corporation and the Prime Minister's immediate successor as Chair of the Board of Directors of Brookfield Asset Management Inc., and

(iv) Connor Teskey, President of Brookfield Asset Management Inc. and Chief Executive Officer of Brookfield Renewable Partners L.P.; and

(b) it be an instruction that the committee report back to the House by Friday, November 28, 2025.

The amendment is seconded by the hon. member for St. Albert—Sturgeon River, which is ably represented by the member.

• (1535)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** The amendment is deemed in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, over the weekend, because of a constituent, I did an inquiry using the Internet. I had asked the question of Brookfield Asset Management and Conservative members who had investments in it. It has everyone from the deputy leader to, and I like this one, the leader of the Conservative party. It says that while not directly holding Brookfield stock, he holds an indirect investment through the Vanguard FTSE Canada Index, which has Brookfield as one of its holdings.

Doing a quick count, I find that AI identified seven members.

I wonder if the member could tell me how many Conservative MPs have investments, directly or indirectly, with Brookfield Asset Management. Does he know that answer?

*Routine proceedings*

**Michael Barrett:** Madam Speaker, I too share the member's lack of confidence in his ability to use Google, but I do not have that information in front of me. What I would say, though, is that the Conflict of Interest Act needs to be updated to make sure that the Prime Minister and party leaders in the House of Commons be required to divest their assets and to place them—

**An hon. member:** Including your leader.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** Order.

**Michael Barrett:** Madam Speaker, I am not sure if I was not projecting. I said that the Prime Minister and leaders of all parties in the House of Commons should be required to divest their assets, because Canadians want transparency. They need to renew their confidence in public institutions after 10 years of it having been broken by the Liberals.

[Translation]

**Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ):** Madam Speaker, first, we would like to have a French version of the amendment. That would help us with our work in this debate.

With regard to the question just asked by the government representative, I would say that the big difference is that elected officials in the opposition do not have the same influence as the Prime Minister does.

Do not forget that when the Prime Minister worked at Brookfield, he moved the head office from Toronto to New York to avoid the minimum corporate tax. That would not be possible in Canada. At the last G7 summit, he succeeded in getting the G7 members to back down on the demand to introduce a global minimum tax on American companies. By so doing, the Prime Minister is helping to make himself richer because he can probably assume that his blind trust still holds shares in Brookfield. The same goes for the web giants, GAFAM. He decided to scrap the digital tax that targets them. However, since his trust also holds shares in this sector, he is benefiting and making money.

What does my hon. colleague think about that?

• (1540)

**Michael Barrett:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. I will send him a French version shortly.

[English]

This is very important. Let us talk about the actions of the Prime Minister. He has taken decisions, and he is able to take decisions. He holds the pen on laws. He is writing the budget. As he said during the election, he wrote the Liberals' platform, which formed the basis for the government's policies, all while still having control over those controlled assets, which were not yet in a blind trust.

The standard needs to be very high for people who want to serve in Canada's highest office. Canadians expect that. We need this transparency and those controls in place. That is why we are looking to continue the study at the ethics committee with these very important witnesses, as in the amendment I moved.

**Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my colleague spoke about some of the deficiencies with the Prime Minister's blind trust.

What good is a blind trust with respect to the carried interest payments to the tune of tens of millions of dollars that the Prime Minister stands to reap? It appears that, in the case of those carried interest payments, it is Canadians who are blind to them, while the Prime Minister is fully aware of what holdings are in the funds that are the basis upon which he will garner profits in the future.

**Michael Barrett:** Madam Speaker, this is a very important question that strikes to the heart of the matter: Canadians are the ones left blind while the Prime Minister continues to be aware of how he can benefit from the decisions he takes, how they will improve his financial standing and how he can make more money based on the decisions that he or his government takes while he is in office.

That is why this review of the act is so necessary at this time.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, there is a lot to go over here. I can say that much.

What I find truly amazing is that anyone following this debate, which I hope does not have to go all afternoon, will see the hypocrisy that is oozing out of the Conservative Party of Canada. It is really quite amazing when we stop and think about it. The current leader of the Conservative Party was one of the staunch defenders of Stephen Harper in a very big and very real, tangible way. He was someone who defended the blind trust. Stephen Harper, as prime minister, was the one who put in the rules by which we operate today. Not only did the former prime minister Stephen Harper put in the rules, but one of the largest advocates for the whole idea of the blind trust was the leader of the Conservative Party.

I find it absolutely amazing that the Conservatives cannot see the hypocrisy there. I am not surprised, in the sense that the Conservative agenda is very much not focused on Canadians but rather focused on the Conservatives' own self-serving party interests. They constantly put their party ahead of the interests of Canadians.

Let me read a quote that comes from a CBC article. I cannot say his name, but I can say that he is the leader of the Conservative Party. It states:

[The leader of the Conservative Party] previously appeared to have no issue with public office holders using a blind trust.

In 2010, Nigel Wright was brought on to be then prime minister Stephen Harper's chief of staff after a career in the private sector.

Wright appeared before the House ethics committee—of which [the current leader of the Conservative Party] was a member—to discuss his appointment, a conflict of interest screen that was set up with the ethics commissioner and a blind trust.

I cannot say the leader's name, but he was actually a member of the committee.

The article continues:

[The leader of the Conservative Party], a parliamentary secretary at the time, said opposition MPs had “attacked” Wright's motives for taking the job and asked him to explain his blind trust.

"I transferred all of my controlled assets into the blind trust in late October. The blind trustee is the legal owner of them all now, and I'm not to have any communication of any sort—no direction, no advice, no information about what's in there. I do not know and will not know what's in there," Wright told the committee.

[The leader] responded by acknowledging Wright's experience in the private sector.

"There are going to be people in this public service world who come from different backgrounds," he said.

"But that is a strength for our country. We look forward to inviting people from various sectors, in this case the business sector, but from all sectors, to make a future contribution to our country."

Talk about selective memory. This is today's leader of the Conservative Party, who advocated the benefits of a blind trust. He was an enforcer for Stephen Harper, who put in the rules we have today. Now, the Conservatives have apparently changed their clothes. They have gone as far right as one could possibly imagine, and they are more focused on character assassination than they are on any great substance of interest to Canadians.

● (1545)

That is what we have witnessed from members of the Conservative Party in their transformation. They know no shame.

What were we supposed to be debating today? There was a superior court that made a decision related to citizenship. There is a deadline coming up on that legislation. We have to pass it before November 20, which means passing it through the entire system before it is ultimately given royal assent. If we do not, we will not have a law that deals with the issue of citizenship of descent. Conservatives have been putting up speakers to this, but the legislation needs to pass.

We have the budget coming down next week, on November 4. We have bail reform legislation, something that the Conservatives like to talk a whole lot about, but when they have the opportunity to deal with it, what do they do? They do silly things of this nature when, in fact, we have a Prime Minister who has followed the rules. Even before he was the Prime Minister of Canada, and even before he was a member of Parliament, he followed the rules. Across the way there has been absolute silence. Each and every one of them should be ashamed of the way in which they continually try to attack the character of individuals over protecting the interests of Canadians. If they had an ounce of integrity, they would see through the game that is currently being played.

When I posed the mover of the motion a question, I asked this: Why was it being introduced today? What was the purpose? What was the motivation? It did not have to be brought in today. I even cited the bail reform legislation and citizenship legislation that we are supposed to be debating. I even made reference to the budget. What was his response? It was, "Well, we want the House of Commons to commit, in terms of concurrence. After all, that is what we are supposed to do." What a crock that is. The member knows it. We get tabled reports coming in from standing committees all the time. If we were to have a three-hour debate on that, we would never get any government business dealt with. The member knows that.

Do we remember last fall when Conservative backbenchers were jumping up and down, hollering and screaming, bringing in all sorts of privilege motions and motions of concurrence? They were a de-

### *Routine proceedings*

structive force on the floor of Parliament back then. Interestingly enough, I do not think they brought any concurrence reports. I would have to confirm it. I am pretty sure they did not bring any concurrence reports prior to their leader getting re-elected in the by-election, which implies to me that their leader is still having a difficult time recognizing the need for change, in terms of what it is that people said in the last federal election. Is that any surprise when we take a look at how it is that we have had a Prime Minister who has been focused on Canadians throughout the election and following the election?

We can't take a look at the agenda, at what the Prime Minister and Liberal members of Parliament have been able to accomplish. Contrast that to the obstruction that we get from the Conservative Party.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the member says I sound upset. I am a tad bit upset because I want to deal with the issues that Canadians are concerned about first and foremost, as opposed to playing these destructive games that the Conservatives want to play, putting their own political partisan party issues ahead of the interests of Canadians.

● (1550)

I am a bit upset. Why? It is because at the end of the day, we had a Prime Minister and Liberal caucus recognizing that we wanted to build one Canada, a Canada strong. That is why we brought in legislation on that, Bill C-5, which we were able to pass, and I am grateful for that. It took down barriers so we could have more trade within Canada. The leader of the Conservative Party was not elected at that time, but we did get it passed. We were also able to give an income tax break to Canadians, and 22 million Canadians derived a benefit as a direct result.

We have substantial legislation before us. How many times did we have a Conservative MP stand up and talk about the need for bail reform? Bail reform is now in a position to be debated, but we need to get Bill C-3 through because of the superior court's deadline. Canadians want bail reform. The Conservatives say it, but they do not want it to turn into reality because they would rather say the government is dysfunctional. In reality, it is the Conservatives who are dysfunctional. Their priorities are all wrong.

They now bring up that we have a committee report, but it was decided by a standing committee where there is an unholy alliance or coalition between the Conservatives and the Bloc because they now make up a majority of the committee, just those two political parties. They have made the decision that they want to continue with the Conservative idea that the best way to get a government to be disliked is to attack the leader, whether it is justified or not. That is their motivation.

*Routine proceedings*

Then they say the standing committee has said we need to have this studied; it wants to investigate this issue. That is the Conservatives working with the Bloc. Those two formed a coalition to try to embarrass the government. That is the intent of the motion that was just proposed, not to deal with substantive issues that Canadians are concerned with.

They ask about the conflict of interest and whether we are interested in it. Absolutely, we are interested in the conflict of interest. We are going by the code that the current leader of the Conservative Party supported and defended, which Stephen Harper brought in and which the current Prime Minister respected even before he became a member of Parliament, let alone the Prime Minister of Canada.

Of course we are concerned about it, but it is the Conservatives who continue to believe that the best way to get Canadians upset is to come up with dots and stars all over the place, as if there is a conspiracy here and a given minister is bad. They are very good at the conspiracy stuff, but when it comes to tangible action, that is where they are found wanting.

One member made reference to the credibility of the system. Do I have a story for members on the credibility of the system. Every member of the House, I am sure, is aware of the leader of the Conservative Party's attack on the RCMP, one of Canada's most significant institutions, recognized around the world as a first-class law enforcement agency and security agency that protects the interests of Canadians. It is, in fact, apolitical. What does the leader of the Conservative Party have to say about it? The word he used in regard to management was "despicable". We then wonder what impact that has.

All sorts of members piled onto that particular issue. They recognize the independence of our conflict of interest office and respect the office. Why do they not demonstrate some form of respect for the RCMP?

Days after the Prime Minister said that, others piled on. I remember the member for Bow River indicated there is "management weakness".

• (1555)

**David Bexte:** Absolutely.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, he reaffirms it by saying "absolutely".

There is so much here. The member for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner said, "there is a disconnect between upper management and [the rank and file]. There are operational issues that are not being addressed by...leadership." The member for Peace River—Westlock said, "The actions of the leadership of the RCMP, I think, are indefensible in many instances." The leader of the Conservative Party implied in a very strong way that the former prime minister, Justin Trudeau, would have gone to jail "[i]f the RCMP had been doing its job".

How do bizarre, weird comments of that nature reinforce confidence in our institutions? Now Conservatives have come up with a conflict of interest, and they say they want X, Y and Z. They want

to attack the Prime Minister and his character, because this is what they believe, and they start talking about the issue of perception.

Members will have to excuse me for not knowing the member's riding. He is the one who I think owns Giant Tiger. I would encourage every member of the Conservative caucus to read what he had to say about conflicts of interest just the other day inside the chamber. As the leader of the Conservative Party calls into question the integrity of the RCMP, they should read what their colleague had to say about conflicts of interest. If members want to study something, they should bring what he said to the ethics group of members of Parliament. Let us study that. That seems to be more of a legitimate study.

However, it does not fit the Conservative agenda. The Conservative agenda can be best described as character assassination, because the Conservatives have consistently done that. I will continue to argue, whether it is during a late show, question period or concurrence in reports, that the Conservative Party of Canada today under the current leadership is more focused on the internal workings of the Conservative Party, on spreading misinformation through social media and on attacking our institutions. At the end of the day, they do not recognize the genuine interests of Canadians and do not treat issues, like the budget, which is coming up on November 4, and the national school food program, with the respect they deserve. It is hard to say why.

Just so the record shows, the member I was referring to is the member for Lanark—Frontenac. That is the individual. Members should read what he said.

Having said that, with less than a minute to go, here is my recommendation to my Conservative friends opposite. I would suggest that they get out of the Conservative bubble. They do not have to follow what their leader is saying. If he was a little more practical and a bit more reflective of Canadians' interests, they could do that, but he is too far to the right.

My suggestion to you is to look at what your constituents are telling you and start supporting bail reform legislation, Bill C-3 or Bill C-9, and look—

• (1600)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** I will just remind the hon. member that I do not need reminding of anything.

He has 20 seconds to conclude.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, at the end of the day, let us collectively, no matter what political entity we belong to, look at ways we can better serve Canadians with a higher sense of co-operation. All of us were given that role in the last federal election. No political party—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Brandon—Souris.

*Routine proceedings*

**Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Madam Speaker, there is a lot of confusion in that speech and what is going on over there. The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader is taking direction from the Green Party leader. We are not sure what is going on, but when the member for Winnipeg North gets up and talks about a lack of accountability and credibility on issues involving ethics, he—

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

I have a point of order from the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

**Elizabeth May:** Madam Speaker, this is really a question of privilege, because what the hon. member just said leaves on the record something that could affect my ability to do my job. I do not give anyone here direction, not even Green Party members when I have some with me. Because I respect enormously the hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac, I just wanted him to be properly acknowledged in this place as the member who brought up the point the hon. deputy House leader wanted to reference. I apologize.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** I thank the hon. member for clarifying that, and I would invite the hon. member to clarify and rectify it too.

**Grant Jackson:** Madam Speaker, on that matter of privilege, I thank the Green Party leader for clarifying what she said. I think that is a very honourable intention.

Getting back to my question, the member for Winnipeg North must be looking in a mirror when he is talking about the lack of credibility and accountability on ethics. This is the member who stood behind a former prime minister who said he did nothing wrong in WE scandal until he was found guilty, nothing wrong in the SNC-Lavalin scandal until he was found guilty, nothing wrong with Jody Wilson-Raybould or Jane Philpott until he was found guilty, and nothing wrong in the Aga Khan island incident until he was found guilty. Are we supposed to take the member for Winnipeg North as the fountain of all credibility and accountability on ethics? I do not think so.

Will the member for Winnipeg North please acknowledge that Manitobans and Canadians likely have a few question marks around the Liberal government's ability to police itself on ethics?

• (1605)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I did not ask him to ask that question. Can members imagine if we were to apply the same question to the leader of the Conservative Party? There is a book, "The Evidence Compiled", that lists off dozens and dozens of scandals. Let me give a few of them: the anti-terrorism scandal of \$3.1 billion, the Phoenix scandal of \$2.2 billion, the G8 spending scandal, the ETS scandal, the F-35 scandal, the Senate scandal, the two election scandals, the cuts to the Auditor General and the foreign interference within their leadership, like the current foreign interference within their leadership.

There is a book of virtually 100 issues of corruption when the member's leader sat with Stephen Harper. When he talks about about looking in the mirror, he might want to get a better sense of

just how corrupt the Conservative government was. His leader played a role in that and is actually cited in the book.

[*Translation*]

**Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am very disappointed in my colleague's intervention. He says we should be talking something else, like Bill C-3. He does that often. If the Liberals would stop sabotaging the work that is done in committee, we could make more progress on Bill C-3. They need to take a look in the mirror.

Today we are seeing the perfect example of the art of turning an ethical debate into a petty political debate. The Bloc Québécois is not forming a coalition with another party to disrupt the Liberal Party and discredit the Prime Minister. The Bloc Québécois is going to rally behind substantive arguments. If the Liberals have any, they will have our support. It is as simple as that.

What is more important right now than to do what Parliament calls us to do every five years, namely review the Conflict of Interest Act?

The Liberals do not like the idea of restoring public confidence in democratic institutions. The Liberals do not like the Prime Minister's past. That is their problem. However, discussing a report in the House that says the act needs to be revised and that outlines the elements that need to be revised is not a waste of time. I am sorry.

[*English*]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, first of all, I would have personally much preferred to be debating Bill C-3. What I believe members of the Liberal caucus came to hear and to participate in is Bill C-3. This debate is being imposed upon us by the Conservatives. I suspect they are going to get the Bloc, as it supported the amendments at committee, to support the motion now on the floor. If I am wrong, I will personally apologize to the member.

We should not be debating this motion right now. What we should be debating is Bill C-3. Again, I would agree there is a need for change with regard to conflicts of interest, but when we are dealing with issues like this, would it not be wonderful if more of a consensus was achieved inside the committee and if the amendments brought forward for dealing with conflicts of interest had a consensus? Right now, we are abiding by the Stephen Harper legislation that is currently there.

[*Translation*]

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we have a number of important bills before the House. As my colleague mentioned, this afternoon, we were supposed to be debating Bill C-3, which seeks to correct a historic injustice regarding access to citizenship. We also have a bill on ambitious bail reform, as well as a bill on border security.

Can my colleague tell me why the opposition insists on using debate time in the House to discuss a committee report rather than focusing on legislation that is central to the mandate entrusted to us by Canadians?

*Routine proceedings**[English]*

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I really appreciate the question because, in essence, it captures the message I was hoping to send, which is that we have a very limited amount of time on the floor of the House of Commons, and there are a lot of issues, which are all in the best interest of Canadians, that need to be addressed.

We have the bail reform legislation, which Canadians and stakeholders from coast to coast to coast want to see passed. That legislation cannot necessarily be called until we can pass Bill C-3, which deals with citizenship, because we have a superior court order that has given us a November 20 deadline. We have a budget coming up November 4, not to mention, as my colleague just did, the secure borders legislation.

The official opposition, much like the government of the day, has an obligation to its constituents to allow for the orderly passage of legislation, or at the very least, getting it to committee stage. I would argue anywhere with anyone, time permitting, why debate of this nature is not warranted.

• (1610)

**Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC):** Madam Speaker, if we are serious about strengthening the Conflict of Interest Act, then we cannot turn a blind eye to the top. The Prime Minister's corporate and shareholder interests are extensive, and Canadians have a right to know whether those holdings intersect with the decisions he is making every day. That is why this amendment calls for witnesses who can shed light on those interests.

Is this review more than a check box, or is it a real test of accountability?

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the Conservatives decided to have a debate on this particular issue, and members will notice that they did not use an opposition day, where a full day could have been allocated to the topic. We would have had a vote on it, and so forth. Rather, they wanted to use a concurrence motion to eat into the government's time.

In doing a very simple Google search, I counted seven Conservative MPs who have investments, directly or indirectly, with Brookfield Asset Management. I ask their ethics critic how many Conservative MPs have investments of that nature. Are there any obligations for them?

Conservatives are trying to score political points, do a character assassination or give some sort of impression that the Prime Minister is offside somehow, and I say shame on that. If they really wanted to be productive, then we should have the committee go through it. There might be some things that come out of the committee that could be positive, but that would be the responsibility of the committee. The Liberals are a minority on that committee.

If the purpose of that committee is being manipulated just so Conservatives can constantly attack the Prime Minister, that is bad use of parliamentary tools and is not doing any service at all for their constituents. At least I have not seen that demonstrated today in the debate brought forward by the first two Conservative members.

*[Translation]*

**Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am surprised by what the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government is telling us today, because the Liberals are always trying to teach the Conservatives a lesson, telling them to take note of the election result. The Liberals themselves should take note of the election result. The government does not have a majority. It is a minority government. As such, the Liberals are in the minority in committees, and if they do not make substantive suggestions, they will not have the support of the Bloc Québécois. What the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government is saying to us is that if the Liberals had a majority, we would not be having this type of debate this afternoon. There would be no debate on the rules governing conflicts of interest. We would not be talking about grey areas having to do with an incredibly unusual case that is before us, namely the position an individual held before becoming a public officer holder.

Today's debate concerns the report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, which requests that the committee conduct a review of the Conflict of Interest Act. Who better to do that than the committee? The report calls for a review of "the Conflict of Interest Act, including the conflict of interest rules, disclosure mechanisms and compliance measures set out in it". This is the mandate that we are seeking in the House, which is why we are discussing it now. The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has only to ask around in the streets and on social media. He will learn that the public has little regard for the work we do here. They have no confidence in their public institutions.

Spending one short afternoon on a serious discussion of a review that is required every five years is also an opportunity to educate and to show the public that even though we politicians are constantly criticized on these issues, they do matter to us. We want to take steps to repair the negative opinion that some people may have toward politics.

The report asks:

that the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics be designated to undertake the review;

I believe we are in the best position to do so. It also asks:

that it be an instruction to the Committee to consider, as part of its review, whether the Act should be amended or expanded with a view to enhancing transparency, preventing conflicts of interest, avoiding potential or apparent conflicts of interest...

This is also a question that the Ethics Commissioner raised during his appearance. I will continue:

...regulating public office holders' ownership of assets in tax havens...

Indeed, it is quite interesting to know that the Brookfield firm, whose leader is now the Prime Minister, is the king of tax havens and tax avoidance.

...limiting the availability of blind trusts as a compliance measure, extending the Act's provisions to political party leaders and leadership candidates, and increasing penalties for non-compliance;

That was also a recommendation from the Ethics Commissioner. It concludes as follows:

...and that, at the conclusion of the review, the Committee report its findings and recommendations to the House.

The Conservatives are proposing an amendment and saying that we will not be voting on this report today. Before we vote on the report, they want to see if we need to go further, and they want to wait for an order from the House to hear from key players identified by the Ethics Commissioner, who told us that the Prime Minister's situation was such that he had to set up conflict of interest screens, which are administered by his chief of staff and the Clerk of the Privy Council.

• (1615)

My colleague across the way seems to look down on the opposition parties. I hope people will remember that in the next election.

Ethics analyzes a situation based on what should be happening. As such, ethics is more demanding than the law. The review I am referring to must be based on principles, and one of those principles is that the highest office in the land requires the highest level of exemplary conduct. This also implies the highest level of transparency and requires, according a former clerk of the Privy Council, that a distinction be made, in terms of rules and requirements, between the Prime Minister, ministers, members of Parliament, and public office holders. It is important to say that. As part of this review, we will have to find a way to provide for more oversight of the role of prime minister.

When I say that ethics is more demanding than the law, I mean that just because something is legal does not mean it is ethical. For example, tax avoidance and tax havens are legal, but are they ethical? Jason Ward, who appeared before the committee, told us that the Canadian government loses between \$13 billion and \$15 billion a year to tax avoidance, and we learned from other witnesses that Brookfield excels in this area. It seems to me that there is reason to be concerned or, at the very least, to question and reconsider the matter. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government may not like it, but the fact remains that we need to do our job and lift this veil of secrecy.

Other principles that should underpin our actions and analysis as we review this act are integrity, transparency and accountability. These must be at the heart of our work in order to come up with rules that preserve or enhance citizens' trust in political institutions.

Issues have been raised since the work began. For example, one of the Ethics Commissioner's objectives is to avoid tightening ethics rules too much so as not to discourage qualified and competent people from entering politics. It will come as no surprise that I disagree with the Ethics Commissioner on that principle. People who want to get into politics must make sacrifices.

At the end of the review, the committee could very well conclude that the role of prime minister is not meant for people with certain private sector backgrounds. Of course, that is assuming that we want to avoid having a veil of secrecy around all this. We will examine this issue, but it is clear that anyone who wants to become prime minister must not have any apparent conflicts of interest. That is one of the issues here. The Ethics Commissioner spoke to us about proactive rather than retroactive ethics, that is, punishing

### *Routine proceedings*

questionable conduct. He told us that it would be interesting to extend the Conflict of Interest Act to apparent conflicts of interest.

• (1620)

He suggested a definition: "Every public office holder shall arrange his or her private affairs in a manner that will prevent the public office holder from being in a conflict of interest" or in an apparent conflict of interest. He wants people who are interested in entering politics to know that they must avoid not only conflicts of interest, but also the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Some people think this is far too difficult to manage. I would respond that the Ethics Commissioner opens an investigation when he believes there is the appearance of a conflict of interest. What he told us is that he would like the provisions of the act, our regulations, to stop things from going that far. He would like to see people receive training and information to prevent them from getting into these kinds of situations in the first place.

The other aspect has to do with sanctions. The Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics is working on this. The commissioner told us that the \$500 penalty seems too lenient to him and should perhaps be increased to \$3,000. We will look into it.

I want to talk about blind trusts and what is happening with the Prime Minister. If his assets are in a blind trust, does that mean that he is making decisions without knowing how much his fortune is growing? Does he really have no idea that it is growing? I mean, he knows how to count. He just does not know by how much it is growing. Some witnesses told us that this blind trust was insufficient.

I am not quite ready to let everything go. We will look at this, but it is serious. Just because a person's assets have been put in a blind trust does not preclude a situation where a decision might be made requiring him to recuse himself. Recusal is vital. We are told that a conflict of interest screen has been set up. On the issue of recusal, I asked the former clerk of the Privy Council, who served from 2016 to 2019, how many times he had had to suggest to the then prime minister that he leave the room. His answer was that he did not remember. I would just like to say that if I had to ask my boss to leave the room so that we could make a decision without him there, I would remember the time and the date. I would still remember a few years later. This means that the legislation, as it is currently structured, does not adequately address the issue of conflicts of interest because the definition in section 2 is strictly limited to private interests and does not cover decisions that would have a general impact.

As my colleague from Joliette demonstrated earlier, the world has changed. Gone are the days when it was a case of one company and one minister who reports to the prime minister and who is governed by certain rules. Indeed, the prime minister can tell a minister to leave the room. The Prime Minister can come to the conclusion that there is the appearance of a conflict of interest and that a decision will not be made along those lines. In contrast, we have the case of a Prime Minister who decides on all of the country's economic policies and who also comes from an environment where tax avoidance is commonplace. It is a whole culture. How do we transpose that culture into a public culture?

*Routine proceedings*

• (1625)

We asked the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner the following question: If all the Prime Minister's assets were placed in a blind trust and that resolved the issue, then why did the commissioner insist on a conflict of interest screen? If that is the case, then on some level, this must not have been sufficient. How many other conflict of interest screens are there and who is managing them? That is another question that we should look into. Experts have differing opinions on that. For now, we have heard from a lot of people who are saying the conflict of interest screens are not sufficient because people who report to the Prime Minister, people he himself appointed, are the ones responsible for this screen. We do not know exactly how this conflict of interest screen works.

What I would propose is that we have an independent commissioner. I asked the commissioner why it was not up to his office to go to cabinet to demand accountability, to administer this screen. He told me that, if he were to do so, he would be in a conflict of interest himself, that he would be both judge and stakeholder. The commissioner should remain the judge and we should appoint someone else to the essential role of ensuring that the process is transparent and that the requirements for exemplary behaviour are met. We have here an opportunity to create additional leverage.

Have I upset the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons? Am I being overly partisan, or am I bringing up key issues in order to improve parliamentary democracy and the basic requirements expected by those who elected us? Are my current remarks in the House unnecessary? Do the people listening at home think that what I am saying is not important? That would be a bit simplistic.

Duff Conacher, from Democracy Watch, told us that when conflicts of interest are defined strictly in terms of private interests, as opposed to being defined in terms of matters that apply more generally, 99% of the time, the prime minister does not have to leave the room. Funny, is it not? He said that, and several Liberals are offended by it. I asked the former clerk of the Privy Council, and he could not remember the last time he asked a prime minister to leave the room. Perhaps this proves Mr. Conacher was right when he said that, under the current act, only 1% of cases would require the individual to recuse themselves.

Once upon a time there was a fellow who wanted to become prime minister. He was the head of a multinational corporation that controlled 900 companies with assets of \$1 trillion. He came to power. Before taking office, he declined to make a declaration, in the interest of transparency, of any potential conflicts of interest he may have had. After entering office, however, the first thing he did was to pass a bill under a gag order that, coincidentally, will ensure that the company he once headed will one day hold very substantial interests in five shipyards—

• (1630)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** Questions and comments. The hon. member for Hull—Aylmer.

**Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to see you in the chair and to take part in these debates. I listened very carefully to my friend from the Bloc

Québécois, a very experienced member. All through his speech, however, I asked myself one question.

What could have changed in a process that was previously considered perfectly acceptable until the day this new Prime Minister arrived? Is anything substantially different? It seems to me that the process is the same one that all members used to consider acceptable, until today.

**Luc Thériault:** Madam Speaker, the question is not so much what has changed, and this is not limited to members. It is simply that we have to review the provisions of the law every five years, and that is where we are now. It is as simple as that.

We have reached the point where we need to review the law, and we have submitted a report outlining the issues we wish to examine, because the world is changing and people no longer trust political institutions or politicians. There have been conflicts of interest, there have been commissions of inquiry, including in Quebec and at various levels of government, and that does not help.

We must review the law every five years simply because the law requires us to do so. The former conflict of interest and ethics commissioner had requested that this review and these changes be carried out, as had the commissioner we received in committee. In his 2024-25 report, the commissioner suggested changes, and we must decide whether or not to implement those changes. It is that simple.

• (1635)

[*English*]

**Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the hon. colleague spoke about the Prime Minister's so-called ethics screen. This is a screen that is unprecedented in scope. It is being administered solely by the Prime Minister's chief of staff and the Clerk of the Privy Council, who are determining what the Prime Minister sees and does not see based on an ambiguous proportionality standard. There are no checks and balances. There is no reporting mechanism. There is no assurance that the screen is being triggered appropriately when it should be. One witness said the only assurance Canadians have is the basis of trust and faith.

It would seem to me that this so-called ethics screen is nothing more than a smokescreen. Would the hon. member agree?

[*Translation*]

**Luc Thériault:** Madam Speaker, some witnesses told us that it was a smokescreen. Others talked about the need to work on the operational aspects of this. However, it became clear that this should not be managed by subordinates of the highest-ranking official, the highest-ranking person in the government, especially since he is the one who decides on economic policy. Also, when he first came to power, he took advantage of a tariff crisis, which will be resolved with free trade agreements in 2026, to launch construction projects that will take eight years to complete, saying that the Canadian economy needed to be rebuilt. In eight or 10 years, Donald Trump will be gone. He will be dead and buried.

It just so happens that the opportunity to develop these projects is directly linked, among other things, to the company he used to run. A veil of suspicion and opacity is being created, and that is why we absolutely must ensure that the law covers this type of situation. This is unusual. We have never seen this before, and it could set a precedent. This is a long way from Paul Martin's ship scandal.

**Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am hearing some government members say that we are complaining over nothing and that the arrival of the new Prime Minister in an old government does not change anything, despite the fact that the new Prime Minister was the head of a corporation that has interests in hundreds of companies.

Here is what I am wondering: Should everyone be allowed to go into politics? We know that there must be a separation between the legislative, executive and judicial branches, and we would not see journalists going into politics because they would have to choose between two roles. Sometimes, people have to make a choice. Today, we are seeing oligarchs around the world getting into politics. I am thinking of the crisis south of the border. I am not accusing the Prime Minister of anything, but this is something that people are wondering about: How separate should the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government be from journalism and wealth?

That is a valid question when a prime minister tells us that the government needs to promote small modular reactors to more easily extract oil in Alberta and we know that, in his blind trust, he has shares in oil and shares in Westinghouse, which manufactures these reactors.

Why should wealth be kept less separate from politics than all of the other functions that we keep separate from it?

**Luc Thériault:** Madam Speaker, some people say it is because we need to encourage competent people to enter politics, as though competence has something to do with wealth or the fact that a person owns shares and interests in a number of companies.

My question about the Prime Minister's conflict of interest screen is whether his chief of staff asked him to be careful when, at the G7 meeting, he took steps to exempt American companies from the 15% minimum tax. When he was not Prime Minister, he decided to move assets that were governed by this rule out of Canada. I am referring to Brookfield headquarters, in the United States. Was he unaware of what he was doing at the G7 regarding that exemption? Was the conflict of interest screen applied?

The answer is no. He was not advised to recuse himself because the conflict of interest definition is limited to so-called personal interests, and it was a decision of general interest. This allows him to grow his wealth, but also, and most importantly, Brookfield's wealth.

• (1640)

[English]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I made the assertion that the Conservatives have worked closely with the Bloc on that particular committee to bring the report forward and that the Conservatives have made the deter-

### *Routine proceedings*

mination to talk about it for three hours as opposed to talking about Bill C-3. The member opposite said that the Bloc was not necessarily working with the Conservatives and that he feels this is a legitimate issue to be talking about.

I understand the rules, and I know that the member opposite understands the rules. Nothing prevents debate on the report. If the good will is there from the Bloc party and if that is the real issue, the Bloc members should say no to the Conservative trap and agree to have a discussion at committee, where they could actually go over it.

The Bloc and the Conservatives form a majority on the committee. If the Bloc members are genuine in wanting to look at ways we could change the system, it is not necessary to have the debate here. In fact if they insist on debate, it could have occurred in January or February.

I would love for the Bloc to vote against the motion and then raise the issue at the committee stage.

[Translation]

**Luc Thériault:** Mr. Speaker, this is a clear example of the contempt toward the House of Commons that I mentioned earlier. For the Liberals, committees are just a way to keep people busy. They use them to get rid of issues they do not want to discuss in the House. However, it is important to discuss these issues in the people's place and not just in committees, whose reports just gather dust anyway, as we all know. Take, for example, the unanimous report we sent to the House on the dangers of breast implants. I managed to get 10 unanimous recommendations adopted, and the government is letting the report sit on a shelf. That is why we want to have certain debates in front of all Canadians. It is a matter of transparency.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** 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 Regina—Lewvan, The Economy; the hon. member for Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, The Economy; the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona, Labour.

[English]

**Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise to speak to the amendment put forward by the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, which I proudly seconded, calling on the CEO of Brookfield, as well as the Clerk of the Privy Council and the Prime Minister's chief of staff, to come before the ethics committee and answer questions as we undertake our review of the Conflict of Interest Act.

Frankly, the Liberals have a lot to answer for with respect to the Prime Minister's multitude of conflicts of interest, which he continues to hide from Canadians, such as his use of offshore tax havens while he was the chair of Brookfield to avoid paying taxes in Canada. So much for Mr. Captain Canada, Mr. Elbows Up. They also have a lot to answer for about the completely inadequate so-called ethics screen that has been set up to supposedly keep the Prime Minister from being involved in making decisions on matters in which he has conflicts of interest.

*Routine proceedings*

Let me say that when it comes to the Prime Minister's conflicts of interest, it is official: He is the most-conflicted Prime Minister in Canadian history. Never have we had a Prime Minister with so many conflicts of interest: more than 500 conflicts of interest and an ethics screen comprising 103 conflicts.

I will be splitting my time with the member for Montmorency—Charlevoix.

Despite 500 conflicts and the vast and unprecedented nature of the situation, this merely scratches the surface of what the Prime Minister's potential conflicts of interest are. That is because we learned from his ethics disclosure that he is entitled to receive carried interest payments worth tens of millions of dollars in respect of the performance of three major clean-tech funds he set up while he was the chair of Brookfield.

The Prime Minister set up the \$15-billion global transition fund; the second global transition fund, at \$10 billion; and the catalytic transition fund. He co-led efforts to draw investments into those funds; he picked the companies. He knows what the holdings of those funds are. Why is that relevant? It is because he knows specific public policy decisions that may impact the performance of those funds, which in turn directly relates to his future bonus pay worth potentially tens of millions of dollars.

Canadians deserve to know what the holdings of these funds are. They deserve to know what companies the Prime Minister hand-picked. They deserve to know that he is not involved in making decisions that would impact these funds, which in turn would determine the amount he reaps in the way of future bonus pay.

• (1645)

The Prime Minister has had an opportunity to come clean and tell us what is in the funds, but he has refused to do so. As a consequence, we have a Prime Minister who, to put it generously, may be complying with the letter of the Conflict of Interest Act but is certainly not complying with the spirit of the Conflict of Interest Act, in the face of these many potential hidden conflicts of interest.

Frankly, the Prime Minister has a lot to answer for based upon his activities at Brookfield. I alluded to the three clean-energy funds that the Prime Minister set up. Where did he set up the global transition fund? Oh, it was not in Canada but in Bermuda. How about the second global transition fund? It was not in Canada; the Prime Minister registered it in Bermuda. The catalytic transition fund is not in Canada. How about the Cayman Islands? All are in offshore tax haven jurisdictions.

Last week at committee, we learned about the extent of Brookfield's use of offshore tax havens. In fact, analysis done by Canadians for Tax Fairness revealed that of Canada's 123 largest corporations, Brookfield is the largest tax dodger; there was the largest tax gap by Brookfield, based upon what Brookfield actually paid in taxes versus what Brookfield should have paid had the statutory tax rate been applied, because of Brookfield's use of offshore tax havens that the Prime Minister actively used and took advantage of while he was chair of Brookfield.

How much was it in the way of tax avoidance that Brookfield, I guess to some degree, succeeded in taking of advantage of? It was \$6.5 billion of tax dodging in just five years.

The Prime Minister said he was coming to stand up and rescue this country at a time of crisis, but when we look at the actions of the Prime Minister, we see time and again that his words do not match his deeds. He was very happy to set up major funds, some of the world's largest clean-energy funds, in offshore tax havens. He was very content to hide behind loopholes in the Conflict of Interest Act to not disclose his hidden conflicts. Of course, we know that he was also very happy to move Brookfield out of Canada to New York City months before he ran for leadership of the Liberal Party.

Then there is the so-called ethics screen. Who administers the ethics screen? It is none other than the Prime Minister's chief of staff and the Clerk of the Privy Council, both of whom answer to the Prime Minister. They are arguably in a blatant conflict of interest in overseeing that screen. Not only that, but there are no checks and balances to see that the screen is being used as intended to keep the Prime Minister away from making decisions in which he would have a conflict of interest. There is no reporting mechanism, for example.

We are really left to having to trust the Prime Minister's chief of staff and the Clerk of the Privy Council who, by the way, even if they were doing their best, which they may be, to shield the Prime Minister from these types of decisions, are subject to an ambiguous proportionality standard that raises other questions about the effectiveness of the ethics screen.

• (1650)

For all of these reasons, this amendment could not be more timely. We need to hear from the Prime Minister's chief of staff and from the clerk with respect to the ethics screen, and we need to hear from the CEO of Brookfield about the many serious ethical questions surrounding the—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** We must go to questions and comments.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as I have indicated, it really is amazing how the Conservatives have reversed their whole thinking on the issue. Former prime minister Stephen Harper put into place the rules. The current Prime Minister is following the rules. One of the biggest defenders of the blind trust was none other than the current leader of the Conservative party.

If they want to talk about a chief of staff, we can think of Nigel Wright, who came in from the private sector, and the wealth he had while being the chief of staff for former prime minister Stephen Harper. At the time, who was defending him? It was the current leader of the Conservative Party. The hypocrisy just oozes out as a direct result of the Conservative Party's wanting to attack the character of the Prime Minister. I find that disgraceful.

• (1655)

**Michael Cooper:** Madam Speaker, what good is a blind trust in the face of carried interest payments and future bonus pay, in the amount of tens of billions of dollars, that the Prime Minister could be entitled to? A blind trust does nothing to deal with that. It is one example of many of the loopholes that exist in the complete inadequacy of the Prime Minister's simply saying, "I have set up a blind trust, and by the way, I also have an ethics screen that is being administered by my chief of staff, who answers to me." It is not good enough.

[*Translation*]

**Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague and thank him for his speech.

He talked about Brookfield subsidiaries in tax havens. I want to remind the House that there are five that are active in Canada that received the wage subsidy during the pandemic at the same time as they were not paying taxes in Canada because they were registered in tax havens. That is unacceptable.

This is my question for my colleague. The Prime Minister makes a decision that will enrich him personally, for example scrapping the tax on digital services imposed on web giants, saying that this will enable an agreement to be reached with the U.S. government before July 21. Obviously, that did not happen. What can be done to ensure that the public does not wonder whether he did this to enrich himself personally, knowing that there are GAFAM shares in his blind trust? What can be done to regulate this?

[*English*]

**Michael Cooper:** Madam Speaker, what is fundamentally lacking is any level of transparency on the part of the Prime Minister. We have a Prime Minister who has not revealed all of his conflicts. That is a problem because Canadians cannot, therefore, be assured that he is, in fact, avoiding conflicts of interest.

Second, we have an ethics screen that is based entirely on trust. There is no reporting and no understanding of when it is being triggered or if it is being triggered. At the very least, as a starting point, we need transparency from the Prime Minister. Some of the transparency does not require amendments to the act. It just requires the Prime Minister's staff to step forward and come clean.

**Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenrahk, CPC):** Madam Speaker, like me, my colleague was elected 10 years ago, and I want to congratulate him on his fourth mandate in a row.

As a veteran parliamentarian, he has seen many cases of malversation from the Liberal Party. We remember Jody Wilson-Raybould when the former prime minister put his two hands into the justice system. That was a kind of corruption. Does the member think that what we are seeing right now with Prime Minister is exactly at the same level?

**Michael Cooper:** Madam Speaker, I guess the more things change, the more things stay the same. That is what I would say.

We had a former prime minister who had serious issues with complying with the Conflict of Interest Act, and we have a new Prime Minister, the current Prime Minister, who has an unprece-

*Routine proceedings*

dent number of conflicts of interest and is not acting in accordance with, at the very least, the spirit of the act and may not be fully complying with the act. We do not know because of the lack of transparency surrounding the Prime Minister's dealings.

• (1700)

[*Translation*]

**Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, PCC):** Madam Speaker, the laws that we pass in Parliament govern our society, including the Conflict of Interest Act. We have specific rules to oversee such conflicts, along with disclosure mechanisms, compliance measures and the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics. The committee's mission is essential, and we must carry it out scrupulously, not complacently, to ensure that the state functions as it should.

Today, above and beyond legislation and procedures, we need to regain the public's trust. I sincerely believe that democracy is in crisis. Our institutions, the very foundations of our democracy, are being challenged every day. What always strikes me when I travel from one region to another is that a growing number of people thank me for coming to visit them, saying it is so kind of me. They treat us like an elite class. They call us government people. The people think we are completely out of touch, that we become a class of our own as soon as we become politicians. I think that is a serious mistake.

Many of my friends ask me questions when they see me. We spend our weekdays here in Parliament but go back to our communities on weekends. People tell me it is great that I am in Parliament. I always tell them that an MP's main purpose is to serve the people. We are here to serve. We are not here to rule the world; we are here to represent our constituents. We are not here to impose our will; we are here to understand. Regardless of the level of government, whether federal, provincial or municipal, elected officials are first and foremost here to serve the people.

I would like to take a few seconds to congratulate everyone running in the Quebec municipal elections. It is truly admirable to serve the public, and I believe it is important to remember that we are here for them. Democracy is not a perfect system, but it is a system that allows every citizen, if they so desire, to become informed, which is the first step. It also allows them to vote, which we all hope they will do, and to run for office, if they have convictions and want to make a difference. This means putting their face on a poster, standing up for their beliefs and getting elected.

The current situation is rather worrisome. People are completely disillusioned. Today, a journalist invited to appear before the committee said that we are in the midst of a democratic crisis. He sees this on a daily basis when he talks to people. No one seems to believe in democracy anymore. People often lose confidence because of scandals. It seems as though politicians are willing to try every trick in the book to slip through the cracks in the system.

*Routine proceedings*

This democratic crisis is very important. We must remember that the first thing to do in any crisis is to fix as many things as possible. The first step is to correct as much as possible to ensure that nothing can possibly be overlooked. The second thing to do relates to transparency. I am not the one who came up with this. All anyone needs to do is go to any university that teaches crisis management. They will say that the first thing to do is make as many corrections as possible and then demonstrate transparency. It is really important to correct the situation as much as possible and then regain the public's trust. That is exactly what the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics is for. Its mission is to ensure that politicians, regardless of their political affiliation, are accountable. The committee provides rigorous oversight to ensure that the interests of Canadians always come first.

I made an observation during recent committee meetings. We welcomed some exceptional guests: the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, the Commissioner of Lobbying, the Information Commissioner, as well as many journalists, researchers, and lawyers. They all came to speak to us. The commissioners, who are instruments of the state working within the system, have, without exception, said two things: First, they are underfunded, and second, they do not have enough power to make decisions and exercise control over the state. I find this compelling because it means that, although processes have been put in place, the commissioners are not being given enough power and funding to do their job.

Worse still, several told us that they often file access to information requests that are delayed or ignored by the government. They have to fight with the government to gain access to information that they should normally have access to, even though they are the regulators. The Information Commissioner has also told us that one-third of requests exceed the prescribed deadlines and that, in many cases, the documents are even destroyed. This does nothing to help the public's perception of our institutions. I truly believe that a lack of accountability is a factor here.

• (1705)

The lack of real consequences is another problem. That is something else we have heard. Commissioners do not have enough clout to enforce the rules. They tell us that it is hard to believe in the stringency of a system when those who violate a law such as the Conflict of Interest Act receive a maximum fine of \$500. That is absurd. People have to pay \$500 when they break the rules of a system that is supposed to represent the people, even though they could potentially influence important decisions and benefit to the tune of millions of dollars. That \$500 seems like a pretty paltry sum to me. It is practically just an administrative formality, really. They get a slap on the wrist and carry on. That is why we see scandals happening year after year, government after government.

We heard this kind of testimony regularly. It was not always about a scandal, but it was about the fact that commissioners have a hard time accessing information and doing their job.

The current Prime Minister's conflict of interest is a rather unusual case. I think that we should treat it as a first, and any first requires some adjustments. I think it is important to recognize that because, for one of the first times in history, we have a prime min-

ister with a rather unique background taking office at a very critical time.

The Prime Minister has a potential conflict of interest with regard to 109 companies that are part of the Brookfield fund, which owns more than 900 companies and is worth billions of dollars. That raises a question. For one of the first times in history, this number is significant. Is our structure able to effectively manage so much information? In committee, we were told that it would take a full-time team to review the 109 companies that are in a potential conflict of interest and to determine what the ramifications are. In the end, two people were assigned this task and they report directly to the Prime Minister.

I think that this is a decision that we, as a society, should question. We are often asked whether there is a challenge function and whether there might be the appearance of a conflict of interest. Without pointing any fingers or casting aspersions on anyone, I believe that we still need to make laws that focus on prevention rather than always looking for a cure after the fact. I often say that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure because that is my motto when it comes to health. I think that also applies to the public service as a whole and to all of our decision-makers.

The two highest ranking public servants, who work on more than just this, are the ones who have to decide, at a time, right now, when we desperately need to improve the country's economy. We have to act fast and meet needs. How quickly we manage this information hinges on two people. They are the ones who make the all decisions in potential conflict of interest cases. I think that is a mistake. We need to change that. This crisis of public trust is a product of these flawed mechanisms, ill-suited at best to the current reality. I think it is important that we make changes in this regard.

The Prime Minister holds the reins of a country whose democratic foundations have been shaken to the core. He recently travelled to New York and London to meet with people. The Information Commissioner told us that access to these records and information about who he met with, when, how and why was needed. Again, nothing has been done. I believe that this, too, erodes public trust.

I think we need to get back to what true ethics are all about. It is not about getting bogged down in minutiae. It is not about seizing on little details. It is not about trying to think like a lawyer and judge what a person has the right to do. Instead, we need to go back to the root of the word "ethos", in other words, moral correctness. It is the right thing to do. I think we need to return to fundamental ethics, which means morality before strategy, transparency before political games.

*Routine proceedings*

To wrap up, I think we still need to ask ourselves some questions. Is our system adapted to the reality of a Prime Minister who comes from the world of international finance? Can we react fast enough? Can our institutions keep up with the current economic climate with a Prime Minister who wants to make very quick decisions that could benefit him? I want to reiterate that I said “could”. However, we have to be able to be sure of that. Do we need to review our practices because it is better to prevent than to cure?

I think it is very important that we analyze this thoroughly. The motion before the House today must be adopted so that we can get answers to our questions.

• (1710)

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I wonder.

In the House of Commons, there are standing committees that cover diverse topics ranging from defence to official languages and natural resources. In each of these committees, members discuss important matters. There may be discussions on reports. Why was this debate reopened in the House of Commons today when we should be discussing Bill C-3?

What is more, the opposition has what we call opposition days. If this issue was truly so important to my opposition colleagues, why did they not use a formal opposition day to debate it and hold a vote on it? I question the process.

At the end of his speech, my colleague mentioned that we need to try to avoid political games. I urge everyone to take seriously the various bills currently before the House of Commons, to be mindful of the time we have available, and to use it wisely.

**Gabriel Hardy:** Madam Speaker, that is a very good question.

Making wise use of our time seems to me to be a clear national issue at the moment. It is a priority, and it is extremely important in order to represent the people. Our country is experiencing a crisis of democracy. We need to reassure those who no longer have faith in our institutions. They need to hear that we are taking their concerns and questions seriously. For example, are politicians really there for them or seeking to take advantage of the fact that the foundations of society are completely shaken? Are our neighbours to the south still our friends? We do not really know. I do not think this is a trivial or unimportant issue; it is an urgent and important issue.

That is what we are doing today.

**Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I have been listening to the questions for the last while.

At one point, the Liberals asked what changed. The law has been the same for a while and everything was fine. What changed? I feel like asking my colleague whether a virus is unfortunately spreading among our colleagues across the way, who all end up infected.

I tend to agree with him that not much has changed. We had ethical problems with the former Liberal prime minister and we have new ethical problems with the new Liberal Prime Minister. Needless to say, they are not the same problems, but they are always ethical. I fear that a virus is spreading in the House of Commons.

Does my colleague share my fear, or does he think that we are safe from this virus on this side of the House?

**Gabriel Hardy:** Madam Speaker, on this side of the House, our job is certainly to ensure that the virus does not spread.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, for one of the first times in history, we are looking at the current Prime Minister's assets and interests. The current situation is not forcing our country's economic development, but I think we need to do it.

This morning, we heard testimony from the former clerk of the Privy Council. He told us that a career in politics never lasts long. This experienced person told us that politicians never know how long their career will last. It might last a year, two years, four years, maybe eight years, sometimes 10 years. No one really knows, but one thing is certain: Politics is not usually a career that lasts 40 or 50 years.

Now we are faced with someone who might be thinking about his life after politics while he is leading a country and holding the reins of its national economy. We have to wonder whether that individual is there for the right reasons, and we need to put mechanisms in place to ensure that he is there for the right reasons.

[*English*]

**Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about a crisis of trust in British Columbia. In British Columbia, local governments are being pushed by the province to create new conflict of interest rules, and they are adapting to a new reality within our institutions and reviewing processes.

If they have to do this at a local level, why do you think the Liberals are against reviewing conflicts of interest at the federal level?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** I will remind the hon. member that I do not think anything when I am sitting in this chair. Questions have to be put through me.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Montmorency—Charlevoix.

• (1715)

**Gabriel Hardy:** Madam Speaker, that just underscores something of paramount importance.

If we have reached the point where people are asking these questions in the provinces, I think it is extremely important that we ask them at the federal level. This further supports my argument that democracy is currently under threat. It is high time that our policies served to reassure the public. We need to overcorrect and prioritize transparency.

*Routine proceedings*

[English]

**Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as a long-time fan of yours, I know you are a deeply thinking person, and I always appreciate the opportunity to hear your thoughts on a range of issues. With that compliment, I am hoping for all of the graces afforded to parliamentarians in this great chamber.

I am thankful for the opportunity to rise today. I will be splitting my time with my dear friend, the hon. member of Parliament for Calgary Crowfoot.

The debate today is a central one to the integrity of the nature of democracy in our country. We need to ask ourselves three principal questions. The first is why this motion is being debated today. The second is what concerns the Liberals have when it comes to opening up transparency on the Prime Minister's conflicts of interest. The third is whether the Prime Minister thinks that somehow he might be above the rule of law in this land, always knows best, can always make the right decision and does not need to subject himself to the standards of transparency that the great people of Calgary Heritage and all Canadians deserve him to be held to.

Let me start with a little reflection on why Canadians deserve answers with respect to the integrity and transparency of their government.

Canadians deserve to understand exactly what the Prime Minister's conflicts of interest are. They deserve to know that the loopholes in the Conflict of Interest Act are not being used to make politicians richer. That is why we are calling for the Clerk of the Privy Council and the chief of staff to the Prime Minister to appear before committee. It would be an opportunity for them, not to be part of some kind of witch hunt about the Prime Minister's individual conduct, but for parliamentarians and all Canadians to understand clearly what the perils might be in the screen they have set up.

Both the Clerk of the Privy Council and the Prime Minister's chief of staff are unique. As government and public officials, they are administrators of the Prime Minister's conflict of interest screen. With the opportunity to appear before committee, people deserve to know how the screen is being applied, when it is being applied and what loopholes need to be closed to protect the public interest.

This is a central issue to how our government conducts itself on behalf of the taxpayer every single day. The fact that it is even a question now was born specifically out of the Prime Minister's commercial conduct in the past.

When the Prime Minister set up his so-called blind trust, he knew exactly what went into it, so consider the likelihood that those assets have changed from the start of the trust to what it is now, seven months into his prime ministership and only a few months after he surrendered them to a blind trust. Members will remember that he has been reluctant, since being sworn in as Prime Minister after a general election campaign, to show transparency. There has been a reluctance from the very beginning. That does not build confidence and trust with the people of Canada at a time when people are very anxious about government abuse and waste in spending.

Specific to this, the Prime Minister is a very impressive business person, and I say that comfortably in this chamber. He coled efforts to raise billions of dollars in capital. He is entitled to future carried interest payments based on the performance of the fund he set up. At his previous firm, he set up a massive fund and raised billions of dollars in which he has a personal stake, but the Canadian public has no idea what is actually in that fund. Members will understand the conflict issues that the opposition is raising in good faith with the government.

The screen set up by the Ethics Commissioner does not require disclosure when the Prime Minister recuses himself when dealing with these types of issues. That is an intolerable loophole. It is an opportunity for a massive abuse of taxpayer money and massive abuse of the public trust. We are talking about a country that the Prime Minister himself has defined as one in a huge crisis. Major decisions need to be made with blinding speed, but with that must come brilliant transparency to ensure that the Prime Minister and his government are not setting themselves up to be on the take later.

This is not a different kind of government, a government worthy of trust. We are now into over 10 years of it, and historically the Liberal Party has not exactly been known as the model for public trust and public confidence with public finances. This speak to a pattern of Liberal corruption.

● (1720)

Canadians have seen this Liberal movie many times before. They saw it with former prime minister Justin Trudeau, who violated four provisions of the Conflict of Interest Act by accepting a vacation on a private island, of all things. They saw it in the SNC-Lavalin scandal, where the former prime minister abused his power and forayed into the integrity of public prosecutions to protect his friends and a company that has been revealed to be mired in scandal and corruption around the world, building prisons for dictators in Middle Eastern jurisdictions. We saw a prime minister who abused the idea of charitable work for our young people through the WE Charity scandal. That was supposed to be good in this country, but he engorged and enriched himself and his family through it. We saw a prime minister who stood by the arrive scam app, an app that was designed to try to keep Canadians safe, and who spent tens of millions in development on phony companies and phony front organizations.

That is the just the tip of the iceberg. This is a record of abuse that stretches into the tens of millions if not hundreds of millions of dollars. Massive spending was required in the context of an international crisis, but so much of that money is completely unaccounted for. It is not exactly a record of trust.

*Routine proceedings*

Now we have a Prime Minister who could cash in on nearly 100 conflicts of interest, according to statistics expert Duff Conacher of Democracy Watch, who appeared before committee. Ninety-nine per cent of the decisions the Prime Minister makes are not subject to conflict laws. The Prime Minister told Canadians that they needed to sacrifice while he financially benefits from offshore tax havens. This is not the kind of confidence that Canadians expect of their government. It is not the kind of trust that we would expect to see built over the months the Prime Minister has had, despite the support of Conservatives, to move major projects forward.

These ethical failures of the Prime Minister and his government are already an opportunity to investigate a bit more how he views ethics and integrity. Internationally, there has been the beginning of a disaster. We have seen the government and the Prime Minister dispense with something as simple as the rule of law and basic human dignity when it comes to standing with the only democracy in the Middle East, Israel, instead siding with terror organizations and rewarding them with statehood. That is one of the highest failures of ethical standards and moral judgment.

The Prime Minister is now ensconced in not just one trade war but two with the United States, which were uncalled for and require Canada to stand strong and united, but he is not turning to resolving a deal with the United States. Instead, he is creating strategic partnerships with the world's biggest rivals in Beijing. The People's Republic of China does not deserve a strategic partnership with Canada. It deserves strategic concern on a range of issues that touch on natural resources, data, technology and the economic growth of our country. For all of these issues, the Prime Minister will be making massive infrastructure decisions with respect to the future of our country, and he, himself, may be personally incentivized in them.

Finally, there is the unleashing of our resources. The Prime Minister is in Asia this week without a single deal to offer the Asian markets that have lined up for our resources. They want to end their reliance on dirty dictator energy. They want to partner with Canada on our resources, the most cleanly cultivated in the entire world with the most stable market for long-term partnerships. However, he did not arrive in Asia for the purpose of doing this, but in anticipation of a meeting with the leadership of Beijing to try to deepen a deal with bad actors.

The decisions made when the Prime Minister looks at the ethics of our country and the screens he sets up, not just to incentivize himself, are for the national interests of our country, the prosperity of our people and, indeed, the security of our western security architecture. That is why this is important.

If this is truly a new government, as the exact same Liberals claim, then they should prove it, flip the page on Liberal corruption and be transparent with Canadians. Should they not want to close these loopholes? Should they not want our people to know that decisions are made in the public's best interest, not in the partisan interests of the Prime Minister or for his personal enrichment?

With that, I will conclude my comments. I hope this Parliament and this chamber pass the amendment we proposed today.

• (1725)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is disappointing, and I say that representing the people of Winnipeg North, that the Conservatives have made the decision to start a filibuster, as opposed to dealing with the real issues that Canadians are concerned about, whether it is Bill C-3, bail reform, securing the borders or many other things.

These are issues the standing committee could continue to deal with. After all, the Conservative and Bloc alliance could dictate what is studied at committee. However, rather than doing this in a responsible, they are on the floor today in a sincere attempt to continue the character assassination of the Prime Minister. I find that disgusting. The Prime Minister is abiding by the laws that were put in place by Stephen Harper. It is very disrespectful to Canadians.

I am wondering if the member—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** The hon. member for Calgary Heritage.

**Shuvaloy Majumdar:** Mr. Speaker, I would perhaps suggest that the hon. member listen to my remarks because I complimented the Prime Minister on his past. I made certain that I not make this about his character, but rather, the need for his decisions to provide the public with transparency.

The Prime Minister has not been embracing the concept of transparency or sunlight when it comes to his personal finances. Since the day he was elected Liberal leader, ran in the election and was sworn in as Prime Minister, only in the aftermath of the election did he provide an opportunity to understand exactly what his personal financial interests are. Public service is a high calling. It is an opportunity for all of us to sacrifice for the benefit of our country by offering transparency so we can build the trust that Canadians need.

[*Translation*]

**Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of the debate, the government and its representatives in the House have been saying that it would be much more important to discuss Bill C-3, which is not being passed quickly enough.

First, I want to remind members that if the government did not try to undo the work that was done in committee, things could move forward much faster. Second, can my colleague tell us why it is important to talk about ethics, about the rules that must be reviewed every five years, and about the fact that this can be done in the House rather than in committee?

*Routine proceedings**[English]*

**Shuvaloy Majumdar:** Mr. Speaker, the government has had the support of opposition parties on a series of priorities. If the government wanted to provide energy corridors to unlock this country's enormous potential, it could decide to table the bills and do so immediately. If the government was serious about bail reform, as the member indicated, the government could have tabled a bill in the first week back in Parliament and got the job done, saving thousands of Canadians from the crime and chaos that affect them on the streets. If the government was serious about transparency and openness, it could have done this from the very beginning by making decisions that would not cast a cloud over every major decision it is making from this point forward.

The government has not shown an honest partnership with opposition parties in trying to make progress for the people and succeed as a democracy. The government has, instead, offered up barriers and bait-and-switch games legislatively. In committees, government members slow down the opportunity to hold people accountable by pursuing transparency and understanding the model of how they do so today.

**Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member spoke about the Liberal Party's track record. He did not have enough time to list all of the transgressions of our ethics laws that took place in the last Parliament. It goes even deeper because the Federal Accountability Act of the previous Conservative government was brought in to deal with the corruption of the government before that.

Would the member comment on the extent to which the Liberal Party, through a succession of prime ministers, has shown itself as an institution to be ethically compromised?

• (1730)

**Shuvaloy Majumdar:** Mr. Speaker, I am a proud colleague of the hon. member for Calgary Crowfoot. He serves his constituents incredibly well, including two retired people in the northwest of Calgary, and I am grateful for his service and hard work.

The list of Liberal transgressions and corruption is taller than I am. I am not particularly tall in stature, but it is longer than my leg, longer than height that I possess of five feet, six inches, and it is longer than the *The Iliad*. We could talk for a long time about Liberal corruption. Conservatives are perpetually elected to restore trust in government and provide transparency and integrity. That is what we will do when we win the next election.

**Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to debate this motion. I will say from the outset that I support the motion and the amendment. I have some history with these matters: I chaired the ethics committee and spent time off and on that committee over the last three Parliaments.

It is a core function of committee to review legislation. Earlier in debate, the member for Winnipeg North made a weird comment suggesting that there is a matter of hypocrisy with Conservatives who supported the Federal Accountability Act in the 41st Parliament who are now concerned about its shortcomings. It is a core function of Parliament and of committees to review laws. This law was up for review, no matter what the circumstances, so I am going to point that out from the outset. There is nothing inconsistent about

Conservatives wanting to review a law that is up for review and bring the lens of current problems that have been identified throughout the years to its study. I support the motion and the work the committee is undertaking now.

As my friend from Calgary Heritage talked about in his speech, there were many cases of the Conflict of Interest Act being breeched by the Liberal government in the 42nd Parliament and the 43rd Parliament. All the way through, it breeched the act. We had the former Prime Minister's acceptance of a vacation, which has been spoken of, and SNC-Lavalin. That episode is a particularly troubling one in that we had interference in the prosecution of a corrupt business being influenced by the former prime minister and the then clerk of the privy council. It was shameful.

The penchant of the Liberal government for trying to get around or ignoring the rules is troubling. We had Bill Morneau and the episode of his forgotten villa in France. The ethics commissioner of the day remarked on loopholes that needed to be repaired in the act, and the government failed to bring forward changes to the law then. That was some time ago. It was 2017, I think.

Later, in the 43rd Parliament, we again saw Bill Morneau in a conflict of interest scandal. He would have it now that he left as finance minister because he could not stand the fiscal imprudence he was being forced to undertake on behalf of the former prime minister, forgetting that he actually resigned in disgrace over his role in the WE Charity scandal.

It is against this backdrop that we have today's motion, which I hope that parliamentarians of all political stripes will support, both the concurrence motion for the report delivered by the ethics committee chair and the amendment moved today.

We have to evolve and make sure that our laws evolve to meet the challenges of the present and the future as best we can. We have had a lot of talk about the Prime Minister's blind trust. I remember a former prime minister and opposition leader Joe Clark, who, under the prime ministership of Paul Martin, called it "a Venetian blind trust" because the concern was that someone could see through and know what assets are there. A blind trust does not work as a protection against conflicts of interest if the subject knows what is in the trust.

• (1735)

That takes us to the current Prime Minister, who has, as has been pointed out by other members today, the potential of carried interest, bonuses and perhaps options. There is the prospect of the Prime Minister's financial interest's being tied up in companies that he knows or can presume are in his blind trust because they are not liquid. It is not a matter of selling everything and having a manager manage funds that one would have no idea of in terms of what is there. That is not the case presently with the Prime Minister, or certainly does not appear to be the case, and that is why there is the need for the study and to hear from specific witnesses at the ethics committee.

*Routine proceedings*

We did not really get off to a good start with the Prime Minister. There has been a lot of talk about how he delayed disclosing his financial interests until absolutely required under the act, having already become Prime Minister. It actually goes back quite a bit further than even before he became the leader of the Liberal Party.

He was named economic adviser to the leader of the Liberal Party; the Liberals did not say “to the prime minister”. A few people noticed right away. They wondered why the Liberals were trying to split hairs between “the prime minister” and “the leader of the Liberal Party”, who were, of course, the same person. Justin Trudeau was the leader of the Liberal Party, and he was the prime minister. The legal hair they were trying to split was that, at the time, the now Prime Minister, as the then adviser, would have been required to comply with the Conflict of Interest Act if he were an adviser to the prime minister. If he were adviser to the leader of the Liberal Party, the Liberals would avoid this disclosure.

This goes back many months, before the Prime Minister became a leadership candidate, but it is material to the debate because one of the things that happened early on, when the Prime Minister had the advisory role, was that the Liberals made a government decision to increase the mortgage insurance ceiling limit on insured mortgages. This created a business opportunity of course for mortgage insurers. One is a Crown corporation, and there are two private ones. One of them is called Sagen, and guess who owns and controls Sagen? It is none other than Brookfield. We saw this happen, and we saw a share price bump immediately after the announcement with Sagen.

Canadians are left to wonder. What are the disclosures? What are the relationships? Was the Prime Minister a part of the decision? Would he have had to recuse if he had actually been listed as the prime minister's adviser rather than as the Liberal leader's adviser? This is not to say that the Prime Minister has acted in his own interest at the expense of the country's interest. The point is the appearance. Canadians want to know and to ensure that the appearance of a conflict does not exist. This is very important to Canadians.

The member for Winnipeg North, in his comments to the previous speaker, talked about all the other business that could be conducted today, and he accused the opposition of a filibuster. His own party was filibustering Bill C-4 at committee last week. As for the bill that we would have been debating, the Liberals had the entire last Parliament to pass it. They failed to manage their legislative calendar then, so I think one could hardly say that it was a burning priority of the government.

We have to at some point debate some of the committee motions. It is important that each member be given the opportunity to weigh in on this with their vote. Yes, today is the day. We are going to have an ethics concurrence report debate and have this important amendment so the ethics committee can call the witnesses that Canadians need to hear from at that parliamentary committee.

• (1740)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is really important to recognize that there are many different opportunities to have the type of debate the Bloc and Conservatives, working together, want to have today, at a significant cost.

We could be talking about the importance of bail reform for Canadians. We could be talking about border security for Canadians. We could be talking about the citizenship bill, which a superior court has mandated we have to pass by November 20. This is let alone that we have the budget on November 4.

Why is the Conservative Party consistently putting party interests ahead of the interests of Canadians, the people we serve?

**Pat Kelly:** Mr. Speaker, I hope the member is not implying that having an ethical government is not in the interests of the Liberal Party. I think that is what I just heard him say, that by having this debate about the Conflict of Interest Act, we are acting only in the interests of the Conservative Party. I would hope that all parties want a regime where the appearance of conflict of interest does not happen.

The member said there are many opportunities for these kinds of debates, and he is right. Today is that opportunity. If the Liberals wanted to get Bill C-3 passed more quickly, they should have managed their calendar better in both this Parliament and the last Parliament.

[*Translation*]

**Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we did a lot of work during the previous Parliament on the issue of Chinese foreign interference. We debated that a lot.

Today, we heard from a witness, an investigative journalist, who came to tell us about Brookfield's various ties to China back when the Prime Minister was the head of that firm.

Does my colleague find that troubling?

[*English*]

**Pat Kelly:** Mr. Speaker, yes I do. I did not see and have not read the testimony from committee, but what the member is reporting to the House is troubling indeed and material to the debate we are having.

**Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of noise coming from the other side of the chamber about whether this debate on ethics is ethical and whether it is blockading the priorities of Canadians being discussed in this place. I think my colleague has answered that question very well. I wonder if he would like to comment on whether it was ethical for the Liberal government to prorogue Parliament and have the least number of sitting days this year since the 1930s, if I understand the math correctly, in order to put the priorities of the Liberal Party and its political health first instead of the needs of Canadians.

**Pat Kelly:** Mr. Speaker, over the years, I have become quite used to this. This is typical and happens over and over again. The Liberal government fails to pass laws. The Liberals table laws, fail to move them, delay and dither, waste time, prorogue in this case, and then blame the opposition that they cannot get their agenda through the House.

*Routine proceedings*

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, this is beyond me. I have put many challenges to the members opposite, but never have they taken me up on the issue of their filibusters, their waste of time or the disgrace in which they often handle the affairs of this chamber. Not one has actually taken me up on the debate.

Let me put this challenge to the member. Will he come to Winnipeg, or I can to his riding, to any university where the two of us can have a debate on how destructive the Conservative Party is? He can provide the counter-argument. I would welcome that debate. Of course, he might say yes here, but I assure members that like every other Conservative, he will not follow up because he knows they are wrong on this issue.

Will he take the challenge?

• (1745)

**Pat Kelly:** Mr. Speaker, there are plenty of volunteers, it would seem, for that debate. Maybe it will happen someday.

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

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** Order.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Brandon—Souris.

**Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the member for Winnipeg North inviting my colleagues to join us in friendly Manitoba. I look forward to that debate taking place on a university campus. Maybe they will come out to Brandon, to my constituency. It would be good to get a few Winnipeg Liberals outside the Perimeter Highway every once in a while to understand the needs of rural Manitobans. I would be glad to take the member back to my alumni university and have him listen to some of the constituents out there, who I am proud to represent, and the challenges they find not just with the Liberal Party's conduct overall, but also particularly with respect to ethics.

It is in fact shocking that the entire argument from the Liberals today about this report and the subsequent amendment coming from the ethics committee is that they want to talk about the fact that this is not a priority for Canadians. I am shocked. I heard a lot about the Liberal ethical challenges on the doorsteps of Brandon—Souris during the last campaign. I am surprised the member for Winnipeg North did not. Perhaps I need to do some doorknocking in his constituency as well, just to remind them of the exact record of the Liberal government.

I would like to note, before I get started, that I plan to split my time with the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan. I understand the members opposite will be very excited to hear from him, particularly given the new situation and the agreement we just came to.

We talk about a lack of accountability and credibility. I asked the member for Winnipeg North this question earlier. I am still struck by the fact that his only response to me, perhaps suggesting the Liberals have a credibility issue on these topics, is to go back and talk about things that happened 20 years ago. Maybe he is accurate on that, maybe he is not, but that is the big comeback, that the bar is set at a certain level so it is fine if we are just as low. That is not really much reassurance for Canadians who have a deep concern about the significant ethical failings of the Liberal government over

the last nine and a half or 10 years. Many of those members are still in the front two or three benches advising the Prime Minister on policy issues, but that he should somehow not be held to a standard, that we should somehow not be improving things in this country is a bit baffling. That is the only argument the Liberals have. I digress, but here we are.

We moved this amendment. I think it is pretty reasonable. The third report is coming from the Standing Committee on Ethics. We are asking for some witnesses to come to have a discussion to better address the concerns posed by the unprecedented extent of the Prime Minister's corporate and shareholding interests "provided that, for the purposes of this order...the following be ordered to appear as witnesses". I do not think it is really that unreasonable, nor do I think most Canadians would think it is really all that unreasonable, for the Prime Minister's successor, as well as a number of his current staff, to come to explain exactly how this blind trust works and what exactly the implications are for his finances when he makes decisions.

It is not that these people coming to committee would be holding up the work of government. That is a convenient excuse for the Liberals, who have dithered away, as my colleague from Calgary said, the first weeks of this Parliament. We passed Bill C-5 because we agree it is finally time for the Liberals to get something built in this country after 10 years of getting nothing done. Tax cuts are always a good thing, so we voted in favour of that too.

The Liberals looked around like they did not know what to do for the rest of the session, as there was no other legislation ready to go. What were they doing when they prorogued for months at a time to run around and find a new leader to salvage the sinking ship of their political party? They did not think of coming up with any new ideas, other than two Conservative platform ideas, to put into legislation.

We came back here in September, and it is the same story. We have been talking about crime for eight years and the fact the Liberals' bail system has destroyed community safety across the country. It took them another month and a half to get a bill together. Where were they all summer? Now they are going to tell us that we are holding up that debate and holding up getting those bills passed.

• (1750)

Bill C-222 from the member for Oxford has been on the books for a month. The government could have passed it already. The bill could be over in the other place. It might have even received royal assent by now if the Liberals were actually serious about getting something done with respect to crime. It is baffling to the vast majority of Canadians, and certainly the ones I represent, that the Liberals' whole argument is "Oh my gosh, the Conservatives are really holding stuff up." No, there was legislation on the books regarding these issues, and the Liberals did not pass it. In fact they did not prioritize it, and they voted against a motion that would have expedited the passage of it.

Now we want to talk about ethics, because there is potentially the most conflicted Prime Minister in Canadian history sitting in office. Maybe he is and maybe he is not. We would like to have a discussion about it, and the Liberals are going to tell Canadians that it is a waste of time. I do not know. I guess we will go to the doors sooner rather than later and have that discussion with Canadian voters, and I am curious to hear. I am not sure that the feedback is going to be quite what the Liberals think it is going to be, despite their set talking point.

I am not sure whether the individuals listed in the proposed amendment to the motion have already texted the Liberal MPs, saying they do not want to come to the committee and asking them to say whatever they can to make their appearance not happen, or whether this is just standard operating procedure for the Liberals.

I pointed out in a question earlier that the members opposite stood up for years, debate after debate, and defended Justin Trudeau, saying there was nothing to see on the WE scandal, that he had done nothing wrong. They were shelling out contracts to WE. They hired the prime minister's family members so they could make some money. The Liberals said there was nothing to see, until of course it all came to light that the Liberals had actually done something wrong, and then they were pretty quiet about it.

Then we got into the Aga Khan's island, and there was nothing to see here; the prime minister was a wonderful guy with nice hair, and there was nothing wrong. That was until it came out that he actually should not have accepted a vacation worth several hundreds of thousand of dollars, on a private island, from a family friend who wanted stuff from the government. Then the Liberals were pretty quiet about it.

Then we got into SNC-Lavalin and the government's actually interfering in the prosecution of a private corporation in this country, full of Liberal insiders and friends. There was nothing to see here; the prime minister had done absolutely nothing wrong, but the Liberals fired two of their colleagues over it. Jody Wilson-Raybould and Jane Philpott got turfed; they bit the dust for Liberal defence mechanisms to defend the prime minister and his office. Then of course it came out that the Liberals had breached ethical activity in those instances.

We want to know this: Is this now the Liberals' falling into the same old habits of defending the Prime Minister, obfuscating the picture and trying to hide as much as possible, or does the new Prime Minister, the member for Nepean, actually have nothing to hide? Canadians deserve clarity on that, and it is not an unreason-

*Routine proceedings*

able ask for Conservatives and the Bloc Québécois, or anybody else in this country, to be making.

The Liberals can continue to stand up and say this is a total waste of time, but it will reflect poorly on them in the future, just as their defence of their actions in the WE scandal, in the SNC-Lavalin scandal, in the Aga Khan island cover-up, in the green slush fund cover-up and in all of the Liberal cover-ups has reflected badly on them in the days that have followed since they said, "nothing to see here".

It is a very simple ask from Conservatives. In fact the proposed amended motion actually sets out timelines. If we need to plan the government House business for the Liberals, we have set out the timelines for when this can be done, in the proposed amended motion, so they can plan their legislative agenda accordingly, because, Lord knows, they have not done it yet. There has not been anything from the Liberals. It took them all year to announce a November 4 budget, three-quarters of the way through a fiscal year, so we have set out the timeline for them.

Let us get this through, get the witnesses called to committee and then get on with solving the rest of the Liberal challenges that are facing Canadians.

• (1755)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know that the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan is going to be the next speaker. I look forward to his indicating very clearly that he is going to come visit the beautiful city of Winnipeg. We will make some arrangements at either the University of Winnipeg or the University of Manitoba, maybe get a first-year political studies class or something of that nature, and let us talk about the last six months. I really do look forward to it, I must say.

It is truly amazing. A new member comes in and is giving the Tory lines that come from the back room. The biggest Tory line out there is to assassinate the character of the Prime Minister whenever they get the opportunity, and that is what we have witnessed all afternoon.

The Bloc is working in co-operation with the Conservatives. Yes, they have a majority on the standing committee that deals with ethics, and if it were up to them, that is all they would talk about, because their priority is not Canadians; it is their own political, partisan Conservative interests. The Conservatives have demonstrated that time and time—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** I have to give time to the member to respond.

The hon. member for Brandon—Souris.

*Routine proceedings*

**Grant Jackson:** Mr. Speaker, it is pretty rich hearing the member for Winnipeg North talk about backroom lines when he has been coming forward for 10 years straight, no matter which prime minister is in the chair, to defend the government on ethical standards, saying the Liberals have done nothing wrong until it is proven. I did not say anything negative about the current Prime Minister at all. I said he may be in a conflict; he may not be. Let us shine the light of ethical review on that.

By the way, as you talked about putting partisan political interests first, what about when Canada is in a trade crisis and crime crisis and you prorogue Parliament to knife your leader in the back, go find a new one and call an election just to save the sinking ship of your political party instead of putting the needs of Canadians first?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** Just as a reminder, comments, even said in a rhetorical sense, should be addressed to the Chair.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Montcalm.

**Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, for me, engaging in politics is a noble pursuit. A key pillar of my work in politics is to make politics more ethical.

Does my colleague realize that the other side of the House is setting a trap and trying to reopen the debate by playing petty partisan politics?

Right now, I want to bring the debate back to ethics. Does my colleague agree that the Conflict of Interest Act should be expanded to include the appearance of a conflict of interest?

If one day, in the distant or not-so-distant future, he were to form government, would he be a strong advocate of legislation governing the appearance of a conflict of interest?

[English]

**Grant Jackson:** Mr. Speaker, just to address my Bloc colleague's preamble, I think his intention of wanting to highlight ethics and bring it to a greater forefront in the ongoing discussion in this country is a very admirable goal. I want to commend him on that being part of his commitment to his constituents, and indeed to all Quebeckers and Canadians, when he came to this place.

This is certainly something worth reviewing. I know that our opposition parties are working very closely together as members of the ethics committee. That is important, because as officially recognized parties in this place, we need to work together to hold the government to account. That includes on matters related to ethics.

I certainly think this is worth reviewing by colleagues, and I commend him for bringing it forward.

**Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will make this quick. There is an old proverb saying that a wicked man flees when no one is pursuing him, but the righteous are bold as a lion. Basically, that means if someone has done nothing wrong, what is the reason for holding up this motion? If there is nothing to hide, why are they running? Let us just deal with it.

**Grant Jackson:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for a great reminder of an old proverb that should guide all of our work in this

place, regardless of which side of the aisle people sit on. It is the exact message of my speech and indeed of our entire party and the opposition parties. If the Prime Minister has nothing to fear, he has nothing to hide.

Let us see whether witnesses will come clean at committee and see if this fund through Brookfield, this blind trust, is actually being managed appropriately without the Prime Minister's decisions and the decisions he and his cabinet are making benefiting him in any way.

● (1800)

**Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not normally plan my date schedule on the floor of the House of Commons, but since the member for Winnipeg North is so eager, this seems the right time to invite all members to join us in Winnipeg during the November break week. I will fly to Winnipeg. Wednesday, November 12 would probably be a good day. It is the day after Remembrance Day, so it is not going to conflict with anything, but students will still be in their classrooms. I will rely on the member to make some of the logistical arrangements on the ground himself, since I am providing the courtesy of flying to his hometown. This will be a great debate in front of students and other members of Parliament, I am sure.

I have been visiting a number of university campuses precisely to ask this question to students: Are they better off or worse off than their parents generation? I know many students I talk to are telling me they are worse off as a result of the failing economic policies of the government. We can talk about economics. We can talk about foreign policy. We can talk about House procedure. I am happy to debate that member anywhere, on anything, anytime, and I think the students of Winnipeg will benefit from that greatly. This will be Wednesday, November 12 in Winnipeg, but it will be the responsibility of the member for Winnipeg North to arrange some of the logistical details and to pick me up at the airport.

On to the subject of this debate, which will maybe be a bit of a prelude to that grand event coming up in a few weeks, we are talking about the Prime Minister's conflicts of interest. The Prime Minister we have in office at present is the most conflicted prime minister in this country's history. He will have to, or is supposed to, recuse himself from decisions related to more than 100 different companies he has an interest in. This conflict of interest screen will be administered, conveniently, by his chief of staff, as well the Clerk of the Privy Council. The process of a blind trust is that somebody else is making decisions about what is done going forward with those investments, but of course, a person cannot necessarily know what they had that was put into that conflict in the first place.

*Routine proceedings*

For those watching at home, this is how a conflict of interest screen works. I buy a Dunkin' Donuts, and then I put it in a blind trust. In my job as a minister, or a prime minister, a decision comes forward with a potential subsidy for Dunkin' Donuts. It is in a blind trust, but I still know I used to invest in that. This is the problem for the whole architecture of this, frankly. If the Prime Minister made all of these investments, continues to hold the investments, knows he has them, yet is involved in decisions that would materially benefit him, even though he cannot control further decisions made with those companies, that still raises some major questions.

It is important to analyze the Prime Minister's own words and his own philosophy as it relates to relationships between corporations and government. I would encourage Canadians to read his book *Value(s)* because I think it is quite revealing about the Prime Minister's approach to things. It is revealing in that he very much believes in this kind of stakeholder capitalist, elite capitalist model of decision-making, which is not free markets, but rather, it is elite business leaders and elite politicians getting together to make decisions, to pick winners and losers, to decide what is going to go forward and what is not going to go forward.

We see the Prime Minister leaning into this elite capitalism, elite corporatism philosophy with some of the proposals he has put forward, which is, on the one hand, more government involvement and control in the market, and, on the other hand, simultaneously, government abridging processes for favoured companies. With Bill C-5, the government did not choose to reform the assessment process. Instead, it said it is going to create an opportunity to fully abridge that process for certain favoured companies or favoured projects.

- (1805)

What we see developing with the Prime Minister is the implementation of his elite corporatist agenda. It is the idea that large businesses and politicians at the elite level come together to say what they like and do not like and what they think should and should not happen, and then they provide a red carpet for favoured projects or subsidies for favoured projects or approaches, leaving in place all the existing roadblocks for other kinds of businesses and those who are not as well connected or part of the elite corporate circle involved in making these decisions.

To a lot of people, the language used in the Prime Minister's book *Values*, such as elite corporatism or stakeholder capitalism, whatever one calls it, sounds nice in a sense because the implication is that people will be coming together and discussing the common good. However, in practice, what it ends up being is a small circle of elite and powerful people coming together and theorizing about what the common good is, while doing a lot of things that are particularly in their own interest.

In opposition to that approach, the Conservatives believe in genuinely free markets and open and transparent democratic decision-making where, yes, we deliberate about the common good, but where all of society, a much broader range of individuals, is able to participate in discussions and decisions about the common good and where economic activity is driven by creative competition in which all businesses can take part, not in which there are a small number of favoured elites.

There is an elite corporatist philosophy coming from the Prime Minister, and it is combined with a personal reality in which he is personally invested in or connected to many of the companies that could play a consequential role in benefiting from the corporate-government relationship the Prime Minister has advocated for. This is a big problem, and I think we are going to see the implications of it going forward from a Prime Minister who believes in elite corporatist decision-making and who is connected to and invested in many of the corporations that could well benefit from that process.

If we want to talk about what is aligned with our values and what is going to advance the common good, I note we have a jobs crisis right now in this country, and we are seeing more decisions that lead companies to move jobs out of the country. These are companies like Stellantis, which received significant government subsidies and chose to move jobs out of the country.

We sadly have a Prime Minister who led by example. Brookfield's corporate headquarters was moved out of the country while he was running the show. We have a well-connected Prime Minister coming from that world, and he paved the way to moving jobs out of this country. It goes to show that elite corporatist decision-making very often does not align with the interests of workers and Canadian families, and that the kind of model he advocates in his book is not one that aligns with anything many Canadians would like to see.

I will sit down and invite the member for Winnipeg North to respond.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I will definitely work with the member to get something set up at one of the two universities in Winnipeg. I very much appreciate it and look forward to it. I will pick the member up at the airport so we can get to the right venue.

As for the question I have for him, what about Bill C-3, the budget, the border control bill and bail legislation? Does the Conservative Party see all of these things as important issues that need—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** I would like a very brief response by the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

**Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned some important issues. Of course, if the Liberals were serious about getting real bail reform through this House, they would have supported our motion, which advanced the jail not bail legislation of the hon. member for Oxford. Sadly, they do not support real bail reform, which is why they did not support our efforts to move it forward. They are the ones obstructing the work that needs to happen.

*Routine proceedings*

• (1810)

[Translation]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

[English]

The question is on the amendment.

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

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, we request a recorded division.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the division stands deferred until Tuesday, October 28, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

\* \* \*

### PETITIONS

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatoon West, particularly residents of Fairhaven, Meadowgreen, Parkridge and Confederation in Saskatoon who have faced significant challenges with crime.

Violent crime was up 10% in 2024, with an increase in assault, murders and robberies. Saskatoon has had 14 homicides in 2024, an almost 15% increase over the number in 2023. Saskatoon residents feel unsafe in their houses and on the streets.

The undersigned petitioners call for the government to do the following: one, reform the catch-and-release bail system to prevent dangerous repeat violent offenders from serving their sentences in the community; two, establish new indictable offences, reporting obligations and limitations on weapons possession for previous offenders who break conditions; and three, pass legislation in which an accused charged more than twice with certain indictable offences must be detained in custody while subject to summons, appearance notice or release order.

I stand with the residents of Saskatoon West.

#### YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

**Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to table a petition on a very sombre subject, which is the ongoing youth unemployment crisis. Youth unemployment is approaching 15%. More than 460,000 young people aged 15 to 24 are out of work.

The petitioners highlight that youth unemployment is alarmingly high across Canada. They note that the current situation leaves many Canadians in these critical formative years unable to secure stable, full-time employment, despite having education and the skills and being ready to work. They also highlight that training and skill development programs have not kept pace with the realities of Canada's labour market, and that many young people are left with-

out the skills that align with what employers are looking for. The petitioners raise concerns as well about how immigration policy is impacting the youth unemployment crisis, and how immigration policies have not been well aligned with our labour market needs. Further, the rising cost of living makes it harder for young people to afford housing near or where available jobs are and for businesses to attract and retain employees.

Persistent youth unemployment weakens Canada's economy and social well-being. The petitioners want the Government of Canada to do what Conservatives have already done, which is to present a clear plan to reduce youth unemployment developed in consultation with young Canadians, employers and educators. Conservatives have already done that through the Conservative youth jobs plan. They want to see the government develop a plan and report to Parliament on progress towards job creation, training alignment and youth labour market participation.

• (1815)

#### HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA

**Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the next petition I would like to table highlights and raises concern about human rights abuses in North Korea.

The petitioners identify a number of aspects of this worsening human rights situation: the prioritization of food distribution to those considered useful to the existing regime; the vast security apparatus that suppresses dissent through coercion, surveillance, fear and punishment; the public executions; and the state-sponsored abductions of citizens of other nations. The petitioners further draw attention to human rights abuses involved in the rendition of North Korean refugees from the People's Republic of China, despite the human rights abuses they are subject to.

The petitioners call on the House to take action on this. They want to see the government table regular reports in the House on the human rights situation in North Korea, including to highlight a number of prison camps, like Kwan-li-so and Kyo-hwa-so, which they would like us to pay particular attention to.

The petitioners want the government to advocate for North Korean defectors and refugees so their rights are protected and so they are allowed safe passage to South Korea, where they will be able to live and be recognized as citizens. They want us to promote human rights in North Korea and engage internationally and work collaboratively with other countries and bodies to promote political freedoms for the people of North Korea.

I commend this petition to members for their consideration.

## MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

**Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if members want more petitions, please ask, but the final petition I will table this evening deals with the issue of euthanasia.

The petitioners are concerned in particular about the adverse effects of the current euthanasia regime on people with disabilities. They note that allowing so-called medical assistance in dying for those with disabilities or chronic illness devalues their lives, tacitly endorsing the notion that life with disability is optional and by extension dispensable.

The petitioners highlight concerns about how offering euthanasia as a “solution” for disability or chronic illness reduces incentives to improve the treatment and care of people with those conditions. The petitioners say that Canadians do not want an ableist health care system where the lives of those with disabilities are seen as not worth living.

The petitioners propose, in this case, that the government protect all Canadians whose natural death is not reasonably foreseeable by prohibiting euthanasia for those whose prognosis for natural death is more than six months.

\* \* \*

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

## CITIZENSHIP ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-3, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (2025), as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

**Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I first want to talk about what Canadian citizenship is. It is not merely a piece of paper or a legal status; it is a solemn promise. It is a bond of belonging that unites generations who built this country through hard work, sacrifice and shared purpose, a shared purpose that has been eroding under the divisive rhetoric of the Liberal government over the last decade.

Canadian citizenship is one of the most precious in the world. It carries with it not just rights but also profound responsibilities to our history, our institutions and our communities, and to one another. For generations, people around the world looked to Canada as a model of how to build a nation rooted in fairness, freedom, democracy and the rule of law, things that have come under attack since the Liberals took power a decade ago. People around the world admired not only our prosperity but also our values, and they aspired to join the Canadian family.

## Government Orders

Citizenship must mean something. It must be earned and respected, and it must never be cheapened by Liberal ideology. A decade of Liberal neglect and mismanagement has weakened the value of citizenship in the eyes of many Canadians. It is not because of immigrants and newcomers who come here in good faith to work, contribute and build a better life, but because of a Liberal government that has turned our immigration system into a chaotic, unfair and unsustainable mess. Hard-working, law-abiding immigrants who are pursuing the Canadian dream are not to blame. The blame lies with the Liberals who broke our cherished system.

Bill C-3, in the form in which it was introduced by the Liberals in the spring, goes too far and abandons a core principle that Conservatives put in place: the first-generation limit. That safeguard was implemented for one simple reason: to stop the spread of Canadians of convenience, to stop citizenship from being passed down indefinitely to people who have never lived here, never contributed here or never built any connection to Canada whatsoever.

However, the Liberals do not seem care. Their initial Bill C-3 would abolish that intended safeguard and then recklessly replace it with a hollow substantial connection test that would amount to little more than a box-checking exercise. This Liberal loophole would create an open-ended system that would allow individuals who have never lived here, and whose parents may have visited only briefly decades ago, to automatically acquire citizenship.

A parent who has spent a mere 1,095 non-consecutive days, without even passing a criminal background check, could confer citizenship on a child who has never set foot in this country. Think about that. That is not nation-building; that is legislating the devaluation of our heritage and what it means to be a Canadian citizen. It would set a dangerous precedent that would undermine the integrity of our national identity and our reputation in the world.

Conservatives support restoring citizenship to lost Canadians but will not stand idly by while the Liberals take advantage of the situation to further their ideological agenda.

Hard-working immigrants who come to Canada today spend years building their lives here. Those who come through the proper channels must meet strict residency requirements, learn our language, study our history, pass a test, obey the law and prove their loyalty and commitment to this country. They do what it takes to earn their place in the Canadian family, including people in my beautiful riding of Richmond Hill South, where most people were born outside Canada but have earned their citizenship and cherish being Canadian every single day.

*Government Orders*

The Liberal Bill C-3, without the Conservative amendments adopted in committee, would create a two-tier system, one tier in which foreign-born individuals who have never lived here could receive all the rights of citizenship simply because of ancestry and bloodlines, and another in which those who obeyed the rules, contributed to our society and paid their taxes and their dues have to wait long in line under a back-logged immigration system that was broken by the Liberals.

That is unfair to newcomers who play by the rules and are working hard to meet the requirements, as well as to taxpayers who sustain our public services. It would strain the very systems communities rely on, from health care to housing, pensions or consular services, by conferring citizenship on people with no connection and no contribution. Our public services would face new pressures, compounding those caused by existing Liberal mismanagement.

● (1820)

Citizenship must never become a passport of convenience. It must remain a bond of loyalty, or else faith in our system and once-great institutions will continue to erode. When citizenship loses its meaning, so does the sense of shared nationhood that sustains our democracy.

Conservatives did not merely criticize. We worked hard when the Liberals were asleep at the wheel while trying to ram through Bill C-3. At committee, we fought tooth and nail and secured common-sense amendments to restore some fairness and integrity to the deeply flawed Liberal bill. Our common-sense Conservative changes require that anyone seeking citizenship by descent or adoption meets the same core expectations as those who earn citizenship through naturalization for elements such as residency, language, knowledge and security screening.

Conservatives strengthened the residency requirements for citizenship by descent or by adoption by now requiring that a parent has been physically present for at least 1,095 days within any five-year period before the child's birth or adoption. This tightened up the previously much looser requirements.

Next, Conservatives strengthened the language and knowledge requirements so that persons aged 18 to 54 must have adequate knowledge in at least one official language, including a demonstration of adequate knowledge of Canada and the responsibilities and privileges associated with citizenship. This is important, as we know that the Liberals have been busy erasing Canada's heritage at every opportunity over the last decade. Remember how they removed a prized Canadian icon, Terry Fox, from our passports?

Lastly, Conservatives strengthened the security screening so that citizens by descent or adoption must undergo a security assessment. This is important, as we know that the Liberals have let countless convicted criminals into our country under their watch.

As many as 17,600 foreign immigration applicants with prior criminal convictions were approved in the past 11 years and the Liberals let them in. These changes ensure equal treatment, equal responsibility and equal respect for the value of citizenship, principles that the Liberals have little regard for.

Conservatives also required reporting and transparency so that Parliament, and therefore Canadians, will know how many citizenships are granted, at what times, under what circumstances and with what exemptions. Accountability is not an obstacle to compassion. It is a safeguard for our democracy. These amendments honour lost Canadians while protecting the value of our prized citizenship.

The heart of citizenship is belonging, not on paper but in spirit, identity and duty. Our country is more than its borders. It is a shared story, a shared responsibility and a shared destiny. When citizenship is diluted, national identity and our sense of pride erodes. When standards disappear, our trust in one another and in institutions collapses. When Parliament treats citizenship carelessly, Canadians lose faith that their country is something worth sacrificing for. Of course, the Liberals demand that Canadians of all generations continue to sacrifice for their Liberal failures.

I know that Halloween is around the corner, but the Liberals seem keen to hand out passports like candy on Halloween night. Canadians will not be tricked. Standing up against handing out automatic citizenships like participation trophies is not about exclusion. It is about fairness, coherence and pride.

Canadians, including millions of law-abiding immigrants and newcomers who aspire to become permanent residents and citizens, want a system rooted in rules, responsibility and reciprocity. It is not xenophobia. It is nationhood.

Today, the Liberal government has a choice. It can stand by its public commitments to accept constructive amendments and respect the integrity of citizenship, or it can bow to the NDP and undo the common-sense work achieved at committee. If it chooses the latter, it will do more than weaken a bill. It will weaken the value of Canadian citizenship itself.

The House must send this message to Canadians and to the world: We cherish our citizenship, and we will safeguard it. We will not hand it out without connection, contribution and commitment. Let us honour those lost Canadians without creating a future of mistrust.

● (1825)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there was a report that came out when Stephen Harper was in government.

A committee, during the time of the Harper government, made a recommendation beginning, "Background checks are only appropriate for candidates seeking a grant of citizenship as opposed to those for whom citizenship is a birthright."

I am wondering if the hon. member would say that—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** The hon. member for Richmond Hill South has time for a very brief answer.

• (1830)

**Vincent Ho:** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives do not believe in two-tier citizenship. We believe all people applying to become a citizen should be treated equally. That includes things such as a security assessment, language—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** The member will have a full four and a half minutes for questions and comments when the House next takes up this matter.

---

## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

### THE ECONOMY

**Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to try to get a more expansive answer on a question I asked in question period a couple of weeks ago. I asked the member from northern Saskatchewan about the spike in food bank usage in Saskatchewan, where 35% of children are food insecure and over 30% of households are food insecure. I found the answer the member gave me lacking. He went on some rant about nothing that was even close to the question I asked about food banks.

Since I asked that question, new numbers have come out. For the first time, there have been over four million visits to food banks in Toronto. The numbers are quite staggering. I will read some into the record. Canada food inflation is nearly double the Bank of Canada targets and food prices have been rising 40% faster in Canada than in the U.S.A. Quite often, our friends across the way want to make this a global issue, but the food price increases are hitting Canada particularly harder than many of our G7 partner countries.

The question is, what is happening in Canada that is not happening in other parts of the world? Conservatives have asked this question time and time again, and the member for Whitby went on a rant about there being no hidden food taxes, but that could not be further from the truth. Some of the policies the Liberals have implemented over the last 10 years have led to so many Canadians being food insecure.

Nearly one in five food bank clients are employed but still cannot make ends meet. Ten years ago, that was not the case. Those who had jobs in Canada were able to put food on the table for their families. That is not the case anymore. The HungerCount food report that just came out says, “It took decades to reach one million visits in a month, and it has now taken half a decade to double that.”

We hear a lot from those on the other side, but one thing they trot out as their showpiece is the school lunch program. One thing I cannot figure out is, after 10 years, why the Liberals are proud that they are handing out food stamps. That is not an endorsement of

### Adjournment Proceedings

their policies. That is an indictment of them. Parents want to be able to feed their own children. What the Liberal government has done under Justin Trudeau and now the current Prime Minister is strip that ability away.

Canadians now pay more in taxes than they do in food, clothing and shelter for their families. That is what the Liberal government has done with its reckless spending and continued increases in taxes on Canadians. They still stand to say they took 22 million Canadians off the tax rolls. Yes, that saved them nine dollars a month. The fact that parents now drive past the grocery store to go to the food bank is an indictment on how bad the Liberal government has handled the finances of our country over the past 10 years. Inflation continues to spiral out of control, and food prices continue to go up.

Do the Liberals realize that having a food program in school is an indictment of the government and not a showpiece? Parents would love to have the ability to feed their own kids. They do not want food stamps. They want good jobs on safe streets in the country they love.

**Wade Grant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to begin my speech with the facts: There is no food packaging tax. Industrial carbon pricing is not applied at the grocery store checkout. It is applied to large industrial emitters, the biggest polluters in Canada, and is structured in a way that ensures Canadian industries remain competitive while cutting emissions at the lowest possible cost.

Canada's pricing system gives companies flexibility. They can cut emissions through innovation, buy credits from innovators or invest in cleaner processes. This is not a cost imposed on families; it is a policy that holds polluters accountable while encouraging investment and growth.

There is also no food tax. The evidence is clear: Inflationary pressures on food have been driven by global supply chain shocks, the war in Ukraine and energy price volatility, not by Canada's carbon pricing policies.

On plastics, the hon. member suggests that reducing single-use plastics is a tax on food. That is false. The single-use plastics prohibition regulations are not taxes; they are important regulations designed to prevent harmful plastics from polluting our rivers, lakes and oceans. They target items like checkout bags, cutlery, stir sticks and certain types of food service ware made from hard-to-recycle plastics.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

It is estimated that these regulations will prevent over 1.3 million tonnes of the plastic waste and 22,000 tonnes of the plastic pollution that will occur from the continued use of single-use plastics between 2023 and 2032 without the regulations. Alternatives are already available. Canadian businesses across the country are making the transition successfully and are saving money by moving to reusable and recyclable options.

I have come to understand that when the hon. member refers to a second carbon tax, that is code for the clean fuel regulations. What the member's argument fails to recognize is that the CFR actually creates economic benefits for farmers by creating demand for agricultural feedstocks for biofuels, a market mechanism that both benefits the climate and benefits our important farming sector.

Eliminating industrial carbon pricing and the clean fuel regulations, as the member opposite proposes, would undermine investment, cost jobs, increase pollution and isolate Canada from global markets. These measures are not about rising costs; they are about protecting Canadians from the higher costs of climate change and pollution.

Just to touch on the member's evaluation of the food program, I come from a first nation where a lot of people have lived under the poverty line for many generations, and I see kids going to school now in my community with smiles on their faces and food in their bellies, excelling in school. That is because of programs such as this. I really wanted to raise that. In first nations communities, these are very important measures.

Climate action is economic action. Our policies protect families, support workers and position Canada for long-term competitiveness.

• (1835)

**Warren Steinley:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's comments on the food program, because there were private food programs in place. I can think of some in my city: Chili for Children, the Nutrien food program, the Mosaic food programs and the Mother Teresa Middle School food programs for less fortunate kids.

The problem is that, while there were programs in place, the Liberals never had conversations with any of the groups delivering food programs. They just made a cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all program. I am not sure what the numbers are, but 400,000 kids are supposedly going to get food. There are over five million kids below the poverty line using food banks every week.

If the Liberals thought that was going to fix the problem, it has not. The solution is to bring back affordability, lower food prices and stop taxing parents to death. I will say it every time I am on my feet: Parents want to feed their own kids, and the government cannot help but stand in the way of that with its overburdensome regulations, red tape and taxes and terrible fiscal policies.

**Wade Grant:** Mr. Speaker, let me be perfectly clear that there is no food packaging tax in Canada. There is no industrial carbon tax on groceries. These are environmental and economic policies designed to cut pollution, protect health and support competitiveness.

Independent analysis confirms that food price inflation has been driven by global supply disruptions, not by federal climate mea-

asures. Abandoning policies would mean more pollution, more uncertainty and higher costs in the long run. Canadians deserve solutions grounded in evidence, not slogans, and that is what this government is continuing to deliver.

THE ECONOMY

**Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to rise in the House not long ago to ask the government what it was doing about what has very clearly become a crisis that has made it so that Canadians cannot afford food.

We know that food bank usage across the country is experiencing record highs. Food banks all over have huge demands, including in my riding, where the St. Thomas Elgin Food Bank will have to feed 30,000 mouths this year. This is the third straight year of record increases. I asked the government about this, and I am going to quote directly from the Secretary of State for Labour, who responded. He said, "We are going to be building. We are building homes and building projects in the national interest, with Canadian lumber, Canadian steel and Canadian unionized workers."

I am not sure what the affordability plan for groceries is, but I do not believe Canadians are going to be eating Canadian lumber. I do not believe Canadians are going to be eating Canadian steel. I certainly hope they are not going to be eating Canadian unionized workers.

The government, in its response, did not even address groceries or food costs, and I understand why. I know full well why the government is not interested in talking about grocery prices, because it would have to acknowledge what has happened to them on the Liberal government's watch.

We know that food bank usage is up 142% since 2015. We know that grocery store food prices have risen by a staggering 40% since the Liberals took power. Now there is a report from Food Banks Canada showing that hunger is being "normalized", which is a word from the experts. Now food bank usage for Canadian families has not become something that is an extreme situation or just a temporary stopgap; rather, it is part of what life is for them. That is a tragedy; it is a crisis, one that has been aggravated and exacerbated by Liberal government policy.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

We do know, contrary to what I am sure the parliamentary secretary is going to say tonight, that there are a number of hidden taxes on food costs in this country, including the industrial carbon tax, which actually taxes the producers of food, which then trickles downstream to consumers; and regulations on plastics and packaging, which make it more expensive for producers and packagers of food, and then that gets passed along to consumers. These are hidden taxes on groceries that, along with other inflationary pressures, are driving up for Canadians the cost of buying groceries.

I have heard from constituents who have had to make difficult choices from week to week about whether they fill up their car so they can get to work or whether they buy groceries. We know that people are skipping meals because they cannot afford the grocery store hauls they used to. Is this the new normal? Is this what Canadians are going to be forced to contend with?

We have not seen from the government anything resembling a plan. In fact, when we talk about very real, very demonstrable driving factors that push up the cost of food, the Liberals try to gaslight Canadians and say they do not exist. They try to say there are no clean fuel standards that make it more costly to move goods around. They are saying there are no costs to the packaging requirements. The government is gaslighting Canadians, and in doing so, it is ignoring that it has access to mechanisms and solutions that we are happy to give them and that would make life more affordable for Canadians and reduce prices at the grocery store.

My question for the government is very simple: Will the Liberals stop their gaslighting and get serious about reducing costs for Canadians at the grocery store?

• (1840)

**Wade Grant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, faced with unjustified tariffs from the U.S. and shifting global supply chains, our new government is well aware of the affordability challenges facing Canadians. Although we have begun to see encouraging signs of stabilization, housing prices have gone up in recent years; although Canada's inflation rate has been within the Bank of Canada's target for 21 consecutive months, we know that food inflation remains a concern as well.

That is why our government is taking immediate action to address this cost of living crisis. Our goal is to bring down costs so that Canadians can keep more of their paycheques and spend where it matters most to them. Budget 2025 would build upon this important work that has already been done. As we all await the tabling of that historic document, I will outline a few ways our government has already acted decisively to make life more affordable for Canadians.

Among the first pieces of legislation introduced by our new government was Bill C-4, which would deliver a middle-class tax cut to allow hard-working Canadians to keep more money in their pockets. I am proud to note that this tax cut would save a two-income family up to \$840 in 2026; going forward, it is expected to deliver over \$27 billion in tax savings to Canadians over the next five years. This rate reduction would benefit Canadians across the country, and the bulk of the middle-class tax cut would go to those with incomes in the two lowest tax brackets, including half to those

in the first bracket, which is \$57,375 and below in 2025. With this middle-class tax cut, the lowest marginal personal income tax rate would be reduced from 15% to 14%, effective July 1, 2025, and this tax cut would help hard-working Canadians keep more of their paycheques to spend where it matters most.

That is not all. This legislation, which I am happy to announce finished clause-by-clause consideration at FINA earlier today, would also eliminate the GST for first-time homebuyers on new homes up to and under \$1 million, and lower the GST for first-time homebuyers on new homes between \$1 million and \$1.5 million. Doing so would save Canadians up to \$50,000, allowing more young people and families to enter the housing market and realize their dream of home ownership. Providing GST relief means Canadians would face lower upfront housing costs and keep more money in their pocket. This would also have a dynamic effect on increasing supply, spurring the construction of new homes across the country.

The bill would remove the consumer carbon tax, saving Canadians money at the pump. I am happy that all parties joined us in supporting Bill C-4. Unfortunately, that non-partisan approach to making life more affordable for Canadians has not translated elsewhere.

While the Conservatives continue to talk down the Canadian economy and Canadian workers, we are stepping up in other ways as well. We plan to spur the construction of new homes with the newly launched Build Canada Homes initiative, which will increase Canada's supply of affordable housing and play a pivotal role in the government's plan to help double the pace of housing construction over the next decade.

The Prime Minister also recently announced that we are making the national school food program permanent, to provide meals for up to 400,000 children. This program will ensure that kids are fed healthy meals at school and save families with two children \$800 per year on groceries. While the Conservatives may refer to this program as “garbage”, I would like to see them say that to the families in my riding. As I said earlier, in my community of Musqueam, I see kids actually going to school with smiles on their face and food in their belly, and they are excelling in their school work as they have not done in many generations.

With these measures, we are delivering changes to cut taxes, bring down costs and put money back in the pockets of Canadians.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

• (1845)

**Andrew Lawton:** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the hon. parliamentary secretary, he may have been getting his talking points mixed up. I was asking about grocery store prices. I was not asking about new home construction, which is a very important issue. If we had more time, we could talk about other areas in which the Liberal government has failed to serve the needs of Canadians. However, I was asking about food costs.

I was asking when the government is going to stop pretending that there are not regulations and taxes embedded in the prices of groceries that Canadians are forced to pay. This remains a live issue, but since the parliamentary secretary wants to talk about everything other than that, I will latch on to one thing he mentioned, which is the school food program. I agree that no family should have to go without healthy, affordable, fresh food. Why is a school food program necessary, in the government's eyes, after 10 years of the Liberals?

**Wade Grant:** Mr. Speaker, as Canadians, we take care of each other. It is a promise at the heart of who we are, and it goes back generations. From universal public health care to employment insurance and strong, stable funded pensions such as the Canada pension plan, there has always been in our agreement that we will take care of our neighbours when they are in need. Our government is laser-focused on lowering costs and will continue to present serious solutions to ensure that Canadians are better off.

On November 4, our colleague, the Minister of Finance and National Revenue, will present the federal budget. This budget will present the next steps in our plan to catalyze investment and build a united and strong economy, one that would create higher pay and careers, raise incomes, withstand global shocks and make us the strongest economy in the G7.

## LABOUR

**Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am standing here today in solidarity with the over 60,000 CUPW workers in this country, workers the government has turned its back on.

Last spring, I asked the Minister of Jobs and Families why the Liberals were not protecting postal services and our posties. She said, "Federal mediators continue to work with the parties on a solution". That is not true. None of that is happening. There is no effective mediation happening. There are no effective negotiations ongoing. It has all been a sham. The Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement has simply parroted every single thing that Canada Post management has said to undermine workers, delay fair negotiations and chip away at one of our country's most fundamental and trusted public institutions.

Just ask anyone from a small or rural community how important Canada Post is. Ask a small business owner what Canada Post means to them. CUPW workers have proposed ways to save this Canadian institution. We could have postal banking. We could have senior check-ins. We could have a delivery system that meets our climate targets. Canada Post's infrastructure could be expanded to benefit all Canadians. It could be a public service that strengthens our communities. Instead, the Liberals would rather punish the workers and let Canada Post die.

New Democrats know workers deserve better. I am so proud of the work my colleagues and I have done to protect workers in this country. I think about the work the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie did in the last Parliament to force the government to put in place anti-scab legislation. I think about my colleague from Winnipeg Centre, who has tabled legislation that would repeal section 107 of the Canada Labour Code, the section the Liberal government continues to use against workers, taking away their right to negotiate.

I am proud of the legislation that I am bringing forward to the House that will stop company unions such as CLAC. It would stop unions that are not working in the best interests of their workers, because every single worker deserves to know the union that represents them has their best interests, and only their best interests, at heart.

There is so much work left to do. We need legislation to ensure that all major federal projects must use Canadian workers and Canadian products. We need community benefit agreements that must be negotiated to establish high labour standards, including prevailing wages, minimum apprenticeship ratios, union representation and affirmative action hiring for people from regional, indigenous or disadvantaged communities. We need to stop the expansion of unfair gig work. These workers are not self-employed. They deserve EI. They deserve to be covered by CPP.

Make no mistake, the workers in this country are under attack. Just today, in my home province of Alberta, Danielle Smith is threatening to use the notwithstanding clause against 51,000 teachers in our province. We all need to pay attention, because if Danielle Smith can do this to the teachers today, Conservative premiers across the country will do it to nurses, to construction workers, to anyone who dares to fight for fairness. This is bullying and a rejection of the rights of every worker in this country. This is an assault on our fundamental freedoms and an assault on our democracy.

• (1850)

**Leslie Church (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretaries of State for Labour, for Seniors, and for Children and Youth, and to the Minister of Jobs and Families (Persons with Disabilities), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our new government is proud to support a commitment to collective bargaining. Free and fair collective bargaining is at the heart of a stable labour relations regime.

Tonight, I will provide an update on the ongoing labour dispute between Canada Post and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. I will also highlight the work we are doing to help the parties reach an agreement. First, I would like to touch on the importance of collective bargaining.

The best deal is the deal that parties reach by themselves at the bargaining table. Collective bargaining is not easy, but it produces the strongest agreements, agreements that help stabilize our economy. That is why we banned replacement workers in federally regulated workplaces during strikes or lockouts. We celebrated this legislation's coming into force this year on June 20. The bill received unanimous support in Parliament.

Replacement workers can destabilize the bargaining process and poison the workplace for years to come. Banning their use protects workers' right to strike and removes distractions from collective bargaining. This will bring greater stability to our economy, because a strong economy depends on stable labour relations.

The responsibility of reaching negotiated deals rests solely with the parties, but the government can and does step in to help when needed. Last year, 97% of all disputes in federally regulated sectors were resolved without a work stoppage. That was thanks in large part to the outstanding work of the federal mediation and conciliation service, which has some of Canada's best mediators. They have worked hard to support both parties in this dispute, but the parties still need to agree. When they are unable to reach an agreement at the bargaining table, it can threaten Canada's economic health. Canadians simply cannot afford this.

Canada Post is one of Canada's largest employers, with more than 50,000 workers. It delivered 6.4 billion pieces of mail and parcels to 17.6 million locations across Canada in 2024. The instability caused by this dispute has been felt beyond the company's walls. It has put a strain on Canada's small businesses and communities.

CUPW and Canada Post need to find the right balance that secures the future of the corporation and respects the workers who keep it running. Both parties have priorities they want recognized, and Canadians expect the parties to resolve this dispute fast. Canadians depend on them to get this right.

The government has been supporting the parties with their negotiations for almost two years. Federal mediators remain available to support the bargaining process, but both parties are encouraged to continue working toward a fair resolution. I am proud to be part of a government that respects and has faith in the collective bargaining process. It is good for unions, for employees, for employers and for all of Canada.

Over the coming year, I look forward to working with this new government to ensure that Canada's workers, Canada's unions and

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

Canada's labour force are strongly represented in major projects and in the building we are going to be doing right across Canada.

• (1855)

**Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, across this country, from the schools in Alberta to the factories in Ontario and from the farms in the Prairies to the offices and hospitals in our cities, it is the workers of Canada who build this nation every single day. Workers' rights are not gifts handed down. They are victories won through courage, solidarity and sacrifice. Every fair wage, every safe workplace and every weekend and benefit we have fought for by people who believed in the dignity and justice of workers. However, today, those hard-won rights are under threat.

The Liberal government must stop attacking workers, stop undermining collective bargaining, stop leaving workers behind and start standing with the people who make this country run. When workers rise, Canada rises. The strength of this nation has always been and always will be found in the hands of our workers. Solidarity forever.

**Leslie Church:** Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member opposite that Canada has been built on the strength of our labour movements. This government strongly supports labour in Canada. We have banned replacement workers. We have introduced 10 days of paid sick leave.

Just today, the Minister of Jobs and Families announced a major reinvestment in the union training and innovation program to create tens of thousands of new jobs for skilled trades workers. These are union, labour, career-starting jobs. She also announced a hero tax credit, which is going to support personal support workers in our health care unions with up to \$1,100 in a refundable tax credit, recognizing the incredible caregiving these workers provide to Canadians and our loved ones right across the country.

I heard the member opposite. I want to assure her that the Government of Canada will continue to take the side of fairness, continue to support our workers and continue to support collective bargaining in every way we can. Canadians deserve no less.

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

(The House adjourned at 6:58 p.m.)



# CONTENTS

Monday, October 27, 2025

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

### Canadian Multiculturalism Act

Barsalou-Duval .....	3005
Bill C-245. Second reading .....	3005
Deschênes-Thériault .....	3007
Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk) .....	3007
Beaulieu .....	3007
Chenette .....	3008
Deltell .....	3009
Champoux .....	3010
Lamoureux .....	3012

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### Citizenship Act

Bill C-3. Report stage .....	3013
Jackson .....	3013
Deschênes-Thériault .....	3014
Barsalou-Duval .....	3015
Redekopp .....	3015
Diab .....	3015
Redekopp .....	3017
Barsalou-Duval .....	3017
Coteau .....	3017
Ma .....	3017
Lamoureux .....	3019
Barsalou-Duval .....	3019
Jansen .....	3019
Deschênes-Thériault .....	3019
Kayabaga .....	3021
Menegakis .....	3021
Beaulieu .....	3021
Menegakis .....	3022
Deschênes-Thériault .....	3023
Beaulieu .....	3023
Jansen .....	3024
Redekopp .....	3024
Lamoureux .....	3026
Barsalou-Duval .....	3026
Kirkland .....	3026
Jivani .....	3026
Lamoureux .....	3028
Brunelle-Duceppe .....	3028
Jansen .....	3028
Brunelle-Duceppe .....	3029
Lamoureux .....	3030
Rempel Garner .....	3030
Barsalou-Duval .....	3030

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### Canadian Farmers

Louis .....	3031
-------------	------

### Recognition of Veterans

Ruff .....	3031
------------	------

### Gordon Grant

Grant .....	3031
-------------	------

### Sealing Industry

Rowe .....	3032
------------	------

### Huguette Veilleux

Lavoie .....	3032
--------------	------

### Canada-U.S. Relations

Rempel Garner .....	3032
---------------------	------

### Buffalo Sabres Player

Kelloway .....	3032
----------------	------

### 125th Anniversary of Credit Union

Vien .....	3032
------------	------

### 125th Anniversary of Credit Union

Garon .....	3033
-------------	------

### Homelessness Awareness Night

Joseph .....	3033
--------------	------

### The Budget

Kelly .....	3033
-------------	------

### Serving Scholars Program

O'Rourke .....	3033
----------------	------

### Affordability Supports

DeRidder .....	3033
----------------	------

### 125th Anniversary of Credit Union

Fortier .....	3034
---------------	------

### Food Affordability

Anstey .....	3034
--------------	------

### Women's History Month

Yip .....	3034
-----------	------

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### The Economy

Poilievre .....	3034
MacKinnon .....	3035
Poilievre .....	3035
Gainey .....	3035
Poilievre .....	3035
MacKinnon .....	3035
Poilievre .....	3035
Gainey .....	3035

Poilievre .....	3035
Robertson .....	3036
Poilievre .....	3036
Hajdu .....	3036
<b>Finance</b>	
Normandin .....	3036
MacKinnon .....	3036
Normandin .....	3036
Guilbeault .....	3036
Garon .....	3036
MacKinnon .....	3037
<b>The Economy</b>	
Lantsman .....	3037
McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke) .....	3037
Lantsman .....	3037
Gainey .....	3037
Kramp-Neuman .....	3037
Hajdu .....	3037
Kramp-Neuman .....	3037
Robertson .....	3038
Bragdon .....	3038
Long .....	3038
Berthold .....	3038
Lightbound .....	3038
Berthold .....	3038
Gainey .....	3038
<b>Forestry Industry</b>	
Simard .....	3038
LeBlanc .....	3039
Simard .....	3039
Joly .....	3039
<b>The Economy</b>	
Genuis .....	3039
McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke) .....	3039
Genuis .....	3039
MacKinnon .....	3039
Hallan .....	3039
Hajdu .....	3040
Hallan .....	3040
Hajdu .....	3040
Tochor .....	3040
Belanger (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River) .....	3040
Connors .....	3040
Gainey .....	3040
Goodridge .....	3040
Gainey .....	3040
Goodridge .....	3041
Gainey .....	3041
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake) .....	3041
Turnbull .....	3041
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake) .....	3041
Turnbull .....	3041
<b>Seniors</b>	
Roberts .....	3041
McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke) .....	3041

<b>The Economy</b>	
Ma .....	3042
Hajdu .....	3042
Lefebvre .....	3042
Lightbound .....	3042
Lefebvre .....	3042
Gainey .....	3042
Martel .....	3042
Lightbound .....	3042
<b>Health</b>	
Sari .....	3042
Michel .....	3042
<b>The Economy</b>	
Melillo .....	3043
Hajdu .....	3043
Holman .....	3043
Long .....	3043
Rowe .....	3043
Thompson .....	3043
<b>Health</b>	
Sodhi .....	3043
Hajdu .....	3043
<b>Canada Revenue Agency</b>	
Deltell .....	3044
Long .....	3044
<b>Health</b>	
McPherson .....	3044
Michel .....	3044

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### Committees of the House

#### Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

Brassard .....	3044
Motion for concurrence .....	3044
Lamoureux .....	3046
Jackson .....	3046
Thériault .....	3046
Barrett .....	3046
Amendment .....	3047
Lamoureux .....	3047
Ste-Marie .....	3048
Cooper .....	3048
Lamoureux .....	3048
Jackson .....	3051
Thériault .....	3051
Deschênes-Thériault .....	3051
Jansen .....	3052
Thériault .....	3052
Fergus .....	3054
Cooper .....	3054
Garon .....	3055
Lamoureux .....	3055
Cooper .....	3055

Lamoureux .....	3056	<b>Human Rights in North Korea</b>	
Ste-Marie .....	3057	Genuis .....	3068
Deltell .....	3057	<b>Medical Assistance in Dying</b>	
Hardy .....	3057	Genuis .....	3069
Deschênes-Thériault .....	3059	<b>Questions on the Order Paper</b>	
Fortin .....	3059	Lamoureux .....	3069
Konanz .....	3059		
Majumdar .....	3060		
Lamoureux .....	3061		
Ste-Marie .....	3061		
Kelly .....	3062		
Kelly .....	3062	<b>GOVERNMENT ORDERS</b>	
Lamoureux .....	3063	<b>Citizenship Act</b>	
Thériault .....	3063	Bill C-3. Report Stage .....	3069
Jackson .....	3063	Ho. ....	3069
Jackson .....	3064	Lamoureux .....	3070
Lamoureux .....	3065		
Thériault .....	3066	<b>ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS</b>	
Kirkland .....	3066	<b>The Economy</b>	
Genuis .....	3066	Steinley .....	3071
Lamoureux .....	3067	Grant .....	3071
Division on amendment deferred .....	3068	<b>The Economy</b>	
		Lawton .....	3072
<b>Petitions</b>		Grant .....	3073
<b>Public Safety</b>		<b>Labour</b>	
Redekopp .....	3068	McPherson .....	3074
<b>Youth Employment</b>		Church .....	3074
Genuis .....	3068		

Published under the authority of the Speaker of  
the House of Commons

---

### SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

---

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

---

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité  
du Président de la Chambre des communes

---

### PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

---

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

---

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :  
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>